

Enlightening and educational

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High Sheriff of Hampshire 2024-25

I was warned by my predecessor that, once declared, the invitations would arrive thick and fast – she was right! I have tried to accept most invitations and indeed have sought invites to as many events that have slotted into my theme of youth and service as I possibly could. The sheer range of youth projects and youth organisations operating in the county is astonishing. Behind each are a dedicated band of adult volunteers ensuring young people are fulfilling their potential, learning new skills and having fun – in effect preparing them for adulthood, citizenship and service.

I am fortunate to be encouraged and supported by the Lord-Lieutenant, himself a patron of many youth organisations, and we met a number of the key leaders of the youth organisations at an inaugural meeting of the Hampshire youth leaders' network. We intend to meet with youth leaders annually to share ideas and learn from one another in a relaxed environment. Following this meeting I have spent time with army cadets, Scouts, police cadets, fire service cadets and St John Ambulance cadets as well as their adult volunteers and it is evident that Hampshire offers young people from all backgrounds huge opportunity to grow, develop and enjoy themselves.

While youth and service is my theme, I have had a busy six months continuing the traditional role of supporting the law and judiciary. The county has three Crown Courts and I have developed excellent working relationships with the Honorary Recorders. As a magistrate of 27 years, sitting in adult and youth courts and sometimes on appeals in Crown Courts, I



Inspecting the standards of the Royal British Legion at their dedication ceremony

felt I had a reasonable basic knowledge of the lower court system. The opportunity, therefore, to sit regularly with Crown Court Judges and High Court Judges visiting the county has been a privilege. Sharing meals with them outside of court proceedings has been enlightening and educational for me! Conversation easily flows and the wealth of their sitting experience readily shared. I am thinking it will help me when I return to magisterial duties after my year's sabbatical.

Aside from the judiciary my focus a priority has been and support for the emergency services. Police, fire and ambulance services have been superb in allowing me to make visits to their headquarters and operational units. Attending award and commendation presentations has been inspiring. Listening to citations of bravery, devotion to duty and selflessness is a constant reminder of the vital work they do often above and beyond

the call of duty. Humbling!

I have particularly endeavoured to support our police service including the special constabulary, support officers, staff and cadets. The Chief Constable has been brilliant in allowing me access to a range of divisions including dog handling, firearms, marine, control room and operational units. Hampshire Police are blessed with the traditions of their own band, choir, chaplain and ceremonial unit and they form important parts of the police family. In fact, when attending the Police Families Day and Police Cadets Day, it was evident that they are a family and support each other incredibly well.

I am halfway through my year and everywhere I go I remind myself of the privilege I hold and the importance of recognising and thanking those who work so hard for us in maintaining law and order in all its various forms.



With the Lord-Lieutenant, Nigel Atkinson, presenting The King's Coronation Medal to former High Sheriff Mark Thistlethwayte (2018)



Supporting the charity Youth Options in Eastleigh