

# A focus on addiction

## Sally Burton DL

High Sheriff of Hertfordshire 2022-2023

What an amazingly busy, enlightening and rewarding year I have had as High Sheriff. With over 500 events and meetings, wearing my court dress well over 200 times, meeting thousands of people yet avoiding both Covid and any cancellations for the entire year, choosing what to highlight here is challenging indeed.

After the two preceding years being affected by the pandemic, I was determined to get out and about as much as I could, engaging with the police, judges, the University Law School, fire and rescue services, councils and as many charities and voluntary groups across the entire county as possible. My focus on addiction to drugs and alcohol led me towards charities working with rehabilitation,

domestic abuse, homelessness, ex-offenders, those struggling to deal with the chaos in their lives, the vulnerable and those with huge mental health issues.

I had a vision to bring together all the agencies dealing with the impact of drugs and alcohol to provide a platform for raising awareness, stimulating debate, encouraging collaboration and finding a way forward. Thanks to the support of the University of Hertfordshire's Law School, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Herts County Council Public Health, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Probation, commissioned services and a plethora of voluntary support groups, the High Sheriff's Symposium on Substance Misuse became a reality in February 2023 and is to be repeated in 2024.

Fifty of my events involved the Hertfordshire Constabulary and I became a familiar face at HQ and local police



Photo: Mark Dalton

With Chief Constable Charlie Hall, PC Becky Clark and TPD Sheriff (now PD Sheriff)

stations. The Chief Constable accepted my unusual request to co-sponsor a police dog, and TPD Sheriff is now part of the team, excelling in her training with PC Becky Clark. They attended my High Sheriff's Awards in March, with Sheriff happily taking treats from my hand amid gasps from the audience. Police dog handlers are often overlooked and really appreciated my raising their profile.

Moments to remember during the year? Riding in police cars and a police helicopter in pursuit of villains; sitting in courts and tribunals with the judges; presenting awards to police and fire officers; meeting hero community volunteers; a glorious garden party at Knebworth House and the vast numbers of judges at my Justice Service in St Albans Cathedral. Furthermore, the celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee, followed so soon after by the death of her late Majesty and my duty to proclaim the Accession to the throne of King Charles III; the High Sheriff's Law Lecture given at the university by Marcus Taverner KC, when I presented three law students with Community Certificates, and the sight of three veteran bikers in their leathers receiving a High Sheriff's Award.

Unexpectedly, I embraced social media, posting nearly every day in an attempt to be current and relevant as High Sheriff. It worked, with an increased following of 30 per cent and people often expressing amazement at the reach and extent of the role. I have loved every minute and have been proud to serve the people of Hertfordshire.



Photo: Mark Dalton

Kaotic Angels, represented by Stitch, Shades and Spectre, receive a High Sheriff's Award



With some of the representatives from the Hertfordshire Symposium on Substance Misuse