

Food poverty initiative

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High Sheriff of Norfolk 2022-23

I am sure other High Sheriffs will agree that it is some of the smaller and unexpected visits and meetings that remain most strongly in mind now that the year has ended: the strength of the voluntary sector; the incredible people that work so tirelessly for the smaller charities and voluntary organisations in the county; the time and commitment many of our magistrates give to the justice system; the dedication of our prison officers and colleagues often in very difficult circumstances. The list goes on and it has been a great privilege to meet and thank these wonderful people.

For part of my year the courts were impacted by the barristers' strike. This, following the Covid pandemic, has created a considerable and unacceptable backlog of cases yet to come to trial. I was struck by the patience and professionalism of our judges and all those working to try to manage those delays. It is also particularly difficult for those accused to spend such an extended time remanded in custody.

We are very fortunate in Norfolk to have a strong and growing Community Foundation. My theme during the year was 'food poverty' and all the attendant challenges that brings; I was lucky enough to work closely with the Foundation on their Nourishing Norfolk initiative. It is incredible to think that by June 2023 we will have 25 food hubs open supporting more than 25,000 people across the county.

These hubs have become a real focus for local community initiatives and volunteering, as well as providing a connection with some of the most vulnerable so that other help and support can be introduced before there is a crisis. The engagement with local food producers, supermarkets, estates and charities to make this happen has been a revelation and emphasises that there is a real depth of generosity and kindness in our community. This is hopefully something that can be reproduced in other counties.

Mental health and wellbeing in all parts of our community, but especially in young people, remain a considerable and intractable challenge. The voluntary and charity sector is picking up more and more of this burden but it seems to me we must all engage with opinion-formers and decision-makers to try to increase resources to help those in most need.



With the Breckland mobile food store and team members at a Nourishing Norfolk event



Above: At the Exceptional Policing Awards to present awards for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Volunteer of the Year

Right: With Alex at Pathway Café and Food Hub at the Minster Mission in Great Yarmouth

The death of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was a moment of great sadness and her close connection with Norfolk at Sandringham meant this was keenly felt. The Norfolk Constabulary did a wonderful job sensitively managing the huge numbers of well-wishers visiting Sandringham to pay their respects. The floral tributes left by so many visitors were very moving. It was a great privilege to participate in the Proclamation of King Charles III in our county and it is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

