



**Philip Seccombe**  
**Police and Crime**  
**Commissioner**  
for Warwickshire



## MONTHLY UPDATE

*The latest news from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner*

March 2017

This week I announced a multi-million pound investment in mobile technology, which will see frontline police across Warwickshire equipped with personal-issue smartphones and laptop computers, enabling them to deliver a better service to the public and be more visible to local communities.

Police officers, PCSOs and operational staff will be allocated the mobile devices, giving them access to force IT systems while on the move, allowing fast access to intelligence, the ability to record crime and enabling a quicker response to incidents.

By encouraging increased mobile working, police officers and PCSOs will be freed up from having to return to a police base to complete administrative tasks, allowing for a more victim-focused service and creating greater visibility among local communities.



The joint investment across the alliance with West Mercia Police has been agreed with both Chief Constables and John Campion, the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia. The first rollout of smartphones to around 400 users has started this week, with more than 3000 smartphones to be issued in Warwickshire and West Mercia during March and April. This will be followed in the summer by a phased roll-out of laptops.

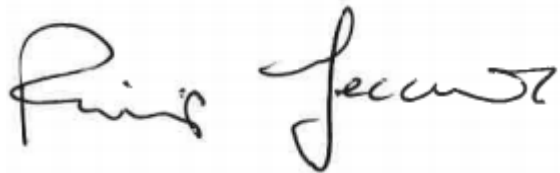
Over many years, police IT technology has not kept pace with the developments most of us now take for granted in our personal lives, such as the ability to use our smartphones while out and about to complete tasks and access services. Quite often victims have found they have better access to modern technology than the officers investigating their crimes

and this simply cannot be right.

Equally, the current situation where police officers and PCSOs are forced to return to police stations to sit at desktop computers to complete simple administrative tasks is inefficient and reduces the amount of time they can be out in their local communities.

I pledged in my Police and Crime Plan to modernise policing in Warwickshire and ensure that our officers and police staff have the right technology and training in place to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. This new investment, together with the enhanced technologies which will be employed when our state-of-the-art Operations Communications Centre opens at Neville House in Warwick, shows my determination to deliver on that promise and provide a better service for the public.

As a package, these investments will allow the police to provide a more victim-focused service while also being more visible among our local communities. I know this is something which will be very much welcomed by the public.



**Philip Secombe TD**  
**Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

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## **HMIC reports improvements to police effectiveness**

This week has seen the publication of the latest report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary as part of its PEEL inspection programme. This time, the inspectors reported on the effectiveness of Warwickshire Police and I'm pleased to say that the overall verdict is that the force is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime.

That overall finding of 'good' demonstrates the clear progress Warwickshire Police has made in the last 12 months and follows similar 'good' assessments during the Efficiency and Legitimacy inspections.

In the latest report, HMIC found advances had been made with digital investigations capability; the way in which the force tackles serious and organised crime; and also found that previous concerns about how the force responds to missing and absent children and more widely to vulnerable victims have all been addressed.



The HMIC inspectors also assessed that Warwickshire Police has good arrangements in place to respond to national threats, including being well-prepared to respond to an attack requiring an armed response.

Encouragingly, HMIC said that “the public can feel confident that Warwickshire Police protects vulnerable people and supports victims.”

This reflects the hard work and commitment to serving local communities and protecting the vulnerable that is demonstrated by officers and police staff on a daily basis. There can be no complacency, however, and there are still areas which HMIC has identified where further improvements can be made.

Warwickshire Police has a good track record of delivering against these recommendations and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure that they are acted upon in the same constructive way. In addition, the investments I am making in new technology and mobile working will further help to ensure that Warwickshire Police continues to move forward, delivering a better service our local communities and victims of crime.

## Hartshill Castle gets high-tech security help



Some good news from the Warwickshire Rural Crime Project this month, as a historic ruin near Nuneaton has been given some high-tech crime prevention help.

Hartshill Castle - a Motte and Bailey castle whose ruins date from 1330 and now listed as a scheduled ancient monument - has suffered over recent months as criminals have sought to steal or damage the stone remains. In response PCSO Sarah Fretter from Warwickshire Police and Carol Cotterill, Rural Crime Coordinator for North Warwickshire, have been working with the custodians of the castle to improve security.

Recently, they were approached by the SmartWater Foundation, who offered to help create a deterrent by marking the stones with a unique SmartWater solution, enabling them to prove the provenance and bring a prosecution against the thieves should anything further be stolen.

Reading University's Department of Archaeology carried out tests to ensure the SmartWater would not cause any damage to the ruins, allowing Historic England to give its approval for its unusual use.

Miss Jean Lapworth, settler of the Harold Lapworth Charitable Trust which owns the castle, added: "I am extremely grateful to the Smartwater Foundation for their generosity and interest in helping us preserve the remains of the castle. The castle, which is in the centre of Hartshill, is valued by the community and I am sure the residents will join me in expressing their gratitude to everyone who has helped us in putting measures in place to help protect the site."

The Rural Crime Project is a scheme I fund to help rural communities across the county to protect themselves from crime. Three Rural Crime Co-ordinators work with Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams to help local residents, businesses and sites of historic importance to boost their security.

