

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter

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Welcome

Alan Jones

This edition of the newsletter predominantly reports on proceedings at this year's annual Roads Policing Conference.

This event has grown over the years, and the feedback continues to be very positive. I would like to thank all those who contribute to making the event the success it now is. A big thank you to all the speakers, exhibitors, sponsors and of course delegates for supporting the event.

Hopefully we will do the same again next year as this is the premier occasion on the roads policing calendar, highlighting new ideas, initiatives and where sharing professional knowledge, vision and experiences contributes to an understanding of progress and the changes we are constantly facing.

Unfortunately, and for understandable reasons, the arctic weather caused a hurried departure for many delegates on the Friday morning, which also brought the very sad news that the Police Federation had lost one of its finest Chairs. Paul McKeever died suddenly and unexpectedly from a pulmonary embolism. The news reverberated causing shock and dismay at the tragic loss of such a fine man.

On a number of occasions Paul had spoken at the roads policing event where his knowledge and respect for all officers who have the task of policing the roads showed how much of an understanding he had for the role and its people.

We will all miss Paul for his cheery character, wisdom and vision, but I know our new chair, Steve Williams, will follow Paul's legacy and enthusiasm; fighting to protect all things that links to policing the roads.

Congratulations to ACPO's roads policing lead, Suzette Davenport, who has just been appointed the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire. Suzette has been leading the portfolio for around 18 months and is providing strong leadership. We wish her well with her new role, rejoicing once again that the symbolism of the roads policing lead is being headed by a chief constable.

The conference saw the second year of ACPO and Police Federation giving awards to recognise outstanding achievement in the world of roads policing. The awards, sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, had 32 nominations this year which were all of a very high standard. When choosing the winners I feel disappointment for those who didn't make the top three places. However, you are all winners and have shown an enormous contribution to be nominated for the recognition you have achieved.

The overall winner was PC Andy Ivison from Cumbria with Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison of Sussex Police and Sergeant Nigel Ralphson from Lancashire Police the two runners-up.

ACC Garry Forsyth announced a new initiative at conference that will stocktake the professional skills and vocational needs for all operational officers involved in policing the roads. This is long overdue. Encouragingly, delegates at the conference gave an overwhelming voice of approval to the initiative.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the raffle held at the roads policing conference dinner. You all helped to raise £1,020 in aid of the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance service.



Stephen Hammond MP praises police officers at the roads policing conference

The Department of Transport (DfT) has thanked police officers for the incredible job they do, day in day out, and helping to make Britain's roads one of the safest in the world.

Stephen Hammond MP, the under-secretary of state for transport, addressed officers via video at the joint Police Federation and ACPO roads policing conference in January.

He spoke about new proposals to cut down on drink drivers and allowing registered health care professionals to use blood and specimen samples in evidence.

He said: "The concluded drink drive consultation will support more law enforcement. Under new proposals this will allow us to close down some loop holes used by some drink drivers to escape prosecution. We will be looking at replacing a breathe test with a blood or urine test.

"We are also looking at proposals to widen the range of registered health care professionals who are allowed to take blood samples and specimens in evidence.

"I am grateful to ACPO, the Police Federation, other police groups and authorities who have responded to this consultation and look forward to

working with them as we decide which measures to implement."

The DfT is giving more than £1bn to local councils to improve the transport infrastructure, including the design of better and safer roads. Some £600million is being invested in the local sustainable transport fund which gives authorities greater power to deliver their own transport projects. A 'think cycle' safety campaign has also been launched after the success of the Olympics last year.

The Minister commented on progress relating to the Collision Lead Evaluate React and Re-open (CLEAR) project, stating 'reducing incident and road closure times was important'. So far an average of 40 minutes road closure time had been achieved however there is still more to be done through the road death investigation manual.

Other key issues raised involved localism and empowering local authorities to have greater control through devolved responsibilities. The setting of speed limits and enforcement would very much be local area decisions based around national guidance for urban and rural roads linked to cost and derived benefits.

