

**Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Making the money work

Hello everyone,

Please forgive the delay in sending you this month's newsletter but I do have an excellent reason. I was very keen to include the first of what I sincerely hope will be an annual event for Bedfordshire Police and OPCC, which some of you will have attended on 19 September at Woburn Abbey. I had taken on board the considerable role in building confidence and trust in the Force that is delivered by our yearly Community Cohesion Thankyou Awards and dinner. However, since these concentrate on our two larger urban areas of Luton and Bedford and are attended primarily though not exclusively by our diverse community members, I felt very strongly that those living in our smaller towns and villages were missing out on the opportunity to learn about what police have been doing in their area and also to be similarly rewarded for exceptional assistance to policing.

To this end, I held the first Community Hub Thankyou Awards in the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn. For those of you who are immediately thinking that this must have entailed substantial expense, I need to reassure you that, thanks to the incredible generosity of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, the venue was provided to us free of charge, welcome drinks were provided as a gift and the cost of the meal was reduced so that it was the exact equivalent of that involved in delivering our Cohesion dinner. As you can imagine, I am hugely grateful for all this help. My team and I set up the room and produced the flowers, candles and other decoration to try to make this an outstanding event for all involved.

The evening allowed each of the eight Community Hubs of Inspectors, Sergeants, PCs and PCSOs in the county to set out some of their key achievements in problem solving on behalf of communities over the last year and also to select a member of the public for each Hub area, and on behalf of the Rural Crime team, Op Sentinel Rural, who has gone the extra mile to really help the Hubs in this work in 2018-19.

If you are not a criminal or victim of crime you will be unlikely to meet your Hub officers on a regular basis and I am keenly aware that our newspapers throughout the county focus so narrowly on a particular town that, without holding this event, it has been extremely difficult to get out the word of what the Community Hubs have been achieving; from reduction of ASB in Shefford and Flitwick, to permanent removal of homeless individuals from the streets of Bedford to the tackling of street drinking in Leighton Buzzard and dramatic reduction of drug "throw overs" at HMP Bedford.

I am told that the members of the public and councillors who attended greatly appreciated these updates and will now 'spread the word' and the Community Hub officers themselves said that they not only felt honoured to have had a thankyou event in their name at such a fantastic venue but that they themselves were grateful for the chance to tell those present about their problem solving approach and successes.

Yours
Kathryn



Kathryn Holloway
Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire



News from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner



The PCC welcomes Garry Forsyth into his new role as the Chief Constable for Bedfordshire Police

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has warmly welcomed her newly appointed Chief Constable, Garry Forsyth, into his new role this week.

Commissioner Holloway said "I'm absolutely delighted to be working even more closely with my new Chief Constable, Garry Forsyth.

"People should be reassured that we haven't let the ball drop for a moment: we've been in touch with the new Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Policing Minister to make Bedfordshire Police's bid as early as possible for a fair share of the new uplift of 20,000 officers that's been promised nationally. Our voices are being heard as one concerning the need for Policing to have two entry routes for new Constables moving forward - both a degree programme, which the College of Policing is insisting on, and a non-degree route - not least as we cannot allow this to become a bottle neck, holding up the uplift in our front line."

Chief Constable Garry Forsyth added "I am honoured to have the opportunity to build on the legacy of my predecessor Jon Boutcher and the Commissioner Kathryn Holloway. Having been part of the senior leadership of the force over the last two years I am very much looking forward to evolving the force to an even stronger position working with our excellent staff, communities and partners.

"Unsurprisingly at the top of my priorities will be continuing to ensure that we have the right level of funding for Bedfordshire so we can provide the services the public want and deserve, and that our officers and staff want to deliver.

"While it will not deliver all of the resource we know we need, I am encouraged by recent announcements of investment, but there will be lots of work to be done with many partners if the effect of this investment is to be properly felt by the public. We will need the infrastructure development and support of other public sector agencies and the whole criminal justice system in order to make the difference that I know the public want to see, but after spending the last nine years as a chief officer making savings from police budgets the difficulties of significantly growing our workforce are finally a nice problem to have.



