



# A proactive approach to my year in office

**WHAT A year 2020 has turned out to be! None of the High Sheriffs who are dedicating a year of service to the counties they represent could have predicted the challenges ahead. To say we are operating in strange times is an understatement.**

In my career as an entrepreneur and project manager, I learnt the best way to deal with problems is to meet them head on and turn them into an opportunity. That is what I, and counterparts across the country, have been doing.

The first thing I realised was that due to lockdown, my diary would not fill up with events and engagements. I would have to be proactive and reach out to make my difference. If the present situation has an upside, it is that many small organisations sprang up to help others through the crisis, and they all needed one thing: money.

Therefore, working with the HEY Smile Foundation, I took part in the #HighFiver social media campaign that raised £31,000 and we distributed this to 60 organisations in awards of £500. I also wrote to the leaders of these groups commending them and their teams on a job well done.

However, it is not all about the little guys. When I became High Sheriff, I wanted to help a big project – one I could see through to the end. For me, that has been refurbishing St Paul's Boxing Academy in Hull city centre.

That might sound a strange choice but let me explain. St Paul's has been operating in Hull since 1948 and in that time has created thousands of champions, but the majority of those are champions in life, not in the ring. It draws from the most deprived areas of one of the UK's most deprived cities and gives young people – who are often without any role



#HighFiver campaign

models – the focus, direction and skills to lead happy and successful lives.

The total cost of the refurbishment was £930,000 – a big ask – but work got underway in May and I am delighted to advise practical completion was achieved on 6 November. We hope to open the gym as soon as CV19 guidelines permit. Everyone is very excited.

As well as this, I have taken part in an online commemoration of VE Day viewed by over 15,000 people; undertaken a Friends Against Scams course to raise awareness of online fraud; delivered thousands of PPE items to BAME communities; cycled more than 1,000 miles for charity; and devoted time to raising greater awareness around suicide prevention.

And there is still just under half the year to go! There is a lot High Sheriffs can do alongside this virus, and I am proud to serve as my county's High Sheriff at this time of crisis. It has enabled me to decide where I can make the most difference and concentrate on that.

The use of technology that the virus necessitates has helped me reach more people than I otherwise would have done and to highlight what the role involves. I believe this is helping to modernise the image of the role, which can only be a good thing for the future of the Shrievalty.

**◆ Andrew Horncastle MBE**  
*High Sheriff of the East Riding of Yorkshire 2020-21*



Friends Against Scams certification



St Paul's Boxing Academy



Out with the Hull Street Angels Trinity in Hull city centre