

# Hoping to inspire to aspire

## Michael Copestake

High Sheriff of Derbyshire 2022-23

My primary project in my year as High Sheriff of Derbyshire was to talk to children in primary schools about careers and aspiration. The Derby South constituency ranks 532 out of 533 wards in the UK for social mobility according to the House of Commons Social Mobility Index in 2018. There are other districts throughout the county with similar low rankings. I wanted to show children of primary school age in Derbyshire what was available to them if they worked hard at school. I was helped in this by the likes of Rolls-Royce, Toyota, Alstom and Nestle. Rolls-Royce with their Small Modular Nuclear Reactor project and electric and hydrogen fuel cell powered engine projects for aircraft; Toyota with similar projects for cars; Nestle with their new, incredible robot powered Buxton Water factory whose opening I was privileged to attend; and Alstom with their high speed trains. I was also privileged to attend the Rolls-Royce Science prize-giving awards for primary schools at their amazing learning and development centre in Derby. Their Chief Technology Officer, Grazia Vittadini, spoke to children about some of the great projects which they are involved in, such as engines for deep space missions to Mars. What is there not to be inspired by about that!

At my presentations we talked about jobs for the future. Included were not only jobs in science, engineering and coding but also entrepreneurship and jobs as electricians and heating engineers. It is estimated that

we will need 27,000 engineers qualified to install air source and ground source heat pumps in the UK if the government is to hit its target of 600,000 installed by 2028. Currently we have 3,000 qualified.

I delivered my presentation to over 6,500 primary school students in, predominantly, the poorer districts of the county. I managed to get 55 primary schools on to a careers portal for primary schools called 'Our Future Careers' run by a charity in London called Education and Employers. Right at the end of my year the Department of Education announced a pilot to be trialled in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire for their much overdue own careers initiative for primary schools called 'Start Small Dream Big'. I helped to get details of this project out to local academies and education authorities. Finally, I prepared a report on my observations which I presented to local politicians of all political persuasions, the University of Derby, local education authorities and academies. One of my observations was that there are currently no British YouTube videos for primary schools on careers and aspiration.

Back in 2018, Derby Law Society and Enterprise 4 Education started an annual debating competition for Year 7-10 students. I attended this year's final and judged a semi-final. The first competition was won by an incredible team from probably the worst performing secondary school in Derby based in Derby South. Just before this year's final I heard that two of that team made it to Oxford and the other two to Russell Group universities.



At the presentation of National Crimebeat commendations to the organisers of Derbyshire Police Cadets and Derbyshire Mini Police



With the mini police

This was a great example of what can be done to help children from more deprived backgrounds to be the best they can be.

A significant amount of my presentations to schools were organised through Derbyshire Constabulary's brilliant Mini Police. I entered them, the Police Cadets and a charity I admire to this year's Crimebeat Awards. The Mini Police and the Police Cadets both received commendations. My own police cadets are two remarkable individuals who will go far in the police force. I attended a number of police events including police awards. The incredible courage and compassion shown by the police officers who received the awards was amazing. Besides the awards, a memorable event was the *Anti-Violence Bee*. Like the *Knife Angel* this huge bee is made entirely of guns and knives collected by the police.

It has been a privilege to serve as High Sheriff, to carry out my project and to have the opportunity to congratulate and thank so many people for the wonderful things they do. I have had a fantastic working relationship with the Lord-Lieutenant, Liz Fothergill, and with my highly knowledgeable and helpful Under Sheriff, Andrew Cochrane. My successor is Theresa Peltier whose Unity is Community programme has got off to a flying start. I am sure that Theresa will find her year as rewarding as I did.



With Dominic Hughes and Jeremy Copestake in Skegness after a 110-mile cycle ride to raise funds for Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre