



Investing in young leaders

I STARTED my year in April with a live Declaration ceremony and service, presided over by the Lord Bishop of St Albans in the iconic St Albans Cathedral. The forecasted snow in the morning gave way to glorious sunshine beaming through ancient stained-glass windows. Working for over 42 years with young people, they were always going to be my chosen area of focus. ‘Youth in Herts’ is my three-pillar theme for the year, focusing on increasing opportunities for young people.

The first pillar, building character in schoolchildren through the Young Leaders Award, is a programme developed by The Archbishop of York Youth Trust and delivered as part of school resourced activities. The programme supports the building of great citizenship characteristics. The second pillar looks to discover that ‘Duvet Flip’ as my friend Jack Parsons, President of The Youth Group, would say, i.e. the thing that gets young people out of bed in the morning, inspires them and motivates them to be entrepreneurial. Working with key stakeholders to create and signpost youth mentoring, employment and business opportunities is an important aspect of this pillar. The third pillar looks at how we increase youth

engagement in the magistracy. I urge you to take a look at the chart I have developed under ‘Themes’ on my website www.hsoh.org.uk which highlights a significant age diversity challenge affecting the way young defendants view our judicial system. Encouraging young people to consider this critical area of community volunteering is the objective of what is known as the ‘30’ under 30’ project. I am greatly assisted by the University of Hertfordshire Law School and have created a multi-stakeholder steering committee to guide some initiatives and a proposed research project. The developing youth and business engagement is very encouraging.

My predecessor Henry Holland-Hibbert, who executed an amazing year in unprecedented times, had prepared me well for potentially disruptive COVID-19 restrictions. I therefore deliberately planned a major event for the summer when we returned to the cathedral for International Youth Day on 12 August. Some 24 youth organisations exhibited. The intent was to platform great opportunities for young people, but we also found the event was amazingly successful in allowing county organisations to learn

Below left: Gospel Singing with neighbouring High Sheriffs: Michael Gurney DL (Norfolk), Lynn Cooper (Greater London), Simon Brice DL (Essex), Lionel C Wallace, Eric Masih (Bedfordshire), Edward Creasy (Suffolk) and Patrick George (UPMASS Choir Director, Britain’s Got Talent participant), Sonia George (UPMASS Choir).
View online at www.facebook.com/Upmass07/videos/108646418105116/

Below centre: Lionel Wallace with his wife Dawn and sons John-Ellis and Jeremiah Joshua

Below right: At the Youth Talk stall (International Youth Day Exhibition) with High Sheriff’s cadet, Belle Creighton



High Sheriff’s Declaration with Hon Henry Holland-Hibbert (2020)

more about each other. We launched the Magistrates Support Scheme which will be administered by Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and available to members and non-members alike. Businesses signing up to the scheme offer company awareness training to staff and paid leave to sitting magistrates, a support many younger applicants would find essential. The event provided opportunity for a neighbouring High Sheriffs’ liaison group meeting, with speakers from Hertfordshire Community Foundation, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Magistrates’ Association, not to mention a rendition of some uplifting Gospel singing and swaying!

◆ Lionel C Wallace DL
High Sheriff of Hertfordshire 2021-22

