



# Young Citizens of the Year

**I AM absolutely sure that every High Sheriff remembers in great detail their year in office. I am equally sure that the year we have just experienced will mean our memories will be distinct, if not unique, in the history of the Shrievalty.**

Sadly, I did not have the opportunity to fully ensure the welfare of visiting High Court judges. However, I did manage to visit a number of judges, including the Hon Mr Justice Dove and the Honorary Recorder of Manchester, His Honour Judge Nicholas Dean QC. I was also delighted to be invited to sit at Bolton Crown Court with the Honorary Recorder of Bolton, His Honour Judge Walsh. An enlightening experience.

While we all hope we leave a legacy, only history will judge whether we have acquitted ourselves well enough during an unprecedented pandemic. I consolidated my earlier Special Recognition Awards by introducing the High Sheriff Greater Manchester Young Citizen of the Year Awards. We received hundreds of nominations, highlighting young people between 11 and 18 years old who, with great social conscience, were enhancing the lives of those people in their communities who needed help.

The awards were supported by the High Sheriff's Police Trust and very generously sponsored by Beaverbrooks, a business that is led by Chairman Mark Adlestone OBE DL, High Sheriff of

Greater Manchester 2019-20. There were ten Young Citizen winners, one in each Greater Manchester borough, and a number who were Highly Commended.

I am pleased to say we received extensive media coverage, including the *Manchester Evening News* and BBC Radio Manchester, with each winner being interviewed in the BBC's 'Make a Difference' strand.

With the former High Sheriff's backing and the current High Sheriff's initiative, we have ensured a continuity of approach, recognising young people, which we hope will endure for many years.

The imposed reduction in the ceremonial aspect of the High Sheriff role has allowed me more time to engage directly with communities, good causes, charities, and individuals.

There are too many to mention here but I would once again like to praise the Greater Manchester Police Special Constabulary, led by Chief Officer Mike Walmsley MBE DL. The interest I have taken in these volunteers, throughout my year as High Sheriff, has been very much appreciated by the 300 or so men and women who give up their own time to help keep us safe.

One of my final official engagements was to spend a day with the Specials on a traffic operation in Manchester. We were



Eamonn O'Neal, High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, on traffic duty with CO Mike Walmsley MBE DL, Chief Officer of GMP Special Constabulary

joined by the Chief Officer and Chief Supt Chris Allsop, Area Commander of GMP's regular force. It was an excellent experience and it was great to witness the support that works both ways between regular and special officers – thanks to mutual respect, a belief in the value of service and authentic leadership.

I have been blessed to have experienced a year as a High Sheriff during a pandemic but I do hope that our successors can enjoy more freedom to thrive in the 'outside world'.

◆ Dr Eamonn O'Neal DL  
High Sheriff of Greater Manchester 2020-21



High Sheriff Eamonn O'Neal presents Greater Manchester Young Citizen of the Year 2020 Awards to: Freya Gavin (Trafford) with her guide dog Lennon; Kea Bell (Manchester); and Keira Arnold (Oldham)

