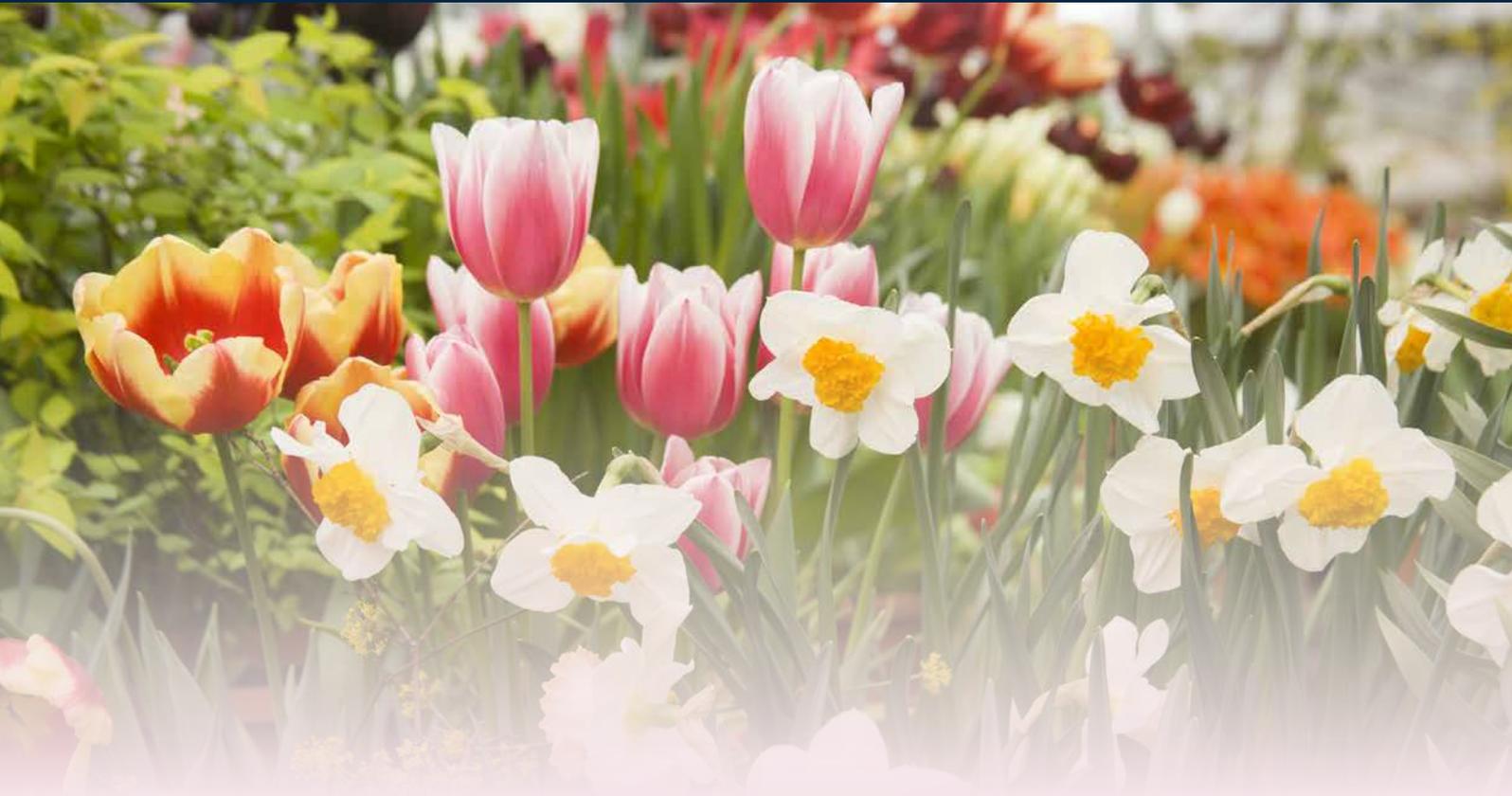




# SHROPSHIRE LIEUTENANCY

SHROPSHIRE TOWN AND COMMUNITY LINKS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026 ISSUE 17



## Welcome

As the days are becoming longer, warmer, and drier, I welcome you to this, our first Town and Community Links Newsletter of 2026.