Federation campaign continues for greater protection for officers involved in response driving and pursuits

Police officers are being more cautious when responding to emergencies as the law leaves them in a vulnerable position to be prosecuted for dangerous driving. This is a concern recognised by many operational officers at the roads policing conference.

During a presentation on the subject, the conference heard from T/DCC Andy Holt as well as John Apter and Alan Jones who outlined the issues.

Mr Jones said the Federation was ultimately seeking an amendment to legislation which would take into account the specialist training and skills acquired in order to undertake emergency response driving including high-speed pursuits.

He said: "Police officers need to be protected for the role they play, as long as their driving is reasonable, proportionate and justified under the circumstances. It is for the officer to justify what they did in a properly considered situation. If the driving falls well beyond the standard, which sadly does happen for no reasonable explanation, then officers can expect to be prosecuted."

Conference heard from John Apter, Chairman of

Hampshire Police Federation, who has passionately fought to redress obvious concerns following the case of PC James Holden who was prosecuted for dangerous driving while following a suspect before being cleared at Crown Court in February last year.

The way the CPS approached the case has left officers feeling vulnerable for doing their job.

No one was injured in the pursuit even though PC Holden's driving was deemed 'admirable' and not 'careless, reckless and dangerous,' according to an independent review of the pursuit.

DCC Andy Holt, South Yorkshire ACPO lead on pursuits, has given his unquestionable support and understanding of the predicament in which officers find themselves.

Mr Holt spoke at the event and said that he would do all he could to ensure that officers were allowed to do their job without fear of prosecution for doing what they are called upon to do. He reiterated that he hoped there would be nothing to fear as long as officers behaved sensibly and with good judgement and proportionality, doing what they have been trained to do.

Section 19 Roads Safety Act 2006

The Government has recently consulted in relation to the introduction of new legislation which will see all those who are required to drive in response to incidents to have attained an acceptable standard of driving in order to be in high speed pursuits.

Speaking at the Roads Policing Conference, Alan Jones said the Federation has submitted its response, which it hoped would be supported by ACPO and others. He added: "We need to think very cautiously about some of the proposals, but it

is absolutely right that all chief officers ensure that police officers are confident in undertaking their role within the law."

This means that the law will, when this section is enacted, recognise that driving skills and competencies have to be maintained by regular review and assessment of standards. This is common sense and provides officers and the public with an assurance that they are competent and capable of doing what they are asked to do.

Section 1A Road Traffic Act

An amendment to section 1 has been introduced which deals with those who use a motor vehicle deliberately as a weapon, to cause injury to another. It states;

A person who causes serious injury to another person by driving a mechanically propelled vehicle dangerously on a road or other public place is guilty of an offence.

(2) In this section "serious injury" means—
(a) in England and Wales, physical harm which amounts to grievous bodily harm for the purposes of the Offences against the Person Act 1861, and
(b) in Scotland, severe physical injury."

New training package expected for roads policing officers

A process has been launched that will lead to the creation of a national accredited standards of training for officers involved in policing the roads.

Vice-Chair of the ACPO Roads Policing Business Area, ACC Gary Forsyth, made the announcement at the joint ACPO and Police Federation's Roads Policing Conference in Leicestershire on 17 January.

The project is set to last up to two years and will engage with forces within England and Wales to establish what training is currently being delivered.

The national package is expected to be in a range of modules which will enable chief officers to have a variety of options that they can tailor to their force's circumstances. The team will work with a view to embedding the standards within the new College of Policing.

Alan Jones, PFEW roads policing lead, said: "Although we already have some excellent in-force

training provision it is too patchy and non-consistent.

"The establishment of a national standard is long overdue. I really do have a long term vision of a national roads policing academy which has tremendous opportunities to embrace all aspects of the role, supporting officers in the best possible way."



