

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter

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Foreword

Alan Jones

Police Federation Lead on Roads Policing



The uncertainty of our economic future and predicting the impact of any cuts in policing has certainly focused minds in recent weeks.

Whatever the future holds, we must make it resolutely clear that traffic policing must be a priority. This core element of frontline policing extends through a broad arch of public engagement and operational commitment. Aside from being a road safety and enforcement role, the support given to local policing teams is central to disrupting and hitting hard at criminal and anti-social behaviour. The essential role of traffic activity cannot be underestimated; neither must it be shallowly dismissed as unimportant as Chief Officers strive to cut costs.

The road network constitutes the biggest cross border community to be policed by far. We need to ensure that we have the resources, operational capacity and resilience to deal with the very real prospect of increasing crime levels as yet more economic cutbacks continues to hit society where it hurts. The Federation's traffic group will continue its work to protect the future of traffic policing by championing the fantastic contribution you all make to the security and well being of the communities we serve. By way of example, congratulations to the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Roads Crime Team celebrating its second anniversary this month with a landmark result of over £10 million of assets seized from criminals and the arrest of over 1,000 offenders.

Road deaths and serious injuries have dramatically declined to an all time low and mainly as a direct result of the efforts of you and your colleagues. Yet we should be concerned that the number of motor cycle collisions remains an issue. Speed camera enforcement has recently come under serious scrutiny through significant funding cut backs. Used appropriately and sensibly this type of enforcement and re training schemes does work and receives wide public recognition and support. I am at a loss to understand why the Road Safety Minister describes this to be a "war on motorists".

At a time when everything is under the spotlight and being continuously analysed for savings and value for money, we must all rally round and make sure that our collective voice is heard. Policing the roads is not something that can be bargained with or officer's skills diluted to be left for some other agency to perform. We are at the heart of policing and we have a valuable and important role to play in the fight against crime and keeping the roads safe.

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of Roads Ahead and if you have any comment or issue to raise then please do not hesitate to make contact. We are here to serve you and listen to the things that matter in the world of traffic policing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Roads Policing Team seize £1.1m of Class-B Drugs

£1.1million of class B drugs were recently seized during a patrol at a lorry park by the Regional Roads Policing Team in Yorkshire and the Humber, taking the total value of seizures by this unit so far to in excess of £10million. Three men were arrested, aged 53, 50 and 18, at Ferrybridge, West Yorkshire. They were later charged with conspiracy to supply Class B drugs, drugs possession with intent to supply, and possession of a firearm and ammunition.



Bike Fatalities North Yorkshire

The fantastic scenery and open roads in North Yorkshire continues to attract many thousands of bikers, but sadly the death and injury figures are once again a sorry statistic. Recently, over a 2 week period, five people died as a result of motorcycle collisions in the county - four riders and a pillion passenger.

North Yorkshire's Deputy Chief Constable, Adam Briggs, who is chair of ACPO's Traffic Ops Forum, says "enough is enough". Mr Briggs said; "So far we have seen 16 bikers killed on our roads this year - with five



DCC Adam Briggs

in the space of 14 days, and the biking season is still in full swing. This is already higher than last year's total of 15 for the entire year. We simply do not want another needless and preventable death and all the heartache that goes with it."

Pursuits

Following national consultation the newly drafted codification of police pursuits is expected to receive ministerial approval shortly. The code sets national standards for compliance and operational practice as well as the management of police pursuits. All forces will be expected to meet the new criteria when the document receives government assent.

Anti-social Drivers

A 'respect on the road' campaign group suggests that 800 lives are lost each year on the roads through road rage or anti-social behaviour. A survey by AXA shows that 79% of respondent drivers believe that motorists are generally quite intolerant through selfish behaviour, with 52% being affected by a bad incident of road rage. Of those involved in crashes, 40% of the survey group report they were frightened or angered before an incident or collision.

Pay-As-You-Go Motoring

The RAC Foundation has reported that drivers are certain to face some form of 'pay-as-you-go' motoring in future as roads become more congested. Traffic levels are forecast to be 33% higher by 2025 while spending on roads is currently being reduced.



