

It's my privilege to serve others

HE holds Hampshire's Chief Constable to account and he's in charge of a £300m annual budget – but he never forgets he's there to serve others.

Michael Lane became Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton last year, with an electoral mandate to serve an area that covers 19 parliamentary constituencies and 14 local authority areas.

Yet at work, he considers himself just the public face of a team that strives passionately to keep us all safer – in partnership with a wide range of others. And in church, he's part of a community of worshippers who seek to care for their immediate neighbours.

Michael and his wife Alison have long been part of local worship with the Royal Navy, at St Ambrose at HMS Dolphin – where they were married 38 years ago – and, more recently at St Mary's Church, Alverstoke.

His responsibility to serve people of all faiths and none sits, for him, comfortably alongside his own faith, and the values and inspiration he draws from it.

"The Christian ethic and the



Below: Michael Lane; above: talking to Sgt Tony Jeacock at our recent Diocesan Synod meeting

role model, certain in her values, with huge inner strength, to hold to them in adversity."

He went to boarding school and learnt to say his prayers and, as a school group, marched in file to attend Sunday services. But it was a secondary school teacher, who was also a priest, who first helped him to actually listen for God's voice, both in chapel and in making choices.

He served in the Royal Navy for 30 years, joining at 17 and rising to the rank of commodore. His roles there helped to prepare him for his current job, including leading people in operational

a long time now. And today as Police and Crime Commissioner he thinks about how to care for our communities and recognises the importance of sustaining the police family.

And of his own family, Alison, his two sons, daughter-in-law and a grandson, Max, he says: "I couldn't do anything in public life if I wasn't supported by my family. They charge my batteries, motivate me and sustain me with their love."

After he retired from the Navy, he continued to seek opportunities to 'make a difference'. He was chief executive of a charity, the Jubilee Sailing Trust, that integrated able bodied and disabled people through tall ship sailing. He worked for Hampshire County Council, helping to regenerate the Rowner estate. He was elected to Gosport Borough Council in 2010, where he served as the chairman of economic development.

And he continues to serve the Church in a range of ways. He is a member of our Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, and two years ago chaired a group looking at the future of parish share.

Often asked if he 'enjoys' his current job, he has an immediate answer that: "There is much to enjoy, but by its nature it is not always enjoyable. What it is, always, is motivating. And it is a privilege to hold this important job at a time when the amount of change and financial constraints make it particularly demanding."

Michael says he is nearly always focussed on future

independently. It is however my responsibility to hold her to account on behalf of the community, as a critical and challenging friend."

The commissioning part of his job allows Michael and his team to initiate and support projects that aim to prevent crime, reduce offending and support victims.

This includes approving funding for local initiatives that aim to tackle issues relating to vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse, youth offending or rehabilitation for offenders once they have left prison. In February, after an extensive consultation and bidding round, he approved £1.7m of funding shared amongst 70 projects.

Michael tends to refer to a "journey of faith" and to emphasise 'service' as a core driver of his work and life. But he also says "my faith is hardwired into who I am and how I am. It isn't a bolt-on extra."

"I was recently in a refuge for women who had been living with domestic abuse and violence," he said. "It was a privilege to be allowed into the room, as the only man, and to hear their stories. To feel useful in that situation is one example how faith resonates for me.

"And recently when very tired, I received a gift of a beautiful service in our cathedral, surrounded by other people of faith and shared purpose. It was restorative, at just the right moment.

"I hope I can continue to serve and make a positive difference as I continue on my own journey of faith."



my faith

Police and Crime Commissioner Michael Lane sees his current role as an excellent way of putting his Christian faith into action – serving others, as Jesus commanded us to do

instructions we have from Christ are very clear – that we should serve others," he said. "This job allows me to serve the community using my professional skills. Helping to keep people, their families and their communities safer is what motivates me."

Michael was brought up in a single parent family, and learnt much from his mother's fierce independence. "She seemed occasionally stern to me when I was very young, but I came to understand some of the challenges she faced as a woman bringing up a child alone and holding down a job, in what was a very unequal world," he said. "She was a real

environments, setting policy, allocating multi-million pound budgets and people-centred projects.

Throughout his Service career, Michael continued his journey of faith and came to relish the variety of expressions and to appreciate the diverse experiences of spirituality he encountered. And he played his part in supporting inter-faith and inter-denominational approaches that created inclusive support available to all in the military and for their families.

Michael talks readily of the central importance of family. Both the military and church families have been a part of his life for