

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of a meeting of the **Devon and Cornwall Police Authority** held at Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter on **Friday 26 September 2003**.

Present:

Mrs J Owen (Chairman), Mr D Money (Vice-Chairman), Mr M I R Bull, Mr C Bulley, Sir Simon Day, Mr T Evans Mrs O England, Mr B C Greenslade, Mr S M Malloni, Mr M Nevitt, Mrs C J Ryan, Mr J Smith, Mrs A Talbot, Mr W D Thomas and Mr C L Wallin.

APOLOGIES

Mr L D Brokenshire, Mrs A Colborne and P Tregunna,
ACC A Melville

/805 OPENING REMARKS

The Treasurer thanked the Authority for the wedding gift recently presented to him and his wife.

P/807 ITEMS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION

P/808 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2003 were signed as a correct record.

P/809 MATTERS ARISING

[P/796] Drug action teams – John Smith advised Members that the work to obtain information on performance had now been completed. A full review of Drug Action Teams was underway and the report on performance was expected at the beginning of November. Once received, this would give a clearer understanding of the situation.

[P/799] Meeting with Hazel Blears, Minister for Policing – Mrs Owen had received a reply from Hazel Blears, Minister for Policing, in response to her letter expressing concerns over the prospect of further increases in council tax for the 2004/05 financial year. Mrs Blears had accepted Mrs Owen's invitation to meet, however had suggested that this should be after the settlement for 2004/05 had been announced. It was thought this would be of little use and a letter had been sent asking for an earlier meeting.

P/810 CHIEF CONSTABLES REPORT

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Mr D Lucas on 25 September. Mr Streeter had transferred from Surrey Constabulary in 1998, having worked there for 20 years. He had been stationed in Launceston and Plymouth and had worked as a communications officer in the resource allocation department. Mr D Lucas joined the Force in December 2000 as an administration clerk in Crime and Operations within the Finance Department at HQ. Both members of staff would be greatly missed.

P/810 CHIEF CONSTABLES REPORT (Cont'd)

- 1.4 The murder of Eric Hingston was part of a major enquiry. Crime Stoppers had put up £10,000 reward for information relating to the arrest of the offender. The operation was being overseen by ACC Melville.
- 1.10 Officers involved in the violent burglary and assault of Nora Lea had presented her with a bouquet of flowers.
- 1.14 An officer threatened by an offender with a kitchen knife was commended for his decision to withdraw from the situation and call in ARV and Tactical Aid Group.
- 1.16 Members were reassured that incidents such as the armed robbery in Newquay were very rare.
- 1.20 – 1.26 A campaign to reduce the speeds at which some motorcyclists travelled was ongoing.
- 1.29 The involvement of officers from Devon and Cornwall had been instrumental in the arrest of a paedophile and his partner in Oxford.
- 1.30 Enquiries were still ongoing into the disappearance of Genette Tate. This year marked the 25 anniversary of the case.

Mr Wallin had received an independent enquiry report into the care of a victim of domestic violence, named as 'H'. Mr Wallin commended officers of the Force for the way in which they had handled the case; they had done their best to protect the victim but had been unable to prevent her death. He was particularly impressed with the evidence given by the officers involved and in particular that of officer Selley. The officers had been highly commended by the enquiry for their actions. Mr Wallin requested that the Chief Constable write to the officers concerned.

Mr Smith reported that the communities of Teignmouth had been very appreciative of the care and concern shown by officers dealing with the dead baby found on the banks of the River Teign.

- 1.33 Anti Social Behaviour Orders were a useful tool however were difficult to impose and there were constraints around how Judges could use them effectively. It was not possible to say specifically how effective they had been in Devon and Cornwall.
- 1.34 Chief Superintendent McGrath was commended for the work done in Torbay in relation to Operation Nickel.
- 1.36 Of assets seized in the fight against crime between 1 April 2003 and 1 July inclusive, £180,000 would be retained by the Force. In future, the central Asset Recovery Fund would be held by the Asset Recovery Agency. All Forces would be required to bid for a share of the fund.

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Operational Priorities

- 2.2 Members were advised that officers in other areas of the Force were also to receive training in the handling of Domestic Violence cases. This was welcomed by Members. Because of the increase in racist attacks against members of the community and officers alike, it was considered that training in this area should also be considered a priority.

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- 2.3 The Automatic Number Plate Recognition system was proving a useful tool in 'frustrating the travelling criminal'. It was to be decided how this system could continue to be used to best effect in the future.
- 2.5 PROMAT the new system used to make ID procedures more efficient had resulted in time savings equivalent to 3000 days and financial savings of £80,000.
- 2.10 Officer involvement in the maritime counter-terrorism / anti-smuggling initiative on and around the Isles of Scilly was of particular importance since the removal of resident customs officers on the islands.
- 2.11 Publicising of the new non-emergency telephone number was ongoing. There had been no significant increase in calls to the police and no performance issues had arisen to-date.
- 2.14 The levels of worry about burglary in Devon and Cornwall were third lowest nationally, car crime the eighth lowest, violent crime the seventh lowest and perceived level of high disorder the eighth lowest nationally.

