



Beachside briefings

IT IS a strange but fascinating time to be High Sheriff; sworn in one day, into lockdown the next. Like all other High Sheriffs, and in fact most businesses across the country, in Cornwall I had to pivot my planned approach to my year very swiftly.

Lockdown brought the requirement to take the Shrievalty online and specifically on to social media sharply to the fore. It also threw many of the traditional events and diary entries up into the air, giving the opportunity to rethink and reshape the entertainment and ceremonial aspects of the role. Third, there has been the opportunity to emphasise the position of the High Sheriff not only at the heart of the police and judiciary but crucially for the future relevance of the role, as a truly positive presence in the community. Without in any way detracting from the integrity and stature invested in the Office.

Across the country, my fellow High Sheriffs have been embracing social media, not only to thank, recognise and encourage but also as an 'at a glance' snapshot of the varied elements the role entails. I am fortunate to have a background in communications and therefore a broad brush understanding; nevertheless it is a daunting and time-consuming commitment and one for which I hope the

High Sheriffs' Association will offer specific training going forward. There were no existing social media channels in Cornwall so I have started (@HSofCornwall) from a base of nil. Twitter is especially popular among the emergency services and while follower levels might seem low, do not be discouraged as my posts are invariably the first subject to be mentioned on meeting people. I have also established a generic email address which will be passed on to my successor, hopefully avoiding the perennial issue of misaddressed invitations.

In this climate, entertaining works best with a clear sense of purpose. Working within COVID-19 guidelines (and with the approval of Devon and Cornwall Police) I am hosting a series of High Sheriff's Briefings in a beachside restaurant to throw a spotlight on just a few of the very impressive individuals and organisations I have met since taking office. With speakers representing those working in the areas of domestic, alcohol and drug abuse and those supporting vulnerable children and young adults, guests (keeping totals to within 30) are drawn from different influential aspects of Cornish life.

One of the first initiatives I announced was the High Sheriff of Cornwall Unsung Hero Awards, recognising those individuals or groups



High Sheriff of Cornwall at her Declaration with Chaplain Canon Pat Robson MBE

who with small acts of everyday kindness, dedication and selflessness played such a crucial role in our communities during lockdown. There are many who deserve recognition and applauding, but for various reasons could fall below the radar for the larger scale awards. Nominations were invited by the local media, with award presentations (mostly in person at an appropriate distance) to date including community shops, a head teacher specifically looking out for struggling families, organisers of online community support groups, the inspiring Chaplain of Devon and Cornwall Police, a charity maintaining vital 1-2-1 support for vulnerable young adults and last week the Cornwall Waste Team.

'What did you do during lockdown?' I feel very privileged to be able to answer 'I was lucky enough to be High Sheriff of Cornwall'.

On a final note: Cornwall has always prided itself by being different and it is even so in the appointment of its High Sheriff. While I represent HM The Queen's interests in law and order, I am appointed by HRH The Duke of Cornwall and am proud to wear a beautiful Cornish badge designed by Cornish silversmith Charles Hall – complete with Cornwall's fifteen golden bezants emblem and the Prince of Wales's feathers.



High Sheriff of Cornwall, Kate Holborow, presenting Unsung Hero Awards to the Cornwall Waste team



High Sheriff of Cornwall, Kate Holborow, presenting Unsung Hero Award to Mawgan Stores, Helford, Cornwall

Kate Holborow DL
High Sheriff of Cornwall 2020-21