



Hitting the right note

THE HIGHLIGHTS of my first five months in office have been too numerous to do justice to in a short article. Together with my wife Heather, I have had the privilege of visiting all five prisons in the county where we were struck by the dedication and resilience of prison governors and staff in the face of major reductions in funding. I have attended many civic and church services and visited charities, hospices and voluntary projects across West Yorkshire. I have also been a guest or presided at some seven university graduation ceremonies.

I have admired the extent to which charities and voluntary groups provide the glue which holds our society together. The sheer quantity and quality of volunteering is amazing.

I have greatly enjoyed entertaining seven High Court Judges and many circuit judges at dinner parties, concerts and the theatre, and hosting

lunches at court. I have sat in court several times, including two murder trials.

I have particularly valued spending time with the police. This has included their annual awards ceremony; time on the streets in inner-city Leeds; visiting the purpose-built Leeds division headquarters at Elland Road and the new state-of-the-art police training centre in Wakefield; and seeing first-hand the operation at the Leeds Festival and the West Indian Carnival. All these have helped provide an insight into the wonderful, mostly unseen, work the police do each day to keep our communities safe.

I had the privilege of being the general election returning officer in the Shipley and the Keighley constituencies. This involved spending the night at the Keighley leisure centre where the results were declared at 6.30 am and 8.00 am respectively. I was most impressed by the professionalism of the

Below: Carleton Community High School receive a framed copy of Magna Carta





listen very carefully because they were going to hear the High Sheriff of West Yorkshire.

Towards the end of August, I officially opened the triennial Leeds International Piano Competition, one of the leading competitions in the world, led by the formidable 95-year-old Dame Fanny Waterman. I attended many sessions and was privileged to introduce Lang Lang, the world's most celebrated pianist, at a special concert at Leeds Town Hall.

I look forward to many visits over the next few months – to the fire service, the air ambulance, on the streets of Leeds overnight with the police and the Street Angels charity, and participating in the north-east circuit Legal Service in York. I am enjoying every day.

Left: Meeting one of the many participants in the West Indian carnival

Below: Magna Carta Stakes at Pontefract Races

Bottom: Promoting cycling for the disabled

♣ Ed Anderson

High Sheriff of West Yorkshire 2015-16

“The town had organised an excellent series of events to ensure that the 800th anniversary was appropriately marked



counting staff and also by the good relations and courtesy shown by all the candidates.

Pontefract is a Magna Carta town since John de Lacy, one of the rebel barons, owned Pontefract Castle. The town had organised an excellent series of events to ensure that the 800th anniversary was appropriately marked. My participation included giving a reading at a beautiful Magna Carta commemorative service in the church on the main square; a dinner where I spoke and unveiled a superb Magna Carta embroidery which had been produced by local women; presenting, in court dress, the prize to the winner of the Magna Carta Stakes at Pontefract races; and presenting a framed copy of Magna Carta to Carleton Community High School where one could hear a pin drop when the head teacher told 400 pupils they had to

