

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING  
HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2017, 4.00PM  
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG**

**PRESENT:** Mr Martyn Evans – Chair  
Councillor Lisa Winnett  
Mrs Gill Mason  
Mr Gary Lucas  
Ms Laura Buchanan-Smith  
Mrs Caroline Herbert  
Ms Jennifer Deasington  
Mr Elis Park  
Insp Emma Smith, RSPCA  
Sergeant Julie Pearce - Dog Section, Gwent Police  
Miss Jessica Tippins –Scheme Administrator, OPCC  
Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC

The meeting began at 4.00pm

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** **ACTION**  
Apologies for absence were received from Chief Inspector Martyn Smith and Mrs Sian Curley.
- 2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017**  
The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record.
- 3 MATTERS ARISING**  
No issues were raised to be discussed.
- 4 OPERATIONAL UPDATE FROM DOG SECTION SERGEANT**

PS Julie Pearce (JP) informed us that there is a basic course running at the moment which two dog handlers are attending who upon completion should become licensed.

We were updated that there have been a number of deployments within the Dog Section on counter terrorism searches in recent months mainly in the Newport area.

There have been a couple of issues regarding the veterinary services contract with regards to consistency of treatment provided to the dogs but these are hopefully now resolved. Summerhill Vets have acknowledged the issue and are looking to extend the parameters of the contract for us. It has been agreed that the force can now also use Fields Vets, who have been used as a force vet in the past. It is hoped that this arrangement will help get some consistency back on the treatment received. Summerhill Vets will still be used for emergency treatment etc, however the new arrangement will allow dog handlers to judge where to go based on their specific dogs needs. It was confirmed that this arrangement has not been extended to any other vets outside of Fields Vets as Fields together with Summerhill are sufficient to meet the needs required.

JP confirmed that the force are going to be running a dog trials this year, but that instead of being in the school holidays it will be done in school time and hopefully be taking place at a school in Torfaen. The force are currently waiting on the final agreement of this, however if it goes ahead the intention is to maximise the schools and pupils involvement with the trials. It was queried whether the Animal Welfare Scheme Members would be allowed to attend. JP advised that she will speak to the school about accommodating the Scheme as part of the invited attendees. It was acknowledged by Scheme members that whilst not all may be permitted to attend, ideally if the new members could attend it would be very beneficial and enlightening for them. JP informed us that the trials would be judged over three phases; tracking, searching and criminal work, of which criminal work is usually a public event. Once details of the date, venue and confirmed invite list are known JP will update the OPCC and Jessica Tippins (JT) will circulate the details to the Scheme.

JP

JP  
JT

JP also advised us that Gwent have been provisionally asked to host the national dog trials in 2019. Whilst they are awaiting a formal request for confirmation, it is hoped that Gwent will be able to host the event. If this is the case this will be a big public event which obviously the Scheme could attend.

A new instructor has recently been added to the Dog Section which means that there are now three instructors.

We requested if the latest Police Dog list could be circulated to all members. JP advised that a list had been provided to JT, JT confirmed that she will arrange for this to be circulated. JP then updated us on the recent retirements of police dogs; PD Falk has recently been retired, PD Chrissy has also been retired as it became clear that she didn't really want to be a police dog which meant it wasn't as safe for her or her handler, as a result of this she has been successfully rehomed on a farm. PD Kob has also been retired and rehomed for similar reasons as PD Chrissy, JP clarified that he would

JT

sometimes want to work and sometimes wouldn't which wasn't really effective for the police requirements.

JP reminded all volunteers that she would discourage physical interaction between them and any of the police dogs, particularly with the general purpose dogs as they may perceive it as a threat, additionally the dogs need to be discouraged from being more social as it is detrimental to their operational role. We were informed that the Dog Section are experiencing issues with some of the dogs from some Scheme members being too friendly with them, so this does need to be discouraged. JP clarified that there may be certain dogs that can be interacted with but this will generally be the smaller dogs and the Handlers will advise members of the Scheme of when this is permitted. We were reassured that all the dogs did receive friendly treatment from their owners and families but that it had to be limited outside of that so that they can do their jobs, this was fully acknowledged by the Scheme.

