



Twitter... a remarkably useful tool

WHAT A wonderful year! It began with a virtual Declaration ceremony presided over by Mr Justice Lavender, who was sitting in Leeds Crown Court, with all other participants joining remotely. The virtual ceremony lost none of its dignity. There was a positive bonus in a virtual ceremony as it allowed for a large number of guests to join the event.

Mastering Twitter was my first challenge. I followed the guidance of the High Sheriffs' Association and set up a Twitter account @HSwestyorkshire that could be passed on to all future High Sheriffs of the county. This has proved a remarkably useful tool. Not only does it allow you to engage with followers, it also allows you to have your events retweeted by others, which spreads the message and demystifies the role of the High Sheriff. In addition, tweeting after every event allows you to have a running log of your year in office.

Zoom-type meetings then began in earnest with 18 from mid April to the end of May. They worked exceptionally well and allowed for some really important meetings to take place, giving the opportunity to say thank you to the various NHS trusts, charitable organisations, and those serving the county in so many different ways during the past incredibly challenging year. It was very moving to witness how appreciative the recipients of the Zoom calls were. I highly recommend that they continue as part of the High Sheriff's calendar, especially in the early months, where you can establish many relationships over Zoom that may lead to visits later in the shrieval year.

The Shrievalty in West Yorkshire is extremely fortunate to have a very generous, supportive and inclusive Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Ed Anderson (High Sheriff 2015-16), who invited me to accompany him on several occasions. These included his investiture of British Empire Medal recipients at Huddersfield University where I presented them with their medal certificates. It was also a great honour to accompany the Lord-Lieutenant when he presented the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to four recipient charities.



Left: David Fawcett of Happy Days Ministries, a homelessness charity, receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service from the Lord-Lieutenant, Ed Anderson



Above: With Virginia Lloyd DL and the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, John Robins QPM, at the Long Service and Good Conduct medal ceremony



Left: Virginia and Clive Lloyd with members of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

I visited four of the five prisons within the county. Visiting prisons is inevitably a very emotional experience with many encouraging aspects, in particular the professionalism of the prison officers and staff, and also speaking to prisoners who have generally had a very positive experience serving their sentence. I would recommend engaging with prisons in your county early in your shrieval year as this leads to invitations to future events. I was greatly honoured to be allowed to present certificates of commendation at Wealstun Prison. The day was made more enjoyable by my neighbouring High Sheriff of North Yorkshire, Venetia Wrigley, who joined me on the visit.

Our Shrievalty has a great tradition of involvement with West Yorkshire Police, one of the largest forces in the country. I have visited various divisional headquarters, attended daily briefings, and visited the training centre, the dog section, the skid pan and the mounted section. I was privileged to present to 25 serving police officers their Long Service and Good Conduct medals at a ceremony in Wakefield.

The Chief Fire Officer, John Roberts, and deputy, David Walton, and other headquarters' staff gave us a fascinating day at West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service headquarters. Included was a demonstration by trainee fire officers entering training areas with specialist equipment where fires were burning with temperatures of several hundred degrees, and a visit to the specialist Urban Search and Rescue unit (USAR) for a demonstration of how quickly they can secure a collapsed building. The unit is one of only a small number of USAR teams in the country and they can be dispatched anywhere in the UK following explosions or building/structural collapses. They have specially trained dogs that can search and identify where humans could be buried.

A very rewarding part of any High Sheriff's year has to be visiting a large number of charities and volunteer organisations. These volunteers do not seek recognition or reward; they give their time to help those in need within our county.

It has been a great honour and privilege to serve as High Sheriff of West Yorkshire. I wish my most able successor, Sue Baker, a most wonderful year in office.

Clive Lloyd
High Sheriff of West Yorkshire 2021-22