

NEWS RELEASE

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HIGH SHERIFF REWARDS VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Essex County Neighbourhood Watch were among 32 charities and individuals to receive awards from the High Sheriff of Essex Christopher Stewart-Smith. Certificates and grants totalling £13,260 were awarded to fund projects and recognise the work being undertaken by local people who are helping to make

Essex communities safer from crime.

Since the High Sheriffs' Fund was established with Essex Community Foundation in 1997 it has distributed over £134,000 to 172 charities.

A special ceremony, sponsored by Essex County Council and organised by Essex Community Foundation, was held at the Fennes Estate, Bocking (6 March). Around 210 invited guests including the Chairman of Essex County Council, Cllr Gerard McEwen, Chief Constable, Roger Baker, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley and many past High Sheriffs of Essex attended the event.

Christopher Stewart-Smith said "The High Sheriff Awards Presentation is a great opportunity to let people know about the wonderful work that is being done by the Voluntary Sector throughout the county and how well it is now supported and encouraged by so many people through the Awards scheme."

Steve Scruton, the leading radio personality from BBC Essex, compered the event. In his own professional style, Steve invited winners to receive certificates and cheques from the High Sheriff and talked to them about their work, helping the audience to gain a greater understanding of the varied activity that is taking place across Essex to make our communities safe from crime and the fear of crime.

Essex Crimebeat gives support to young people who come up with ideas to make their schools and living areas safer places to be. The special High Sheriffs' Shield was awarded to the Footprints Community Group recognising the success of their Creative Cookery project. The project is run by 19 year old Karl Beavis and aims to encourage young people in Rochford to attend workshops where, as well as cookery, they will learn social skills and enjoy themselves. They will go forward to the National Crimebeat Awards in July.

The Essex County Fire and Rescue Shield which recognises the work of an organisation's support of young people was awarded to Victim Support for their Peer Mentoring Programme. The project involves training young people in schools to mentor and support their peers dealing with issues such as bullying, peer pressure, self-esteem issues, domestic violence and being a crime victim.



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The Volunteer Centre of the Year Award, launched at the Awards in 2002 by George Courtauld, was won by Langley Colts Youth which provides football club activities for young people in Harlow. The Group received £1,000 for the support, respect and training that it gives to its volunteers. Gino Ostacchini nominated the club. He said "In the seven years I have been a volunteer, I have seen the club grow extensively to currently support over 200 young people. The club is very pro-active and inclusive of everyone".

Ray Williams won the Essex Police Cup for his tireless commitment to the Thaxted Youth Club. Gerry Smith, who nominated Ray said "It is almost embarrassing to walk down Thaxted High Street with Ray and witness the constant greetings from people of many ages, all past members of the Youth Club. He is only concerned to represent the club's best interests and has never sought praise for his untiring work".

The event ended with two young students, Kaitlin Trennery and Helen Maynard reading poems they had written as part of the Rhyme Against Crime project in Harwich.

The High Sheriffs' Fund is managed by Essex Community Foundation, an independent charitable trust investing and distributing funds to local charities on behalf of individuals, companies, trusts and public agencies throughout Essex. Since the High Sheriffs' Fund was established in 1993, it has distributed over £134,000 to 172 charities in Essex helping to make our communities safer places to live and work.

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Notes to Editor:

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme which has distributed nearly 2,500 grants totalling over £8 million to Essex based charities and community groups. Funds are distributed on behalf of a wide range of donors who want their charitable giving to be accessible to local charities. www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk

High Sheriffs' Awards:

Lists of awards and grants in each District are attached, together with a list of the overall winners of the Cups and Shields.