

SUFFOLK

News from and about members



Keeping a Clean Sheet

Above:
Celebrations at
the High Sheriff's
Awards evening

Below: At the Eve
of Peace Service
in St Edmundsbury
Cathedral with the
Lord-Lieutenant
of Suffolk, Clare,
Countess of
Euston, and the
High Sheriff's
cadets, CSM
Shannon Elsdon,
Cpl Tom Guinivan
and Senior
Emergency
Services Cadet
Alicia Williams

THE BEAUTY of Suffolk with its picturesque towns and villages, magnificent cathedral and churches, and incomparable coastline can lull one into overlooking the fact that we have some of the most deprived wards in the country in Lowestoft and Ipswich, as well as serious pockets of deprivation uncomfortably close to all of us across the county. Spending time with charities and community groups has been jaw-dropping in understanding the appalling hands dealt to so many but also the quite extraordinary humanity with which vital support is administered. In the fragmented

world of the voluntary sector it has been good to play the important role of cheerleader and compassionate listener as local charities fight for survival amid funding cuts and increasing competition from the nationals.

The contemporary relevance of the High Sheriff was demonstrated to me in several areas as I worked in tandem with the brilliant Suffolk Community Foundation. The Foundation encourages communities, particularly those affected by the scourge of gangs and county lines, to take ownership of their own destiny rather than waiting for solutions to be imposed, and to persuade the public, private and voluntary sectors to work genuinely in equitable partnership with each other.

The dedication, professionalism and compassion of those in our criminal justice system, from judges to magistrates and court staff, the police and other emergency services are truly impressive. We have three excellent Suffolk prisons, each with a clear commitment to train and prepare prisoners for resettlement into the community. HMP Warren Hill is the best-performing prison in the country, operating a progressive regime and creating a culture of hope and respect. Despite the good work, reoffending rates remain at over 60 per cent, resulting in personal tragedy on multiple levels, continued disruption in the community





Far Left: Outside HMP Warren Hill

Left: At the helm during take-off of a KC-130 refuelling aircraft at RAF Mildenhall

and a waste of taxpayers' money. It was good to be able to establish rehabilitation projects in Warren Hill involving locally recruited mentors to support prisoners for six months pre-release and a further six months once out. In HMP Hollesley Bay we have commenced a project providing farm-based employment for groups of prisoners on day release. In my opinion, this goes to the heart of the role of High Sheriff and I commend the phenomenal Jane Gould and her employment charity for ex-prisoners, Clean Sheet (www.cleansheet.org.uk), to High Sheriffs looking to support the rehabilitation of prisoners.

In the centenary year of the Armistice it was wonderful to spend so much time with our armed services, especially our American allies at Lakenheath and Mildenhall who were so generous with their friendship. Flying their simulators and

refuelling F-15s over the North Sea are never-to-be-forgotten experiences.

Particular highlights of the year were Suffolk Day, when I travelled the county with the Community Foundation and BBC Suffolk to celebrate our volunteers, and creating the Suffolk Medal, a beautiful piece designed by Suffolk's greatest living artist, Maggi Hambling. This recognises, rewards and champions the exceptional contributions of Suffolk people who have made a fundamental and lasting difference to the lives of people in our county. With nominations being submitted by residents of Suffolk, the Suffolk Medal will be truly by Suffolk, for Suffolk, in Suffolk.

◆ George Vestey DL
High Sheriff of Suffolk 2018-19

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

High Sheriffs intending to lay wreaths during the Armistice period can order these with the High Sheriffs' badge in the centre from The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Orders should be placed (quoting stock code H0018) by calling the Poppy Appeal on **01622 717172** and speaking to a Regional Organiser.

Please order in good time.

