



Shrieval evolution

BEFORE 1889, the Sheriffs of London had always been the City Sheriffs because 'the City' was London. They were also the Sheriffs of Middlesex. In that year the County of London was created and the Sheriffs were separated into those representing the City and the equivalent Sheriff for the County of London, i.e. the part of London outside the City. (I am also a City of London Alderman and the last time someone in my position was also a Sheriff for the rest of London was in 1895, 125 years ago, so I'm particularly humbled to be appointed.) With the County of London's abolition in 1965, Greater

London was created out of what was inner London, Middlesex and parts of Surrey and Kent at that time.

Today, as High Sheriff of Greater London, I am nominally responsible for all matters relating to the judiciary and the Rule of Law in the 32 boroughs but excluding the City of London. I cover the following main areas:

- Royal Courts of Justice, including the Queen's Bench, Family and Chancery divisions of the High Court
- Nine Crown Courts
- Eight prisons
- Metropolitan Police
- Charities supporting the justice system



Attending Isleworth Crown Court for a presentation to the Operations Manager, Ms Harpreet Dale, for outstanding service provided by her and her team during the COVID-19 crisis

As can be seen from the list, my primary focus is on the main stakeholders in the judicial system in Greater London. I also work in co-operation with the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London.

My Declaration would normally have occurred physically at the Royal Courts of Justice in front of the Lord Chief Justice, the Queen's Remembrancer and other senior High Court Judges. This year, for the first time ever due to the COVID-19 lockdown, it took place virtually with all of us dialling in from home! Since then, my planned visits to courts and prisons, and so on were all postponed to the autumn or even the new year. I have just started making some of these visits, having previously been in shielding. Otherwise, I have spoken virtually to almost all the resident judges at the Crown Courts and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Chief Inspector of Prisons and others upholding law and order.

My virtual engagement initiative is ongoing and will, I intend, cover all parts of the judicial system over the coming months. Hopefully, if things return to 'normal', I will also be involved in more physical engagement, not least to thank all those in the Greater London legal system for their contributions during the pandemic and more generally. I see my role as convening and facilitating between different participants of the justice system in and will pursue this as far as I can, including closer ties between Greater London and the City in the judicial area. A specific initiative I have been given by the High Sheriffs' Association, already started, is to co-ordinate communication between those High Sheriffs across England and Wales who are responsible for the major conurbations, primarily through sharing ideas. Last, but most certainly not least, I hope to hold one or more Justice Awards. Huge thanks must go to my wife and my Under Sheriff, Lynn Cooper, for their support and resilience.

◆ Alderman J Garbutt JP
High Sheriff of Greater London 2020-2021