



## Onwards and upwards!

**IF SOMEONE had spoken to me at the start of my year in office using terms like ‘social distancing’, ‘self-isolation’ and ‘pandemic’, I would not have comprehended what I would be faced with throughout my shrieval year. These terms are now punctuating all our lives, along with ‘Teams’, ‘Zoom’ and ‘virtual visits’; even my Declaration required a crash course in video conferencing!**

Thinking hat on, I asked myself: ‘who really needs my help?’ and ‘who needs to know, or indeed might be interested in knowing, about the role of the High Sheriff?’ Let’s face it, in normal life, there are many who are unaware, particularly the younger generation in our communities.

One of the main areas of focus during the pandemic has been our key workers, and our county’s support for them has been outstanding. But what about their children? I decided to pay some virtual visits in full court dress complete with sword to some of the primary schools in North Yorkshire to show support and provide a little shrieval education.

Barrowcliffe is a school with many challenges, due not only to the pandemic, but to its location in a deprived area with high crime rate and many vulnerable children. Using video conferencing, all the children gathered around their TV screen, and after a brief introduction from Headteacher Mark Rodgers, I talked to the children about the history of the role and what my duties involve which raised a number of questions including: ‘Do you have a Sheriff’s badge?’; ‘Have you ever met The Queen?’; and ‘When everything is back to normal, will you come and visit us?’

There have been virtual visits to the lifeboat stations at both Whitby and Scarborough, a meeting with Cleveland Mountain rescue, and of course conversations with two chief constables, the chief of the North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service and a meeting with the police and crime commissioner. Interestingly I also connected with the British Transport Police Chief which resulted in naming a BTP cadet as one of my appointed cadets for the year.

Talking of trains, I was asked to say a few words and then ride on a new summer service from Skipton to Appleby called *The Staycation Express* – the first train in the country with specially fitted screens and pulled by classic diesel locomotives.

I was pleased to head up a campaign by York Community Volunteer Service to raise funds for the many small charities suffering during the crisis and give out Business and Tourism Excellence Awards for the town of Richmond. North Yorkshire media have been very kind and I have managed to get the message out to our communities about the role of the Shrievalty which is a big positive.

A great honour has been giving out High Sheriff’s Awards and writing endless letters of support to those who were giving exemplary service within our communities.

My theme for the next six months – onwards and upwards!

**David Kerfoot MBE, DL**  
*High Sheriff of North Yorkshire 2020-21*



**Above:** ‘In’ the classroom at Hutton Rudby Primary School. **Above right:** *The Staycation Express* provides a new Skipton to Appleby service