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MONTHLY UPDATE

The latest news from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner

June 2019



I'm pleased that the opening topic for this month's newsletter covers similar ground to last month's, albeit with additional historic proportions. The campaign to recruit more officers to Warwickshire Police is really gaining momentum, with six cohorts of student officers now undergoing their training at Leek Wootton, ahead of their deployment to patrol policing roles over the course of the rest of the year. The Chief Constable tells me his research indicates that the group of 76 is the highest number of new recruits to be trained simultaneously in the force's 162 year history, which is quite an achievement.

Last week I attended a special parade to celebrate these record numbers at Leek Wootton. You can see the impressive ranks of new officers in the photo above, lined up behind myself, Chief Constable Martin Jelley and Assistant Chief Constable Debbie Tedds.

As well as the new student police officers, the cohort includes nine new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who are also undergoing their training at Leek Wootton.

PCSOs play a vital part of our Safer Neighbourhood Teams, engaging with local communities and in particular building up relationships with younger people as they work to solve the underlying problems in their areas. I was pleased to be able to fund five new PCSO posts this year, with the remainder helping to replace some of the current PCSOs who have successfully applied to become police officers.

Boosting the numbers of 'boots on the ground' can only be a good thing for the county and will help to improve the visibility of our police and the response the public receives when they call 999 and 101, which I am sure will be welcome, particularly in our rural areas. The uplift into patrol policing from the new recruits will also help to release officers to form a new rural crime team, that will specifically work across the county to target criminal activity in our rural areas. This will build upon the existing work of the Reducing Rural Crime Co-ordinators I fund and I hope will prove an effective addition to the force's response to this area of crime.

There are more photos from the parade at the end of the newsletter.


On Tuesday, a jury at a Coroner's inquest ruled that police restraint of a man from Coventry who died days after being arrested contributed to his death. Darren Cumberbatch died in hospital nine days after being restrained by police in Nuneaton in July 2017.

Firstly, I offer my sympathies to Darren Cumberbatch's family and friends at this difficult time, as I have from the outset. This was a very tragic incident which raises questions about the actions taken by the police and it will be vital to answer these in order to provide reassurance to all communities across Warwickshire.

A separate investigation by the Independent Office of Police Conduct will shed further light on what happened in due course and I will be keen to see its conclusions when they are published.

Warwickshire Police says it recognises the importance of taking the appropriate time to carefully consider the inquest outcome and to ensure that police officers are prepared to manage all the risks they face in the course of protecting the public. The jury's narrative verdict stated that some of the restraint used may have been excessive and that despite attempts to de-escalate the situation, officers could have continued to do more.

The case highlights that policing is often challenging and officers face difficult situations in which they must make dynamic decisions on a daily basis. It is important that any action they take is appropriate and proportionate and is seen to be so by the public. I will be discussing the questions this case raises directly with the Chief Constable, once all of the appropriate authorities have reported their findings, in order to seek further reassurance on the public's behalf.



Philip Secombe TD
Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Meeting with the Association of Convenience Stores



From left to right: Eleanor O'Donnell and Ed Woodall from the Association of Convenience Stores; Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Secombe; Business Crime Advisor Bogdan Fironda; and OPCC Development and Policy Lead Debbie Mullis.

On Wednesday I met with Ed Woodall and Eleanor O'Donnell from the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS). This organisation is the voice of over 33,500 local shops, supporting its members through lobbying, advice and networking opportunities.

Earlier this year I provided my support for the work the ACS is doing around business crime, and this meeting was the opportunity for me to find out more about their work and for me to update them on what is being done in Warwickshire to address the issue.

We were joined by the OPCC's Development and Policy Lead Debbie Mullis and my Business Crime Advisor Bogdan Fironda, who was able to outline the work he carries out to support ACS members, through the Warwickshire Business Watch website, crime prevention visits and through partner agencies.

As we have seen only too recently in Fenny Compton and at other locations in Warwickshire, the nature of crime against convenience stores has changed significantly in recent years, with an increase in organised crime groups stealing ATMs, using violence to threaten staff in to handing over cash, alcohol and tobacco, and larger scale thefts.

There are also more repeat offences of shoplifting by vulnerable individuals in the community, perhaps to finance drug or alcohol dependencies and it is clear a police and partnership approach is required to tackle these underlying problems.

I was able to reiterate my commitment to tackling business crime, whether it occurs in urban or more rural parts of our county. The ACS was impressed with the range of initiatives that take place in the county around business crime, including the Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative, local Business Improvement Districts and Community Safety Partnerships. We also discussed the police's problem solving approach and the work that I have commissioned around drugs and alcohol support services and for victims.

