



**National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of
England and Wales**
**Cymdeithas Cenedlaethol Siryfion Dinas a
Thref Lloegr a Cymru**



Winter Newsletter 2025



Dear Sheriff's Association Fellow Members

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter 2025, which marks a year since my first newsletter.

The year has vanished so quickly but as evidenced at the AGM at Lichfield in my Chairs report a great deal of work has been done in the past year to stabilise and strengthen our Association, Civic Office and the role of Sheriff. A copy of my report is available on our website.

This newsletter will bring you up to speed with our work, but as usual let's look back at our AGM conference weekend in Lichfield in September first, and the 40th anniversary celebration of the National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales.

Lichfield

This was my first visit to Lichfield and the city and the weekend itself certainly lived up to its reputation and promise with an excellent

weekend's itinerary run by our hosts and many memorable moments to recall.

The excellent venues of St Mary's Hub on the Friday evening (with the added excitement of a fire alarm activation!), the splendid Lichfield District Council chambers for the AGM meeting, to The Guildhall for Saturday lunch and the formal dinner in the evening (what a transformation that was) to the spectacular Lichfield Cathedral for the Sunday service (which was live streamed across the country!) all helped make the weekend.





At the AGM meeting itself I was pleased to welcome Colin Greatorex from Lichfield as our new Vice Chair, having been voted and duly elected. I was equally pleased to nominate and see our former Chair, David Brown from Gloucester, become our fourth Vice-President in recognition of his work on the 40th anniversary booklet and as Chair. Congratulations to both of you.

The 40th anniversary booklet was distributed to members at Lichfield and as it seems an immediate success with many favourable comments.

At the AGM an amendment to our constitution was passed to reflect a change in terminology from Auditor(s) to Examiner.

A copy of the amended constitution and the draft minutes of the AGM meeting are attached and the latter will be ratified at Lincoln in September.

Time was also protected for our President and Executive team to meet the nine current sheriffs in private after the AGM and before the excellent lunch buffet.

In the meeting, there was some really interesting topics discussed and ideas suggested, some of which I will cover in the NACTSEW business

section of this newsletter. It was possibly the most productive meeting I can recall in recent times.

In the afternoon, there was some great tours on hand including the National Arboretum which was very poignant and I was pleased to be able to visit the NACTSEW commemoration plaque to pay my respects on behalf of NACTSEW. The plaque was installed the last time Lichfield hosted the weekend in 2008.



One of the highlights, if not a little daunting! was the magnificent after dinner speaker, historian Lesley Smith appearing in full costume as Elizabeth 1st.



What a befitting scene on our 40th anniversary than to be all addressed by Her Majesty in some style!

Presenting a bouquet of flowers after her speech did make me wonder how it would be received or what would happen! but it must have been well received by her Majesty as shortly afterwards I was knighted by her.



A collection for the Mayor charity "Lichfield Arts" and the Sheriffs charity "Pathway" raised a combined total of £675 which has been passed to the Lichfield Shrievalty for equal dissemination. An excellent total which once again acts as a reminder of how we can importantly contribute to the host city and town, beyond increased tourism and financial income to the wider community each year.

The Horse-led procession to the Cathedral on Sunday through the lovely city was the start of the final formal part of the weekend of course, but it also led to the meeting of Lichfield's current Junior Sheriff, Master Daniel Mannox; a delightful young man.



This concept interested me immediately and I will return to this matter in the NACTSEW business section.

Taking into account the whole weekend, Lichfield more than did us proud and it was a grand setting for my guest Tracy Frisby, Chair of the National Association of Civic Officers to witness and have NACTSEW showcased at its very best on her first occasion.

I have of course written a letter of thanks to the Sheriff of Lichfield Revd Ian Haytor and the organising committee, notably Robert Yardley and Michael Mullarkey congratulating them on a highly successful weekend

Thank you everyone

NACTSEW Business

The more formal but important part of the newsletter will include the following:

- Executive Officers
- Membership and Finances
- NACTSEW Website
- Junior Sheriff
- New Initiatives
- Meetings and invites
- Future AGMs

Executive Officers

Alongside myself as Chair, the Executive Officer team comprises:



Colin Greatorex, Vice-Chair
Colin.greatorex@lichfield.gov.uk



Xena Dion
Secretary and Website Admin
nactsewsecretary@gmail.com



Suzie Mercer, Treasurer
nactsewtreasurer@gmail.com

Welcoming Colin, we have already held our first business review meeting since Lichfield and again targets and tasks have been set to make sure we continue to carry out our duties to the best of our abilities this year.

