

Ten Trees for Sheriffs

Tuesday 29 March, 2016

The Forest of Marston Vale recently hosted the planting of 10 trees to celebrate and commemorate the year of public service given by the outgoing High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, the Countess of Erroll. Joining the celebration were Charles Whitbread, the incoming High Sheriff and Nick Webb the Chief Executive of the Forest of Marston Vale Trust.

Lady Erroll planted the trees at the newly created Green End Wood, a two hectare community woodland between the new housing development at Kempston and the established hamlet of Green End, to mark the end of a successful and very busy year in this apolitical and entirely unpaid post. She was joined by her successor, Charles Whitbread, who will be installed as High Sheriff at the beginning of April at a ceremony in Southill.

The Office of High Sheriff dates from Saxon times with the exact date of origin unknown, but the Office has certainly existed for over 1,000 years. Queen Elizabeth I is generally believed to have originated the practice, which continues to this day, of the Sovereign choosing the High Sheriff by pricking a name on the Sheriffs' Roll with a bodkin. It is said that she did this whilst engaged in embroidery in the garden.

The role of High Sheriff is the Queen's representative in Bedfordshire for all matters relating to the judiciary, so it is closely involved with the police, courts and judges within the county. Lady Erroll will round off her year of public service by presenting High Sheriff Citizenship Awards to deserving individuals and organisations in recognition of the most outstanding projects and services to our community within the County.

Charles Whitbread as the incoming High Sheriff, comes from a family which has a long historical association with the post, with 6 predecessors having undertaken the role of High Sheriff. He commented that he is looking forward to gaining a greater understanding of the legal system as well as meeting people in a variety of organisations, both voluntary and statutory, throughout the county and encouraging them to realise that they are making a real difference.

Nick Webb, as the Forest of Marston Vale Trust's Chief Executive, joined Lady Erroll and Charles Whitbread at Green End Wood, to plant the trees and said of the occasion "I'm delighted to welcome both the incoming and outgoing Sheriff to this beautiful new woodland in the Forest. I hope these newly planted trees will remind them of their year of public service, for a long time in the future".

Green End Wood, was planted during the winter of 2015/16 by the Forest of Marston Vale Trust. It is open to the public to enjoy. For more information of the wider 61 square mile Forest of Marston Vale visit www.marstonvale.org

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