



City and County of Bristol 2013-14

I feel very privileged and honoured to have carried out the role of High Sheriff. Two words I would use to describe my year would be 'awesome' and 'humbling': awesome because there were so many interesting events in which we participated and humbling because I came across so many individuals who year after year give their time and effort so generously for no financial reward and little recognition. By visiting them, taking an interest and thanking them regularly on behalf of the public, I was able to give them a modicum of well-deserved recognition.

Judiciary and the law

My husband and I have had the pleasure of entertaining High Court Judges to traditional Asian cuisine dinners at home where we have introduced them to other diverse residents of Bristol.

In collaboration with a judge and a barrister, I have initiated the Court Multifaith Support Service in the Family Court. The multifaith volunteers will support families of faith or no faith through the legal system, and signpost them to other services if required.



Dr Shaheen Chaudhry learning the art of spinning plates from students at a playgroup in Bristol.



Dr Shaheen Chaudhry with students and volunteers at a Youth Centre in South Bristol.

Police and prisons

We have visited many police stations in the city and have been immensely impressed by the quality of thought being given by the police to crime prevention and intelligence, and by the high quality and dedication of all the officers I have met.

With support of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, I am laying down the foundations for the Annual High Sheriff's Awards for individuals who have worked with young adults from diverse backgrounds and made an exceptional difference to their lives. I have also suggested to them the concept of nominating a Police Cadet to attend and escort High Sheriffs at formal functions, similar to the Lord-Lieutenant's scheme. I have also found the prison officers we have met to be dedicated and hard working and have been impressed by their efforts to dissuade prisoners from reoffending and to start making a positive contribution to society. With support of the Chair of the Bench and the Police, I am in the initial stages of establishing a service for repeating offenders from the black and minority ethnic communities to

identify their needs and ways to bridge gaps which currently exist in the services provided for them.

Bristol Youth and Community Action (BYCA) and Cadets

BYCA is the High Sheriff's charity, which funds diversionary holiday activities for vulnerable children aged 8-12 living in disadvantaged areas of the city. This year BYCA has already made 35 grants, totalling over £50,000, which enabled nearly 5,000 young vulnerable people to benefit. To acknowledge the work of the Youth Group Leaders, I held the first 'Thank you' Certificates Event. I have been fortunate enough to see a good deal of the Army, Navy and Air Force cadets and officers, both on manoeuvres and at various social functions.

Diverse communities

The citizens of Bristol are very brave to welcome their first Asian female hijab-wearing High Sheriff from the black and minority ethnic community. But looking back in the city's history, this should not be a great surprise, since it has always welcomed diverse communities. In my year, I have attempted to bring together the many



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facets and individuals from the differing communities, to understand and respect each other's differing views and to celebrate the many similarities we have in common.

Theme of the year

My theme for my year was mental health and young adults. I have organised and hosted health and wellbeing days to raise awareness of this issue in the diverse communities.

Neighbouring High Sheriffs

I have invited fellow High Sheriffs from surrounding counties and their spouses to events including the 'Eid-Ul-Adah' celebration and the Legal Service in the Cathedral.

The New Year floods caused misery to many in Somerset. I requested that prayers be said in the mosques for those affected and collections were made to purchase necessary household goods. These were delivered to the Flooding on the Somerset Levels Action Group (FLAG) in convoys provided free by the local taxi company.



Dr Shaheen Chaudhry with Bristol Youth and Community Action (BYCA) group in North Bristol.

It has been a privilege to serve as High Sheriff for the year. It has offered me the opportunity to be part of the history of this country. I have been genuinely welcomed and accommodated by all communities who in turn have become more aware of the

role of a High Sheriff. My thanks go to all those who have helped me throughout, including my husband and to those who put their trust in me. □

Dr Shaheen Chaudhry
High Sheriff of Bristol 2013-14