



A year like no other

'A YEAR like no other' – advice received from Burghley House and former High Sheriffs, and so it turned out.

A very special year, encompassing the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One; the 100th anniversary of the vote for women, and great excitement around Her Majesty The Queen's visit to dedicate the new Mersey Gateway Bridge, with the last-minute addition of HRH the Duchess of Sussex on her very first official public engagement.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as High Sheriff, meeting so many amazing volunteers and charities as I have criss-crossed the county, all working hard without any fuss or much ado, strengthening and enriching Cheshire at their every step.

I include the many in paid work who go so far above and beyond a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, without giving a thought to any thanks or extra reward: key local government officers; the faith groups; the university; colleges; and members of the public at large.

Beyond The Queen's memorable visit, highlights included the many events surrounding the centenary of the end of World War One. From the commitment of so many people, young and old, using this poignant anniversary to renovate

and re-dedicate local memorials, to the hundreds who attended the 6.00 am candlelit procession through Chester Cathedral to mark the signing of the armistice, before the 11.00 am laying of the wreaths in the company of His Grace the Duke of Westminster. High attendances at all events ensuring future generations will also not forget.

The visits to schools and citizenship ceremonies were uplifting examples of the power and symbolism of the regalia – for children to enjoy their shared and deep constitutional history, as well as to welcome and encourage new citizens to embrace and contribute to that shared history.



Above: Greeting Her Majesty The Queen and the Duchess of Sussex with Lord-Lieutenant David Briggs MBE and consort Phil Redmond CBE.
Below: Blue light carol concert in Chester Cathedral.



Above: International Women's Day

Throughout the year, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's work with the Prince's Trust, delivering personal development courses helping young people turn their lives around, was inspirational, while the charity Christmas concert featuring choirs from all the blue light services, backed by the police band, was especially enjoyable.

So many memorable occasions, but I should mention one other event, the reception I held to welcome the new Honorary Recorder of Chester, His Honour Judge Everett. It was a fun gathering that brought the judiciary, public sector and blue lights together, for me, as High Sheriff, to thank them for their continued commitment to public service. They achieve great results in what are, and always have been, extremely difficult circumstances.

In Cheshire, the High Sheriff works to support both Cheshire Crimebeat and the Community Foundation, and together with the University of Chester, to deliver the prestigious High Sheriff's Awards for Enterprise, and a separate award for Literature. All build on the legacy of previous High Sheriffs, and I was privileged to carry on and develop these initiatives further where I could, and work as a broker in bringing people together, to exchange views and ideas, helping build partnerships.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have held the office for 2018-19; indeed, a year like no other.

◆ Alexis Redmond MBE
High Sheriff of Cheshire 2018-19