The first three months of the year are usually a little quieter but that does not seem to have been the case at all this year.

It has been a busy time of celebration and thanks; for our 15 New Year Honours recipients, our 8 King's Award for Voluntary Service winners, our wonderful county of Shropshire on Shropshire Day, numerous thank you events for Shropshire's wonderful volunteers, and some big anniversaries to mark.

We hope this newsletter gives you a good insight into the work the Lieutenancy does and maybe some ideas as to how we can work with your organisation, be that church, school, volunteer group, or community event.

With my best wishes

*Anna*

Twice a year, I eagerly await that very important list of National Honours recipients, awarded to some of those incredibly hard-working people who do so much in our county; to say I was thrilled to see fifteen Shropshire citizens had been recognised by His Majesty the King in the recent New Year Honours, is an understatement! What an achievement for them and wonderful for our county. I felt incredibly proud to see so many people recognised for their contributions to such a wide range of causes.

*Recipients were:*

### **Officers of the Order of the British Empire**

Mr John Edward Gormley Former Governor HM Prison The Mount, HM Prison and Probation Service; For Public Service  
Mrs Advolly Xotshiwe Taylor Richmond, Plant, Garden, Social Historian and Champion, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; For services to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Horticulture

### **Members of the Order of the British Empire**

Mr Keith Henry George Bowley – Volunteer, Bridgnorth Community Trust; For services to the community in Bridgnorth  
Mrs Kathryn Anne Crewe Read Former Headteacher, Bishop's Stortford College; For services to Education  
Mrs Tracey Annette Dix-Williams Former Chief Executive Officer, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust; For services to Heritage  
Mr Clive Jones, Volunteer, from Market Drayton; For services to Blind Veterans UK  
Mrs Beverley Gail Morris, Rapid Response Co-Ordinator, Department for Work and Pensions; For Public Service

### **Medallists of the Order of the British Empire**

Mrs Sally Crawford Angell James; For services to Defibrillator Provision in Shropshire  
Mr Adrian Robin Emery, Transport Volunteer, Royal Voluntary Service; For Voluntary Service  
Mrs Kathryn Coral Foster; For Charitable and Voluntary Service to Alzheimer's Research UK, to Heritage and to the community in Shropshire  
Mrs Annabel Susan Alice Gittins, Chair, Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians; For services to Young People  
Mrs Alison Jane Humphreys; For services to people with Memory Loss and Dementia  
Canon John Thomas Naylor, Music Director, Nantwich Choral Society; For services to Music  
Mr Gerald Thomas Nickless; For services to the community in Shifnal, Shropshire  
Mr Scott Saunders; For services to Emergency Response and to the community in Telford

Reading about the incredible work that is undertaken always fills me with pride, we are truly blessed having so many people doing such wonderful work across our beautiful county. These medals are only given to a small proportion of people who have either achieved something exceptional in public life or selflessly made life better for others. It is a proud moment for the entire county, and I would like to congratulate them all for their incredible efforts. The Honours system singles out individuals who have gone above and beyond in their field of interest, or through volunteering. British Empire Medals are presented locally at a number of ceremonies and in our next edition, I hope to share some photographs of those joyous occasions

### **King's Award for Voluntary Service Presentations**

You may recall that our Christmas newsletter covered the announcement that yet again Shropshire had achieved a further eight King's Award for Voluntary Service, the most prestigious award given to the voluntary sector, and often described as the MBE for groups. In the first three months of this year, I have had the absolute pleasure of presenting five of these coveted awards, with a further three to be presented over the next few months.

### **The Arts Society Wrekin**

As The Arts Society Wrekin volunteers had been involved in heritage conservation at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, it was fitting that they chose to have their presentation in the Engine Shed at Coalbrookdale. It was a wonderful occasion which included exhibits of some of their many works, they do so much to promote and widen participation, for people of all ages across the area.

### **West Shropshire Talking Newspaper**

This inspirational group of volunteers, give their time weekly, to enable those who are visually impaired to have access to a range of publications including the Shropshire Star and Magazine; turning print into sound to bring friendly voices, local news and features to sight impaired people at the touch of a button for anyone who cannot read printed papers.