"I have seen at first hand the benefits that can be achieved with the strong support of a determined PCC and this has been key to securing additional funding for the force and transforming how the force is perceived across the country. I very much look forward to continuing in this vein and I am excited at the start of my tenure for the future of our force and the county of Bedfordshire," said the Chief Constable.

Both the PCC and Chief Constable Forsyth have been quick to launch their new working partnership side by side at various events this week.

"We have been out and about together, most recently last Sunday (28 July), at the annual Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Memorial Day for those who have lost their lives in police service. I don't know who was more pleased that we didn't have to weather the storms on a bicycle as one of Bedfordshire Police's fantastic 18 commemorative cyclists who rode as part of the Unity Tour, which opens this event, all the way from our county to the National Memorial Arboretum in Burton on Trent!" said Commissioner Holloway.

"Garry and I get on incredibly well; we've proved that we are a strong working partnership over the past two years, while Garry has been the Deputy Chief Constable, and I'm completely certain that he is the right person in the right job to take Bedfordshire Police into an ever brighter future in the service of the public in this county."



PCC welcomes Home Office investment to tackle serious violence across Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has vowed to ensure money assigned to a Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) will make a real difference in driving down gun, gang and knife crime across the county as a whole.

The Home Office confirmed this week (Monday) that Bedfordshire has been awarded £880,000 to set up the specialist unit to bring together different organisations including police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime at its root cause, in a whole system approach.

"Serious violence has been on the rise nationally and, sadly, this is no different in Bedfordshire which also faces the scourge of gang, gun and knife crime; where we have seen young people murdered and seriously injured on our streets, with a stabbing virtually every day.

"It is absolutely crucial that we have a genuine partner approach to tackle this issue in society and that everyone plays a part in steering young people away from becoming involved in such crime before it is too late," said Commissioner Holloway. Bedfordshire is one of 18 forces across the country set to benefit from the £35m Government funding to tackle knife crime and serious youth violence through specialist violence reduction units.

The initial plans for the VERU were first announced in June and followed separate grants to the PCC of £4.571m to pay for the Force's specialist gun, gang and knife team, Boson, allowing it to be doubled with a permanent unit in the north as well as the south of the county, and £1.38m for extra patrols, intelligence data-gathering and community projects.

T/Deputy Chief Constable Jackie Sebire, who is also the National Police Chiefs' Council portfolio lead for serious violence, said: "The VERU will allow us to work much more closely with partners in a 'public health' approach to preventing gun and knife crime. I have said, time and time again, that this is not purely a police problem and that a joined up approach to address the root causes of serious violence is the only way to tackle this problem.

"It is fantastic that the additional funding has now been confirmed, which means we can drive forward with our plans for a Bedfordshire-wide approach to reducing violence. Every penny will make a difference, and we now have the incredibly important job of turning our plans into reality."

Late last year, the Home Office agreed to award a £4.571m Special Grant to the PCC to cover the unprecedented costs of Bedfordshire Police's Boson team in fighting gang violence and weapon supply over three years, including in 2018-19. Earlier this summer, the former Policing and Fire Minister, Nick Hurd, confirmed in writing to the Commissioner that the Home Office will pay for the cost of the Boson unit in the next financial year too, after she supplied details of the results of its investment.

"I was able to prove to the Home Office team that their money had been very wisely invested in Bedfordshire and produced real results, as the Boson units in the north and south of Bedfordshire had chalked up 148 years in prison terms in a year. But it's a truism that you can't just arrest your way out of serious youth violence. There's a much wider piece of work around winning hearts and minds through education, driving home the health messages around the dangers and working with local authorities and communities themselves to better safeguard children and intervene earlier to protect them when they are vulnerable to being lured into gangs and knife carrying," said Commissioner Holloway.

"I'm delighted that the money for the VERU has now been rubber stamped, after the Home Office reviewed a detailed description of our bid, and it will allow this countywide, joined-up approach, which is the only way to tackle the escalation of violence that we've seen. While the Force will, of course, continue the hugely impressive work of its Boson unit to arrest and prosecute those involved in gun, gang and knife crime, the VERU will give us the opportunity to be much more proactive in preventing vulnerable young people being exploited and drawn into violence in the first place.

