



Overstocked but underfed

I FELT I couldn't do better than repeat what I said to prospective High Sheriffs at our recent regional meeting. My collage is just a reminder, particularly for future High Sheriffs, not to over order stationery before taking office.

If it's an order of service for your Turnover Ceremony or visiting cards you are after I am your man – I am sure we could come to an accommodation on price.

Printing is extraordinarily cheap these days and the quality is first-class, lead times are short and there is nothing like a stiffer coming through the post.

Useful equipment might include a self-inking stamp – I have not had to top up the ink yet – remarkable quality compared to rubber stamps of yore, and an embossing machine both nearly new and available to hire. A potential downside is that both items of equipment include my name and the Scott clan badge with its questionable motto AMO – that's Latin and not an abbreviation for a bullet.

Of dubious legal standing a laminated message: 'High Sheriff of Lincolnshire on Duty', to be displayed on the dashboard of your vehicle. It's unlikely traffic wardens will have covered its status during training; useful if you are running late for a cathedral appointment.

Like everyone else my first couple of months last year was spent writing letters to all and sundry. Being old school I like using a pen on Conqueror paper. I have a feeling in this day and age recipients will



Not required as much as anticipated...

not notice and will have no idea what you are talking about – will that be William the Conqueror, who incidentally was a great supporter of High Sheriffs?

I received very few responses to my letters and I have to conclude that email is the only form of communication that has any chance of succeeding. No pen, no Conqueror but getting the correct email addresses is a difficult task when snail mail is easy, but pointless if it does not work.

The relationship between High Sheriffs and local authorities has always been a strong one but we now have chairmen, generally referred to as chairs, mayors and others who are essentially ceremonial and who have

small entertaining allowances, and we have leaders and cabinet executive committees who have to declare every £25 bribe that they receive. I was warned about local authority buffets and have spent 12 months dreaming of my first buffet invitation; this band of well-meaning elected representatives are a vital part of how our counties operate and serious consideration should be given as to how best to engage and manage the relationship.

I was not over aware of the activities of the Lincolnshire Community Foundation before I took office but they look after our High Sheriff's Fund; I could see they would be an excellent conduit for the High Sheriff's interaction with voluntary organisations in the county. I tasked them to recommend suitable candidates for the High Sheriff's Awards and I also approached a myriad of organisations myself asking for nominations. I recognise that this is an informal format for the awards, always the case in Lincolnshire. They are totally within the gift of the High Sheriff and in this year will not necessarily reach out to all worthy recipients, but I have been humbled by the response for people who have gone the extra mile in this most extraordinary of years.

Rather than the usual award ceremony in the county court I have personally presented 42 awards since we were partially released from lockdown on 29 March.

I am sanguine about my virtual year. I have missed the opportunity to interact with volunteers and their organisations, with the judiciary, with our two prisons and with the military – particularly the RAF. The cathedral has always been an important part of the High Sheriff's year and has not really happened but I am comforted in the knowledge that there are far greater problems out there than the inability of an old man to slip into his tights without finishing up on some sort of register.

Michael Scott
High Sheriff of Lincolnshire 2020-21

Below: At the presentation of a High Sheriff's Award to the clinicians and pilots Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance, and to the Lincolnshire Air Ambulance County Appeal Committee, represented by Mr and Mrs Jamey Burt, who organised an online auction that raised £86,000