### Shropshire European Organisation CIC:

This group has been a pillar of support for the community since 2015; providing outreach services to Eastern European residents, collaborating with multiple agencies, they support individuals and families in need providing inclusive and unique services. Support covers health, housing, education, and safety, offering interpreting and translating services, working closely with the police and the NHS, they have proved successful in helping bridge cultural differences and helped many people adapt to life in the UK.



### The Melville Club, Albrighton

This community resource has been running for over fifty years and continues to go from strength to strength. Volunteers provide hot lunches twice a week, a range of social activities, day trips and have their own minibus to help those without transport get around the village and attend hospital and GP appointments. I was delighted to present their award at a lovely afternoon tea, involving many members and partner organisations who came together to recognise the volunteers' achievements.



### Friends of Pontesbury Library

Pontesbury has an incredible resource, the Friends (volunteers) that run their library (FOPL) but that's just a fraction of what these volunteers do. They also support community events for groups in and near the village, raise money to part-fund a part-time Library Manager (without which the Library would have been closed by Shropshire Council) and maintain and improve this key facility. I was delighted to meet many of their incredible committed volunteers who also run a lottery, concerts, exhibitions, school visits, craft sessions, coffee mornings, talks by local authors and an annual plant sale.



## KING'S AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE

It's that time of year again! when we start our annual search for high performing businesses, large or small and encourage them to consider applying for the King's Award for Enterprise, the most prestigious award for business. Whilst we recognise it takes a lot of hard work, the rewards are well worth it, with previous winners telling us it has made a real difference to their business giving worldwide recognition, increased commercial value, and staff feel incredibly proud of their achievement.



This year we see an extension to the number of categories from four to five.

- International Trade
- Innovation
- Promoting Opportunities
- Sustainable Development plus
- Young Founders – for those entrepreneurs aged 18 – 30 years old with turnover £250k sustained for 3 years.

Although companies have to make their own application, we do our best to help, by offering a support programme for businesses interested in applying for the award. This year this will start with a breakfast Masterclass on Tuesday, April 14th 8.30-10.30am kindly hosted by Harper Adams University at The Quad in Telford. This will be followed by a further Masterclass being held in Shrewsbury at the offices of Reech Media on April 20th from 5-6.30pm. In addition, there will also be an online Masterclass, also in April, to support businesses unable to attend the Telford or Shrewsbury events. Please do consider coming along to learn more about these awards and what it means to receive one, you can register your interest by emailing: [emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk); or [shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk).

# SHROPSHIRE DAY

A celebration for Shropshire Day spanning the River Severn

I wonder how many of our readers know that each February 23rd, the ceremonial county of Shropshire celebrates Shropshire Day? which is the feast day of Saint Milburga, the county's patron saint. This year a special event was planned on Sunday 22nd February to mark the occasion – a multi-location Church of England service spanning the River Severn that took place on a stunningly sunny Sunday afternoon, a modern-day pilgrimage to mark Shropshire Day 2026. The walk through the Ironbridge Gorge allowed those taking part to reflect on and enjoy the beauty of the Shropshire countryside.

The afternoon of worship commenced at St Mary the Virgin Church, Jackfield and then proceeded with a walk of approximately 2.5 miles starting in the Diocese of Hereford and the Telford and Wrekin Council area, crossed the River Severn and concluded in the Diocese of Lichfield and the Shropshire Council area at the Church of St Mary, Sutton Maddock.

The event was arranged by Deputy Lieutenant Claire Crackett MBE; the service was led by The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield and The Rt Revd Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford. It was such a wonderful uplifting experience aided by beautiful weather. There was also the introduction and reading of a new prayer that had been drafted by the Revd. Preb. Chris Thorpe of St. Andrew's Church, Shifnal. I think it encapsulates the beauty of Shropshire.



## A Collect for Shropshire

Loving God  
We give you thanks and praise for our county of Shropshire;  
for its unique blend of stunning, peaceful landscapes,  
its rich industrial heritage, and for its deep historical roots.

Help us to nurture and value all that is good,  
to build up strong bonds of belonging in our towns and villages,  
where people care for one another and for our environment.

Bless all who live and work here, and all who come to visit.

Help us to seek the common good in all we do,  
that together we may build on the solid rock of your love,  
made known to us through your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.



