

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

Notes of the **POLICE AUTHORITY LIAISON MEETING** for the **Penwith** area held in Committee Room 1, Penwith District Council Offices, Penzance, on Tuesday 17 February 2009 at 19.30hrs.

PRESENT

Authority

Mr M Hicks Chairman
Mrs C Horton (Administrator)

Constabulary

Superintendent M Orpe (Local Policing Area Commander – West Cornwall), Inspector M Eccles (Sector Inspector - Penzance), PCSO C Britten

20 people attended the meeting, of whom 19 had signed the attendance register.

1. Welcome, Introduction & Housekeeping

The Chairman welcomed all those present at the meeting and introduced Superintendent Martin Orpe and Inspector Mark Eccles. He explained that the minutes of the meeting would be available on the Police Authority website and that any important issues would be fed-back and dealt with at the next full meeting of the Police Authority.

2. Consultation Questions

The Chairman asked those present to answer a number of consultation questions designed to assess the visibility of the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. A show of hands was given by the 20 people present in response to each of the following questions:

How many of you know your local Neighbourhood Policing Team? 11 People

How many of you know how to contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team? 13 people

How many of you have seen a Police Officer patrolling your neighbourhood in the last month? 7 people

3. Police Report

Inspector Eccles introduced himself and explained that he had been in post in Penzance for 6 months since last August. He gave the following report on performance in the area:

- The level of crime in Penzance remains low and stable although the figures show a slight increase in comparison with this time last year. This is mainly as a result of problems associated with the night-time economy; therefore patrols have been focussed on the town centre.
- There have been vast increases in the number of patrols and arrests in Penzance and a number of referrals have also been made for alcohol and drug rehabilitation to help tackle the problems of daytime drinking in the town centre. This has had a considerable positive impact and has resulted in a number of letters of appreciation being received from local individuals and businesses.
- Anti-social behaviour is still unacceptably high in the town centre at night and 7 individuals have been identified to go through the ASBO process to help tackle this.
- The police are working very closely with the local licensees to monitor individuals and identify troublemakers. A number of 'test purchase' operations have been carried out in the town and these will be repeated in the summer.

- The PACT priorities in the town centre are predominantly related to driving and parking infringements, and in particular drivers ignoring the one-way system in Market Jew Street. This issue is being tackled by the PCSOs who have found that the majority of people they stop are local people who are well aware of the one-way system and are choosing to ignore it. Drivers whose registration numbers are reported to the police by members of the public currently receive a warning and are then charged if they are caught a second time. It was suggested that further discussions need to be held with First Bus regarding their existing 2-way use of the street and that a one-way system (downhill) would be preferable. This suggestion is supported by the recent Disability Access Audit carried out in the town.
- A new 'Front Office' facility has recently opened in St Just for half a day every Wednesday to ensure that local people can access their neighbourhood team more easily. Similar facilities are also available in Heamoor, Marazion, Newlyn and Buryas and there are plans for a further facility in the far west of the area.

Superintendent Orpe rounded off the Police Report by announcing that the Penzance area is due to have an additional 5 officers and 1 PCSO in the near future as a result of the Chief Constable's vision to bring an additional 200 officers to the frontline by April 2009.

4. Open Session – General Questions on Policing Issues

The Police Officers and Members of the Authority responded to the following questions from the public:

- Lack of police opposition to licence applications – Inspector Eccles explained that the police have an excellent relationship with the Licensing Committee, but the committee is advised by the Council's legal team and the Police are only able to oppose an application in certain circumstances. He explained the importance of working with the local MP and councillors to look at the cumulative effect of new licence applications and try and oppose them on this basis. Where there are breaches of licence, the police or Council Licensing Officers should be notified so that enforcement action can be taken.
- Availability of drugs in the town centre – the police are aware that there is a problem and have carried out a number of operations with the drugs dog which have been quite successful. Also Operation Auckland recently tackled drug dealers in the town by using test purchasers which resulted in a number of arrests.
- Cars parked and for sale at the entrance to Alexandra Gardens – Inspector Eccles will ask the local team to check the area for obstruction offences and will also look into the issue of trading.
- The local officers were praised for their joined up working with other agencies and authorities, in particular with respect to tackling alcohol misuse by young people.
- Increase in Police precept – the Chairman explained that the precept will increase this year by 4.94%, as planned, in support of the Chief Constable's 3-year plan to improve services and the long-term aim to become one of the top ten performing forces in the country by 2012. This will not only provide the high quality policing that the local community deserves, but will also enable access to additional funding for specific initiatives. The Devon & Cornwall Police Authority is currently the lowest precepting authority in the country with this year's increase amounting to 13.5p per week on a Band D property.
- Proposed changes following the introduction of One Cornwall – police funding will still be allocated and distributed in the same way across Devon and Cornwall following the introduction of a unitary authority on 1st April 2009.
- Lack of visibility in rural areas such as St Just & St Buryan – this claim was disputed by Inspector Eccles who explained that the area is covered by a very active PC and PCSO who are very rarely diverted to cover Penzance. These officers usually attend parish council meetings and are also available in the local 'Front Offices'.
- A Drug Dealer was reported as operating in St Buryan – Inspector Eccles will follow this up.

- Repeated vandalism at St Erth Church – Inspector Eccles asked whether this had been reported and agreed to look into the matter.
- Thanks were given, both to the local officers in Penzance and to the Thames Valley Force, for their recent assistance in locating two missing persons.

5. Independent Custody Visiting Report

There was no Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) present to give a report, but the Chairman drew attention to a new leaflet which gives details of the role of ICVs and encouraged members of the public to become volunteers.

6. Matters of Interest from the Police Authority

The Chairman drew attention to the Police Authority Newsletter which gives the latest information about the Authority along with relevant contact details. He highlighted that 3 new Independent Members of the Authority had been appointed last October and explained that he was currently involved in the selection process to appoint a further two Independent Members to take up positions in November this year.

The Chairman emphasised that the Force is continuing to strive to meet the targets set in the Chief Constable's Long-Term Vision and assured all those present that the matters raised at the meeting would be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

7. Date and Venues of Future Meetings

The next Police Authority Liaison Meeting to be held in Penwith will take place on **Tuesday 20 October 2009 at 19.30hrs at Passmore Edwards Institute, Commercial Road, Hayle.**

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 20.45hrs.