Vehicles

It is now being quite widely recognised by government, ACPO and fleet managers that striving for a centrally procured vehicle standard does have its benefits. Progress has been made. It is worth noting that the Federation has no desire to specify one manufacturer over another. Our desire is to set standards for equipment and procurement at a consistent level, ensuring that vehicles of all types are suitable for the job in hand. This means proper evaluation and testing of equipment in respect of its place and position in the cabin area. Vehicles operating at their capacity or edge of their limits should not be on fleet, we can do much better. ACPO's Working Group on delivering standards for vehicles and equipment has gathered some real momentum under the leadership of ACC



Nick Croft. The Federation has received lots of positive feedback and ideas for improvement to vehicles and we maintain this input through the working group. We look forward to seeing some of these ideas progress in the interests of best and safe practice.

Forensic Collision Investigation

We welcome ACC Sean White from Cleveland Police who has recently taken on board the vacated ACPO portfolio of collision investigation from Commander Shabir Hussain. The first meeting of the group took place in July and a number of issues were discussed in order to take the portfolio forward. We look forward to contributing to this valuable field of expertise. This is an exceptionally important and critical area of police investigative work, and as



ACC Sean White

needs and expectations change, we have to ensure our priorities remain focused on developing staff skills and professionalism for this challenging role. One key consideration in the drive for greater efficiencies is to ensure officers who provide this vital service remain based within a reasonable and sensible travelling distance to incidents.

National Police Training for Traffic Officers

After 3 years of thorough work, led by Dr Rachel Cragg of the NPIA, we now have a national occupational standard for roads policing officers. The idea is very much akin to how CID has taken on board the PIP training programme, and which sets the benchmark of skills. The launch of this new programme was on 8th June at Ryton, where DCC Adam



Dr Rachel Cragg

Briggs gave his whole-hearted support for the project on behalf of ACPO Traffic. The trial forces that have participated in the initial scoping work have reported very favourably in terms of content and satisfaction. This should now be opened up to all forces. It is not exclusive to officers in centralised traffic roles but is applicable to any district officers who are expected to undertake operational traffic responsibilities.

The next phase of development needs to focus on specific SIO skills for traffic incidents. The standard is different to that of a CID SIO, but nonetheless the role must be properly assessed to a national standard. The standards for specialist skills in the commonly termed 'nuts and bolts' courses or tachograph specialism is not affected by the new training programme – these courses remain stand alone additional modules for those seeking greater enhancement from the role.

Please email your comments to roadspolicing@polfed.org

ACPO Traffic Strategy

Work continues to progress in determining the future strategy and a re-defining of the role of traffic policing. The Federation has been calling for such a comprehensive overhaul for some time, and has submitted our thoughts to the reviewing team led by Ch Supt Geraint Anwyl (North Wales). We look forward to seeing the published document in due course, hopefully by the end of the year. There are significant challenges ahead and things will become difficult, but the opportunity to redefine our role and operational focus is important. The one pleasing thing that we have seen in recent times, which we hope will transfer across to all traffic enforcement, is the return of good old-fashioned common sense and discretion. This is a welcome contrast to the heady days of excessive targets which all too often superseded the



ability to use some discretion and alternatives to direct prosecution. We hope ACPO will make appropriate recommendations and ensure that the traffic policing role remains central to future planning whilst joining together some of the various traffic related portfolios which need better connectivity.

North Report

Sir Peter North's report and recommendations regarding drink and drug driving was recently presented to the new government. Sir Peter was tasked by the previous government to look at issues concerning drink and drug driving, and has produced a very detailed report outlining his recommendations for change after much evidence taking. The report presents the necessary changes we are seeking to improve operational enforcement. To view the full report, visit

www.northreview.independent.gov.uk

In total there are 28 recommendations relating to drink driving and 23 relating to drug driving. The key recommendations are a reduction to an alcohol limit of 50mg/100ml blood which equates to 25mcg/100ml breath and to remove the statutory option, something which the Federation's traffic group has been pursuing for some time. In relation to drug driving, perhaps the key is to develop, approve and supply drug screeners as soon as possible, whilst permitting nurses to take

blood for drug testing. The question over proving impairment still remains a challenge, but hopefully this can be addressed.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond MP, has yet to announce the government's response to Sir Peter's report. In a recent report to Parliament, he said; "There is only a limited amount of police time available to intercept and process people who are guilty of drink and drug driving and our priority is to see we make the maximum possible impact on road safety within that constraint."



