



The High Sheriff's Declaration at Bryanston School: (left to right) Richard Ball JP, Under Sheriff, Katharine Jones, Solicitor, the High Sheriff, the Revd Brian Williams, High Sheriff's Chaplain, and immediate past High Sheriff, Mrs Catriona Payne JP DL.

Safety first

AS I reflect on my year as High Sheriff so far, I feel extremely privileged to have had so many opportunities to meet with all the people working so hard for the county.

My Declaration ceremony in early April was a special occasion and the support shown was most encouraging. My theme for the year is focused on those engaged in public service, volunteers, and two particular initiatives designed to educate and keep people safe. These are SafeWise, an interactive safety centre with two sites, and the Safe Bus, which aims to provide a safe haven for predominantly young people, potentially vulnerable, at night in the town centre.

The past six months have been immensely busy and rewarding; the long hot summer certainly showed Dorset at its best. I have been very pleased to spend time with the emergency services, whether at formal award ceremonies or out with frontline staff. Dorset Fire and Rescue run various courses, for example Safer People and Responsible Communities (SPARC), for young people seeking employment. At the time of writing I have just returned from one such passing-out parade, where

participants had acquired new skills and achieved certificates in first aid. They relished working as a disciplined team to tackle a number of tasks, including extinguishing fires and rescuing 'victims' from a burning building and road traffic accident. Most importantly, after such a short time self-esteem and confidence are vastly enhanced, and students have a greater sense of purpose and future.

I am most supportive of Bournemouth University which runs various community initiatives. These include the Dementia Institute and Shrieval Students, nominated by the university for a year to support community initiatives such as the Safe Bus and other voluntary work, receiving a certificate from the High Sheriff.

I opened a concert (the result of a ten-week project) featuring patients with dementia and members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. While the orchestra played *Bolero*, it was clear that all present were enthralled.

It has been a real privilege to meet so many people around the county who are engaged in promoting safety. Dorset Police actively support both the Safe Bus and SafeWise. The launch of 'NightWise'

provides a valuable opportunity to educate young people about being safe while out at night. The many countless hours given by volunteers in a wide range of activities across Dorset is truly remarkable.

Of course, this year has marked the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. There have been various events marking service and sacrifice, which have proved so memorable. A commemorative service at the Tank Museum on 4 August was powerful in reminding all of the conditions on the ground in 1914. Meanwhile the Air Show provided a close view of the superlative Red Arrows, and HMS *Westminster* in Bournemouth Bay recalled the crucial role of the Royal Navy. Most recently a visit to the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford underlined the importance of the Signals in developing modern communications – it is so worth a visit.

It has been a special privilege to be present during royal visits, which are greatly appreciated by local people and help to shine a light on the work of councils, volunteers and businesses. Likewise I have enjoyed meeting magistrates, judges and court staff, and attending one of the biggest gatherings for scouts in rural Dorset – of – over 1,000 earlier in the summer.

It has been a marvellous six months and I look forward to continuing this fascinating and privileged role over the winter months. It is so important to celebrate and acknowledge the lasting contribution made by people in support of their communities.

◆ **Jane Stichbury**
CBE QPM DL
High Sheriff of Dorset 2014-15



Photo: www.neolinn.co.uk

The High Sheriff with students, SafeWise CEO Alison Shelton BEM and Christopher Lees, Chairman of the Talbot Village Trust, at the launch of 'PubWise', a new initiative at Streetwise Safety Centre.