Impact of cuts affecting Family Liaison Officers

Concerns have been raised in relation to how budget cuts, pressures and resourcing are impacting on Family Liaison Officers.

There are currently 850 family liaison officers in England and Wales. Speaking about this issue is Alan Jones, roads policing lead at the Police Federation of England and Wales.

"Family liaison officers perform a really important role in dealing with difficult and sensitive cases," he said. "They provide a much-needed link between families, the police and the legal system. "Without their care, passion and understanding in the job they do, life can be difficult for families and police investigators".

Drug 'station screener' trail launched by the Home Office

A new screener to test drugs in police stations is being trailed by the Home Office.

The station screener was introduced in December last year and will be a trial for new drug screening technology while other devices are currently being tested and screeners are perfected.

The current procedure states if a suspect is found to be driving with impairment they are arrested and taken to a police station before being examined by a doctor to confirm the suspect's condition. If the examination is confirmed, a blood or urine sample is taken otherwise the suspect is released.

Jerry Moore, national roads policing liaison officer, spoke about the new trial at the Roads Policing Conference in January. He advised police forces to 'look at what technology is out there' and that the benefits of the screeners will be 'down to each individual force'.

Alan Jones, PFEW roads policing lead, added: "The recognition of a suitable device to test for drug abuse is long overdue.

"I hope there will be a more energetic move in sorting technical and legal problems which are sufficient in moving enforcement and are less problematic than the current case."

Cumbria police officer wins roads policing award

A police officer who broke up a wide-scale criminal conspiracy operation in the haulage industry has received the national award for outstanding contribution to roads policing.

Police Constable Andy Ivison received the award, presented by DCC Davenport, on Thursday 16 January at the National Roads Policing Conference in Hinckley, Leicestershire.

The award recognised the overall commitment and results from a career which promotes all the positives of policing the roads.

Alan Jones, Police Federation of England and Wales roads policing lead, says: "I'm immensely proud of all the winners and nominees for their dedication and commitment in ensuring the public and our roads are kept safe.

"Our winner, PC Andy Ivison, shows great enthusiasm and passion. His expertise and knowledge has helped to combat conspiracy, disrupt crime and terrorism; he is a remarkable role model.



Sussex and Leicestershire police officers are runners up

Two other officers received runner-up awards for their contribution to roads policing.

Runner-up Chief Superintendent Paul Morrison from Sussex Police actively joined forces with the Police Federation and ACPO to personally brief the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) on the potential consequences of charging standards relating to police drivers and dangerous driving.

Runner-up Police Sergeant Nigel Ralphson, from Lancashire Police, is also a vital part of the roads policing team tackling issues surrounding young drivers and motorcyclists who drive inappropriately.

During 2007, Nigel worked closely with road safety partnerships to combat the high level of fatalities and road traffic collisions recorded during 2006. This has led to a significant decrease in collisions involving young drivers and there were no fatal collisions in his division involving anyone under the age of 30 during 2012.

Alan Jones, PFEW roads policing lead, said: "Both chief superintendent Paul Morrison and police sergeant Nigel Ralphson's contribution to roads policing is also extremely admirable and highly valued."

ACPO lead on roads policing, Chief Constable Suzette Davenport, said: "The outstanding

contribution of these three officers to roads policing has been exemplary and their dedication is an inspiration to other officers.

"Some of the work they have done is ground-breaking and lives are being saved by the initiative and professionalism they have shown.

"I am hugely proud of their work and the tireless dedication shown by other officers across the country, whose valued contributions are keeping our roads safe and saving lives.

"Roads policing is a hugely important and complex operation, but the unwavering support of officers such as these means they are a highly valued asset to our national aim of further enhancing road safety."



Police detect over 7,000 drink drivers over Christmas and New Year

Statistics from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) revealed that at least 7,123 drivers were caught risking their lives by driving over the limit.