Membership and Finances

Membership and GDPR compliance continues to increase with 104 members paid up for 25/26, and with only 6 members yet to renew only from last year.

Other members who are in arrears from further back to 2022 are being contacted by Suzie Mercer our treasurer, to invite their renewal once more before becoming recorded as lapsed.

Stock has been re assessed after locating a

quantity in the historic records handed over at Lichfield and we are now akin to financial records which is very pleasing.

I am currently assessing the historic records and will present my findings at the half yearly meeting in February, where we can decide their destination.

NACTSEW website

The AGM Weekend has been captured in photographs and added to the Website. Many thanks, as always, to Xena for her sterling work in keeping the Website current, informative and interesting.

The Website link:

<https://www.sheriffsofenglandandwales.org/>

Junior Sheriff

As already mentioned earlier in the newsletter, I was very impressed at the concept and presence of a Junior Sheriff at Lichfield, and it immediately resonated with me that it maybe an idea that could possibly be replicated by some of our Cities and Towns.

This would without doubt align with the AGM motion brought about at Haverfordwest by John Butler in promoting the office to a wider and younger audience, but also assist in preserving and enhancing the role of Sheriff at the same time.

I asked Colin Greatorex as his first task to research the Lichfield Junior Sheriffs role, its introduction and benefits.

Colin very quickly responded and as part of this newsletter, his findings are in Appendix A at the end.

I would urge all our members and shrievalty Associations to seriously consider this as a viable option to adopt, to protect, enhance and promote your own office of Sheriff.

Please do contact Colin in the first instance if you would like more detailed information and discussion

One to organise for May 2026 perhaps?

New Initiatives

- New WhatsApp Group

At the meeting of new Sheriffs in Lichfield a key idea that was suggested was to establish a new What's app group for the Executive Officers and the current Sheriffs who are members of NACTSEW this year.

The group members would change each year to reflect the current holders of office, but importantly provide a direct line of communication with the current sheriffs each year, who wish to join. The WhatsApp group intends to provide a platform for sharing advice, thoughts and questions for all.

This new WhatsApp group was set up in October and to date 7 of the 9 sheriffs who attended Lichfield have joined and interacted with us and their peers. It has already proved its worth and notably provided an action that is well worth the wider membership to take note .

In mid-October the Sheriff of Haverfordwest, Dani Thomas-Turner used the platform to seek help and advice concerning making her role more prominent and to overcome some local issues. After receiving advice from Xena, Colin and I, Dani consulted the civic team who then contacted us.

The civic team acknowledged and applauded the letter dated July last year concerning civic office and its preservation including the role of Sheriff, and concluded by expressing a strong desire to actively engage with NACTSEW and work in partnership to succeed in promoting and developing the office of Sheriff in Haverfordwest.

This was excellent news which we acknowledged but to cap it off they made a formal request for this year's Sheriff to lay a wreath on behalf of NACTSEW at their Remembrance Sunday Service, and thereafter for it to become an annual occurrence. This was of course agreed and I was delighted that such a request was made and in my 15 years with NACTSEW a first!



This lays the pathway now for each City and Town whose Sheriff are members of NACTSEW to consider this for 2026 and beyond, and not least a welcoming topic at Lincoln's AGM. Please do speak to your own civic team if you wish to take this on board and also myself for further details

Well done Dani and thank you.

- New stock

Colin Greateorex has been tasked to look at new suppliers for our current stock of badges, scarves, and ties, but to also explore more options in potentially acquiring things such as Table clothes, banners and smaller items such as pens and accessories.

Watch this space and the sales table at Lincoln!

- Training

Following the feedback at the AGM where there was a strong argument for succession planning at local level, taking into consideration the introduction of the new sheriffs online meetings, the WhatsApp Group, and the sheer cost involved versus viability, it has been decided to defer this initiative at present.

In the background we are monitoring the impact of all the new initiatives whilst considering other options too.

