

New High Sheriff of Lancashire

The new High Sheriff of Lancashire has been announced as Mrs Catherine Penny.

She has held a number of roles in the voluntary sector, and is currently the Chairman of the Shepherd Street Trust, a Preston-based charity which provides funding for children and young people in need of assistance.

As the new High Sheriff, Catherine will be sworn in at a special ceremony on Wednesday 8 April 2020, when she takes over the office from the incumbent High Sheriff, The Honourable Ralph C Assheton TD DL.

Each year Her Majesty The Queen personally appoints the High Sheriff of Lancashire - a role dating back over 1,000 years.

Speaking on her appointment, Catherine said: "I am honoured to have been asked to hold the ancient Office of High Sheriff of Lancashire for the forthcoming year. Since the reign of Henry II Judges have been sent round the country and been welcomed and entertained by the High Sheriff. I look forward to continuing this tradition and carrying out other official functions."

Catherine, who lives in the Ribble Valley, has had a career in horticulture, she set up her own plant nursery which specialised in old fashioned roses, including Gallica officinalis, The Red Rose of Lancaster.

Since selling her nursery in 2002, Catherine has continued to advise on plants and gardening from her home at Dutton Hall. Together with her husband, Andrew, she has developed and expanded the gardens there, establishing notable collections of trees and shrubs. They have a Plant Heritage National Collection of Hybrid Musk roses and Catherine is a trustee of Plant Heritage as well as Chairman of the North West Group.

Until recently, she was also the Treasurer of the Lancashire Fundraising Committee of The Art Fund.

The role of High Sheriff includes a duty to 'protect and assist in upholding the dignity and wellbeing of Her Majesty's Judges and to project the principles of encouraging responsible citizenship and respect for the diversity of the community which lies at the heart of our Constitution'. One of the main features of the role nowadays is to support and promote voluntary work. In her year in office Catherine has said "she would like to focus on matters relating to young people."

The office of High Sheriff is an unpaid and voluntary role.