



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE - 15TH JUNE 2016

SUBJECT: ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

REPORT BY: OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

Election of New Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Force Area

Welsh Labour's Jeff Cuthbert has been elected as the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent and has vowed to ensure that the principles of social justice and fairness become the cornerstone of policing practice in the region.

After the poll went to a second round of votes, Mr Cuthbert secured a total of 96,030 votes overall, over 36,000 more than his closest rival. In only the second ever PCC election, voter turnout in Gwent increased to 42% compared to 12.97% overall in the first PCC elections in 2012. Louise Brown who was running as a candidate for the Welsh Conservatives came second with 59,931 votes and Plaid Cymru's Darren Jones was in third place with 37,916 votes.

Former Welsh Government Minister, Jeff Cuthbert, has stood down as the Assembly Member for Caerphilly, a position he has held since 2003. His term of office as Commissioner will last four years and he will be responsible for representing the people of Gwent and making sure the service provided by the police is efficient and effective.

The Commissioner's priorities for policing in Gwent will include:

- Providing more of a visible police presence on our streets and in our communities;
- Ensuring that crimes such as domestic abuse, hate crime, child exploitation, and modern slavery are given the attention that they deserve;
- Developing and maintaining good community cohesion;
- Working with the Voluntary Sector to inform on-going policies and practices;
- Working with the Chief Constable so that the principles of social justice become the cornerstone of police practice;
- Working with the Welsh Government and the devolved public services on practical issues of support such as the provision of the additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for Gwent.

Mr Cuthbert swore an oath of office in order to set out publicly his commitment to tackling his new role with integrity and impartiality. The Commissioner aims to be a "visible" and "inclusive" PCC and has vowed to ensure that the principles of social justice and fairness become the cornerstone of policing practice in the region.

Victims Champion Co-ordinator

Johanna Robinson has been appointed as the new Coordinator for the Connect Gwent victim's hub - the first ever multi-agency service of its kind in Wales which provides positive and lasting support to victims of crime, helping them to cope and recover. Based in Blackwood, the Connect Gwent hub was launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Gwent, Ian Johnston, in May 2015. The service has brought together a range of agencies and organisations under one roof to provide enhanced support for victims of crime.

Johanna's role is designed to ensure victims are supported inside and outside the criminal justice process and that they receive the support, information and guidance they need to cope with their victimisation and recover from it. Johanna has more than 20 years of experience working in support services for vulnerable people and aims to make a positive difference to the lives of victims of crime in Gwent. The role will include ensuring the hub runs smoothly, provides a quality service to all victims of crime and fully complies with the victims' code of practice.

Tackling Mate Crime

In support of national Mental Health Awareness Week (16-22 May 2016), Gwent PCC Jeff Cuthbert and the Chief Constable of Gwent Police, Jeff Farrar visited the Connect Gwent victims' hub in Blackwood. They met with a number of victims of crime with mental health requirements to find out how the hub is making a positive difference to their lives. The Hub has a Specialist Mental Health Practitioner from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) based at Connect Gwent. Since April 2015, 243 victims have been referred to the Hub for psychiatric help.

One of the victims the PCC and the Chief met during their visit was 52 year old from Cwmbran. The person was a victim of 'mate crime' - a form of hate crime in which a vulnerable person is manipulated or abused by someone they believed to be their friend. Mate crime is often difficult for police to investigate due to its sometimes sensitive nature and campaigners believe the problem is far more widespread than is currently reported.

The victim, who has both physical and mental health requirements, had been expressing concern that items were going missing from his home and he didn't understand why. It was subsequently discovered that people were stealing from him. The crime had a dramatic impact on the victim's confidence and trust in people. The ABUHB Specialist Practitioner provided appropriate support and the victim has been able to cope and recover from their ordeal. Connect Gwent aims to support one of the most vulnerable groups of people in the community - people with mental health conditions who are victims of crime.

Protecting Our Elderly

Whether it's through the post, on the doorstep, via the internet or over the telephone, unscrupulous scammers have found a way to invade and destroy every aspect of the lives of older and vulnerable people by duping them out of their precious assets and savings.

The Facts: Scams Against Older People

- Only 5% of these crimes are reported;
- The average age of a scam victim is 74, showing that criminals tend to prey on older and often more vulnerable members of society;
- Studies have proven that vulnerable adults defrauded in their own home lose confidence and are 2.4 times more likely to either die or go into residential care;
- Scams cost the UK economy between £5-10 Billion a year;
- The stress and pain of victimisation often results in depression, withdrawal and isolation from family and friends and the deterioration of physical and mental health;
- In some cases victims have been known to either consider, attempt or commit suicide.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Gwent and Gwent Police hosted in April a '*Protecting Our Elderly Together*' seminar in conjunction with Age Cymru Gwent. The Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Sarah Rochira attended the event to promote the Wales Against Scams Partnership (WASP) and to develop partnership working to protect older people against scams and swindles. The aim is to work with partners in the community to raise awareness of things people can do to protect themselves and their properties and provide reassurance to the elderly and those who are most vulnerable.

The OPCC and Gwent Police developed a regional action plan and worked closely with Trading Standards to build a list of more than 1,100 people in Gwent who are prone to scams. The list has

been circulated to each local authority in Gwent. Specialist agencies based at the Connect Gwent victims' hub in Blackwood are also contacting some of the most at risk people to help provide specialist advice.

New Stalking Awareness Campaign

In March 2016, Gwent PCC Ian Johnston officially launched a new national campaign and film aimed at highlighting the danger posed by men who stalk their ex-partners. The PCC funded and supported #TroubleWithAnEx which is being run by the Network for Surviving Stalking charity.

The campaign includes a 20 minute educational film under the same title which features the story of 44 year old Rachel Williams who was shot by her estranged husband Darren at her hairdressing salon in Newport just six weeks after they split up. Rachel shared her experiences at the launch of the campaign and the first screening of the film which was attended by representatives from a range of organisations that provide support to victims of crime and vulnerable people.

The #TroubleWithAnEx film has been produced by Jane Harvey from the Network for Surviving Stalking charity and highlights the warning signs often missed by women who have left an abusive relationship. The film aims to educate potential victims and their families so that they can identify obsessive stalking behaviour as soon as possible and seek appropriate help. The campaign is accompanied by downloadable and printable information leaflets.

Gwent police collaborated on the production of the film and a specific training version for police officers and staff, including first responders and call handlers who provide support for victims, has been produced. The film is being piloted within Gwent Police and will be distributed to all UK forces.

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