

Engage with your local 'chain gang'

Charles Moyle JP

High Sheriff of Worcestershire 2024-25

In addition to the fundamental roles that come with being a High Sheriff I had two key objectives for my year. The first was to examine as many iterations of my 'Life Chances' theme as possible and the second was to get as close as I could to the grassroots charities operating throughout the county.

First, Life Chances: using county-wide rugby clubs as both the base and metaphor for what a team and family look and feel like, we invited 100 educationally excluded young men to join a weekly course. These courses focused variously on debt management; what it feels like and means to be part of a team; how to treat girls; and the dangers of county lines. The final course was hosted by the playing members of the club where they showcased and encouraged the boys to consider work experience as builders, electricians, cooks and plumbers. Will it work? Who knows... time will tell but if you can offer young people the opportunity to work they will quickly understand the benefits of the three Ss – structure, salary and self-respect.

Another iteration of Life Chances came from working with the police cadets in North Worcestershire. The cohort of 25 16- to 18-year-old boys and girls were so proud to wear the uniform and I wanted



With Harriett Baldwin MP inspecting the North Worcestershire Police Cadets before giving her 'VIP Journeys In Life' talk

to give them a range of experiences they wouldn't normally take part in. Each month they attended a talk from an inspirational Worcestershire high achiever. From the Lord-Lieutenant to an army general, from the director of nursing to a local MP, from a senior police officer to a local entrepreneur – each individual explained how they got to where they are today, the challenges they faced and the 'golden nuggets' of life advice they could offer within their 'VIP Journeys In Life' talk.

There are so many ways of bringing Life Chances alive – it's a wonderful theme to explore for any High Sheriffs in nomination to consider.

Second, county causes – the volunteer sector has never played a bigger part in picking up the roles which historically have been funded and delivered by local councils and government departments. But how does one discover just what is going on in the county and who is delivering often lifesaving services?

I approached all 11 mayors and district council chairs and requested that they give me one day of their time to introduce

me to all the extraordinary causes in their towns. The results were amazing. Each civic leader created a wonderful programme of visits of between six and eight charities and community organisations. We booked the local press to join us and asked each charity to invite their volunteers, staff, donors and trustees to meet with the mayor and myself.

I have learnt such a huge amount from each organisation I've visited and in many cases have had the greatest of pleasure in helping them – whether by developing their marketing strategy, assisting with funding applications or by introducing and signposting other useful organisations and, finally, returning in full 'kit' to recognise these community heroes by presenting High Sheriff's Awards and medals. It has been the most worthwhile and rewarding part of my year and I'd encourage all High Sheriffs in nomination to engage as quickly as possible with their local 'chain gang' – these men and women are your gate keepers to what is going on right under our noses.



Presenting awards to Polish community leaders at Hartlebury Castle in recognition of their commitment to participating and integrating the wider community into charitable service in Worcestershire



'Life Chances' Awards given in recognition of both great personal development having overcome significant challenges and for their contributions to our county

