

In good shape

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High Sheriff of Lincolnshire 2025-26

Turnover, as the change of High Sheriff is known in Lincolnshire, went better than expected – but what was to be expected?

The turnover was a family affair plus official guests and the grandchildren behaved better than my wife and I had ever witnessed before, handing out sausages, delicacies, etc. with great aplomb. One of our grandchildren, aged six, summed up her feelings after the day best when she said, 'Grandad [I waited for it], I am very pleased you are High Sheriff of Lincolnshire but a little disappointed you're not Nottingham!' The stuff of dreams.

The five-year build-up to the year of being High Sheriff is seemingly a very long one. I started to wonder if I would still be alive! Perhaps three years would have suited me better.

However, to the task... spreadsheets were designed, questionnaires prepared in readiness, a process defined and understood, and a website, with all kinds of invites coming in from day one – all had to be dealt with politely and carefully. Instead of a diary, which I have used for I don't know how long, I switched to my phone's calendar, so others, looking on, could see and advise; that has worked very well, though I still long for a diary back-up when people go on holiday!

Predecessors are very polite in their advice in trying to guide us 'freshers'. How many meetings, I asked. It varies [you can do more or less and some years are more and others less. 46 in 5 months, to date, but quality...].

How many court dress events? It depends [I try and use mine as often as possible as the event organisers like it and I only have it for a year!].

Does your wife attend? Sometimes [but more than 50 per cent, which is nice].

Can you do the job with a normal job you're already doing? Well, yes and no [I have, but a good PA is essential and it helps if your business is flexible].

Do people treat you differently? Not particularly, and, if



With Sergeant David Cave, John Young (Humberside Fire and Rescue Service) and PC Dan Mosley at the Cleethorpes 999 event



Outside Kingerby Church at my turnover with my wife Sue and my chaplain Father Robert Thacker

anything, the court dress helps define the role. Some people do think you've got money if you accept the role but it's not necessary to be very well-off.

Do you work weekends? Well, yes, that's often when events want you, though for charities it's more during the week.

Do you wine and dine the judges? Yes, at home or at a restaurant; we have that pleasure to come. The best wine will be served! In the meantime, one does attend the courts (thus far, eight times) and the prisons – all the legal duties.

Do you see other High Sheriffs? Yes, frequently and we have a good rapport and a WhatsApp group together too.

Halfway through the year, I have settled in and relaxed as and when I venture out. Good fun, good company and great things being done by lots of people, all voluntarily. I just wish the country was in such good shape as the High Sheriffs in the East Midlands are.