

Definitely not a dog's life!

Geraint Richards OBE

High Sheriff of Cornwall 2025-26

Cornwall is an extraordinary place, steeped in Celtic culture and natural beauty; that is why it attracts so many visitors each year, drawn to this south-west tip of the mainland by the glorious sand and sea. Most of the tourists, however – and even some of the resident population – will be unaware of the many and varied social challenges that exist in this beautiful part of the UK. As High Sheriff, my eyes have been opened to these problems and I have frequently had tears in those eyes; tears of sadness because of what I am witnessing but, at the same time, tears of joy because of the truly amazing people that I am meeting, people who have made it their life's mission to improve the lives of others throughout Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Even before my year began I made a commitment to visit all 26 of the police stations here, a task nearly completed. Without exception, during each visit, I have been so impressed by the dedication of our police officers and the same is true of the other public servants that I have met, working in courts, prisons, probation services and for other blue light services. Supporting Devon & Cornwall Police dressed up as Bravo the police dog at the Royal Cornwall Show and being caught by



Police dog Bravo



Going underground

a real police dog during a demonstration at the Devon County Show will live long in my memory.

I have met so many incredible people working or volunteering for charities and community groups and it was wonderful to gather many of them together to thank them at my autumn gathering in September. A year ago many of these people were not known to me but now they are friends for whom I have so much admiration.

One of my first official visits in March was to West Cornwall Women's Aid where I became aware of the tragic extent and effects of domestic violence. After further visits to other related organisations, I am now working with these key partners to reduce domestic violence in Cornwall, particularly by focussing on the concept of male allyship.

Every High Sheriff's year contains key anniversaries and 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Having attended several VE and VJ day events, I will be planting oak trees at RAF St Mawgan and RNAS Culdrose around Remembrance Day in November – most appropriate given that I am a forester.

This year also marks both the 20th anniversary of Young & Talented Cornwall and the 40th anniversary of Cornwall Heritage Trust. To commemorate the latter, I was invited to light Sancreed Beacon on Midsummer's Day, a great honour indeed. For the former, I am helping organise a gala evening at the Hall for Cornwall, Truro, in November,



Lighting the Sancreed beacon on Midsummer's Day



With His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at the Royal Cornwall Show

to showcase the incredible young talent that Cornwall produces and that Young & Talented Cornwall helps to flourish.

There is so much more that I will remember about this year: for instance my trip on the Newlyn lifeboat, my underground tour of a Cornish tin mine and my visit to the Isles of Scilly, in addition to several royal visits including meeting the Duke of Cornwall at the Royal Cornwall Show.

I return, however, to all those extraordinary people I have met this year who are making Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly a better place for all people and to whom, as High Sheriff of Cornwall, I am immensely grateful.