



Bedfordshire 2013-14

I have come to the end of a fantastic year as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire. I have really enjoyed the challenge of supporting the judiciary as well as the enormous contribution made by the emergency services, armed forces, local authorities, faith groups and the voluntary community. The role of High Sheriff appears to be as relevant as ever. I have really enjoyed bringing together people from these various groups.

2013-14 saw a number of changes in Bedfordshire with a new Chief Constable, Coroner, Chief Executive of Bedford Hospital and commandant at the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC), Chicksands. We have enjoyed entertaining and introducing them to other key people as well as the High Court and Crown Court judges.

A notable part of the High Sheriff's year is the service to celebrate the role of the judiciary. During the year we will have been to seven High Sheriffs' Justice Services, including an evening service for the High Sheriff of Northamptonshire, where 11 High Sheriffs were on parade. We also had the privilege of attending the celebration service of Her Majesty The Queen's Coronation in Westminster Abbey.

As many High Sheriffs before me have done, I have participated in lots of Citizenship Ceremonies. At the moment, we are admitting about 50 to 60 new British citizens per week in Bedfordshire. The ceremonies are held in three Registry Offices in the county.

I have enjoyed my involvement with the Police, Special Constabulary and Cadets, presenting long-service medals to the Police and Specials and also celebrating 100 years of Special Constables in Bedfordshire. My visits to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue and to Bedford Prison were fascinating. I have also supported the numerous cadet organisations.



HRH The Prince of Wales is greeted by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire when His Royal Highness visited the county in December 2013.

More recently, I have spent a lot of time with the Probation Service, particularly with the excellent Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team. I have also been working with the Penal Affairs Group of St Albans Diocese and the IOM team to pilot a Community Payback scheme using ex-offenders to help in renovating churchyards.

During the year I have been involved with a variety of fundraising events including clay-pigeon shooting, golf days and charitable dinners, raising funds for Bedford Open Door, a charity concerned with young people's mental health, National Crimebeat (see page 8) and the East Anglian Air Ambulance.



News from and about Members

At my Declaration I mentioned that I hoped to work with organisations involved with young people, particularly those seeking to keep them from drifting into crime. I have had discussions with Probation, CAB, ex-offenders and young people, and it strikes me that one of the most likely considerations influencing whether a young person turns to crime or whether somebody re-offends on release from prison is how financially capable they are. The problem is not whether they have much money but how they budget and try to manage it. In my view young people need to be better equipped with life skills, particularly financial capability. I am in discussion with The Money Charity to explore how we may provide this in Bedfordshire.

My High Sheriff's Community Awards evening was held at the exciting new Higgins Gallery in Bedford. I gave 30 or so awards to many dedicated and hardworking people from across the county. The event was wonderfully supported by the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation Trust and also by many former High Sheriffs. Later that month, I was delighted that at the National Crimebeat Awards in London, for which I submitted two projects, the third prize was awarded to



At the Passing Out parade of the Police Cadets, Deputy Chief Constable John Fletcher; Police Cadet Chris McInstosh (Sword bearer for the High Sheriff); High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Mrs Deborah Inskip and Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Mrs Helen Nellis.

the Luton Knife Crime Project (see page 8). It was great to have a positive success story generated by the young people of Luton.

My year has just flown by; I have had 359 engagements and have enjoyed every minute. I have had the most wonderful year, made lots of new friends, been welcomed all over the

county, enjoyed many memorable occasions, learnt so much and had glimpses of aspects hitherto unknown to me. I fully intend to continue to support so many inspiring people. □

Deborah Inskip

High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2013-14