



A strictly wonderful year!

AFTER SEVERAL months of varied and engaging experiences, I received in November an unexpected request to 'open the voting' when *Strictly Come Dancing* visited Blackpool. After considerable debate and analysis of the situation, and having been emboldened by 007's parachuting companion, I accepted. This turned out to be another unique and wonderful engagement, although being introduced with Sir Lenny Henry as part of 'the country's best loved comedy duo' was somewhat surreal.

Every year in Lancashire the High Sheriff has the honour of hosting the Young Citizen of the Year Awards. This year we had a very impressive list of winners who demonstrated a passion for improving their communities that was quite extraordinary. The young people of today often do not get proper credit for their actions, and it was a most uplifting experience to hear of their dynamism, creativity and compassion, and to meet them all. Like many of my shrieval experiences it was memorable.

In March I invited 15 voluntary organisations to come to a High Sheriff's Award Ceremony in County Hall where I

Top right: With the winner of Lancashire's Young Citizen of the Year Award Jessica Basquill, Joel Arber of the sponsor UCLan, and Andy Rhodes, Chief Constable

Below: Preparing to open the voting on *Strictly Come Dancing* with Claudia Winkleman and Sir Lenny Henry

Below right: Recipients of the High Sheriff's Awards at County Hall



presented them with Commendations. It was an extremely happy occasion and they all took great pride in being recognised for their outstanding work, as well as enjoying listening to the citations of their peers and having an opportunity to network afterwards over tea and cakes!

One of the themes I became aware of when visiting our public services throughout the county was the need and desire to develop better ways of delivering their objectives through closer partnerships with each other. In an attempt to promote and encourage this theme of collaborative partnering I hosted an event (supported by the University of Central Lancashire) for all the leaders of

our public services at which we had an intense interactive day together to identify opportunities and ways of making faster progress. I am hopeful that this initiative will gain traction and bear fruit in the near future.

My shrieval year has been a delightful blend of insightful visits and special events in wonderful venues, together with the opportunity to meet so many fine people who make such a positive impact on our county. It has been a great honour and privilege to hold the office and one which I will never forget.

◆◆ Robert Webb JP DL
High Sheriff of Lancashire, 2017-18

