



## Solitude, sunshine and... breakfasts

**DESPITE THE complex set of circumstances caused by the pandemic I took up my post as High Sheriff of Leicestershire in March. As the city of Leicester was one of the very first places in the United Kingdom to be 'locked down' due to COVID-19, much of the activity I had planned for my shrieval tenure needed to be adapted to address the challenges we all faced.**

As a proud Leicester lad, I am immensely honoured to represent the county I've called home for my entire life and to continue the charitable activities undertaken by my predecessors for the place I love. I very much value the connection I maintain to Leicester and Leicestershire not only through my business activities, but also via the charitable trust I founded with my wife, Clare.

Following the long winter lockdown, as the country began to 'open up' this summer, I took the opportunity to cycle from my home in rural Leicestershire to Spey Bay in Scotland, 60 miles north of Aberdeen, a journey of 560 miles. Clare joined me on the first day of cycling and we enjoyed being out on the road together. The aim of the journey was to raise valuable funds for five worthy charities. Thanks to incredibly generous support we managed to raise £25,000 in

donations, which Clare and I personally matched bringing the total to £50,000.

Helping those around me has always been a key part of my life and when COVID-19 challenged us all, I looked for ways I could fundraise without relying on everyone being in a room together. I've always enjoyed cycling so combining this with my love of Scotland – and in particular, Spey Bay, a favourite fishing spot – meant it was a great ride. Many people thought I was a little crazy to do it during the hottest week of the year, but it was a glorious journey and I thoroughly enjoyed the solitude, the sunshine and the refuel breakfasts.

I also met up with my long-term friend Bob Woods, with whom I founded Mattioli Woods Plc in 1991 – so this year we celebrate 30 years in business together. The icing on the cake of what has been, and continues to be, an incredible journey from humble beginnings, was my royal appointment to the Shrievalty. Bob and I reminisced over a wee dram or two in Scotland!

**Below left:** Ian and Clare Mattioli at the end of the first day of Ian's cycling challenge

**Below centre:** High Sheriff Ian Mattioli enjoying one of his many refuel breakfasts – one of the highlights of his journey!

**Below right:** The High Sheriff with Yasin Patel, his Imam

The journey was a great success and ultimately gave me the opportunity to support some local organisations close to my heart including:

Warning Zone, dedicated to teaching life skills and safeguarding children;

LOROS Hospice care for over 2,500 people annually;

Rainbows, the East Midlands' only hospice for children and young people;

CKI School of Martial Arts, helping to improve children's fitness, teaching them discipline and to understand the importance of a supportive community;

and Aylestone Park Football Club, with over 25 teams from junior to adult including Leicester City Ladies.

Thirty thousand pounds was shared between the five charities and the additional £20,000 will be distributed to both local and national charities identified by donors.

With the nights now drawing in, I hope, restrictions permitting, to gather people together for an informal actual event. I want to thank our sponsors, honour my chosen charities and bring business, civic and charitable organisations together for the complex task ahead as we head into the 'new normal' post pandemic.

We continue to operate under challenging conditions, but I feel we must take time to recognise how fortunate we are, and to support and value the communities in which we live and work. After all they make us who we are.

◆ Ian Mattioli MBE

*High Sheriff of Leicestershire 2021-22*

