

HERTFORDSHIRE

News from and about members





Leaving prison behind

I AM often asked what the difference is between the Lord-Lieutenant and the High Sheriff. The answer is that the Lord-Lieutenant is HM The Queen's representative in the county and the High Sheriff represents law and order; but in Hertfordshire, as in other counties, we work closely together and are often present at the same functions. I have been working closely too with the Hertfordshire Constabulary, giving out awards and raising awareness of some of the crime issues that we see in Hertfordshire.

I presented the HACRO Achievement Awards in May when 24 ex-offenders and those who have helped them were recognised for changing their lives to be crime-free. This takes a certain kind of determination and courage and it often means changing social circumstances and friendship groups. I visited HMP

The Mount – the only prison in Hertfordshire – for the 20th birthday of the children's play area, which is run by Community Development Action. CDA Herts provides opportunities for children to play with their fathers in a friendly environment and is a vital contribution to their chances of rehabilitation when their sentences end. I have been invited back to the prison by the chaplain to talk to some of the men about the issues of modern slavery and how prevalent it is in the county.

I have taken a particular interest in modern slavery and knife crime. Both of these problems have been getting plenty of coverage in the media but when it is happening in close proximity to



Above: The inaugural meeting of the Bishop's Stortford Police Cadets at Bishop's Stortford Fire Station with (seated) Detective Constable Rob Scott, Chief Constable Charlie Hall, High Sheriff, Cllr Colin Woodward and Commander Paul Redhead

Below left: High Sheriff with Yasmin Baltiwala, President of HACRO

Opposite page: High Sheriff and police cadet Paige Mangleshott

where you live, then it becomes a reality. Within a couple of months of my taking on the role, a High Court Judge tried a case at St Albans Crown Court. It took six weeks to complete the trial and five 14- and 15-year-old boys were found guilty of murder and given life sentences of 12 and 14 years. I sat with the judge on the bench at the Old Bailey for the sentencing. I found this very sobering and have been determined to explore groups in the county that give young people an opportunity to achieve outside school and hopefully prevent them from becoming part of the criminal justice system.

I was honoured to be present at the first meeting of the Bishop's Stortford Police Cadets in early September. It is the 11th cadet group to be established in the county and is supported by Chief Constable Charlie Hall and district councillor Colin Woodward. Cadets will learn about police procedures and will work alongside local officers to play a vital role in community events. I now have my own personal police cadet who attended a recent visit to Hertfordshire by HRH The Princess Royal and will carry my sword at the Justice Service in November at St Albans Cathedral.

Modern slavery is a problem that affects us all. It exists in car washes, hospitality, nail bars, and in the agricultural and construction businesses. In Hertfordshire, I have been supporting a modern anti-slavery partnership which is a multi-agency group made up of 15 agencies and charities, established in order to tackle this crime. My aim is to raise awareness of it and to encourage members of the public to spot the signs and report it to the police or to contact the Modern Slavery helpline.

Hertfordshire has its share of crime issues, mainly due to its proximity to London and a large population, but there are also many people who work hard to enable us to live our lives peacefully and I have been honoured to meet some of those individuals.

◆ **Suzy Harvey**
High Sheriff of Hertfordshire 2018-19

