



Nottinghamshire 2013-14

I have adopted a broad focus for my year under the umbrella of law and order, which includes supporting and promoting those organisations which work so hard in our county to reduce crime, keep the community safe, and improve the lives of others. This also embraces organisations that help to rehabilitate prisoners and ex-offenders. As part of this support, I am endeavouring to increase the awareness among our business community that it is local charities which are in desperate need of their support.

The start of my year was helped immensely by pre-Declaration visits to the police and prison services, the Coroner's office, several charities that met my focus and behind the scenes at the Courts. I made personal contact with our Crown Court administrators for regularly updated notice of visits by the High Court Judges.

I am increasingly aware of the large number of overlapping law and order charities and organisations, all pulling in not dissimilar directions, but so often working in a vacuum and also competing for essential funding from



Meeting the Nottinghamshire Army Cadets at Thetford Forest for their annual camp.

the same limited resources. A specific objective of mine has been to identify opportunities for improved communications between appropriate law and order bodies and service users and to facilitate these. The limited success any High Sheriff can achieve in 12 months, even with the benefit of added leverage, may prove frustrating. For example, I have found that some

police custody suites can only offer limited referral support to those moving through the suite. With the support of relevant local charities, therefore, we are working together to provide a practical handout listing appropriate new contacts for help with issues such as housing, drug and alcohol abuse and prostitution.

I have been able to link up several charities with common aims and issues which were not previously aware of other charities' existence. I am increasing the profile in the county of the newly formatted National Crimebeat Awards through the Community Safety Partnerships, hosting a seminar to promote employment of ex-offenders by local companies. I am also introducing High Sheriff's Awards for those unsung heroes who go that extra mile as volunteers in the law and order charitable sector in collaboration with our Community Foundation.

Another area where smaller charities can benefit is from prompt and local pro bono property and legal advice. For example, so many people risk significant problems by entering short-term leases without taking or being able to afford



The East Midlands regional High Sheriffs
Left to right: Toby Dennis (Lincolnshire), Derek Mapp (Derbyshire), myself, Sally Bowie (Leicestershire), Trish Ruddle (Rutland) and James Shepherd-Cross (Northamptonshire).



News from and about Members

advice. I am looking at how to encourage more professionals to support ProHelp, a Business in the Community initiative.

My limited personal experiences suggest to those in nomination:

- meet as many key contacts in your areas of interest, including the local press, before your year starts;
- have a laminated A4 sheet with High Sheriff's badge/ 'High Sheriff on duty' in the car for display when needed;

- High Sheriff's visiting cards are proving very useful;
- obtain in advance the email addresses for the clerks of visiting High Court Judges;
- consider a group communication to all your predecessor High Sheriffs and those in nomination at least once a year since many of them may be interested in shrieval news; and
- for those who wear tights (not risking accusations of gender discrimination!), do not wear any with sheen as flash bulbs hate them!

I really value the support and comradeship of our East Midlands High Sheriffs' team, which has recently enjoyed a memorable and thought-provoking visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

How tremendously privileged I am to be experiencing the opportunities that my year continues to provide. □

Nicky Weston

High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire 2013-14



The Judges at HM The Queen's Birthday Service at Southwell Minster in June.