



## Getting Court an eye-opener

IT WAS an enormous privilege to serve as High Sheriff of Gloucestershire last year. My main hope was to be able to see at first hand the contributions from many organisations that look after the people in the county, especially those who are vulnerable and in need of support. I have certainly seen many aspects of generosity of time, spirit and a willingness to go the extra mile to make a difference in so many ways.

Our police and emergency services have allowed me to see and recognise the training and hard work, and going above and beyond what they do for the community they serve. The Gloucestershire Police Awards presented in March and the Police and Crime



With the Chief Constable of Gloucester Rod Hansen at the Gloucestershire Police Awards

Photo: Antony Thompson, Thousand Word Media



Above: Meeting the hard-working porters at Gloucester Royal Hospital

Below: With my wife Daisy and daughter Mary in Gloucester Cathedral for the Legal Service and my Declaration



Photo: Paul Nicholls

Commissioner's Impact Awards in May highlighted their skills and service.

I wanted to focus on the Getting Court process that started in Gloucester and allowed teenagers the chance to sit in on a morning session at the Crown Court with their teachers and then ask questions of an ex-prisoner. This is a wonderful example of allowing our young people to understand what will happen if they get involved in a life of crime. This already happens in Bristol and Oxfordshire and I hope will extend to other counties. The mock trials at Whitminster and Cheltenham that I attended allowed me to see schoolchildren involved in the magistrates' court process and was an eye-opener for all involved.

I attended many events significant to our aviation history, including the 50th anniversary of the first Concorde dinner and RAF Fairford celebrating 75 years since opening. It was a privilege to go on board Concorde with my wife and to learn more about the construction and work undertaken at Filton. One thing I have learnt during my year is the fabulous and patriotic way that we carry out our processions, which I saw during the Armed Forces Day and civic flag raising in June in Gloucester.

I have been continually amazed at the number of incredible charities working to protect those who are vulnerable and those who have been involved in our criminal justice system. The National Star College in Cheltenham held its leavers' awards ceremony in July. This highlighted the hard work that their carers put in to help the young people with severe disabilities who have been studying there to acquire vital skills to help them with their future. I was pleased to visit many of the charities that were to be given funding from the High Sheriffs' Fund. The work that many are doing voluntarily to keep our young people busy and allow them to learn a new skill has been tremendous. I saw at first hand the enthusiasm and the speed at which many had progressed in their lives.

I was also impressed by my tours of Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital where I was alerted to the hard work the porters put in to help link together the staff and the patients. This work is incredibly important and especially during these challenging times in 2020.

**Charles Berkeley**  
*High Sheriff of Gloucestershire 2019-20*