

DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2015-013

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING
HELD ON 9TH FEBRUARY, 4.00PM
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG**

PRESENT: Mr E J Harrhy – Chair
Mrs Val Dudley
Cllr Lisa Winnett – Blaenau Gwent
Mrs Laura Buchanan-Smith
Mr Anthony Davies
Mr Martyn Evans
Ms Gill Mason
Inspector Emma Smith – RSPCA
Sgt Julie Pearse – Dog Section, Gwent Police
PC 1490 Gareth Thomas – Dog Section, Gwent Police
Mrs Maria Chapman – Scheme Administrator, OPCC
Miss Jessica Tippins – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC

The meeting began at 4.10pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Paul Harris, Mrs Siân Curley, Cllr Tom Bond and Mr Gary Lucas.

2 CONFIRM MINUTES OF MEETING OF 8TH OCTOBER 2014

We received and confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on the 8th October 2014. The following was highlighted:

Section 2 – Deputy Commissioner Update

Mr Harrhy (EH) queried whether members of the Animal Welfare scheme had to declare an interest related to any groups applying to the Commissioner's Partnership Fund. Maria Chapman (MC) confirmed that members did not have to declare an interest.

Section 6 – Operational update form the Dog Section with a debrief on the Dog Section's NATO activities

Cllr Lisa Winnett (LW) queried whether the review of the Dog Section had been completed and if there was an update as to whether replacements would be made. Sergeant Julie Pearse (JP) updated the group that the review was still on-going, but it would appear that no replacements would be made.

Section 9 – Any Other Business

MC raised that the OPCC had not yet received dates from JP regarding her availability at future Animal Welfare scheme meetings. JP agreed to **JP**

forward her availability or send notification if a deputy would be attending on her behalf.

JP expressed her pleasure regarding the December dog trials, commenting on the high attendance figures at the event in terms of both scheme members and the general public.

5 PRESENTATION BY SGT PEARSE ON CHANGES TO THE DANGEROUS DOGS ACT 1991

PC Gareth Thomas presented an overview of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to the group as well as the changes introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Key topics covered within the presentation were:

- Facts about the new powers introduced in 2014.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts (ABC's)
- Community Protection Notices (CPN)
- Injunctions
- Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO)
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
- How the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 has changed

EH thanked PC Thomas for his presentation.

PC Thomas left the meeting

3 OPERATIONAL UPDATE FROM THE DOG SECTION SERGEANT

JP made the group aware that the section has two new dogs named PD Noah and PD Krissy who were licensed in November and doing very well.

Confirmation was given that the Dog Section would be getting their own Facebook and Twitter accounts. JP said she would provide an update to the group once they live.

The group were informed of the regional and national dog trial dates and locations. The regional trials are to be held in Devon & Cornwall on February 22nd with the national trials being held in Scotland during May. The two dogs from Gwent taking part in the regional trials will be PD Jack and PD Blitz.

The group were made aware that the whole of the Gwent Police force was currently under a re-structure and that this would have an effect on the Dog Section. The following adjustments were raised:

- Gwent is to be split into 'East and West'.
- East would cover Newport, Monmouthshire with West covering Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen.
- The number of handlers would remain the same, although the

section would aim to increase capacity. The current 14 handlers would be split between the two sections according to demand.

9 handlers had been assigned to the West and 5 assigned to the East. JP assured the group that these changes would not affect the scheduled visits and that volunteers would still be able to carry out their visits at the station of their choice.

The group were made aware that Inspector Martyn Smith would be taking over the operational training unit. Inspector Lee Ford would oversee operations in Maindee (East), whilst Inspector Gavin Clifton would oversee operations at Ystrad Mynach (West). The group were reassured that once firm plans were in place regarding the re-structuring of the Dog Section, JP would provide an update to the scheme.

Another change the group were made aware of under the new saving strategy, was that the number of Dog Section vehicles would be reduced. Handlers would no longer be able to take section vehicles home and would have to transport the dogs home in their personal vehicles. A number of queries were raised regarding these changes. LW raised the issue of how would officers who do not have their own cars, or large cars, transport their dogs home. JP reassured the group that these issues were being taken into consideration and that alternative solutions were being discussed. Another question was raised around whether these officers would need to have certain car insurance to cover them whilst transporting the dogs to and from work. Again, JP told the group this had been considered and all officers would need to obtain business insurance on their vehicle, although, this should not be at any extra cost. Another visitor asked what would happen if one of the patrol vehicles was off the road. JP confirmed that workshops would make the dog section vehicles a priority, but if that fails, specialised hire cars would be used. Another enquiry raised was whether volunteers would need to check the personal cars as well as the patrol vehicles on their scheduled visits. It was confirmed that volunteers would not need to check officer's personal cars and that visits would remain the same. Finally, EH questioned whether the dogs' welfare was being considered when using personal cars as transportation. JP confirmed she has risk assessed this and created a 'Safe Operating Procedure', copies of which she would be happy to provide for the next meeting.

JP

For clarity, JP confirmed that the Dog Section would have 14 handlers with 8 vehicles to patrol Gwent with bases being at Maindee (for the East) and Ystrad Mynach (for the West).

JP

It was requested by members that an update be provided to the group of how other forces are managing these proposed changes in their Dog Section's at the next meeting.

4 SCHEME UPDATE

MC made the group aware that only two out of the four arranged visits had been completed. All members who were scheduled on the rota during these missed meetings confirmed they had not attended. MC reiterated that if people were unavailable to complete their scheduled visits, they should phone or email the OPCC who would aim to re-arrange for someone else to carry out the visit. Inspector Emma Smith (ES) requested that she and Gary Lucas were not scheduled on the rota together due to work commitments. Laura Buchannan-Smith (LB-S) queried whether volunteers were allowed to carry out lone-visits. MC stated she was not sure but would investigate this further and update the group in due course.

JT

MC

MC made the group aware that the bi-annual visit to the Waterton Kennels was due in April and asked if any-one would like to accompany her on this visit. MC stated she would send a list of proposed dates to members to find which was most convenient for them.

MC

6 Presentation by Inspector Emma Smith (RSPCA) on Completion of RSPCA reports

GL

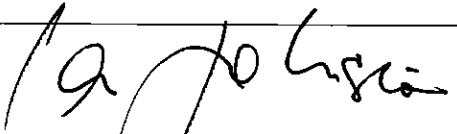
This was deferred to the next meeting as Gary Lucas (GL) would be presenting this item.


ES did provide the group with an overview of the RSPCA in South Wales stating that there are 5 Inspectors, 1 Welfare Officer and 3 Collection Officers which cover the whole of South Wales. January is a relatively quiet time for the organisation and therefore they were dealing with the backlog of calls from the Christmas period (currently around 150 calls). We were informed that most livestock and commercial premises calls were referred to the local authority with anything remaining covered by the RSPCA. The staff were currently working to clear the backlog of calls by having 'clean sweep' days where they try to action all the calls from one area in one day. Most recent 'clean sweep' days have taken place in Barry and Penarth.

7 Any Other Business

No other business raised

The meeting concluded at 5.25pm

Ian Johnston QPM, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	
I have monitored the Animal Welfare Scheme Minutes and am satisfied with progress.	
Signed 	Date 13.3.15

Contact Officer	
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Background papers	None

