



Taking the Shrievalty virtual

OF COURSE it has been a challenging year to be High Sheriff and not without significant disappointment in events missed. But it also represented a blank page and a once in a generation opportunity to reshape the traditional shrieval year and role. Little did I know at the beginning of the year that research, script writing and broadcast skills would be required.

I had always planned to focus my year of office on supporting those individuals and organisations who underpin the work of the police in the community, working with vulnerable people in the areas of domestic abuse, sexual violence, mental health issues, alcohol addiction and drug abuse. COVID has made the work of these groups even more crucial and challenging.

I was intending to host a series of High Sheriff briefings where I would throw a spotlight on a few of the impressive and indeed humbling organisations I have met this year, aiming to give profile to those causes which don't always receive the recognition they deserve. Unfortunately infection levels got the better of us – and it was all put on hold first in September and then finally at the end of January.

'Virtual' was obviously the way forward and to give it legs, endorsement and importantly traction for the

organisations involved, I approached a brilliant Cornish community hub, which had set up its own broadcast studio early in the pandemic. The CHAOS (Community Helping All of Society) Group agreed to run The High Sheriff of Cornwall Briefings as a partnership with CHAOS TV. The briefings would run as part of the CHAOS programming and sit permanently on a dedicated CHAOS Vimeo page.

The High Sheriff Briefings were streamed as ten separate programmes, where I interviewed individuals representing a range of organisations supporting various struggling groups within our communities.

The programmes were promoted via both the CHAOS and High Sheriff of Cornwall social media feeds as well as a newsletter to the broader High Sheriffs' network.

Like many fellow High Sheriffs across the country I also faced the challenge of making the traditional Legal Service work online. In fact this proved the opportunity to thread and bring together themes and initiatives from across my year. I could not have done this without the support and 'can do' attitude of the Truro Cathedral team who wholeheartedly threw themselves behind the challenge of making this very different Legal Service memorable and impactful, while still containing the traditional celebration of the judiciary in Cornwall.

Under the umbrella theme of 'A Brighter Future', some of Cornwall's brightest young musical, dance and even motor racing talent were invited through my chosen charity Young & Talented Cornwall to contribute to Cornwall's Legal Service. The service was put together from filming both in the cathedral and from outside, with the Dean, my Chaplain, Truro's Honorary Recorder and the Chief Constable all speaking on the subject of A Brighter Future.

Throughout my year of office I had recognised and supported those



The High Sheriff Briefings: Kate Holborow, interviewing Elisabeth and David Carney-Haworth from Operation Encompass (linking schools and police forces to support children living with domestic abuse) for CHAOS TV



Cornwall's first virtual Legal Service: Kate Holborow in Truro Cathedral, with a performance by 17-year-old ballet dancer Aston Purnell

'unsung heroes' who with dedication and selflessness play such a crucial role in our communities. Two recipients of The High Sheriff of Cornwall Unsung Hero Awards also featured in the service.

Our successors will undoubtedly have more opportunity for face-to-face engagement and events in their shrieval year. Nevertheless this pandemic year has succeeded in illustrating the modern-day virtual role for the High Sheriff, with new opportunities to build on.

◆ Kate Holborow DL
High Sheriff of Cornwall 2020-21



Photo credit Paul Williams

Monique Collins of DISC Newquay receiving the High Sheriff of Cornwall Unsung Hero Award from Kate Holborow, with Jane Hartley DL, Chair of the Cornwall Community Foundation