Awards and Commendations

Members asked for the provenance of the awards detailed in the reports.

The Vera and Ada Murrin cups were awarded in memory of a relative who had died whilst serving as an officer in the Force.

The Waddell prize was introduced by ACC Waddell, a previous Assistant Chief Constable with the Force.

PC French had been seconded to the Training School and had died of multiple sclerosis. The Tony French cup was presented in his memory.

David Farley had been an Inspector with the Constabulary.

Members would welcome the inclusion of PCSOs when considering the awarding of awards and commendations.

Force Strength

The personnel snapshot taken on 31 August 2003 showed that the total number of police officers was 3270.8. This was 0.02 below the funding post profile (target) and had increased by 23 officers since the last meeting.

Temporary members of staff were included in the figures reported to the meeting, however the percentage was very low.

49% of PCSOs were female, showing an increase since the last meeting.

There had been a reduction in the number of Special Constables, from 609 to 593. Many Specials had successfully applied to become PCSOs and this had automatically reduced their number. It was common for members of the Special Constabulary to apply to join the regular Force. There was no target number of Special Constables that the Force was aiming to recruit. It was important that the quality of entrant remain high even if it was at the cost of increased numbers. The Lead Members for the Special Constabulary and PCSOs had identified that PCSOs and Specials in Cornwall felt isolated in respect of training.

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Mr Greenslade requested a breakdown of the Police Officer numbers for North and East Devon BCU.

The recruitment of black and minority ethnic officers was on target and the Force was looking to bring forward the requirement for 2004-05. It was thought that at least seven Forces elsewhere were not meeting their targets in this area. Retention was also an issue.

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Members considered the posters enclosed at the end of the Chief Constable's report entitled 'Spotlight on Success'. The Force had received letters from the public in support of the introduction of PCSOs. The evaluation of PCSOs had shown that public satisfaction with the way in which the towns where PCSOs had been placed were policed had increased since their introduction.

Members were updated on the current position in reducing levels of sickness amongst police staff.

Considerable improvements had been made, with an average of 8.93 days of sickness compared with 11.3 days in 2001/01. The savings made equated to 7 full time officers. The introduction of the Employee Assistance Programme in May 2003 was thought to have contributed to the 12% reduction in officer sickness and 13.8% reduction in support staff sickness seen since its introduction. The inclusion of a sickness standard under the 'Commitment to attendance' criteria as part of the Competency Related Threshold payment scheme and an increase in the number of occupational health specialists was also likely to have contributed.

Members were pleased to see these reductions which were based on existing low levels of sickness.

It was requested that figures for support staff sickness levels be reported in future reports.

Dr John Challenor, FMO had been influential in achieving these reductions and Members asked for their congratulations to him to be placed on record.

There were a few pockets where sickness levels could be improved. The Call Handling and Communications Department was one such area, however there was a relatively high number of staff in that department on recuperative duties. Members expressed some concern that staff may be inappropriately retained on recuperative duties. However, Police Authorities now had a duty under Regulation A20 of the Police Pensions Regulations 1987 to be involved in making these decisions and Members of the Human Resources Committee had recently received training to enable them to do this.

ACC Melville was involved in a major review of working shift patterns within the Force. This exercise was intended to match resources with demand and would be different for every BCU and department depending upon operational requirements. It was appreciated that shift patterns must be set primarily to suit the demands of the station or department over that of the officers and staff and achieving a satisfactory balance for all concerned was difficult.

to note the Force's performance in respect of reducing sickness levels amongst police officers within the Constabulary.

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P/812 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2002-03 (Cont'd)

RESOLVED

P/813 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The presentation on performance management given at the meeting on the 9th had been well received.

2. A meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee was held on 23 July 2003.

Members noted the items discussed by the Committee. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting.

Work on the Consultation Strategy was ongoing. Mr Money thanked those Members who had attended the Planning and Consultation seminar on 11 September.

It was requested that in future, strategy reports should be dated.

3. A meeting of the Resources Committee was held on 19 September 2003.

The following recommendation arose from the meeting:

[R/278] AIRWAVE COMPENSATION CLAIM

RESOLVED

[R/276] PROPERTY STRATEGY AND PFI UPDATE

RESOLVED

P/813 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES (Cont'd)

[R/279] IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORCE INTRANET

RESOLVED

[R/281] BARNSTAPLE REFURBISHMENT

RESOLVED

P/814 APPOINTMENT OF AN ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE

RESOLVED

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

P/818 OPERATIONAL MATTER

P/819 MULTI AGENCY PUBLIC PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS

P/820 MARY CLEVELAND