

# Some very inspiring individuals

## Zulfiqar Ali Karim DL

High Sheriff of West Yorkshire 2023-24

I have been humbled and overwhelmed by everyone's kind and generous reception and attitude towards me as High Sheriff. There are so many wonderful people in the county and my wife Saira and I feel extremely fortunate to have met some of them on the shrieval journey so far.

The courts in Leeds and Bradford are extremely busy and I have enjoyed the opportunity to visit on a number of occasions starting, of course, with my Declaration ceremony at Leeds in April. The holy month of Ramadan started shortly before I took office; however, c.50 friends and family were able to join me to celebrate, as well as three of His Majesty's High Court judges (one of whom grew up in my hometown of Bradford).

When I was approached to be High Sheriff and accepted the position back in 2019, the word 'COVID' did not feature in everyday vocabulary. At the beginning of the pandemic, I became seriously ill and was hospitalised with the virus. Thankfully I recovered but have been left with what is now known as Long COVID. With this in mind, I have been very mindful of the need to pace myself; however, I have still been able to attend the majority of the events planned during the first half of my shrieval year.

**Right: At the University of Bradford graduation ceremony**  
**Below: At the inauguration of the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam as new Bishop of Huddersfield at Halifax Minster**

Some of the highlights:

Five royal visits so far: HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh, HRH the Duke of Kent, HRH The Princess Royal (twice) and, finally, HRH The Princess of Wales.

Lunch at the Great Yorkshire Show with my fellow North Eastern Circuit High Sheriffs and spouses followed by an evening reception at judges' lodgings as guests of the Rt Hon Lord Justice Edis and four of His Majesty's High Court judges.

A day at the Immigration Courts in Bradford which was most interesting and an open day at the Bradford Combined Court Centre.

Graduation ceremonies at the universities of Huddersfield and Bradford and also speech day at Bradford Grammar School.

On the 26 October we shall be hosting a gala dinner at Bradford Grammar School as an alternative to an outdoor summer reception. We are very much looking forward to hosting our guests in such a wonderful setting and will be fortunate enough to have some of the High Court judges in attendance.

Visits to both West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and West Yorkshire Police – both organisations doing incredible work within our county to keep everyone safe.



**With President Lubna Shuja at Leeds Civic Hall for the first ever admissions ceremony for Leeds Law Society**

The admissions ceremony for Leeds Law Society at the Civic Hall was a very special occasion, not least as it was the first ever outside London.

We have been delighted and humbled to visit some of our region's charitable organisations and enjoyed hearing about the difference they make to the people they help and support. So many volunteers going quietly about their work and some very inspiring individuals.

Visits to some of our local hospices have been truly remarkable and the excellent care they provide for both patients and their families really is heart-warming. We are very fortunate to have such wonderful facilities available and it never ceases to amaze me how calming yet uplifting they are.

Most recently the Letters Patent Ceremony at Leeds Combined Court Centre where we were joined by the Hon Mrs Justice Lambert DBE, Presiding Judge of the NE Circuit. Thankfully the weather stayed fine as we lined up outside to welcome her to a fanfare by the WY Police band trumpeters.

On Sunday 8 October the North Eastern Circuit Legal Service at York Minster took place followed by lunch at the Assembly Rooms – a wonderful occasion to be part of and quite the spectacle with so many attending in all their finery! It's hard to believe that we have crammed so much into only half the year and already the diary is full of exciting events to be part of in the coming months. Here's to the next six!