## SHROPSHIRE HIGH SHERIFF'S LEGAL SERVICE

One of the highlights of the High Sheriff's year is their Legal Service, a thanksgiving for the King's peace and our heritage and where members of the Judiciary from Justices of the Peace to High Court Judges are thanked for their dedication to delivering justice within Shropshire. This year our High Sheriff, Jane Trowbridge JP, chose the Chapel of St Oswald, King and Martyr at Ellesmere College for this occasion. It was a beautiful service, with music provided by their director of music and the Ellesmere College Chapel Choir.



## SIGHT LOSS SHROPSHIRE

Each year, usually in late January, Sight Loss Shropshire, a charity that has been running for over one hundred years run "A Winters Day Out". I was delighted to once again be invited to share in the day of entertainment, fun and friendship. I always think this is such an important event in our calendar enabling visually impaired and blind people, to come together and benefit from meeting so many others, especially when for many January is a long, cold month with few social activities. This year more than 200 guests from across Shropshire attended the event which included a sight loss equipment swap, a craft sale, and demonstrations of the latest assistive technology including spectacles that identify what you are looking at and relay in a spoken message!

*There was also a perfect opportunity for one of the guide dogs to take a nap!*



# CORONER'S COURT

I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet some of the staff and volunteers at the Coroners Court; this is yet another great example of where volunteers support the work of staff and who show such respect and empathy to people who face tragedies and bereavement.



# TELFORD MORTUARY VISIT

One of the more unusual visits this year was to the Mortuary to meet staff and understand more about their work. These four Anatomical Pathology Technicians are members of an admirable team, who work with compassion and empathy at the mortuary, helping to prepare deceased bodies for viewing or release after postmortems, including reconstruction post-examination. Undoubtedly a job that goes under most of our radars, but they take pride in and find hugely rewarding.



# HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY



This is such an important day in our calendar, which I feel we should all continue to support. The service in Telford, attended by Vice Lord-Lieutenant Jenny Wynn, was a time of deep reflection for all in attendance and an opportunity for the community of Telford & Wrekin to come together to remember the victims and survivors.

The service was beautifully curated with guest speakers who shared personal accounts of their families' experiences, and pupils from Charlton School and Haberdashers' Abraham Darby spoke about what they had learned about the Holocaust and how it had affected them personally. Also in attendance was the Mayor, councillors and approximately 150 local residents. Candles were lit and a minute's silence held to conclude the very moving service.

# TELFORD STREET PASTORS

After a busy Christmas and New Year period the Street Pastors take a well-deserved break throughout January, but come together for their winter social, which I was delighted to attend. It provided an opportunity for me to thank them and all their volunteers for all the work they do in the local community, irrespective of the weather!



# HIGH SHERIFF OF SHROPSHIRE OUTSTANDING CITIZEN AWARDS

In January, Telford Central Fire Station provided the setting for a wonderful evening of celebration for the annual High Sheriff of Shropshire awards.

After assisting the High Sheriff Mrs Jane Trowbridge JP, with the presentations to truly outstanding Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin individuals, I was able to chat and thank many of the fabulous people who give their time and energy to help make Shropshire such a lovely county to live in.



## 170<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SHREWSBURY CATHEDRAL

In January a very special mass was held to commemorate the 170th anniversary of the Cathedral in Shrewsbury. It was a wonderful service and beautifully sung Latin mass. It was fascinating to hear the history of the Cathedral told by Bishop Mark Davies and Father Sean.

Photo Credit: Simon Caldwell



## THE ARMY CADET FORCE

Unsurprisingly during covid, the numbers of cadets in detachments across the county reduced and for the past four year they have been rebuilding numbers and opening new detachments, supported by volunteers. One of my key roles is to support the Army Cadet Force in Shropshire and I know from working with my own cadets just how transformative being a cadet can be. Apart from attending their detachment once or twice a week, they participate in weekend exercises and an annual camp. Cadets learn many practical and a wide range of life skills, including ironing their uniforms, lifesaving first aid but perhaps more importantly how to work as a team and have fun. Being a cadet is one of the best things a young person can do, they become confident, self-assured, team players, attributes which make excellent employees. Last September a detachment was reopened at Haberdashers Abraham Darby School in Telford and have recently expanded to two evenings, due to the commitment of the cadets.