Road Safety Cameras

Understandably recent drastic funding cuts announced by the Department for Transport has attracted quite concerning national reaction, with some authorities deciding to withdraw altogether from supporting camera partnerships. Both the Federation and ACPO Traffic Lead, CC Mick Giannasi, wrote to the Transport Minister expressing our concerns, specifically in relation to a statement saying that “there had been *some misunderstanding* over the road safety grant”.

Road Safety Minister, Mike Penning MP, has since responded with assurance that he is addressing many of our issues with local authority chief executives. He also stated that officials are currently working with ACPO to

set up a ‘Task and Finish’ group to examine and address the issues being experienced by the safety camera partnerships. He has welcomed Federation input to this group and we will ensure representation. Nonetheless we remain concerned about the implications this supposed cost cutting initiative will have if a sensible solution cannot be worked through.



ACPO Summer Drink & Drug Driving Results

Figures released by ACPO on 4th August showed that the percentage of drivers found to be over the legal alcohol limit dropped slightly in the month long drink and drug driving summer campaign compared to last year.

100,853 people were stopped by police and breath tested. 5,652 (5.6%) tested positive, or refused or failed a breath test. That compares to 5.8% during the same period last year. The campaign ran throughout June. Interestingly, offending by under 25s was slightly up on last year – from 5.9% in 2009 to 6.4% in 2010. 27,147 were stopped by police and breath tested in 2010, compared with 34,285 in 2009.

Field Impairment Tests (for drugs) were failed by 22% in 2010 compared with around 33% in 2009. ACPO lead on roads policing Chief Constable Mick Giannasi said:

“Generally the results remain consistent with last year. While it is pleasing to see that the number of reported collisions was down on last year, alcohol continues to be a major cause of death and injury on our roads. The cost of this is immense, not only in human terms, but also in terms of the financial impact. It is estimated that the cost of each fatal collision is £1.9 million and the cost of a serious injury collision is £188K.

“The Police Service is committed to tackling drink and drug driving and the message we need to get across is that drinking and driving don’t mix. We will continue in our efforts to make the roads safer for all users.”



Transport Committee Meeting - Drink & Drug Driving Law

This meeting took place on Tuesday 14 September at 10.15am, ended at 12.57pm

Witnesses

- 1 Sir Peter North CBE QC; RAC Foundation, Automobile Association, and Association of British Drivers
 - 2 Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, Brake, and Association of Chief Police Officers
- For more information, visit the following links;

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/>
<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=6605>

Officer Profile

The Federation recently undertook a snapshot survey, specifically targeting female officers to try and glean an insight as to why the traffic officer role was not the most appealing career choice. From the responses received, there is no single reason or general pattern of concern, other than the notion for many, that it's not a role women are particularly interested in. Some expressed concern that the role is not ideal for women with childcare responsibilities. So, we asked Chief Inspector Gill Wootton, Deputy Head of Roads Policing, Thames Valley Police to give us her thoughts on the matter.

Gill joined Thames Valley Police in 1990 after a seven-year career in retail.

On promotion to Chief Inspector, she was appointed to her current role as Deputy Head of Roads Policing. She said: "Mine is a Force-wide operational role. I manage the Roads Policing regions, the intelligence and proactive teams, the specialist departments (casualty reduction and traffic management) and the Fixed Penalty Notice Support Unit.

"It is fair to say that when I was first told that I was coming to Roads Policing it was a bit of a shock, especially given that I was a detective inspector at that time. I had never worked in Roads Policing before and was somewhat apprehensive both about coming to a new department and also going back into uniform! However, within a very short time I discovered that Roads Policing is a fantastic department to work in and offers a huge variety of work to the officers and staff."

The Roads Policing Department is responsible for policing 196 miles of the strategic road network which includes the M4, M40, M25 and M1 – acknowledged to be among the busiest roads in Europe.

"My officers work in partnership with Highways Agency Traffic Officers to ensure that congestion on these routes is kept to a minimum. In addition, we try to deny criminals the use of the roads by enforcing the law – many of our vehicles are fitted with automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) equipment. We also aim to reduce road casualties and



Chief Inspector Gill Wootton

anti-social driving, tackle the threat of terrorism, and enhance public confidence by patrolling the roads," said Gill.

"We attend and investigate serious and fatal collisions across the Force; our Forensic Collision Investigation Unit officers use their specialist skills to piece together the events and mechanical evidence to present to the courts."

