

Your Excellency, Lady Gozney, Your Honours, Your Worships, Mr Attorney, family, friends and colleagues.

Firstly may I welcome you and thank you all for attending? I am very grateful to his Excellency and Lady Gozney for allowing this lovely house to be used for my swearing in ceremony and to their team here at Government House for facilitating it.

I thank His Excellency and the First Deemster for their kind words, all of which are completely undeserved but none the less welcome.

I have tried to think of how to express my feelings at my appointment as High Bailiff. In 2011 on my appointment as Deputy High Bailiff I used the words, honoured, delighted and humbled. I would simply like to repeat those sentiments today, perhaps adding "relieved"- how many times have I written the word "Deputy" in the last seven and a half years?

The office of High Bailiff dates back to 1777 when four High Bailiffs were appointed later reduced to two. It wasn't until 1933 when two became one (where have I heard that before) and High Bailiff William Lay was appointed as the first sole High Bailiff of the Isle of Man. Although undoubtedly all different in their approach to the role, prior to my appointment all of the High Bailiffs had one thing in common-they were all men. It is perhaps appropriate that I have been sworn in as the first woman to hold the office on this International Women's Day.

I am very conscious of following in the footsteps of giants, two of whom I am pleased are present here today, High Bailiff Moyle and Deemster Needham, both of whom approached the role in different ways but both of whom have undoubtedly left their mark- I can only hope and strive to be as successful in the office and not be remembered only as the first woman appointed but also as a good, effective, efficient, fair and innovative High Bailiff. I will do my best.

I have so many people to thank for assisting me on the way to today's appointment. All of those that I have invited here today have in some way contributed to my appointment I am very grateful to them.

Without that seemingly unremarkable but well-timed telephone conversation with Linda Watts back in 2007 I may not have come to the Isle of Man at all. Without the faith placed in me by my referees Michael Moyle and John Corlett and the panel who appointed me as Deputy High Bailiff in 2011 including my now, soon to be retired, friend Della Fletcher I wouldn't have been eligible to be appointed as High Bailiff.

Once appointed as Deputy High Bailiff I was assisted by the then High Bailiff, now second Deemster John Needham, Deemster Montgomerie and Stephen Tucker in understanding and dealing with what I soon learned are the very many and varied aspects of the office of High Bailiff.

In learning the joys of licensing law and the challenges of the organisation of the Licensing Court I enjoyed the benefit of the experience of the Magistrates who sit with me on the bench represented here today by Alan Gelling, of the then Sergeant of the Police Central Alcohol Unit, Darren Bradford and of course of Lisa Sinclair who managed somehow to get us through the Triennial Sessions in 2012 and beyond. The great sadness of my time as Chairman of the Licensing Court was the death of Jimmy Kneen so soon after his retirement from the bench, I still miss Jimmy's knowledge, experience and wonderful humour.

I have enjoyed working on Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme with Paul Morris and Maria Bridson, they both brought their different experience and expertise to their roles to allow us to work as an effective, and I like to think efficient team in considering applications for compensation for those injured as a result of crimes of violence- I am pleased that we will be able to reprise our role albeit for limited time.

My thanks also go to Paul Morris and Sharon Roberts for their references- I don't know what you said but it must have been good to have persuaded the interview panel who recommended my appointment to His Excellency.

I couldn't manage at all without the excellent support of the summary court administrative team, led by Liz Humphries, Rachel, Zoe and Sam are the cogs which keep the summary court's wheels, and mine in particular, in motion.

Whilst I know that all of the summary courts, the Tuesday courts in particular, look slick and effortless it may surprise you to know that it comes as a result of a great deal of unseen effort and preparation on their parts. I am very grateful for their efforts, efficiency and humour with which they go about their many and varied tasks.

We are moving into challenging times in the summary court. Thankfully the judiciary will soon be up to full strength with only the position of Deputy High Bailiff left to fill. We will be an entirely new team in the summary court, new High Bailiff, new Deputy High Bailiff and new legal adviser to the Magistrates.

Not only are there challenges in having a new team in place but also legislative changes are planned which will affect the summary courts, the proposed new sentencing powers for the High Bailiff, a proposed new and long overdue Licensing Act will undoubtedly impact on our workload.

Anticipated changes to legal aid, whatever they may be, will not only impact on the court but also across the Island's justice system generally.

But perhaps the biggest challenge will be from the introduction of the IOM Government digital strategy. The modernisation of court processes linked where appropriate to other agencies is long overdue, who could complain about not having to physically sign court registers, summons and court orders? Who could legitimately object to the improvement to management systems and records from a modern digital system? I welcome the changes to move Isle of Man Courts of Justice into the

21st century but I do so with a note of caution. We must not seize the opportunity to improve the systems for those of us using the courts today to the detriment of those who follow. We must make sure that we have the right people making the decisions on digital strategy and move together where appropriate and not as individual agencies. I recently attended a multi-agency meeting on digital strategy when the question was asked "are we the right people to be making the decisions on digital strategy?" Should a group of middle aged (well okay, old) people who still remember when you had to get up to change channels or turn off the TV, who are able to recall their granny's telephone number even though she has been dead for over 20 years, be the best to plan a digital future? The suggestion was made, not entirely flippantly, that there should be a 12 year old on the digital strategy board because they would have the vision, be brave enough to grasp the opportunities and understand the advantages offered by digitalisation. But perhaps we also need the old and middle aged to remind that 12 year old what we have. I had cause a while ago to look into the High Bailiff's records from the 1930s to assist an elderly man to find the identity of his father. Not only was I able (with assistance) to find High Bailiff William Lay's record of the affiliation proceedings that established the father's identity (no DNA in those days) but I was able to read and understand them. Could the same have been said if those records had been held digitally when you consider the rapid changes which have taken place in the digital arena in the last 20 years or so? The test for a digital strategy must be not only does it work for us in 2019 but will it also work for those following us in the future?

I understand that it is traditionally at times such as this to pass on the benefit of experience. If I have any advice to give to those looking to begin a career in law, male or female, it is that it is never too late to start. I was 32 when I stated my law degree and 39 when I qualified as a solicitor. To work hard, to at all times remember and to be thankful to those who have helped you on your way, don't be afraid to take a leap of faith and grab opportunities with both hands when they arise.

I am grateful to all who have helped me on my way to this appointment, but I would have not been able to achieve any of it without the love and support of my family. Unfortunately only Terry my husband and my daughter Robyn can be here today my son Duncan and his partner Liz trotting out that old chestnut of an excuse that they are busy saving lives in Liverpool.

Thank you for attending and making today special and for your patience in listening to me, thank you again Your Excellency and Lady Gozney for allowing us to share your home.

I look forward to speaking to you all over coffee.