

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter
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Our aim is to use this publication to open up informative channels of communication between all roads policing officers and associated bodies. We intend to focus on key issues that influence the delivery and professionalism of traffic officers around the country.

If you have a roads policing news story or you require further details please email: roadspolicing@polfed.org

Police Federation Lead on Roads Policing: Alan Jones

It is heartening that at long last, we should see the back of the target culture, in favour of good old common sense and discretion. Public confidence and respect can only improve from a fair, but firm flexible approach.

These changes are for the good, and present an opportunity to promote roads policing within community concerns and issues. By any assessment, vehicles link to criminals and anti social behaviour, as much as unacceptably high casualty and fatality figures. So forces must try harder to ensure the key priorities for roads policing register as local, regional and national concerns.

In terms of vehicles, the Police Federation and fleet managers are working to ensure that the requirements for future demands and needs are considered through improved national standards that are consistent through all 43 forces. Jointly we recognise the significance of advancing technology and equipment issues, and the need for better management of the vehicle procurement process, which will also improve on safety issues. The continued lack of engagement at ACPO level, despite many attempts to encourage interest is hugely disappointing.

It strikes me following a recent conference, that we could do more to encourage our female colleagues into roads policing roles, this is a long standing problem, but the role is so unrepresented by women, it is worth making a bit of a shout to try and up the interest and recruitment. Or if anybody out there knows the reasons for this please feed it back to us.

The Police Federation welcomes Steve Green's replacement, Chief Constable Mick Giannasi of Gwent as the new ACPO lead for roads policing in September. He has a very mixed basket of issues within his portfolio, with an agenda that continually makes public headlines. We wish him well in the role and hope he can deliver the kind of strong leadership and direction that recognises the wide ranging skills and professional expertise, that should be so highly valued in our roads policing officers.

I hope you find this second edition of Roads Ahead informative and as ever we look forward to receiving your feedback and comments.



Disqualified Drivers will be kept off the roads

A pact to ensure disqualified drivers are kept off the roads was confirmed recently by British, Irish and Northern Ireland Ministers. The agreement - the first practical step of its kind in Europe - means that UK drivers disqualified for an offence in Ireland will no longer escape that punishment when they return home. Likewise, any disqualification earned by Irish drivers while in the UK will be recognised and enforced when they return to Ireland. Jim Fitzpatrick British Road Safety Minister, said: "This pioneering agreement will

make our roads safer by ensuring disqualified drivers are not able to escape their punishment and so keep dangerous drivers off our roads." Another breakthrough announcement from Mr. Fitzpatrick includes the power to take deposits and enforce penalties on foreign or non resident drivers who flout the law. Alan Jones said; "This is long overdue and will come into force next year. Only roads policing officers and VOSA officials will have enforcement powers to issue notices."

Cutting back on fuel:

Rising fuel prices have already driven one police force to reduce recruitment, and there are warnings that the problem will escalate across Britain in the coming months.

Simon Reed, Vice Chairman of the Police Federation spoke to national newspapers about the increased pressures put on policing budgets. He said: "All the fat has already been trimmed off police budgets. For a lot of forces, there is nothing left to cut except officer numbers."

Hampshire Police Federation chairman Geoff Crowe recently said: 'We think the public will be disappointed to know that the biggest hit on numbers is on the front line at a time when they are expecting to see more police officers on the street, not fewer.'

Duncan Davis, chairman of Derbyshire Police Federation, said: "The fuel price rise will impact on operational needs and I'm sure recruitment is one of the areas they [senior managers] will be looking at". As fuel prices escalate many public sector emergency services will feel the pinch.



How Many?!

A recent question asked in the House of Lords by Viscount Simon related to the number of traffic officers in England and Wales. The Minister, in reply, indicated a figure of 6412 officers, representing about 4.5% of the Police officer establishment. How that figure is derived we are unsure, but it urgently needs bolstering if we are to respond to the increasing demands on our roads.

RP Fringe meeting outcomes



At a successful roads policing fringe meeting at the Police Federation's Annual Conference a number of issues were discussed.

The main area of concern related to the sustainability of a viable roads policing group. A number of reps raised concerns over the lack of support in their own force, including, albeit with some mixed responses, the growing tendency to withdraw routine patrolling of motorways. Some force reps highlighted this as a problem, and expressed reservations about this policy.

Jim Lucas from South Yorkshire said that roads policing has a key role to play in the delivery of front line operational policing and the Federation should fight to make sure the true worth, standards and value of roads policing is recognised.

