

NEW YEAR HONOUR

Knighthood for Hamilton

SEVEN-TIME Formula One world title winner Lewis Hamilton has been given a knighthood in the New Year honours list following pressure on the Prime Minister to approve the accolade.

Despite being one of the UK's most successful sportsmen, Hamilton had previously been repeatedly overlooked, reportedly due to his tax affairs.

The honour rounds off a bumper year for Hamilton which saw him equal Michael Schumacher's record with a seventh Formula One title and being voted Sports Personality of the Year for a second time.

Elsewhere, continuing the trend set by the Queen's Birthday Honours list, there are a slew of gongs for those seeking solutions to the problems posed by coronavirus as the pandemic drags on.

Veteran footballers Jimmy Greaves and Ron Flowers are also made MBEs after a long-running campaign to ensure every surviving member of England's 1966 World Cup-winning squad gets an honour.

There is a damehood for actress Sheila Hancock, who made her name in the West End before becoming a perennial figure on British TV screens.

People striving to end issues such as homelessness, domestic abuse and social isolation also receive awards, including Kim Leadbeater - sister of murdered MP Jo Cox - who becomes an MBE.

Many people looking out for the health and wellbeing of NHS staff during the pandemic received recognition for their efforts.

One example is Greta Westwood, chief executive of nursing charity the Florence Nightingale Foundation, who is recognised with a CBE for her work highlighting the mental health toll of the pandemic on frontline workers.

In music, star of the '90s UK garage scene turned music producer and DJ Craig David is recognised with an MBE.

Other film and TV stars to make the cut include former EastEnders actress Nina Wadia and also Coronation Street stalwart Sally Dynevor.

Susan was left delighted and emotional by news

By DAN NEWBOULD
News Reporter

EMOTIONAL and delighted is how a Tamworth managing director felt after hearing she would be awarded a New Year's Honour.

Susan Tipton MBE, aged 66, now of Harlaston but formerly of Tamworth, has received her honour for services to apprenticeships and charity in the West Midlands.

The Protocol Consultancy Services managing director beamed: "I am absolutely delighted. It is fabulous. It makes me very emotional. I never ever thought anything like this would happen to me. I haven't quite got used to it especially as I haven't been able to talk about it yet!

"This award is testimony to the significance of working with apprentices and traineeships. It is so important helping them get on the career ladder and seeing them develop into successful employees with responsible positions and gives great satisfaction. Their success is Protocol's success and now more than ever in these challenging times we need to support each other and help in making the lives and career prospects of local young people better.

"We are only a small organisation and usually in our industry most of these go to college principals and a few to independent training providers but mostly national ones so it is an excellent achievement.

"Even though I have been honoured with this it has never been just me except for the first five years or so. Particularly in the last 10 years I have had an excellent team around me, many of whom have been apprentices themselves and grown up with the organisation. It really has been a team effort. We are going to celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2021 so what a way to start.

"I would like to acknowledge and

express my thanks to my excellent, professional and skilled team, who share my values, goals, vision and aspirations; our learners and employers who have shown great loyalty and achievements; the support received from my fellow Directors of the Birmingham and Solihull Network of Training Providers, colleagues from West Midlands Combined Authority and of course my grateful and heartfelt thanks to AELP (Association of Employment and Learning Providers) who nominated me."

Susan set up Protocol Consultancy Services in 1996 as a small Midlands based apprenticeship training provider and over the last 25 years has supported more than 5,000 learners, engaging with over 2,500 employers and helping 2,000 NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) young people into apprenticeships or employment.

Over the 25 years, she has employed 40 apprentices in her own business, some of whom are now directors or senior managers.

She recalled: "I had taken redundancy from my previous company, I was 40 and I wanted to have a go at starting something so that is what I did.

"I grew the business. First I operated out of Tamworth and then I moved into a premises in the centre of Birmingham. Within the first year I had grown to 60 people on my books through word of mouth. I was a sub contractor to a local organisation and then I managed to go solo myself after a further five years and get my own direct contracts.

