

Citizenship Ceremony

Deputy Superintendent Registrar, New Citizens and your families and friends, it is a great pleasure as High Sheriff of Surrey, to have the opportunity to speak to you today and to officially welcome you all to our county of Surrey.

The role of High Sheriff has been part of our history and tradition for over a thousand years, when the 'Shire Reeves', as they were then called, protected the Monarch's interests in the county. The High Sheriff used to have very extensive powers, but nowadays is an independent, non-political Royal appointment for a single year.

Today the role has evolved and now includes attendance at Royal visits, supporting the judiciary, providing encouragement to the police, emergency services, probation and prison services and to others involved with crime prevention, particularly where it effects young people.

The High Sheriff also plays an active role in promoting the wide range of voluntary and community work within our county.

This work provides an astonishing insight into Surrey, and it's needs and resources. I have had the chance to meet so many amazing people in our-your-County who volunteer their time, skill and commitment to help other people who are in need of support and care. Such incredible volunteers go largely unseen and unsung. This is priceless community support, and I hope that you too will find an opportunity to play your part in everyday life in Surrey, and to use your own special talents and experience to enrich the lives of the communities you are joining, and contribute to this county's future.

We also encourage and ask you to take part in our democratic process and exercise your right to vote in all elections.

What a county you have chosen! Surrey truly has something for everyone.

Our county is home to over 1.2 million people across our eleven Boroughs and Districts (hence the eleven points on the High Sheriff's badge of

office), and we are home to more Organizations and Company Head Quarters than any other county, outside of London itself.

Surrey is renowned for its excellence in education. Our schools are some of the highest performing in the country, and our colleges are also good examples of the breadth of teaching, learning and training opportunities for young and old alike. The Universities of Surrey and Royal Holloway are outstanding international institutions with world-wide reputations for excellent teaching and research.

Surrey's also has an amazing heritage and history with a multitude of monuments, museums, castles, historic houses and world-renowned gardens-there are so many treasures.

Walkers, cyclists and those that enjoy the Countryside are drawn to Surrey's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which covers one quarter of the land in the County and includes wonderful hills, woods and fields with plenty of opportunities to access this through commons ,open spaces and footpaths, and to be rejuvenated by the fresh air, biodiversity and wildlife. Surrey has a long tradition of protecting its countryside, preserving its heritage and continuing to celebrate our culture, as the forward-looking county you would expect us to be.

Your County Council, in whose offices we are gathered, looks forward to providing you with the services that bring you quality of life; and to do this by listening and responding to your needs; and to working alongside you with shared values, and the common goals of tolerance and respect.

This is a proud moment for you, your families and friends - it also gives me great pride to be one of the first official representative to offer greetings - 'You are All Very Welcome to the County of Surrey'!