When asked about progress on training, Alan Jones said that the National Police Improvement Agency had been commissioned by ACPO to address this matter and promises made that the 1st April 2009 is the target date for their report to be published. This work should define and set the minimum standards required for a roads policing officer. He thought it would link to a PIP type standard.

Other brief matters discussed – The Federation is supporting a reduction in the drink drive limit, a better scientific method of roadside screening for drugs, and pursuing the removal of the need for provision of a second sample where a driver provides a sample of 40mg on a substantive breath testing machine.

Alan Jones also announced that Volvo has displayed considerable interest in designing and producing a standardised vehicle. A concept car is being built. This proposal was very well received by all attendees, who supported the notion of a national consistency for traffic vehicles.

The Department of Transport released the National Statistics on road casualties in Great Britain for 2007

- The number of people killed in road accidents fell, by 7 per cent from 3,172 in 2006 to 2,943 in 2007.
- There were 247,780 road casualties in Great Britain in 2007, 4 per cent less than in 2006.
- 121 children died on the roads, 28 per cent fewer than in 2006.
- There were 644 pedestrian deaths, 5 per cent less than in 2006.
- The number of pedal cyclists killed fell by 7 per cent from 146 in 2006 to 136 in 2007.
- There were 588 motorcycle user fatalities in 2007, 2 per cent lower than during 2006. The number of killed or seriously injured rose compared to 2006 (up 4 percent from 6,484 in 2006 to 6,737 in 2007)
- The number of deaths among car users in 2007 was 1,431, 11 per cent less than in the previous year. The number seriously injured fell by 9 per cent to 11,536.

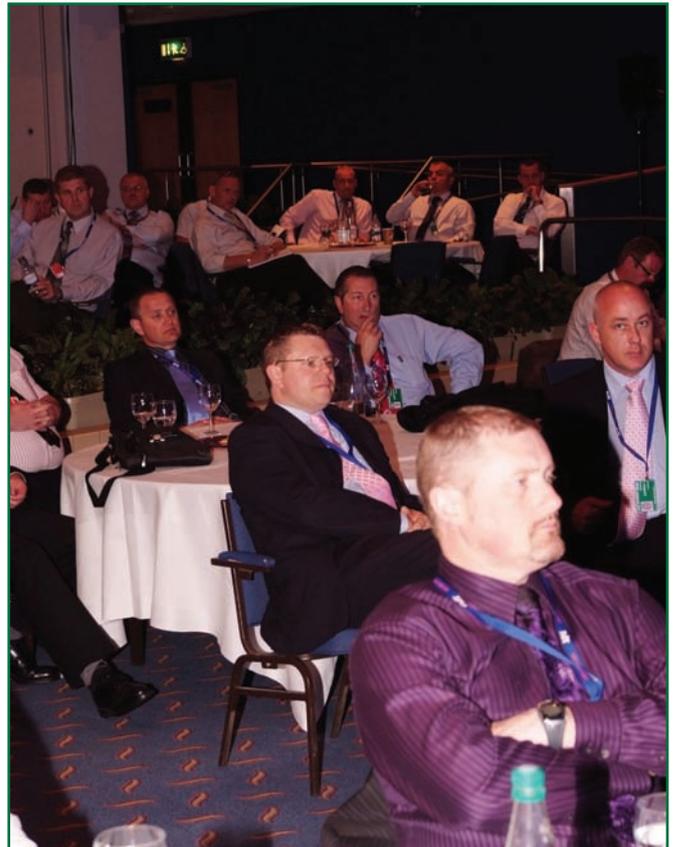
In Focus : Roads Policing User Group

Parliamentary meeting update

On the 1st July the Federation Roads Policing User Group held their third annual Parliamentary meeting. This year we were joined by the Police Minister the Rt Hon Tony McNulty MP and Louise Ellman MP, the newly appointed chair of the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee. Joining them through part of the session was Viscount Simon, a tremendous supporter of roads policing issues in the House of Lords.

Matters over resilience, capacity and resourcing which can deliver an effective and professional roads policing function were discussed. The point was made that policing our roads should have as much importance attached to it as neighbourhood policing, after all criminals use the roads to get to and from where they are going to. The Minister was also reminded of the absurdity of police target cultures.

The Police Federation highlighted causes for concern in relation to the deficit of skills and professional competence. In addition, we focused on legislative issues linked to drink, drug and disqualified driving. Concerns were also raised about the growing reliance and spread of technology based enforcement solutions; there are fears they are replacing, not enhancing, the spontaneity and challenge that policing the roads requires.