It was a positive meeting and I look forward to working with the ACS in the future.

Flying the flag for our armed forces



This week I welcomed the Armed Forces Day flag to my office on Reserve Forces Day (June 26), to show my support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community - from currently serving troops to service families, reservists, veterans and cadets.

As many of you know, I am also the volunteer chair of the West Midlands Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association alongside my role as PCC, so I am pleased Warwickshire Police remains committed to its Reservist Policy,

allowing officers and police staff to join reserve forces if they want to do so.

Strong reserve forces are a vital element in the protection of our national security, while the additional skills that reservists bring back to Warwickshire Police is something that the wider community here in the county can benefit from on a daily basis.

Warwickshire Police will be observing Armed Forces Day itself on Saturday (June 29) when the flag will continue to be flying proudly at Leek Wootton after its trip around the police bases of the county.

Visiting my office with the flag was Sergeant Vicki Duffield-Smith from Warwickshire Police, who is also a Royal Navy Reservist.

Finns Law brings greater protection for police dogs



Warwickshire Police Dog Buzz, ready for duty!

A new law protecting police dogs and other services animals is an important recognition of the vital role they play in keeping communities safe.

The Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Bill, known as 'Finn's Law', came into law on Saturday (June 8) and will prevent those who attack or injure service animals from

claiming self-defence and also means that service animals will not be treated simply as 'property' by the law.

The law is named after Finn, a Hertfordshire Constabulary police dog who was stabbed whilst pursuing a suspect with his handler PC David Wardell. Finn sustained serious stab wounds to the chest and head while protecting PC Wardell from a knife-wielding robbery suspect. However, only criminal damage charges could be brought against his attacker with the law as it stood.

I've been extremely impressed by the way in which PC Wardell and Finn have campaigned to change the law to make sure service animals have the level of protection in law that their tireless work to protect our communities deserves. I wanted that protection for our police dogs here in Warwickshire, which is why I was pleased to back the campaign.

The previous law, which treated service animals as little more than property, was simply inadequate, so it is absolutely right that this has now been corrected. This new legislation, coupled with the government's plans to increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty offences to five years in prison, will make sure those who harm service animals are punished accordingly.

The need for this new legislation does very sadly highlight the risk of violence that all our service animals and police officers face in the course of their duties. However, I think the strong public support for Finn's Law illustrates how highly we all think of service animals and policing more generally – and that's something I hear reflected time and again across Warwickshire.

Bradby Club celebrates 100 years with PCC support



I recently attended a special event to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Brady Club, the Rugby charity which makes a huge difference to the lives of young people in the borough.

The club was originally founded in the aftermath of World War One, which had left a generation of children without parental support. Rugby School housemasters G.F. Bradby and the Rev Canon Bonhote began arranging activities and games for the boys of Union Street. The group soon grew and began using a building at Rugby School's Hillbrow site in the 1920s. In 1947, G.F. Bradby died and left in his will ground in Union Street to be used as a children's playground and this would become in future years the home for the charity's work.

Today, the Brady Club offers a range of services and activities to support young people in their journey into adulthood. Nightly open access youth club sessions run three nights a week, while the Club also offers a substance misuse service for young people and targeted youth support, which aims to identify and work with young people who have additional or complex needs.

I am delighted to fund some of the Bradby Club's valuable work, including its Safer Relationships project, which works with young people to provide information and advice on matters surrounding sexual health and safe relationships.

As I told those present at the celebration evening, I can also recall being involved in the 50th anniversary celebrations, where I took part in a sponsored run in what turned out to be pretty horrendous weather conditions. I'm not sure I'd fancy doing the same again now!

I am pictured above at the celebration evening with Cllr Deepah Roberts, Deputy Mayor of Rugby. With thanks to Cllr Howard Roberts for the photograph.

Picture Special: New Police Recruits on Parade

More images from the record-breaking parade of new student police officers and PCSOs at Leek Wootton.



Diary dates

Here are some of the key events in my diary for the next few weeks:

July 1: Visiting Quinton Community Speedwatch, Lower Quinton

July 2: Hartshill Parish Council

July 3: Police governance conference, Daventry

July 4: Student officer passing out ceremony, Warwick

July 11: Student officer passing out ceremony, Warwick



July 12: Federation of Small Businesses' engagement event, University of Warwick

July 13: Whitacres & Shustoke Show

July 18: North Warwickshire Police Cadets awards, Nuneaton

July 19: Regional police governance meeting, Birmingham

July 25: Meeting with the Independent Office for Police Conduct, OPCC

July 26: Blue Light Collaboration Board, Warwick