"We are an independent training provider that primarily work with apprentices. We do traineeships now as well, working to try and get on the career ladder.

"We have won various accolades over the years and I am a grade one Ofsted outstanding training provider

and have been since 2006. We have won Small Company Business Excellence Awards on numerous occasions, we are Matrix accredited and a runner up as Training Provider of the year for the 2019 Apprenticeship Awards.

"Alongside running this training company I also ran the Gungate Hotel and I brought a bit of fame to Tamworth because I went on the Hotel Inspector show in 2014. We had articles in the Herald. I eventually sold it in 2018 so I could focus back on the training company."

Through Protocol Consultancy Services, she has supported numerous national and local charities including the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and Alzheimer's Society and Dementia Friends.

"It is important to be able to give back," says Susan. "We champion the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation. Over the years, bearing in mind we are only a small organisation, we have raised about £70,000 through organising balls at Moor Hall or Drayton Manor. I would raffle off gourmet nights at the hotel.

"I became a Dementia Friend because of my mother who had Alzheimer's for the last 10 years of her life so that is dear to me. We also do Air Ambulance, Save the Children, Sport Relief, Christmas Jumper Day.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me with the charity work both locally and nationally that we have undertaken over the years."

So what does the future hold?

"I am still there and I am still active," said Susan.

"I am coaching, mentoring and working closely with somebody who started as an apprentice with me and is now operations director.

"There is a fantastic synergy between us and I would like to feel that I can hand over the company to



him when I am ready to. We make an excellent team working together.

"This has been the most gruelling, challenging year because of Covid - trying to keep money ticking over and keep the business going which we have been able to do, it has been tough times and I don't feel like the worst is over yet with everything that is going on in the world right now.

"Perhaps after next year I can slow down a little bit and enjoy life while still feeling I have a role to give with my expertise."

Susan has also led a Peer Review Group within the Birmingham Network of providers that support benchmarking and sharing of good practice with the learner and apprenticeships as the focus for activities for the last nine years.

She volunteers her experience and expertise by attending Birmingham Employment & Skills Board, post-16 forum, AELP and West Midlands network meetings.

She has previously chaired and is the current treasurer of the Birmingham & Solihull Work Based Training Providers and she has also been a KPMG mentor and QCF champion supporting other independent training providers and colleges.

The British Honours system: How does

THE release of the New Year Honours list provides another opportunity to celebrate individual outstanding achievements and contributions to British society.

But who decides how honours are handed out, and what exactly do they recognise?

Here we take a look at the inner workings of the honours system:

What are honours for?: Honours as part of orders of chivalry have been given by monarchs since the middle ages.

In recent times, the British honours system recognises people who have "made achievements in public life"

and "committed themselves to serving and helping Britain".

It acknowledges long-term volunteers, innovators, entrepreneurs, individuals displaying "moral courage", those making a difference in their community or field of work or people improving life for others less able to help themselves.

Honours are given to people involved in a range of fields, including sport, health, science and technology, education, business and the arts and media.

Gallantry awards recognising bravery can also be given to members of the armed forces and the emergency

services and civilians.

How are people nominated for honours?:

Any member of the public or an official body can nominate someone for an honour. UK nationals and citizens of 15 Commonwealth "realms" to which the Queen is monarch are eligible to be nominated.

People living or working overseas, whose achievements were made in another country or in the UK and have a significant international element, can be nominated too. Nominations are submitted to the Cabinet Office's Honours and Appointments Secretariat, which

oversees the honours system.

Someone who has made an exceptional contribution to the response to the coronavirus crisis in the UK can also now be nominated. Non-British or Commonwealth country citizens can be considered for "honorary" awards.

Who approves nominations?:

Consideration of nominations can take 12 to 18 months, but recent honours recognising services during the coronavirus pandemic were approved in less than six months. The suitability of nominees submitted to the Honours and Appointments Secretariat is established through