

# Traditions and awards



Presenting a High Sheriff's Award Certificate to Sue Taylor-Franklin of Cwm Taf Morgannwg MIND



With members of 415 (Merthyr Tydfil) Squadron, No 1 Welsh Wing, RAF Air Cadets

## Professor Jean White CBE

High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan 2023-24

I realised in my preparation for my year as High Sheriff that traditions and expectations are many and varied, unique to the county in which you serve and in support of the 1,000 years plus heritage we all become part of. I was keen to play my part to keep these traditions alive during my tenure because I recognised that building on the past ensured continuity and often led to greater impact long term.

In 2009, Anne Morgan, the then High Sheriff, decided to raise money and give awards to young people who had done good work in the community. This initiative has since grown and is now a large annual High Sheriff's event. I joined the steering panel made up of past, present and future High Sheriffs in my nomination year and will continue to support its fundraising activities in future years. This year's main sponsor, Sony UK, also offered week-long paid work experience to two exceptional young people. Past winners have gone on to be winners of the national St David Awards in Wales. I am proud to have acknowledged these young people and I believe these awards serve to inspire future activities.

Throughout my term I have witnessed countless examples of voluntary activities. These activities often provide vital contributions to the services we all rely on, for example, special constables who work alongside regular police officers. About five years ago High Sheriffs in Mid Glamorgan began awarding long service certificates to the magistrates working at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates' Court. Magistrates are volunteers and the bedrock of our court system. I enjoyed the Christmas party where I presented the certificates for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service and thanked them all for their dedication and hard work.



Supporting the St John Ambulance Cymru Defibratory campaign

Conventionally High Sheriffs recognise excellence through the awarding of certificates each year. I awarded ten certificates to various organisations and individuals. To give an example: one sunny afternoon I found myself presenting the certificate, attired in court dress, to Porthcawl Lifeguard Club in their clubhouse which stands on the headland overlooking Trecco Bay. I was surrounded by scantily clad volunteers, young and older, ahead of their normal lifeguard training on the beach, so felt somewhat overdressed! This club was formed 60 years ago and is one of the longest established surf lifesaving clubs in the UK. Often overlooked as essential emergency



Presenting a High Sheriff's Award Certificate to members of Hawthorn Ambulance Station, Pontypridd



Celebrating 25 years of Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisation with CEO Heidi Bennett

services, this club, and the others like it, save countless lives every year.

Acting as host is probably one of the nicest traditions. I certainly enjoyed hosting dinners with various judges. I was determined to promote awareness of men's mental health so hosted a fundraising concert in my hometown, Pencoed, along with the town mayor and my nominated charity, Cwm Taf Morgannwg MIND. The money raised is being used by the charity for counselling services. In February, I hosted high tea for the staff and volunteers, where I awarded certificates to those nominated by their peers for having made the greatest impact in their work with people affected by poor mental health.

It can be surprising what you learn in your year and who you meet. I had a go at weaving a willow basket with a mental health support group and learnt to sign my full name with the Wales Council for Deaf People. I met charity worker Sue Taylor-Franklin, who, with her wife, holds the Guinness World Record for pulling a 48-tonne Airbus A320!

It was hard to choose my favourite moments from a year packed with hundreds of wonderful activities. I am very grateful for having been given the opportunity to carry the traditions of the Shrievalty forward.