



# A 'taste match' special



Some of the charities at the High Sheriff's garden party



Photos: Andy Newbold Photography

**THE SUDDEN passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has of course been, and will remain, the most significant event in my year of office. I read the Proclamation from the steps of Guildford Cathedral before a large gathering at 1.00 pm on Sunday 11 September.**

The Dean, her team and those responsible for the special operation, worked tirelessly with my Under Sheriff Caroline Breckell and ensured all went smoothly. It was a memorable historic occasion, with people of all ages coming together to herald the Accession of King Charles III. I handed to the mayors of the county their copies of the Proclamation and they departed to read them in

their boroughs. At 2.00 pm a Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving witnessed the choir superbly sing two anthems and the Lord-Lieutenant give a moving address.

The theme for my year is 'Against abuse, for recovery', my intention being to give support to victims of domestic abuse and also to those most adversely affected by Covid. In 2019 I was asked by the Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey Michael More-Molyneux to chair a Lieutenancy focus group on domestic abuse. As High Sheriff I am helping to publicise the shocking increase in abuse and violence against women and girls, especially since the first lockdown. I have met not just the police and judiciary, but also public and charitable agencies who help victims. One initiative in May enabled the women and young children living in refuges in Surrey to enjoy a day out at a working farm/ play area. There will also be a December trip for them to meet Father Christmas. In October I have invited a distinguished speaker to talk about domestic abuse at an evening conference.

The first High Sheriff's Youth Awards charity golf day was held in June and a substantial sum was raised. This will mean more grants for projects that help young people. It was the idea of my predecessor, Shahid Azeem DL (2020), but Covid prevented it happening in 2020 and 2021. A lot of work was carried out by a team experienced in arranging such a day.

My garden party on 23 June was held at the University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine. I invited 20 charities to attend and set up stalls. My guests enjoyed talking to the charity workers who, together with their charities, apparently benefited from such contact.

Following a conversation with David Kelham, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, at the Old Bailey reception for this year's High Sheriffs, he and I have agreed upon a 'Taste Match' at a vineyard in Dorking in October, when producers of wine, gin, beer and cider from the two counties will meet. The public will be able to

taste and compare the drinks from the two counties. Over 30 artisans from the Surrey Hills will also offer their goods for sale. Any net proceeds from the event will go to the High Sheriff's Youth Awards scheme. In February there will be a return event at Warwick Castle to benefit charities in Warwickshire.

I have so far hosted two themed dinners. The first brought together 10 individuals whose work is connected with domestic abuse: a senior police officer, three women who run refuges or outreach services, focus group members, and University of Surrey legal academics. The second was about sustainability and my 10 guests were from businesses relating to fossil fuel consumption, environmental DNA, and construction, as well as from the Stock Exchange, the county council, and the environmental department of the University of Surrey. Both dinners facilitated an exchange of ideas and practices and created useful links. I plan follow-up dinners shortly before my year ends. In September I am giving a dinner for those working with individuals of all ages who have mental health problems, particularly referable to Covid.

The county held a 'Surrey Day' in May, organised by the Surrey Hills Society and BBC Radio Surrey. From 9.00 am to 7.00 pm the Lord-Lieutenant and I separately visited different businesses and organisations across the county, culminating in radio interviews in front of Guildford Cathedral. The day involved my visiting five locations: a workhouse museum, a vineyard, a large garden centre/ farm, a mosque, and an art gallery. The day was a delightful way to publicise and celebrate the county's beauty, diversity and businesses.

I believe that there has not been a Law and Order Conference organised by a Surrey High Sheriff since the 1970s, so I have organised one for November at which a former Chief Constable, a former Prison Governor and a QC will talk about the criminal justice system.

**◆ His Honour Christopher Critchlow DL**  
*High Sheriff of Surrey 2022-23*