



## Socially distanced dinners

**WITH THE COVID-19 crisis still in full force as we head into the autumn, I really had to put on my thinking cap (or High Sheriff's bonnet in this case) and come up with some ideas to make the most of my year.**

I was keen to do something special to highlight some of the wonderful teams and people that I have been able to meet, be it at socially distanced meetings or over video chats in my time as High Sheriff of Kent thus far.

In order to adhere to the government guidelines, I arranged for a marquee in the garden to host a number of seminar dinners, with a maximum of 30 guests each night at socially distanced tables.

On the first night, I was delighted to host Lennox and Bali Rodgers, founders of the charity Refocus. As the main role of High Sheriff is to represent HM The Queen's interests in respect of law and order in the county, Lennox and his team could not have been a more suitable charity for me to support. Lennox had spent time in 21 different prisons or detention centres, before turning his life around and setting up the charity Refocus; he gives talks in schools and youth centres to inspire young adults to turn away from a life of crime. He explained this and more to my guests; it was lovely to be able to connect him with potential supporters for the charity as well as educate guests on the vulnerability of the youth in Kent.

The second night I hosted the Border Force; having been out on their boat and seen first-hand the marvellous work



On patrol with daughter Alex and three members of Border Force



With Garnet Johnson, Bali and Lennox Rodgers of the charity Refocus, for the first of my dinners



With the Deputy Chief Constable at a socially distanced dinner for Kent Police

they do, I was keen to invite them to speak. With the ever-increasing number of migrants trying to enter the country on small boats, it was so important and interesting to hear how their role has changed in the last couple of years. The day of the seminar was also the day a record number of 416 people made the precarious voyage across the channel. I am therefore so grateful that they took the time to impart their knowledge and stories to us that evening – even bringing along wonderful props to showcase the cleverness of the 21st-century smuggler.

On the third evening we enjoyed the company of the excellent members of Kent Police. The Deputy Chief Constable gave

a presentation which was wonderfully informative and showcased the hard work of the county police, especially during these unprecedented times.

On the Friday I entertained twelve of the county's criminal judges and their partners for a dinner; I was delighted to meet the judges and be able to offer them hospitality.

Overall it was a brilliant (if fairly exhausting) week of hosting, and although my year will be different, there are still ways to show appreciation for those involved with law and order in the county.

**◆ Remony Millwater**  
*High Sheriff of Kent 2020-21*