- Letter of thanks – to retiring members

Following a message from a long-standing member explaining that they were no longer able or willing to continue their membership, Xena has suggested, which the Committee have agreed, a letter of thanks be sent in way of recognition to any long serving members who decide to leave the Association. Most members just gradually disengage and do not 'formally' retire from the Association. But if and when a long-standing member (i.e over 15 years for example) actively resigns from the Association and informs us, we should send them a formal letter of thanks and recognition of their support. This is now in place.

Meetings & Invites

The second online Teams meeting with all current Sheriffs has been arranged for later this month and will include a part of successive planning.

The Half yearly committee meeting has been arranged for early February. This year it will be an 'in person' meeting at York where a Teams online faculty will also be offered for those who cannot attend in person.

I look forward to welcoming Lincoln committee members Jo Rimmer and Melanie Tointon to the meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be reported in my Spring newsletter

I have also provisionally accepted invitations to represent NACTSEW as Chair at Sheriffs Dinners in Canterbury and Haverfordwest in 2026.

This gives me a real opportunity to strengthen our links with the hosts and to support the Sheriff and the Office itself to all attending.

Future AGMs

Lincoln - Friday 25th to Sunday 27th of September 2026

Preparations are well underway way and the is attached to the covering email and also available on the website.

Newcastle - Friday 24th to Sunday 26th September 2027

We have written to the Chief Executive of The City of Newcastle Council to explain and explore the AGM weekend and await a response.

A final decision will be made at the half-yearly committee meeting after we send a final letter by recorded delivery in early January. But, if there is no response, it is my intention to host the AGM weekend ourselves in similar vein to Oxford 2019.

To conclude my winter newsletter I wish to thank my hard working team of Xena, Suzie and Colin for all they do, and to wish you all the very best wishes for Christmas and a happy new year in 2026.

I will leave you with a few words from our president and founder Andrew Gravells

Kind regards,



Andy Swinburne
Chair NACTSEW

Email: andyswinburne322@btinternet.com

<https://www.sheriffsofenglandandwales.org/>

Appendix A Follows:

A Message from our President

Dear Member,

Our 40th Anniversary weekend in Lichfield was a great success and was over way too soon.

NACTSEW colleagues in Lichfield really set the bar very high. Thank you Lichfield Members.



It was good to hear from the Chair and the Executive Committee at the AGM. The work they've covered since the last AGM is phenomenal, and they have brought NACTSEW right up to date.

I'd like to thank all of them led by our Chair Andy Swinburne for just getting on with everything in a professional and conscientious way. We're in good shape as we move forward and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in Lincoln.

Best wishes everyone, Andrew



APPENDIX A: The Role of the Junior Sheriff

Lichfield, Colin Greateorex

Background: Lichfield has a Shrievalty Society of 20 - 25 former Sheriffs of Lichfield.

A sub-group of the Lichfield Shrievalty Society has been created to specifically organise the Sheriff's Ride and that sub-group is called the Sheriff's Ride Committee.

The committee has successfully sought a main sponsorship: a company that wanted to support Youth Projects to meet its aims and objectives of support. What the committee was able to do was get sponsorship of a Green Badge guide who gives talks on the history of the ride to school and other groups, some aspects of the cycle ride on the same day the horses travel around the city (mainly younger people). The Junior Sheriff was another part of the support fund the sponsor could get behind, to the tune of thousands of pounds, rather than hundreds.

The process: The committee has only had the Junior Sheriff role for the last two years, one girl last year and a boy this year, so it is still developing. A different junior school has been selected each year to help share the knowledge of the Sheriff's ride around the city.

Applicants and succession: Once the school has been asked to get involved, the committee secretary explains the role to the school staff and there is an in-house discussion as to which student would be a good advert for the school and the Sheriff's Ride.

Duties: Public Relations! The main duty is to wear the Junior Sheriff's gown on the day of the Ride, on a horse-drawn carriage, normally with the

non-riding consort of the Sheriff and a chaperone. The Junior Sheriff features in many pictures and stops during the day. This works well as the Sheriff is more tied up with looking after the horse, food and toilet needs for themselves and others.

The committee use the Junior Sheriff at any other photo-opportunity that presents, e.g. at the fund-raising launch evening before the ride and /or at the helpers' thank you event after the ride. The appointment of the new person is normally newsworthy as well.

In summary, the role of Junior Sheriff is only useful for sponsorship of youth and for PR, so unless a town or city did not have a clear annual event and thus role for them it might not attract a sponsor and would then be less worthwhile.