"It also demonstrates, yet again, that the Home Office accepts that Bedfordshire Police is not sufficiently well funded through its core Government grant to be able to respond to all the serious and complex crime challenges it faces.

"Our T/DCC, Jackie Sebire, has shown great leadership in helping us secure this funding and I'm committed to helping her ensure that it is put to good use in making Bedfordshire a safer place for us all."

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has involved members of the worst hit communities to advise it and the Force on projects which are felt likely to be most beneficial in preventing gang and knife crime. These include presentations in schools by emergency medicine specialist, David Kirby, from the Luton and Dunstable University Hospital and playing pupils the hard-hitting '24 Hours in Police Custody' episode 'Knifed' showing a machete fight and double stabbing in The Mall, Luton, and the murder of 18-year-old Azaan 'AJ' Kaleem in a knife attack in the town. The VERU bid will span the entire county and involve Bedford Borough Council, Luton Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The confirmation of the funding has been welcomed by all three local authorities in Bedfordshire.

Chief Executive of Luton Council, Robin Porter said: "This funding is excellent news for Bedfordshire.

"It will ensure the vital work to tackle crime both in Luton and across the county can continue, and can make a real difference.

"Tackling serious violence needs a partnership approach and as a local authority we have a vital role to play.

"Eradicating poverty and improving the life chances of our residents is a key priority for Luton Council.

"We want to understand the root causes of violence and collaborate on prevention, early intervention and support to make lasting change which will ultimately save lives.

"If we can work together with our partners to drive vulnerable people away from poverty, we can make a real and long-lasting difference to them, their families and our communities."

Cllr Colleen Atkins, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety at Bedford Borough Council, said: "We are committed to working in partnership with police and key partners and this funding allocation will go some way to helping Bedfordshire Police in ongoing efforts to tackle the serious issue of violent crime."

Councillor Ian Dalgarno, Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive Member for Community Services, said: "This is great news, we welcome this funding and hope it will help make a real difference to our communities."



PCC and Chief Constable joined by BGT stars Dave and Finn to welcome nearly 15,000 visitors to Family Fun Day

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, and Chief Constable, Garry Forsyth, were joined by Britain's Got Talent finalists PC Dave Wardell and the police dog which saved his life, "Fabulous Finn" as they opened the Force's 2019 Family Fun Day (Sunday 1 September 2019).

PC Wardell is still a serving member of the Dogs Unit which serves Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, although Finn has now retired from police duties and still lives with PC Wardell and his family.

PC Wardell explained to the crowd that he had honed the magic act which took him and Finn to the BGT final with the show's producers to draw attention to the campaign for "Finn's Law" for tougher penalties for those who attack police service animals, which became law in June 2019, after Finn, who had already been stabbed by an escaping burglar, threw himself in front of him to save PC Wardell from a fatal blow. Two vets fought to save the life of the heroic dog.



"There's no doubt at all that Finn risked his life to save me. He usually slept in a kennel but, when he came home, I made a bed up on the floor and slept beside him for four weeks. I'd been stabbed in the hand myself but the physical injuries were the least of it; he helped me get over the mental effects of the attack just as much as I helped him get over his physical injuries," PC Wardell told the crowd.

"People think I've become a millionaire through Britain's Got Talent but I haven't made a penny; it was always about drawing attention to Finn's Law."

PC Wardell confirmed that Finn had made a huge impact on BGT lead judge, Simon Cowell; a well know dog lover: "Simon Cowell has invited us to his home for dinner to meet Squiddly and Diddly, his own two dogs, and he also made a substantial contribution to a German Shepherd charity as a result of us appearing on the show," he said.

