



## Post it!

**LOCKDOWN SHUT us all in just after I had managed to make my Declaration at Wells Cathedral. I know other High Sheriffs were not so lucky and had to make their Declarations virtually but after that, we all had the same problem. If we had had more time to get stuck into the office, we would have had something to work with. As it was, those of us who inherited a blank sheet of paper had only what preparation we had done and the internet.**

Those twenty-odd invitations received were all postponed or cancelled. I had made some contacts in advance but that was not enough. It was a bleak picture ahead. After a couple of weeks in shock, I saw that something had to be done.

Now, I am not remotely techy but I saw that using social media was the only way to get the message of the High Sheriff out there. I found some furloughed children of friends who helped me set up the lot: Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. I began to learn. I made mistakes. I joked about my mistakes. On cutting off someone's head, I commented that sadly my powers did not include that! I just posted every time I could think of something to post. The post had to have a photograph. If nothing was happening on a day which meant so much to us all, I would just post the countryside, with thoughts on, say Easter, for example.



The High Sheriff with Mo one of the burger chefs on the Key4Life programme

On VE Day I held a homemade sign for 75 years of peace in my court dress. My followers increased.

As lockdown has eased, I have been able to get out more and I have posted every time. People are finally getting an idea what the High Sheriff does. We don't have a website in Somerset – no wonder some people may have thought

**Below left:** The High Sheriff with Jamie Paterson (on the Key4Life at risk programme) and Eva Hamilton MBE, CEO of Key4Life  
**Below right:** Michael Winter and Lolly Walters who set up Jack Winter's Leg Up Legacy in memory of their son; the fund is administered by the award-winning charity Key4Life

the office irrelevant. I am determined to resolve that too.

From the fingerprinting paraphernalia to the beauty of an AONB, I've been able to showcase so much of our wonderful county. Take Key4Life's Food Cell, for example. Key4Life's aim is to reduce the rate of young adult re-offending. The charity runs an innovative seven-step programme for those in prison or at risk of going to prison. The programme focuses on emotional resilience, employability skills and ongoing support after release from prison. Michael Winter and Lolly Walters raised the money (Jack Winter's Leg Up Legacy) to fund the burger van in memory of their young son who died of cancer. The Food Cell gives young offenders valuable business skills and experience to help them get future work and in doing so helps to reduce the reoffending rate. On my visit the burger van was staffed by three young men, one who was recently out of Brixton. By posting pictures of their happy faces, grateful for the second chance they've been given, I've managed to help the charity get greater exposure.

To see what I've done, go to Facebook: @highsheriffsomerset, Twitter: @somersetsheriff1 and Instagram: highsheriffsomerset.

Go on, High Sheriffs, get out there and post!

**Mary-Clare Rodwell**  
*The High Sheriff of Somerset*

