



A focus on 'youth'



From top: The High Sheriff and Mrs Taylor with the Lord-Lieutenant, judges and lawyers at the annual legal service photo credit: June Essex; Welcoming Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to the official opening of the new Elephant House at ZSL Whipsnade photo credit: Tristan Newkey-Burden; With family on Declaration day photo credit: June Essex; With the Luton Irish Forum Emerald Pipe Band at the High Sheriff's garden party photo credit: June Essex

I AM delighted to contribute to this edition of *The High Sheriff*, reflecting on what is an engaging and gratifying six months since my Declaration on 1 April 2017 as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire at the Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Mandir in Luton, Bedfordshire.

I was born in Uganda to Indian parents with British nationality and came to the UK as an immigrant. I feel fortunate and proud to serve in a role that represents our county and allows me to make a difference to the lives of the people and hopefully leave a legacy of my year in office.

Besides traditional shrieval responsibilities and activities I have chosen to focus on 'youth' – how to keep young people fulfillingly occupied as the central theme for my year as High Sheriff. This theme has been highlighted by my engagement with various youth initiatives, listening to try and understand issues that concern them in areas such as crime, alcohol, mental health, housing, training and employment, and finding ways to engage youth in responsible, inspiring activities to create positive social change.

It is a pleasure to have been invited to a myriad of events and taken part in activities which have afforded me first-hand experience of the work carried out by some of the incredible people in our emergency services, the armed forces,

church and faith groups, and the voluntary community which give their time to serve our diverse county.

There have been many highlights such as welcoming Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to the official opening of the new Elephant House at ZSL Whipsnade, receiving HRH Princess Alexandra, and announcing the general election results for North East Bedfordshire.

I have engaged with the YMCA, The Prince's Trust, the national youth work organisation Youthscape which works directly with teenagers and local schools, supporting the curriculum; Mary Seacole Housing Association which provides supported housing and services to young single homeless people while enabling them to develop the skills needed to move into independent living; Meaningful Education which runs the Bedfordshire Dignity Network and Junior Dignity Network Youth Ambassadors creating a positive approach to the preservation of dignity by raising awareness of its importance. I am touched and humbled to hear directly from young people as to how these services have enriched their lives.

With the Bedfordshire community at large, I have attended many festivals, celebrations and faith ceremonies in various communities, meeting elderly and disability service users and gaining great insight which I much appreciated.

Additionally, I have had the privilege of hosting the annual church service for Her Majesty's judges at St Mary's Church in Luton and on the same day celebrating the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Crown Court in Luton, attended by serving and former Crown Court Judges, the Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, legal practitioners and court staff, members of the voluntary sector, High Commissioners and other dignitaries. It has been an extraordinary six months and I look forward to continuing the second half of this privileged role.

◆ Vinod Tailor DL
High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 2017-18