

# Welcoming the communities of Nottinghamshire

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High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire 2024-25

The County of Nottinghamshire has traditionally celebrated The Queen's official birthday with a service of thanksgiving at Southwell Minster on the Sunday after the Trooping of the Colour. This is one of the most important events in the calendar of the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire. Last year a special service was held to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, so this year was the first service to celebrate The King's birthday.

The Lord-Lieutenant was particularly keen that we celebrate the community of the county alongside His Majesty's birthday. We tried to ensure that as many different groups as possible were invited to 'A Service Celebrating our Communities and the Official Birthday of His Majesty the King' – a joyous occasion for all involved.

It is important to maintain the traditions of these occasions with all the pomp and ceremony this brings. The service started with the judicial and military procession led by Under Sheriff Deborah Hutchinson, with representatives of the emergency services, armed forces, the judiciary, Lord-Lieutenant Veronica Pickering and the Honourable Mr Justice Hildyard.

I was delighted to be accompanied by both of my chaplains, the Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell, who led the service, and Rabbi Gili Zidkiyahu. The sermon by the Rt Revd Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, resonated with many – particularly as it included reference to Taylor Swift!

By inviting representatives of one of my chosen charities, Salaam Shalom Kitchen (SaSh), to address the congregation, we were delighted to include representatives of the Muslim and Jewish communities



With Veronica Pickering (Lord-Lieutenant), the Honourable Mr Justice Hildyard and members of the judiciary Photos: @shaddha\_bagrodia



With police cadets Jack Inquieti-Lamb and Leo Gardner, Rabbi Gili Zidkiyahu and HHJ Nirmal Shant KC

of Nottinghamshire. The reflection by Karen Worth and Ferzana Shan was very well received with many later enquiring as to how they could volunteer for the organisation. The SaSh is a joint Muslim/Jewish charity, founded on the belief that working together across communities and perceived boundaries helps build community cohesion and break down barriers. They provide a weekly hot meal and food bags to those in one of the most deprived areas in the city centre.

Lee Canoville, founder of my other charity, Brighter Futures Through Sport, told us of his work mentoring children with a wide range of needs, empowering them to identify and use their own solutions to the difficulties they face. It gave those present an insight into some of the challenges that many young people in our county face including grooming by county lines gangs and bullying. He also spoke about the improved connections we have jointly been able to make between his charity and police and civic leaders.

We were thrilled that representatives of the Nottinghamshire Hong Kong community attended. I had become aware that Nottinghamshire has become home for many relocating from Hong Kong and I reached out to their community. Several representatives joined us and told me afterwards how much they had enjoyed it and honoured to have been invited.

We wanted to include young and old in the service. I am not sure who the oldest congregant was but I suspect my 93-year-old father may have been in the running. Very ably representing the

younger generations was Evie Holder, Nottinghamshire Young Musician of the Year 2024. She sang 'Poor Wandering One' from The Pirates of Penzance which ends with an incredible cadenza, leaving us all in awe of her talent. The other young people who played an important role were my police cadets, Leo Gardner and Jack Inquieti-Lamb, providing invaluable support, as always.

We were really pleased that Shradha Bagrodia, a master's student at Nottingham Trent University, agreed to be our official photographer. The student population is an important community within our county with almost 80,000 studying in Nottinghamshire each year. I was very grateful to Shradha for representing them and for the incredibly professional photographs that she took.

The music at Southwell Minster is world renowned and the service was particularly special thanks to the contribution of the cathedral choir, directed by Paul Provost and organist Jonathan Allsopp.

What I learnt from helping to plan this event with Southwell Minster was that, with a lot of careful thought and hard work, we were able to be more inclusive. The service was an important celebration of our King and, importantly, his communities in Nottinghamshire.

By taking some time to think about those in our communities who may not feel as connected as others do, I feel that we were able to make a positive difference to the people of our county. I believe that this is an important part of my role as High Sheriff and will be focusing on it for the remainder of my term.