



**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING
HELD REMOTELY AND PARTLY IN PERSON AT YEW MEETING ROOM,
POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 27th JULY 2022 at 4:00 PM**

PRESENT:

Tracey Leake-Jones – Animal Welfare Visitor (TLJ)
Andrew Watkins – Animal Welfare Visitor (AW)
Helen Lawless – Animal Welfare Visitor – (HL)
Sarah Fowler – Animal Welfare Visitor – (SF)
Kirsty Buckland – Animal Welfare Visitor - (KB)
Caroline Herbert – Animal Welfare Visitor – (CH)
Emma Smith – RSPCA (ES)

Matthew Havard - Inspector - Roads Policing Specialist, Operations
Jeff Cuthbert – Police and Crime Commissioner, OPCC (JC)
Nicola Warren – Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)
Ceri Davis – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

The meeting commenced at 4:08 p.m.

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies for absence were received from Louise Crawford - Dogs Trust, Laura Buchanan-Smith, Anthony Davies, Victoria Waite, Chloe Bradley-Thomas, Linda Mason, Martyn Evans, Stephen Lewis and Emelia Smith.	
2.	Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings	
	The Police and Crime Commissioner emphasised the importance of the Animal Welfare Scheme and thanked the volunteers for their work, as it was important to provide assurance to members of the public that police dogs were being cared for appropriately and that their welfare needs were being met. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	

	<p>NW informed us the chair had sent their apologies and she would chair the meeting in her absence.</p> <p>NW informed us that government guidelines were being followed with regards to Covid restrictions and if visitors had any symptoms, they should attend the future meetings online as a precaution.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Scheme Update</p>	
	<p>NW advised us that unfortunately Madhualta Patel had taken the decision to resign from the scheme due to a change in circumstances. Madhualta had enjoyed her time on the scheme and passed on her best wishes to the panel members. Unfortunately, Lisa Winnett had also resigned from the scheme.</p> <p>NW informed us that it had been brought to her attention that some visitors were unhappy about visits not being carried out randomly and unannounced. However, NW advised us that unannounced visit had not been undertaken in the past as this was not operationally viable. Arrangements had to be made with the dog handlers in advance in order to ensure a visit could be conducted or the handlers could be deployed to an operation if the visitors arrived unannounced. The visits take place within a few weeks of the arrangements being made, so there is very little time for any deterioration of the dogs to be rectified within that timeframe, should there be any.</p> <p>NW advised us that the tenure for Martyn Evans, Laura Buchanan-Smith and Anthony Davies was due to conclude at the end of August and thanked them for their dedication to the scheme on behalf of the Commissioner, his team and the scheme members for their commitment and wished them well for the future.</p> <p>NW informed us visits had been conducted in April and June and the report forms had been received.</p> <p>NW confirmed that all new visitors should attend a visit with an experienced visitor in order to feel confident when conducting a visit prior to conducting a visit as per the rota.</p> <p>NW advised us that she had revised the visitor report form to include guidance for the visitors on what observations they should be making and what questions they should to be asking the dog handlers.</p> <p>NW requested that if the visitors were unable to carry out their scheduled visits to liaise with the other scheme visitors as soon as possible to attempt to arrange cover. If they were unsuccessful in arranging this, they should notify the OPCC as soon as possible in order to allow the OPCC adequate time to assist in trying to organise cover. NW advised the visitors that CD would send a reminder email to the visitors who were scheduled to conduct a visit that month as a reminder.</p> <p>NW informed us visits could be carried out in the evening in addition to the daytime.</p> <p>The new visiting arrangements had been circulated to visitors with the aim of ensuring that all dogs are visited at least once a year. Visitors should email all</p>	<p>CD</p>

