



# Sheriff defends against cyber-attacks...

AS WELL as being the High Sheriff of Hampshire, I am also chairman of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation. This brings me into contact with many wonderful small charities but also a few harrowing stories about the consequences of cyber-attack. So with the help of others I sponsored a workshop held in November at St John's House in Winchester.

The event was a joint initiative with Action Hampshire, HIWCF, Hampshire Constabulary, Fixers, Southampton University and Vermont; it was designed to help smaller charities and voluntary organisations protect themselves against the threat of cyber-crime. Over 70 participants attended from organisations across Hampshire, and a closing speech was given by the Mayor of Winchester Cllr Jane Rutter.

In 2014, £1.2 billion of direct debit donations were made to charity nationally, providing a huge temptation to cyber-criminals perceiving charities to be an easy target. Some smaller voluntary organisations and community groups simply don't believe they have the financial or staff resources to protect themselves against attacks. They risk their customer database being held to ransom, their website forced offline or loss of access to emails or business-critical data. The impact of a cyber-attack can be

immense, involving loss of funds and valuable staff resources wasted in trying to resolve the situation, but worst of all potential donors may lose their trust in that organisation.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics indicate that fraud and computer misuse accounted for 5.8 million crimes during 2015, with another sharp increase for the first half of 2016. Detective Chief Superintendent Ben Snuggs is responsible for Cyber-Crime, Digital Investigation and Intelligence at Hampshire Constabulary and he gave an insight into the world of cyber-crime, explaining that in order to

defend your organisation, a company's philosophy is absolutely key. People must be willing and prepared to protect themselves through adequate training, strong passwords, updates to software and reporting of suspicious activities. Implementation of Cyber-Essentials, a scheme designed by the government, can help organisations to protect themselves against the most common types of cyber-attack for just a few hundred pounds.

Neil MacEwan of Southampton University presented a ransomware case involving a cyber-attack against event organisers Action Hampshire; access to their vital business data was only unlocked after a ransom of almost £500 had been paid.

My work with the Community Foundation was a massive trigger for the conference; the smaller charities we support can ill afford the total disruption that a cyber-attack generates. Our aim is to help these groups protect themselves. Ian Glover, President of Crest, advised that to gain Cyber Essentials certification, an organisation must complete a self-assessment questionnaire which is then verified by an independent certification body. The cost is approximately £300 but HIWCF are making grants of £200 available to Hampshire charities to help. Accreditation with Cyber-Essentials will not only enhance protection but enable organisations to demonstrate that they are taking cyber risks seriously.

◆ Tom Floyd DL

*High Sheriff of Hampshire 2016-17*



Above: The cyber-crime workshop was a brilliant sequel to the most wonderful Legal Service in Winchester Cathedral which was attended by three High Court Judges and six visiting High Sheriffs seen here with the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire and the preacher, the Bishop of Lynn