



PRESS RELEASE

Annie Brewster JP

High Sheriff of Hertfordshire 2024 – 2025



Annie Brewster has been appointed by the King as the new High Sheriff of Hertfordshire. She becomes the first female Mayor of St Albans and the first female Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council to take on this historic position that originated under the reign of King Edgar (959-975).

Her Declaration Ceremony took place on Wednesday 17th April in St Albans Cathedral. In attendance were the Lord Lieutenant, the Bishop of Hertford, the Dean of St Albans, the Chief Constable, the Police and Crime Commissioner, St Albans Crown Court Resident Judge, the Justice of the Peace Bench Chairman plus the new High Sheriffs of Bedfordshire and Essex.

The office of High Sheriff is the oldest continuous non-religious office under the Crown, dating back over 1300 years to Anglo-Saxon times.

Over the centuries, a Sheriff from each Shire, or county, was responsible to the Monarch for the maintenance of all law and order and for the collection and return of taxes. Today's law enforcing Sheriffs, best known from American Westerns, stem from this ancient role across the world.

In 1829 Sir Robert Peel formed the Police Force and the High Sheriff's role began to change. Today, High Sheriffs bring together a wide variety of people within the county, supporting its judges, police, magistrates, prison and probation services, emergency services, local authorities, church and faith groups, and promoting the many charities and voluntary organisations who work for the public good, as well as attending a host of Civic events across Hertfordshire and supporting Royal visits.

In March a hole was made by Annie's name on the list of those proposed by the Privy Council using a silver bodkin in an ancient 'pricking' ceremony, which dates back at least as far as Henry VIII. Some of the Sheriff's duties, such as officiating at all hangings, were so onerous it was feared appointees' names written in pen and

ink could easily be scratched off the velum they were written upon.

Although many traditional duties now sit with others, High Sheriffs are still called upon to make the Proclamation at the death of the Sovereign, to be the Returning Officer at a General Election and to have the power to raise a posse to hunt down outlaws.

Annie has lived in Hertfordshire all her life and has two sons with her husband, Paul. She has served her community in Wheathampstead for over 17 years, being a Parish, District and County Councillor.

She was the Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council in 2022-2023 and headed up the Platinum Jubilee, the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III events. She also served as the county's Deputy Executive Member for Public Health during the Covid Pandemic.

In 2013 Annie was the Mayor of St Albans City & District championing the addiction charity 'The Living Room' throughout her tenure. She then became the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Culture, Sport and Leisure, overseeing the development of the new St Albans Museum + Gallery, three leisure centres and the new Eric Morecambe Centre in Harpenden.

A former international athlete, Annie has been a long serving Member of the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) Board and will adopt *Sport for Good* as the theme for her year in office.

She is passionate about the power of sport and physical activity as a cost-effective and successful vehicle for social change in areas such as health and mental wellbeing, social inclusion, community cohesion, crime and disorder reduction, educational attainments and the development of skills leading to employment and economic prosperity. She is very much looking forward to getting those who live and work in the county 'moving' in this Olympic year.

Annie will raise money via her 'High Sheriff Fund' run by the independent charitable trust, Hertfordshire Community Foundation, to help break down obstacles to opportunities for people of all ages to engage in physical activity.

Following the ceremony, the High Sheriff said "I am so excited to be given this amazing historic honour and cannot wait to work with all the wonderful people who underpin our mighty county. As a local magistrate, Trustee of the Domestic Abuse charity 'Future Living' and an ex-politician, I have a good idea about the county's challenges but I am about to learn so much more. It will be the greatest privilege to recognise and celebrate all the work being done by a huge number of people, so many of them volunteers, and to shout about all that is good about Hertfordshire wearing a slightly different hat!"