Figures from the anti-drink and drug driving campaign showed that during the month of December, more than 175,000 people were stopped and tested compared to almost 157,000 during 2011.

Police officers across England and Wales focused particularly on those under 25 after research from 2011 showed drivers aged between 20 and 24 failed more breath tests than any other age group.

More than 1,000 extra drivers under 25 were breathalysed compared to 2011. Figures released on 17 January showed there were 104 fewer young drivers failing tests compared to 2011.

PFEW roads policing lead, Alan Jones, said: "Thank goodness we can keep the drink drive message alive and strong particularly over

Christmas time. With over 7,000 cases detected, it could be an even bigger problem if police resources are not targeting drink or drug driving over the festive period. I think the public are behind police activity, stamping out this serious anti-social behaviour, but we need to do more throughout the year."



Cassie's Law comes into effect

In the last edition of the newsletter we highlighted our support in respect of giving police officers more powers when faced with a driver who has a known and potentially dangerous medical condition.

In this case at least 45,000 people signed the petition which was set up after Cassie McCord was hit by Colin Horsfall three days after he failed an eye test but refused to give up his licence. The officer was powerless, at the time, in making immediate preventative action.

Cassie's mother Jackie campaigned for over two years to introduce a law which would instantly ban unfit drivers.

The Department of Transport (DfT) has now announced that it is working to 'accelerate' the process to enable officers to suspend driving entitlement more quickly.

The DVLA will now inform people they can no longer legally drive within hours

of being notified by police officers.

Police were in the process of trying to get Mr Horsfall's licence revoked after he had driven into the exit of a petrol station in Colchester and then failed a police eye test. Cassie sadly died three days later.

Alan Jones, Police Federation roads policing lead for England and Wales, welcomed the decision.

He said: "It seems absolute nonsense a police officer who knows someone has defective eyesight has not been able to do anything to prevent him from driving.

"We believe what the Department for Transport has suggested is something which would work.

"Cassie's Law has asked for the police officer to have the authority to suspend a licence, in this suggestion the officer acts as a conduit and we are happy with that."

Police officers at risk of fatigue while driving

In recent years the number of police officers killed while driving to and from work has risen dramatically by 100%.

At least 54 officers have died as a result of road traffic collisions; the most common cause of police line of duty deaths since 2000.

Research commissioned by the Government recently found that 20% of crashes on motorways or similar roads are drivers who have fallen asleep at the wheel.

A police officer could have been driving, single-crewed, for the majority of a shift, which can often be between eight to ten hours, then once completed having to travel, on occasion, a distance home.

As it is predicted that the pressure on police drivers will increase due to the reductions in the police budget, this is only going to put more pressure and expectations on them.

A survey, conducted by Yvonne Taylor, a constable in North Yorkshire Police, and studying at the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, looked at how this has been affecting forces in North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Humberside.

The survey found that 91% currently work shift patterns with over 93% having to travel to and from work by car which can take less than 30 minutes each way. At least 85% stated they recalled feeling sleepy whilst travelling to or from work in the past 12 months with 74% saying they felt they could have fallen asleep at the wheel.



Police Federation questions managed motorway proposals

The Police Federation has reservations on new proposals to introduce a managed motorway scheme and believes it 'highlights potential risks.'

The Highways Agency has proposed the scheme to take place on the M1, between junctions 32 and 35a, in order to improve traveling conditions.

It would involve removing the hard shoulder and enabling all lanes to be used, which the Federation believes will cause problems when dealing with serious incidents

Alan Jones, PFEW roads policing lead, said: "We understand the reasons for increasing the motorway capacity, however the potential risks associated with all lanes running and removing the hard shoulder will have consequences when the emergency services are trying to deal with a serious accident.

"The need to quickly dispatch to the scene, rescue vehicles and ensure emergency vehicles can attend the scene as quickly as possible will anticipate a problem if there is limited or no easy access."