Pictured above at the castle are: are North Warwickshire Rural Crime Co-ordinator Carol Cotterill; Ian George, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England; Miss Jean Lapworth, custodian of the castle; Phil Cleary, Co Founder and Director of Smartwater and PCSO Sarah Fretter.

## Blue light collaboration developments

As you may know, I have recently been chosen to chair the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

It couldn't be a more timely point to taking on this role, as we have just seen the Policing and Crime Bill receive its Royal Assent recently, to become the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This marks an important milestone for emergency services collaboration and should help to encourage local services to build upon the close working relationships which already exist.



The new Act introduces a raft of measures designed to make collaboration between the

blue light services go further and faster, helping to break down barriers to allow even closer working relationships where these make the most sense. New measures include:

- A duty to collaborate on police, fire and emergency ambulance services;
- The possibility for PCCs to be represented on their local fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), with voting rights, where the FRA agrees;
- Enabling PCCs to take on the governance of fire and rescue services, where a local case is made via either a Governance Model or a Single Employer model.

Central to this vision are that the measures are enabling and should build upon the many good examples of collaboration which are happening up and down the country. Some PCCs have already stated a desire to take on greater responsibilities for their local fire services, while others are at earlier stages of discussion.

In areas where PCCs are looking to explore options for taking on responsibility for fire and rescue services, they will be required to consult locally and submit a detailed business case. There is also a duty to consult with affected police and fire personnel and I know that PCCs will be listening carefully to the views of the public and their key partners.

Here in Warwickshire there is already good collaboration between the police and fire service - perhaps the most visible representation being the training of a number of PCSOs as retained firefighters. I am keeping an open mind as to how we might proceed with closer collaboration, bearing in mind the need for the development of strong business case and clear local support as the first steps.

With County Council elections taking place in May, I think having any formal local discussions on possible options would be premature at the present time, but this a topic I will looking at in more depth in conjunction with all the relevant local partners later in the year. Whatever these eventual discussion might yield, there will be a full public consultation before any decisions are taken, to ensure everyone has the chance to have their views taken into consideration.

## **New Independent Custody Visitors wanted**



Could you help see behind the scenes in police custody? That's the question I'm asking as I seek new volunteers to help boost the vital service which helps ensure police custody facilities and practices are correct and that the welfare of detainees is looked after.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), as they are known, have the power to turn up to police custody blocks unannounced to talk to detainees and make sure that everything is operating as it should. That includes checking on the detainees' welfare – for example, whether they getting enough to eat or drink, or any required medical help or medication. It also includes checking that police officers are following all the correct legal processes and protocol. Any issues found by the ICVs can be immediately raised with the custody staff, while a wider report also comes back to me to ensure that overall standards are being maintained.

I'm very happy to say that in Warwickshire there were 82 visits to custody carried out in 2016, with no serious issues identified - but it's vital that we retain a good pool of volunteers to provide the public with assurance that the current high standards are maintained.

I'm keen that we encourage new people to come forward and join the well-established schemes we have here in Warwickshire, from as wide a range of backgrounds and ages as possible. It's a fascinating and important role, so I'd urge people who want to do something beneficial for their community to come forward and find out more.

To be eligible to apply you must be over 18, live or work in Warwickshire, and have been a resident of the UK for at least 3 years.

You will not be suitable if there could be a conflict of interest e.g. you are a serving police officer or Justice of the Peace (Magistrate). All applications are subject to police vetting. If you are interested in becoming an Independent Custody Volunteer, please visit: [www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/vacancies/](http://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/vacancies/) for more details of how to apply.

## **Joint Audit Committee members wanted too!**

Continuing the theme from above, I'm also looking for volunteers to help scrutinise police finances and offer a strong and independent voice on corporate governance affairs.

Together with the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and the Chief Constables for Warwickshire and West Mercia, I have launched a search for citizens with a good understanding and experience of public sector legislation and guidance who



are politically neutral to sit as members of the Joint Independent Audit Committee.

The Committee will review and scrutinise the affairs of both organisations, looking at issues such as risk management, internal control and corporate governance as well as overseeing audit arrangements and reviewing financial statements

We are now looking to appoint a Chair, Vice Chair and four independent members. The appointments will be for either a two year period from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2019 or a four year period from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2021.

The closing date for applications is March 6, 2017 - to find out more, visit our vacancies page at: [www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/vacancies/](http://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/vacancies/)

## The month ahead

Here are some of the key events in my diary for the month ahead:

**March 6:** Visit to Supported Village scheme, Willoughby

**March 7:** Rugby Community Safety Partnership meeting

**8 March:** Speaking at Warwickshire Unison AGM, Kenilworth

**8 March:** Warwickshire Rural Crime meeting, Stratford

**13 March:** Visit to DACS, Bedworth

**15 March:** Association of Police and Crime Commissioners meeting, London

**22 March:** Speaking at Citizens' Academy graduation, Warwick

**28 March:** Place Partnership meeting

**29 March:** Alliance Governance Group, Hindlip

**30 March:** Meeting with IPCC Assistant Commissioner, OPCC offices.



In addition, I have a weekly meeting with the Chief Constable to hold the force to account and discuss any arising issues. You can find details of these meetings [here](#).

A full schedule of my key meetings and events is kept up-to date online at [www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/event/](http://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/event/)

**The next newsletter will be published on Friday, 7 April.**