New Sentencing Guidelines

The sentencing guidelines for serious driving offences, linked to causing death by due care, drink/drug driving and without insurance or a driving licence came into effect on the 4th August 2008. We welcome these guidelines, which hopefully will now address some of the understandable and justifiable concerns raised when sentencing for bad and aggravated driving is deemed inadequate by family and friends of loved ones so tragically killed on our roads. We must also ensure that forces have the resilience, capacity and provide the investment into properly skilled and trained officers to meet the high professional standards expected in investigating and prosecuting serious collisions.

Transport Select Committee

The Federation gave oral evidence before the committee on the 30th April in relation to casualty reduction matters. Whilst welcoming the statistical reduction from 2007 figures, it is still important to recognise amongst all the knife crime concerns, that 3000 people lose their lives each year on the roads, with countless serious and lifelong injuries, all of which are personal tragedies that can be avoided. The pressure on police resources to deal with these incidents is significant.

Details of Federation Roads Policing Group

Roads Policing interests of the Federation are regionally represented by operational roads policing officers who provide support and engagement on local, regional and national issues. All members attend their regional Senior Traffic Officers Conferences (STOC) and are there to represent the interests of all roads policing officers.

Contact your roads policing rep:

Number 1 region: Guy Young, Lancashire:
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Number 8 region: Paul Monk, Metropolitan:
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On-going initiatives

Operation Mermaid continues to be a pivotal national campaign in the annual calendar, co-ordinating and joining together enforcement across the UK. During 2007, over 13,000 vehicles were stopped, an increase of 20% on the previous year, which identified some significant and serious vehicle and driver related offences. Interestingly there were 47 vehicles discovered illegally using red diesel, with the price of fuel escalating in recent times, the expectation is that such incidents will increase.

The head of the intelligence forum that directs Mermaid operations is Chief Supt Geraint Anwyl. He says "This is one of the largest policing activities in the UK. It is intelligence and target led, not intended to inconvenience legitimate operators, but ensuring that rogue operators are effectively dealt with."

In the Met:

The Met has commenced a six month pilot of "Stammtische" after liaising with German colleagues. Stammtische is the German word for "regular get together" and this scheme has been running through Europe for some years now. It involves inviting truck drivers stopped at motorway services to have open chats with the officers in attendance about any concerns they may have, without fear of reprisal.

It is hoped that the gatherings will be held at three of London's Service Areas; Thurrock, Clacket Lane and Heston. Contact Paul Monk for more details.
paul.monk@met.police.uk

South Wales Update

The Welsh equivalent Highways Agency comprises the Traffic Management Centre within a Welsh Assembly Government building in Coryton. It is a



partnership scheme involving Traffic Wales, South Wales Trunk Road Agency and Traffic Link.

Termed SWARM, its aim is to remind road users of safety issues while also interacting with them on all levels not just when they are pulled over because of wrongdoing. Jason Stroud, Sector Inspector, explains that a more positive approach has a long lasting effect on drivers. "We do not want people to just see us as law enforcers we prefer to have a community approach and integrate with the public rather than only engaging with motorists when they might be in the wrong."

SWARM also aims to promote road safety and through the help of local sponsorship, numerous interactive alert message boards have been erected on the M4 and traffic updates are on display to warn motorists of any incidents ahead. "The benefits of working in partnership with the other outlets means numerous targets are more achievable like it is easier to sustain a free flow of traffic, we can share information and resources and we are all in the same building communicating," says Jason Stroud.



ACPO/PFEW Second Joint National Road Policing Conference 26th - 27th November 2008 National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham



This year sees the second collaboration between ACPO and the Police Federation of England and Wales in hosting the National Road Policing Conference. The theme of the event is "Roads Policing – the Wider Picture" and this year includes speakers from the police service, government, the Highways Agency, the Transport Research Laboratory, the Road Haulage Association, the NPIA and our key sponsors the Motor Insurers' Bureau. This event will offer delegates an opportunity to gain a valuable insight into the future vision and direction of Roads Policing. As well as updates on the latest policing technologies and guidance for forces, there will be sessions on road death, uninsured drivers, professional development, understanding collisions, Operation Foist, one box technology, antisocial use of vehicles and a debate on Managing Road Closures. ACPO and the Police Federation have decided once again to jointly host this year's event to give added recognition to the serious challenges posed in policing the roads and the importance of continually striving for harm and crime reduction. The conference will be of interest to road policing strategists, tacticians, road safety professionals, partner organisations who work alongside the police and those who manufacturer and develop enforcement equipment used by the police.

For booking details visit www.polfed.org