

What is the best thing about being High Sheriff?



Saying thank you to the Coroners' Courts Support Service (CCSS) on their 21st birthday with Philip Spinney (Senior Coroner for Devon) and Roey Burden OBE (founder of CCSS)

Commodore Jake Moores OBE DL

High Sheriff of Devon 2024-25

A question I am often asked and which I always answer in the same way. It is the privilege of being able to say thank you to so many different groups and individuals who make a contribution to the county.

The High Sheriff holds a unique position, acting as a bridge between the past and present, and underscoring the importance of continuity and community. Over the centuries, the role has evolved, but remains just as important with continued focus on the judicial functions along with a greater emphasis on community engagement and support for the voluntary sector.

Among the many responsibilities, one often overlooked, is the expression of gratitude. Saying thank you, though simple in nature, resonates deeply, especially when delivered by a figure like the High Sheriff. Within the modern context, I feel that the act of expressing gratitude emerges as a crucial component of the High Sheriff's role.

Gratitude, when articulated by someone in a position of authority, carries a significant weight. It acknowledges the contributions of individuals and groups, validating their efforts and inspiring further acts of service. I have seen that as the High Sheriff, and have enjoyed attending police commendation awards days, visiting prisons celebrating success days, and recently the Coroners' Courts Support

Service 21st birthday party as well as numerous visits to charities which support the community. Publicly recognising the hard work and dedication of volunteers, the blue light services, and community leaders not only boosts spirits but also fosters a culture of appreciation and mutual respect.

Police officers and emergency service personnel often operate under challenging conditions, with their efforts frequently taken for granted. The High Sheriff's public expressions of thanks serve to remind the wider community of these individuals' sacrifices and hard work. I made a point, after the disturbances in Plymouth in early August, to write to the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner to express, on behalf of the county, the excellent way in which the police contained and controlled the situation. I then visited two police stations in the centre of Plymouth to personally express gratitude for what they do on a daily basis. This recognition can bolster the morale of these crucial personnel, reinforcing the community's trust and cooperation with those who keep us safe.

Engaging with the community is a cornerstone of the High Sheriff's role. By attending events, such as civic services, I can use my platform to spotlight the importance of community cohesion. During these engagements, the act of saying thank you, whether through formal speeches, letters of commendation, or personal interactions, can galvanise community spirit and encourage broader



Thanking the Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) crews for their excellent work with Darren Goodwin (Operations Manager DAAT), the Venerable Martin Poll (High Sheriff's Chaplain) and Helena Holt (CEO of DAAT)



Expressing the gratitude of the people of Plymouth and Devon to the councillors, officers and staff of Plymouth City Council; with The Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Tina Tuohy, at the lighting of the beacon to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings

participation in communal activities.

The voluntary sector relies heavily on the goodwill and selflessness of individuals. As the High Sheriff, promoting and supporting the voluntary sector is paramount. Acknowledging volunteers through High Sheriff's Awards, investiture ceremonies, or simply thank-you notes, can significantly enhance the visibility and value of their contributions. This not only rewards current volunteers but also inspires others to get involved, creating a ripple effect of generosity, civic-mindedness and a sense of duty.

In conclusion, while the responsibilities of the High Sheriff are diverse and multifaceted, to me the act of saying thank you stands out as a fundamental aspect. Through sincere expressions of gratitude, the High Sheriff can effectively honour the past, enrich the present and inspire the future, ensuring that the spirit of community and service continues to thrive.