

'You made me feel seen'

Henrietta Chubb JP

High Sheriff of Leicestershire 2023-24

I am contemplating what future, current and past High Sheriffs, as well as other readers, might want to hear about my year in office.

I could tell you about the hundreds of people I have been privileged to meet but this is documented on the High Sheriff of Leicestershire's website and social media.

I could share stories, like the time I sat among a prison choir, predominantly made up of people on life sentences, singing 'I Want to Break Free', or the time when a police officer almost shut me in a cupboard for my own safety when a situation got a bit lively, but there is simply not the space here.

I set out on my year with the brilliant advice to 'just do it your way', which was both most valuable and most useless because I had no idea what 'doing it my way' was going to look like.

In my year I chose to visit and recognise the smaller charities and organisations which don't normally attract the attention of the High Sheriff and perhaps are in the greatest need.

In the first half of my year, I realised that I needed to discover and make these contacts and get on invitations lists. I went out to meet people and was deeply touched and heartened by the warm reception I received from so many communities.

People were polite and welcoming, but it became apparent they were unfamiliar with the role of High Sheriff – its historical significance as a royal appointment, its non-political and independent nature, and its esteemed position in many counties.

It became a ritual at my visits to



Out with the team from Mansfield House Police Station, Leicester to observe the night-time economy

explain the modern role of the High Sheriff, a gesture that was well received and provided context, especially during award presentations, and gave greater impact for the people I met.

Dispelling misconceptions surrounding the role – that it was like a mayor or you needed a legal or an elite background – allowed me to engage more effectively with communities. It is about service to your county and not about self-promotion or business connections.

In my year, I learnt that many counties have a High Sheriff's fund; Leicestershire did not, so I set one up and have raised over £30,000 capital so far. Future High Sheriffs can then use the income only, generated from the invested capital, to give to charities in line with the shrieval role. I will continue to promote and watch over the fund; it is my legacy and gift to the county.

It has been a genuine pleasure to watch my police cadets grow in confidence and stature during their year of service and to become friends with their families.

As my year in office drew to a close, I held a 'thank you' reception for the remarkable individuals and volunteers that I had met during my year. With over 250 attendees representing 80 organisations, it was my attempt to ensure they felt valued and appreciated.

Serving as High Sheriff has been an unbelievable privilege and is absolutely what you make of it – a role I was told was the coolest job someone had ever heard of and they are right.

We are in a unique position to connect a wide range of people and can be a catalyst for unity and collaboration.

Though my term has ended, my commitment to serving the community continues and I will continue, quietly and unobtrusively, to connect and help those organisations which I had the privilege to meet during my year in office.

A final story: a recipient of a High Sheriff's Award, upon spotting me at an event, called out, 'It's the High Sheriff, she gave me an award and it was first time I had felt seen.' Job done!



Presenting Diane Taylor (left) and members of the New Testament Church of God with a High Sheriff's Award



At Eyres Monsell Club for Young People for inclusion group night where I ran a mock trial and presented High Sheriff's Awards