

Spreading the word...

Kate Hill-Trevor

Hon Mrs Hill-Trevor,
High Sheriff of Clwyd 2023-2024

My theme was a very simple one: Making a difference. I hope that I have added to some people's lives, often just by showing an interest. Certificates and saying thank you are such simple things, but we should never underestimate their power to make people feel special and I am delighted that Clwyd is now offering bilingual long service certificates for magistrates who combine the law and order and voluntary elements that are so fundamental to a High Sheriff's remit.

Sadly, most people have no idea what a High Sheriff does. At the beginning of my year, I lost count of the times I was asked how many fetes I had opened and how many babies I had kissed and so, as well as meeting as many people as I could, I have tried to build awareness by developing social media accounts, hopefully bringing the Shrievalty to a new audience. I hope that these help to show how the role continues to be relevant in our modern society. Following other High Sheriffs' accounts is a great source of inspiration but also a slippery slope and I have caught myself falling into the trap that we warn our children about – the dreaded FOMO and thinking that everyone else has a more focused theme or more diverse visits. However, I haven't been asked the baby question recently so hopefully together we are making steps to improve our 'brand awareness'.

Despite the history of the role, we all know that the world and voluntary sector are changing. Young people today are



At Brynkinalt Hall with winners of the High Sheriff of Clwyd Community Awards

leading very different lives and are unlikely to stay in jobs long term. Many do not have direct role models of volunteers in their families, with both parents working full-time and grandparents using their time to help with childcare. I believe that we need to look closely at lifestyle trends, be more vocal about the benefits of volunteering and offer volunteering options for those looking for short-term possibilities as well as those able to commit on a more regular basis. This clearly presents challenges but we must adapt if we are not to end up with a huge void in the voluntary sector.

As I reflect on my year, I'm reminded of the saying: 'The best experiences in life are often detours' – events that take place off the standard path and moments that we never planned or expected but that change us for ever and help us to see the world in a different way. I have certainly seen and heard things that I would never have done in a 'normal' year – phrases such as 'would you like the regimental goat to come along?' or 'fanfare etiquette'

don't crop up in most people's lives! So what have been the best moments? I find it impossible to narrow it down to single occasions, although sitting with an elderly lady who had lost her sight and watching her face as she felt her way around my court dress – stroking the velvet, feeling the steel cut buttons, feathers and lace – that will be etched in my memory for ever. It was a harsh reminder to keep one's own life in perspective as there are so many people struggling out there.

I am very proud to follow in the footsteps of other family members – Sir Edward Trevor and my husband's Uncle Nevill who were both High Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1622 and 1965 respectively – but the role of High Sheriff isn't about me or any of the High Sheriffs who have come before and who will follow... it's about the people we meet, and for me it has also been about my journey through the year and the feelings of joy and hope that, despite what the media would have us believe, the world still has huge numbers of kind and selfless people.

Throughout my year, I've been continually reminded of the profound impact individuals can have when they come together for a common cause and the power of collective action. I make no apology for repeating what other High Sheriffs say: it really is eye-opening and humbling and a complete privilege to have held the Office of High Sheriff.

I hope that together we can continue to thank those who are doing so much and inspire others to do more. To borrow a quote: 'If not now, then when? If not you, then who?' Together we can all make a difference.



At St Mary's Church, Chirk, with the Revd Canon Dr Hayley Matthews (Archdeacon of Wrexham), Amanda Blakeman (North Wales Police Chief Constable) and volunteer police cadets and leaders following my thanksgiving service



With Rhyl Boxing Club, winner of Clwyd Crimebeat Project of the Year 2024