



Apr 22, 2015 00:00 BST

## Modern role for High Sheriff

Lucy Winskell OBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor at Northumbria University, Newcastle, has been appointed as the new High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear.

Appointments are made by the Monarch and are the oldest secular positions in the country, dating back at least a thousand years from the days when the High Sheriff was responsible for all law and order in the County.

Today, the appointment is for one year only and voluntary. The role is not purely ceremonial and involves working with those who keep communities safe and secure including the Police, Emergency Services and the Courts. Office holders are also encouraged to be modern and innovative.

Lucy takes over from well-known North-East business woman and former National Grid Director, Ruth Thompson OBE. She said: “My predecessor, Ruth, has been the very epitome of a modern High Sheriff. One of her key pledges was to raise awareness of the particular plight of children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse, and to recognise the valuable work of those who work in child safeguarding. She has certainly achieved her aim and I very much look forward to building on her work and to continue developing the office as being modern, relevant and innovative.

“Many High Sheriffs opt for a theme in their year and a particular focus for their activities. As Pro Vice-Chancellor of Northumbria University I have a particular interest in education, and the power that education can play in transforming the lives of young people no matter what their background. This is a focus and ambition I share with John Mowbray, who succeeds me in the role next year. He and I have committed to build on Ruth’s excellent initiative to work with North East Universities to research the impact of what we do and help us focus on what we can do better. I include in this opportunities afforded through the wider learning experience, such as music, art, dance and theatre and sport – the sort of things that provide confidence, aspiration, self-esteem and valuable life skills.”

Supporting the work of community groups and their volunteers will also remain a priority. This will include The Tyne and Wear High Sheriff’s Fund, looked after by the Community Foundation, which distributes around £30,000 a year to help groups working primarily with disadvantaged young people and children.

Iain Riddell, who manages the High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear Fund at the Community Foundation said: “Hundreds of children and young people have benefited from these awards since the High Sheriff Awards Fund was established in 1995. The funding given can make a real difference to the work of the many clubs, centres, organisations involved. Last year 54 awards totalling £30,250 were distributed to youth causes in our community and we hope to be able to recognise more young people in 2016.”

For further information on news at Northumbria, [click here](#).

---

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our

courses go to [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339