## EMPOWERING WOMEN TO HEALTH

I was recently invited to help “Empowering women to Health” celebrate their first anniversary. This is a group of ladies that meet in Randlay Community Centre, Telford. They provide a warm space for gentle movement, health and wellness, friendly gatherings, and positive conversations. Well done ladies.



# ROBERT JONES AGNES HUNT VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU EVENT

By now you will all be aware of just how valuable I think volunteers are; in many ways they are the backbone of our county. We are blessed with so many wonderful people who give up their time, daily or weekly to support others and to increase opportunities for Shropshire residents by providing services from friendship groups, lunch clubs, cadets, and many health services. So it is always lovely when I have the opportunity to say thank you, every single volunteer makes a difference!

One such event recently was an evening meal to thank and recognise the huge value of volunteers at Robert Jones Agnes Hunt Hospital, where I had the opportunity to chat with so many volunteers. The team were over the moon that so many of their dedicated volunteers were in attendance and able to relax and enjoy being together.



## A BETTER TOMORROW – CHARITY LAUNCH



I have long been a supporter of ABT and their amazing work, so I was especially pleased to be invited to open the launch event for their charity. This organisation is peer-led, being mostly staffed by people who have lived experience of addiction, mental ill-health or domestic abuse. Starting in 2014 they now have 30 houses, 129 rooms, have helped over 3,200 people and continue to grow.

## SHREWSBURY SCHOOL 474<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

I recently helped staff and pupils at Shrewsbury School celebrate their 474th birthday! I was given a tour of the site and visited their newest House, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Rigg's Hall, where Sir Michael Palin was a boarder. I also went to the Taylor Library and Archives to view the current exhibition and various notable items related to Charles Darwin.



# TELFORD COMMUNITY BASKETBALL CIC

What a great initiative this organisation is and I was so pleased to be able to visit.; They facilitate and deliver high-quality, accessible, non-competitive basketball and wellbeing programmes that empower children, young people, adults, and families, regardless of background. I met with the team and people who attend the sessions before having a go at shooting some hoops!



## ELLESMERE ROTARY 40<sup>TH</sup> CHARTER DINNER

Deputy Lieutenant Diana Flint was invited to attend a dinner to mark the fortieth Charter dinner of Ellesmere Rotary Club at the Albright Hussey Hotel. The event celebrated forty years of service to the local community, supporting many Ellesmere events such as the Winter Festival, the Carnival and the Rotary Regatta on the iconic mere. As an organisation they have provided financial support to many, indeed they distributed over £32,000, between 2021 and 2024, to benefit the town and its network of organisations. Dr Mackey, Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Institute of Directors, experienced businessman, gave an inspirational, highly entertaining and rallying speech. A Rotarian himself and a shining example of what Rotary stands for. Ellesmere Rotary Club welcomes volunteers and is looking for new members.



## So, how can you help?

If you or your organisation has something special to celebrate over the next year please do get in touch, I would be delighted to hear from you and if we can help by supporting any of your initiatives we would love to do so. We have Deputy Lieutenants right across the county who can attend if I cannot personally attend. We would also like photos of your events, which may then be shared in my reports to the palace.

We are looking to link with as many schools, churches, different faiths, voluntary organisations and businesses throughout the county as possible, so that we can see all the fantastic work that is taking place and, where appropriate, share your news through our own platform.

To find out more about the Shropshire Lieutenancy visit our website: [www.lordlieutenantofshropshire.org.uk](http://www.lordlieutenantofshropshire.org.uk)

Follow us on social media:



### Lieutenancy contacts:

Emily Marshall, Shelley Davies and Paige Starkey are Assistant Clerks to the Shropshire Lieutenancy and can be contacted by email or phone;

|                |              |  |
|----------------|--------------|--|
| Emily Marshall | 01743 257717 | <a href="mailto:emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk">emily.marshall@shropshire.gov.uk</a> |
| Shelley Davies | 01743 257718 | <a href="mailto:shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk">shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk</a> |
| Paige Starkey  | 01952 380110 | <a href="mailto:paige.starkey@telford.gov.uk">paige.starkey@telford.gov.uk</a>         |

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