



Good people need to act

FUNDRAISING HAS featured high on my agenda since my Declaration. Many charities have seen demand increase from their beneficiaries since the crisis took hold but at the same time their ability to raise cash has been diminished. They have their own survival crises and many need help.

The COVID appeal launched with the Cheshire Community Foundation has been a particular highlight in the county with individuals and businesses digging deep and donating funds. With a generous match funder I found, we have now raised around £1.5m.

I have personally provided 300 tablets to hospitals so patients so can have some video contact with the loved ones they are prohibited from seeing. I have also provided tablets to disadvantaged families to enable their children to have lessons virtually.

My whole family has become involved; after I ran three marathons in a week around my garden, my sons organised a marathon relay across their advertising agency network engaging 500 runners and raising over £17,000.00 for local charities.

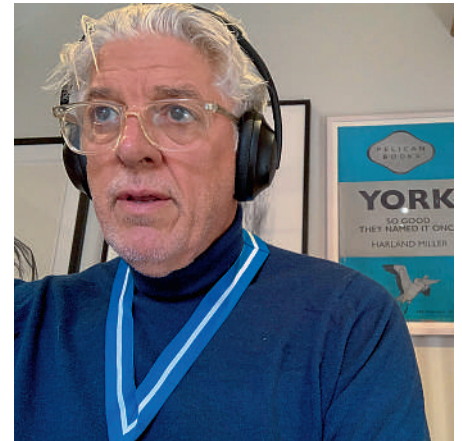
I have engaged with the art world and been the ideas man behind a couple of national campaigns which has seen £2m raised very quickly and subsequently distributed mostly to health-related, food, and homeless charities. I am working on another project with Maggie's Centres which is on target to raise £750,000.

I'm running an online fundraising campaign for Warrington Youth Club which is now guaranteed to raise over £500,000 to ensure that the new £7.5m youth zone under construction will have the funds to continue to provide mentoring for vulnerable young people in the town for the next three years. This has been made possible with some very kind donations and a government-backed match-funding scheme. It's vital work that saves young lives.

I have offered lots of charities my ideas, mentoring and guidance on



With two of my Kilimanjaro climbers on a training walk up Snowdon



Zoom fundraising training, helping to raise cash for victims of domestic abuse



VJ Day commendations while in quarantine

fundraising and I have just launched a big initiative to raise £1.5m for an MRI brain scanner for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. This is an essential bit of kit which will save tens of thousands of children's lives across the world every year. RMCH is the largest children's hospital in the UK and a world pioneer in treating brain disease, tumours, autism and epilepsy.

My plans for 2021 include leading a group of 16 ladies up Kilimanjaro in February to raise funds to pay for the mentoring and support of young women in the county.

Many have commiserated that it must be a terrible time to be High Sheriff. I have a different view. This is a crisis and in a crisis good people need to act; they need to create plans and they need to make a difference.

Representing HM The Queen's interests in respect of law and order in the county is a great honour, but it's also an opportunity to encourage good people to get involved and engage with the more vulnerable members of society who need help, guidance and looking after – now more than ever.

With no travelling, dinners, openings and other events I am able to dedicate my time to positive, impactful and vital activity for the good of the county.

Cheshire is a great county; we have many fantastic people here who are committed to making sure that we come out of this crisis stronger and more together than we went into it and I for one am proud to play my part.

Nick Hopkinson MBE DL
High Sheriff of Cheshire 2020-21