Chief Constable Garry Forsyth opened the 2019 Bedfordshire Police Family Fun Day which took place on the sports field where the police Dogs Unit also train, on Sunday. In brilliant sunshine, the Fun Day attracted 14,725 visitors this year. Chief Constable Garry Forsyth said: "The Family Fun Day was an amazing day and I want to express a huge thank you to everybody who contributed and everyone who came to support the event. It was great to see so many people enjoying themselves. "We were very fortunate to have the day opened by Britain's Got Talent finalists PC Dave Wardell and Finn, the police dog that saved his life. There were so many stalls showcasing what policing is all about and getting people involved in the important work that we do, including impressive displays from the dog unit and an exciting landing from the police helicopter by our colleagues from NPAS. To top it off we raised a huge amount of money for our force charity Embrace CVOC supporting child victims of crime. "These events are so important for the force to build relationships with our local communities, we loved meeting you all and we hope to see you at next year's event."

PCC Kathryn Holloway, a former presenter with TV-am and Sky News, then interviewed PC Wardell and met Finn. "It was an absolute pleasure to meet Dave and Finn and to hear this quite remarkable story from the man himself. It sounds more like a feature film than real life and should be made into one in my view: a police dog who forms an incredible bond with his handler and goes on to save his life, despite receiving horrendous injuries in the process; the law seeing an attack on a police dog as "criminal damage" so a campaign is launched for tougher penalties which actually becomes law. The two of them going on to the final of Britain's Got

Talent without a dry eye in the house - certainly not mine - and also winning a Cruft's Award for human friendship with dogs, this summer - you couldn't make it up! "No wonder Dave and Finn were such a draw that almost 15,000 people from families across Bedfordshire poured in to meet them and enjoy all the other attractions on such a fantastic day. What a way to end the school holidays." she said.

On 5 October 2016, Finn was attacked with a 10" hunting knife by a burglar trying to escape as he was pursued. As a direct result, The Annual Welfare (Service Animals) Bill was published in parliament by Sir Oliver Heald MP and received its second reading in June. The legislation will remove a section of the current law of self defence, often used by those who harm a service animal, and aims to increase maximum sentences for such attacks to five years imprisonment.

Finn was stabbed in the head and received extensive stab wounds to his abdomen in the attack but is now enjoying his retirement with the Wardell family.

The Family Fun Day also included a visit from the National Police Air Service (NPAS) helicopter, displays by the Dogs Unit, a chance for families to try on uniforms and get into police vehicles to sound the sirens and set off blue lights, a visit from the motor cyclists of the Road Policing Unit and partners such as Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, face painting by members of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, fairground rides and food stalls, including a Caribbean Food Shack run by Reactive8, who support ex-offenders to reform, on both sides of the HMP Bedford prison doors, on behalf of the PCC.

"In my opinion, it was the best Fun Day so far and not just because of the weather; Dave and Finn really made the day for me and everyone who got to meet them," said Commissioner Holloway.



PCC and former Chief Constable call on head of police watchdog to publish QCs findings after independent investigation

Media statement from Kathryn Holloway, Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, with the backing of her former Chief Constable (to the end of July 2019), Jon Butcher.

"Since raising a formal complaint concerning Bedfordshire's Inspector of Constabularies, HMI Zoe Billingham, on 10 July 2017, I have waited for more than two years for HMICFRS, the organisation which judges legitimacy and ethical behaviour in policing, to finally respond publicly. The Chief Inspector of Constabularies, Sir Tom Winsor, has now published his interpretation of events, which I do not recognise. Sir Tom engaged one of the most experienced QCs in the country to lead a lengthy independent investigation into my complaint; Mr Tom Kark (the former lead counsel to the Mid Staffordshire Inquiry, who has practised as a barrister for approximately 37 years). Yet instead of publishing Mr Kark QC's independent report, Sir Tom has chosen instead to publish his own findings.

Bedfordshire Police's former Chief Constable, Mr Jon Boutcher, also raised a formal complaint with HMICFRS concerning HMI Billingham and we are now calling on Sir Tom Winsor to publish the executive findings of Mr Kark QC's independent report concerning both of our complaints.

We do not accept that sending HMI Billingham - a senior public official required by her Terms of Engagement to observe the Nolan Principles at all times - on a management course, is an appropriate sanction by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in response to our complaints.

Jon Boutcher and I will now be inviting the Home Affairs Select Committee to review this matter and to consider Sir Tom's handling of our complaints in the light of all of the evidence, together with the worrying lack of a transparent Complaints process at HMICFRS."



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