

Expanding awareness



With 17 of the London Borough Mayors at my afternoon tea party

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High Sheriff of Greater London 2025-26

When I was considering being appointed as High Sheriff of Greater London (HSGL) for the second time – the first time being in 2020-21 – I had in mind that, due to Covid, how little I had been able to get out and ‘press the flesh’. In particular, having caught the virus myself, how this had restricted my visits to the numerous courts, prisons and charities to be able to present awards due to lockdowns. Through Zoom and Teams, etc., I did, however, manage to meet virtually with almost all relevant personnel, but I found this wasn’t as helpful for establishing new relationships and promoting the role itself. This time it would, I hoped, be a lot easier to achieve these aims. I felt I had unfinished business. This meant I accepted my second Royal Warrant with enthusiasm!

So, since the very end of April I have been doing a lot of visiting and attending events. Particular highlights have included attending two VE day services on the same day, at Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s Cathedral; the Metropolitan Police Remembrance Service at Hendon Police College; the UK Sikh Gurdwara celebration at Portcullis House; the HMCTS

London Regional Awards ceremony at the Old Bailey; my afternoon tea party at International Students House (to which over half the 32 London Borough Mayors came); and the opening of the Legal Year, again at the Abbey with a reception to follow in Westminster Hall. I have also had meetings with the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Lady Chief Justice (who also presided over my Declaration at the Royal Courts of Justice). In addition, I have visited several of the nine Crown Courts, 18 Magistrates’ Courts and Tribunals to help boost their morale through the presentation of Special Recognition Awards – mainly to the ‘unsung heroes’ in the back offices.

Coming up, I’m aiming to present yet



The opening of the Legal Year at Westminster Abbey



Wreaths were laid at the Metropolitan Police Remembrance Service

more certificates at several of the eight London prisons and young offenders’ institutes, the remainder of the Crown Courts, Coroners Courts, and the Supreme Court (where I shall also be holding my Justice and Youth Award ceremonies). In addition, I have in prospect my Justice Service which will be held at Southwark Cathedral and my Judges’ Dinner for all the senior judiciary in Greater London.

As part of my ambition to expand awareness of the role, I have commenced this by meeting as many of the London mayors as I can to discover what I can do to help them promote the HSGL role in their local boroughs in order to ultimately get some understanding by the ‘man in the street’ – quite challenging given there are almost nine million people in GL. I also hope to help achieve this aim by visiting the numerous charities around London involved in law and order, and to see how I might assist them by supporting their objectives.

Finally, one additional specific initiative

is that I’m aiming to set up a new charity in London: The HSGL’s Impact Fund. This will initially focus on helping to reduce mental health issues in London prisons. At present we are ‘early days’, looking at suitable charity structures, possible sources of funds and how we can handle flexing the objective each year according to the aims of that particular High Sheriff if they are different. I know that some counties already have well-established funds, so all thoughts are welcome! Please contact me at: garbutt.jsimon@gmail.com.