



Supporting and promoting the voluntary sector

WHEN I was invited to contribute an article to this magazine about my experiences as High Sheriff, I thought 'where do I start? It has been such a busy (about 250 engagements) and enjoyable year with so many highlights that I am not sure where to start.

I have had my share of visiting royalty (eight) which is always a pleasure. I have enjoyed participating in the citizenship ceremonies held at County Hall in Kingston and welcoming new British citizens who have decided to settle in Surrey. I delight in telling them about all that Surrey has to offer and what a remarkable and diverse county it is. I have also enjoyed presenting awards dressed in my finery whether it is for the Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, apprentices, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service or Surrey Police.

While I think it is important to continue and to respect the traditions of this great Office (and I took great pleasure in doing so – the service for the judiciary was one of the highlights of my year), in my view the main role of the modern-day High Sheriff is to take an active part in



Youth Engagement Scheme (YES) graduates with Kevin Hurley (Police and Crime Commissioner), David Munro (Chairman, Surrey County Council), Simon Moore (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Gavin Stephens (Assistant Chief Constable) and Peter Lee (High Sheriff)

supporting and promoting the voluntary sector in the county. With 1,600 charities and voluntary organisations in Surrey, that is a job well worth doing.

I am pleased to report that two of my three nominations for a National Crimebeat Award – the Leatherhead Youth Total Football Project and Youth Engagement Scheme (YES) – received certificates of commendation which I was proud to present to them. Total Football, a project which engages disadvantaged young people through football, also received the High Sheriff Youth Awards Sports Project Award at the prestigious 2014 Surrey Sports Awards held at Kempton Park in December.

My year culminated in the High Sheriff Youth Awards celebration event generously hosted by ExxonMobil at their headquarters in Leatherhead. It is an opportunity to showcase some of the projects the HSYA has supported over the year. I am pleased to say that, as the presenter of this impressive event, I was completely outshone by the young people who participated in it.

I was very flattered to be the subject of a four-page interview in *Surrey Life* magazine headed 'The Good, the Bad and the Dashing', although I am not clear which of these referred to me! The article, fittingly, came out on the day of my successor's installation at Guildford Cathedral and drew a neat conclusion to my year.

As I reflect on what has been a busy and at times challenging year, I feel honoured, humbled and privileged to have served Surrey as its High Sheriff. It is a unique role which affords a special insight into the workings of the county, the people of the county and the communities in the county. There is an extraordinary amount of goodwill out there for the office of High Sheriff and I hope that I have played my part in preserving that for my successors.

I may now be an ex-High Sheriff but I believe that I am a better person for the experience – certainly a better informed person.

◆ Peter Lee

High Sheriff of Surrey 2014-15



Peter Lee, High Sheriff of Surrey, with some of the young participants at the High Sheriff Youth Awards celebration event hosted by ExxonMobil at its headquarters in Leatherhead