He added: "We have responded to the proposals and highlighted the concerns we believe all emergency services will have if this were to go ahead. We hope the government and the Highways Agency will take these into consideration."



Two roads policing units base facing closure in Cumbria

Police officers in Cumbria are outraged that their force is considering the closure of two roads policing units (RPU).

Cumbria Constabulary is looking to close both Penrith and Kendal bases as they look at a major restructure of the unit, which polices the

country's roads, as part of a review of its services aimed at making financial savings.

The roads policing unit is currently run from five bases across Cumbria including Carleton Hall headquarters in Penrith and at Kendal, Carlisle, Workington and Ulverston.

80mph speed limit on motorways to be scrapped

Ministers are planning to abandon plans to introduce a new 80mph limit on motorways in Britain amid fears it could lead to more accidents.

The Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, is determined to make road safety a greater priority and does not want to implement an 80mph speed limit despite launching the plan back in 2011.

The Police Federation fought against the decision to implement the new proposals as it felt increasing the speed limit would lead to more motorists exceeding it by an extra 10 per

cent – effectively leading them to drive at a speed of 90mph.

Police Federation roads policing lead, Alan Jones, welcomes the plan to scrap the speed limit. He said: "We gave evidence to the Transport Select Committee last year, alongside ACPO, relating to some of these proposals.

"We asked them to take very careful consideration of all issues which arise from increasing the national speed limits.

"This is not a priority for the roads policing agenda and we hope our concerns have played a part in this decision".

Police Federation roads policing lead gets recognition award

The Police Federation's lead on roads policing has been praised by both his colleagues and friends after receiving a lifetime achievement award during a ceremony in Leicestershire.

Alan Jones, who retires on 17 March after almost four decades within the police service, was presented the award during his last Roads Policing Conference for the extraordinary work he has done as a Police Inspector for South Yorkshire Police and for the Police Federation where he was the Chair of the Inspectors' Central Committee.

Alan's passion and enthusiasm for roads policing has made a huge impact, and seen him work tirelessly on behalf of police officers within England and Wales, supporting and campaigning for a variety of changes to improve policing the roads.

He said: "I have been part of a fantastic team – it is not just about me, but everyone who works so hard.

"Our colleagues in ACPO and the Superintendents' Association all share the same passion for roads policing and we have all worked tirelessly to take issues forward. It is infectious and may it long have value."

ACPO roads policing lead Deputy Chief Constable Suzette Davenport said: "Alan has

made a tremendous contribution to roads policing. He is extremely passionate about his role and will be sorely missed. I hope he continues to be involved in roads policing in some way."

Steve White, secretary of roads policing, said: "This award was extremely well deserved. On behalf of everybody at the Police Federation and police officers up and down the country we would like to thank Alan for everything he has done for roads policing and he will be missed."



New Federation Roads Policing Lead

John Giblin a Sergeant with Gwent Police has been announced as the replacement national Federation lead to Alan Jones.

John takes up the role with immediate effect and admits Alan will be a tough act to follow, but is confident in the tremendous organisation within the portfolio that can support him as he picks up the reins.

He said: "I am amazed and uplifted at the total drive and energy the Federation roads policing group have given to this key role, and I will do all I can to maintain the momentum going forward. There are a lot of issues which remain outstanding, but are so important for all those we represent at the operational level."



Special Guest

The conference dinner welcomed a very special guest PC Dicky Coetzee and his wife Margi.

Dicky is a serving Constable in the Nottinghamshire force and was seriously injured over 12 months ago in a fail to stop a collision while riding his cycle off duty. The driver pleaded guilty at court and received a substantial prison term for dangerous driving.

In welcoming them, DCC Suzette Davenport praised Dicky's example of determination and will power to keep going despite the terrible injuries he faces. He is a remarkable man who has the will to remain positive and keep fighting for what he can achieve as he tries to re build his life.

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Steve White, Roads Policing Secretary, JCC: stephen.white@polfed.org

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