	<p>three dog training instructors directly or call their mobile phone and leave a voice message if there was no answer. Contact numbers had been circulated to visitors. If all of the dogs in training had been seen recently, the lead visitor should contact two handlers of the dogs from the list circulated of those dogs unseen or not seen for the longest period. This was to ensure that if one of the handlers was called away on operational duties, the visit could still take place.</p> <p>NW advised that she, CD and two of the new visitors had received training from the RSCPA at the Dog training location. This would enable the NW and CD to better support any new visitors who have not yet received a visit with an experienced visitor. They were unable to observe the training due to the extreme hot weather on the day, the training had been carried out very early in the morning when the temperature had been much cooler for the dogs.</p> <p>NW informed the visitors they were welcome to stay to observe the training following a visit should they wish to do so, provided the instructors had been notified.</p> <p>NW advised that under the Gifts and Hospitality policy visitors should not be requesting or accepting drinks, food or gifts from the force. Although a one-off hot or cold drink would not be an issue during extreme weather. Animal Welfare visitors are independent of the force, and this could be perceived as bribery if it was a regular occurrence.</p> <p>NW informed us there were no issues raised on the visit report forms from the visits conducted.</p> <p>It was drawn to our attention that the canine first aid kits were not in any of the vehicles and that many of the dog handlers had not received annual canine first aid training. NW relayed this information to the head of the Dog Section and was assured the matter would be rectified. NW has also revised the report form to include canine first aid kits as part of the checks to be conducted.</p> <p>NW advised us that the visits should be conducted in pairs, unless visitors are still undertaking their training visits. One form should be completed per visit and visitors should notify CD if they require more visit forms or envelopes for submitting the report forms to the OPCC.</p> <p>NW informed us sadly Police Dog Ollie had passed away, condolences had been sent on behalf of the Animal Welfare Scheme to PD Ollie's handler.</p>	
4.	Operational Update from the Dog Section	
	<p>MH informed us that Sergeant Pearse would be transferring to another police force. NW would send an email of thanks and congratulations to Sgt Pearse on behalf of the scheme and the OPCC.</p>	NW

MH informed us that three of the newly licensed police dogs had settled in and they had had some positive operational results.

MH advised us a number of handlers had been deployed to assist with the policing of the Commonwealth Games.

MH informed us a new course; Initial Pursuit, was taking place with a number of handlers attending the course. Once training had been completed this would allow the handlers to work closer with the roads policing officers during pursuits.

MH advised us that a number of unmarked vehicles were being purchased for the handlers and this would allow each shift to have an unmarked capability.

A multi caged van was also being purchased to be utilised for training purposes and planned operations to be able to carry multiple dogs.

MH advised us the merging of the Dogs Section and the Roads Specialist Policing Operation was working well.

NW asked if the extreme hot weather conditions had impacted on the operations that the dogs were able to attend to ensure the welfare of the dogs. MH informed us the dogs were kept in shaded areas when not operational during the high temperatures or taken to a lake or stream to keep them cool and confirmed the dogs were provided with the appropriate equipment. Necessary risk assessments were conducted prior to deployment.

MH advised us that there would be a dedicated training instructor on each shift and each shift would be self-contained for training. Two instructors would be up-skilled to Drugs Dog instructors which would result in an instructor for each shift which should assist when visitors are arranging a visit. One handler was due to receive training to qualify as an instructor.


NW reiterated that visitors should communicate with the OPCC to advise when a visit had been arranged. MH advised us that the visits could take place at any time, the shift pattern was four on four off allowing wide availability to carry out visits.

We discussed the use of air conditioning in the dog sections vehicles and were informed that the air conditioning was used as a last resort as it dehydrated the dogs and should not be used as temperature control for a long period of time. The best option was to park the vehicles in the shade with the boot lid open or in natural temperatures which is the protocol followed by the dog handlers.

NW advised us the new process of arranging a visit was working well as multiple dogs could be visited at one time with which the Inspector concurred. NW asked that any suggestions for improving the process further should be sent to NW and CD.

5.	AOB	
	No other business was discussed.	
6.	Date of Next Meeting	
	The next meeting will be held at 4pm, on 24th October 2022.	

Meeting concluded at 4:35pm

Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct. Any such interests are recorded below. The above request has my approval.
Signed 
Date 28/09/2022

Contact Officer	
Name	Nicola Warren
Position	Governance Officer
Telephone	
Email	Nicola.Warren@Gwent.Police.uk
Background papers	

Actions from Meeting dated 27th July 2022

Minute Number	Action	Owner	Update	
3.	NW advised the visitors that CD would send a reminder email to the visitors who were scheduled to conduct a visit that month as a reminder.	CD		
4.	NW to send an email of thanks and congratulations to Sgt Pearse on behalf of the scheme and the OPCC.	NW	NW sent email to JP.	Complete

