

Over in the blink of an eye

The Lady Edwina Grosvenor

High Sheriff of Hampshire 2022-23

Then suddenly it's all over. Twelve months which you have waited for with much anticipation for five years, all over in the blink of an eye.

My year as the High Sheriff of Hampshire had all the emotions drummed up in me. Excitement, amazement, horror, sadness, happiness – it was all there in a kaleidoscope of adventures. Learning about my home county and really getting to know it was a huge benefit from my year in office. Having lived in Hampshire for twelve years after growing up in Cheshire, I now feel like I understand it far more. I have a better knowledge of the county and not just geographically; I also feel that I understand the people a little better, the different cultures a little more. I have peered into some of the gloomier areas that form part of any county's rich tapestry.

As High Sheriff you only really have time to lift the lid on issues, there is no time for 'deep dives'. One could see the end of their High Sheriff year as final, or, perhaps it could be seen as the start of a new relationship. I feel after twelve months of having done so much, learnt so much and having met so many interesting people, that it feels more like a new beginning to be celebrated.

Diversity was my theme, or as I like to say: the lens through which I looked at everything. This stood me in good stead on any visit and allowed an interesting discussion to take place no matter where I was. The discovery of others who are different to us 'in every which way' is something which should be embraced and encouraged at every level. It was this theme that made my year so exciting and fun. I appointed myself a Hindu chaplain at the very start of my year and made sure that I visited the gurdwaras and mosques; just these small acts alone opened many a colourful door to me throughout the year.

I stuck to the theme of law and order quite rigidly in order to try and make the biggest impact possible. It's very easy to say yes to every invite that comes in because it's flattering to be asked. I resisted this and am glad that I did. Time is short and energy supplies need to be monitored carefully! I went into my year with a proactive mindset as opposed to a reactive one. This allowed me to get



With Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE, preacher at October's Law Sunday Service at Winchester Cathedral

in the diary straight away the things that I wanted to do, which in turn made me feel less guilty about saying no to others. Even when it's the right thing to do, it's still hard to say no to deserving people who are doing great things.

So, it's back to the day job which I can give more time to again. I just really hope that Hampshire as a county has benefitted from my year in office as much as I have from holding this ancient office. What an honour it has been.



With Cllr Hugh Mason (Lord Mayor of Portsmouth) and recipients of High Sheriff's Awards at the Great Hall Winchester