



Good High Sheriff vibes

IT IS almost impossible to put my year as High Sheriff into 500 words, but I will try!

It was like a game of two halves with pandemic restrictions preventing physical meetings for the first few months. This did, however, give me the opportunity to create plans for my two key themes. First of all, I determined to work with our Community Foundation to engage businesses more closely with supporting community groups and charities throughout the county; this culminated in the launch of 'Lancashire Investors in Community' which now has a strong cohort of subscribers.

Before my Declaration (in the garden!), I had met online David Apparicio MBE JP who sits on the bench at Northampton and was enthused by his work to reduce reoffending. My initial meetings with prison governors both inside and outside the county were virtual, but I was able to make visits to all the Lancashire prisons in the autumn and experience first-hand how the prisoners felt about the prospect of release back into society. I then decided to explore ways to support prison leavers better and had the opportunity to meet James Timpson. He was embarking on the creation of Employment Advisory Boards



(EABs) and asked me if I would form one at HMP Lancaster Farms. There has been a huge amount to learn, and I am happy to say that my EAB is about to be launched albeit at the end of my tenure as High Sheriff.

I had many physical visits cancelled at the beginning and resorted to joining discussions online. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service introduced me to the Lancashire District Youth Councils, and I was able to spend time talking with young people about the issues that meant the most to them.



High Sheriff with The Four Tops – 'vibes' at the Christmas lights switch-on in Preston... all part of a varied year!



At the Shire Hall, Lancaster Castle for the shield hanging ceremony – a special day after all the restrictions



Above: Presenting a High Sheriff's Award to Aishley and Samantha Bell-Docherty of 'Skool of Street', Blackpool

Left: The High Sheriff with his wife Anne planting trees for The Queen's Green Canopy on the Duchy of Lancaster estate, Dolphinholme

Photo: Steve Pendrill Photography

By the time a degree of normality resumed I was well briefed to engage with the judiciary and police through whom I experienced the sterling work they are undertaking to maintain their services and keep our communities safe. My presence with officers on a 'night-time economy' patrol caused much mirth with revellers who asked if the High Sheriff had a horse and did I live in Texas!

There were few visiting High Court Judges sitting in Preston later in the year, but I had the pleasure of entertaining Mr Justice Goose and Mr Justice Spencer before Christmas. I sat in the High Court on a few occasions but spent the majority of my time visiting voluntary groups where I met some outstanding people, some of whom received a High Sheriff's Award at my presentation evening.

A great many people, including friends, have little understanding of just what a High Sheriff does in 2022. I was fortunate in securing a page each month in *Lancashire Life* magazine where I was able to explain some of the history and what both the Lieutenancy and Shrievalty are all about.

It has been an immense privilege to perform the role and I wish my successor Martin Ainscough every success.

Edwin Booth CBE DL
High Sheriff of Lancashire 2021-22