Gill has become a passionate advocate of road safety. She was the senior investigating officer following the M4/M25 coach crash in January 2007, and had only been in the job for a few weeks when she was called to the scene of a fatal collision where a nine-year-old boy died in the back of his friend's Dad's car. "I challenge anyone to go to such a scene and not be profoundly affected by it," she said. "I take every opportunity I can to give messages about road safety – don't drink/drug drive, wear your seatbelt and stay off your mobile phone - in fact my husband has told me off for getting on my soap box with our friends!"

Gill goes out on patrol and likes to keep in touch with her officers 'on the ground'. She takes the time to tutor and encourage staff with their professional aspirations. "I carry out more specific mentoring with some individuals," she said. "It is always a great pleasure to see people achieving their goals and progressing in the organisation.

"I think I have been very lucky. I have been supervised by some super people and, indeed, some excellent role models. I had some formal mentoring for a while when I was seeking promotion to this rank and when the time came for me to apply for this latest

promotion, I was extremely well supported and encouraged. My experience is that people are always willing to help you if you ask them. Of course, the very best support has always been from my husband!

“I think that if they want it, women can have all the same career opportunities as men. The reality is that women are often the primary child-carers and sometimes their professional aspirations can change in line with their personal priorities, meaning that they can't capitalise on the opportunities that may be there for them.

Gill thinks that there is a need for more women in the male dominated parts of the business. “Interestingly, at one stage while I was the DI with CID in Amersham, at least half of the team was female, in complete contrast with the common CID stereotype,” she said. “The entire team - both men and women - were a professional, committed and dynamic group of people, but I was struck by the strength, capability, independence and compassion of the women officers in particular.

“On Roads Policing there is me, one inspector out of six and three sergeants out of twenty-eight who are female. As a senior woman officer I feel a great sense of obligation to be a good role model for other women. It is also vital that the department is perceived to be one that is friendly to people from diverse backgrounds. I have encouraged acting PS opportunities for part-time officers which has meant challenging traditional working methods; e.g. if a part-time A/PS cannot make an early shift briefing due to child care, there is no good reason why it can't be carried out by one of the senior PCs. I have arranged a number of open days and awareness sessions with new recruits and existing staff to promote the good work of Roads Policing and also to encourage the recruitment of diverse officers to the department. Many of my officers volunteer for and are trained as tutor constables and we tutor all IPLDP students on a two week attachment to Roads Policing in their early service. This is a great opportunity to expose student officers to experienced, capable, competent police officers, to train them in basic street policing skills and to give them a good experience of working with us early on in their careers

which will hopefully bear fruit in terms of potential recruits in the future.

Gill joined BAWP (British Association for Women in Policing) some years ago and has attended a number of women's conferences and training days. “It is another excellent way of meeting female officers and staff from across the entire country,” she said. “The subjects covered include many of the practical issues directly facing women, and the presentations are always high quality and thought-provoking.”

“In my view, the best way to effect cultural change is from within. As more women join the supervisory ranks, particularly in the male-dominated parts of the business, confidence will grow that the working environment is conducive for other female staff. There must also be solid management commitment to the diversity aspirations of the Force.”

TVP has a Women's Network which Gill sees as a really positive move. She added: “Male officers have a natural network by virtue of the fact that they join the service together and often go through the various specialisms and ranks together. This is often not the case for women because many leave the service to have children and they tend to be dotted across the Force. I think anything that brings women staff together to share experiences is a good thing.”

Gill has recently taken part in Positive Action Leadership Programme for senior women officers run by the NPIA. She said “this was a career and indeed life-changing opportunity for me. I met some wonderful women officers and police staff equivalents from many Forces and we were able to share experiences, fears and aspirations with each other and debate some of the key issues facing the service which clearly includes further diversifying the workforce. I intend to take some valuable lessons back into the workplace, particularly around work/life integration and good leadership styles.”



Date for your Diary

*National Roads Policing Conference, 20-21 January 2011
Hinckley Island, Leicestershire*

Register today by emailing nyki.curtis@polfed.org

Messages

Our thoughts are with our brave colleague, PC David Rathband. David truly deserves our utmost respect for his resolve, determination and remarkable spirit.

We wish Wayne Baker, South Wales, a very happy retirement and thank him for the many years of valuable support he has given to the Federation's Roads Policing Group.

Thanks also go to John Apter for his dedication and support of the Roads Policing Group. John will continue to support our efforts from a distance and we welcome PC Chris Powling (Hampshire) who has now joined the group, representing the South East region.

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