We requested if it was possible to be provided with a list of the Gwent dogs that are due to be in Waterton for when the Waterton visit takes place. JP confirmed that this would be possible, she advised that she will ensure that Waterton make sure any Gwent dogs kenneled at Waterton on the date of our Scheme's visit are in areas that are visible so that they can all be viewed. JP

## **5 SCHEME UPDATE**

JT informed us that four new Animal Welfare Visitors have recently been recruited, one of which is awaiting finalisation on vetting and references. A rota has already been circulated which has the three confirmed new volunteers on it; this rota will be updated and circulated once the fourth volunteer has successfully completed the required checks.

We were advised that as part of the review of the Scheme it has been recommended that all Scheme members be security vetted to level 1, therefore all volunteers are required to complete the vetting form and pass the vetting process in order to remain on the Scheme. This will mean that ID cards and vetting will need to be renewed on an annual basis.

JT updated us that the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable have recently agreed that they intend bringing back Gwent Police open days, as such they are aiming to hold the first on Bank Holiday Monday - 6<sup>th</sup> May 2018. This will be a joint emergency services event with the Ambulance Service and Fire Service but there will also be invites going out to other organisations e.g. Mountain Rescue and RNLI. JT advised that along with using the

Headquarters site they are hopefully going to be using Crownbridge School's ground and potentially other local schools if permission is granted. The day will include things like police dog displays, a rescue by the fire service and a car crash demonstration. The first planning session will be taking place tomorrow, as such we were informed if there is anyway the Scheme want to have an input on the day to let JT know e.g. to have a stall. Further details on the event will be provided once finalised.

JT

## 6 WATERTON

Councillor Winnett (LW) advised the Scheme of an email she had sent to JP following the last visit to Waterton conducted by herself and Gary Lucas (GL). One of the concerns was that there were two dogs listed on the board and on the book which the Welfare Officer at the kennels could not advise of which force they belonged to, as the officer's name / collar number next to the dogs was not evident. LW clarified that one of the dogs was called Dexter, but it was unclear if this was a Gwent dog or not as LW was aware Gwent did previously have a dog by that name. Other concerns raised were that no Welfare Officer was in attendance when the dogs were checked in (which potentially led to the confusion around who the dogs belonged to) and that PD Ozma was not behaving in the normal manner; she was hyperactive and took a while to calm down as did the neighbouring dog.

JP informed us that PD Ozma is a highly strung dog so the behaviour described is her normal behaviour as she is excessively hyperactive, however JP did acknowledge the comments regarding the dog held next door. We were informed that South Wales have recently installed partitions for Gwent, to limit interaction with other dogs when needed, this was installed specifically for PD Uzo, but obviously other dogs will now be able to benefit from this too. We were advised it is not possible to partition all of the dogs and quite often there is no need for them to be partitioned. When Gwent Handlers take their dogs to Waterton, South Wales do always try to oblige any requests to put the dogs wherever the Handlers specify e.g. certain Handlers will ask for a partition, for instance if the dog is aggressive, or if dogs are likely to be in kennels for a long period of time, Handlers may ask for them to be kennelled with more of a view over the river, as this is less boring and provides more stimulation for them. JP advised that the Welfare Officer who attended LW and GL when they went to Waterton was relatively new, so wasn't able to provide the answers that a more experienced member of staff could. JP clarified however that there is not always a Welfare Officer in attendance when dogs are checked into the kennels as sometimes they are taken there in during antisocial

hours e.g. 3am in the morning, whereupon there will not necessarily be a Welfare Officer in attendance. JP clarified that PD Dexter is a South Wales Police Dog, however it was verified that he was the same Dexter LW was thinking of as he was previously owned by Gwent, but got transferred to South Wales. JP also verified that if the South Wales handlers choose not to put their officer's name or number next to their own dogs on the board, then that is down to South Wales Police, Gwent only have responsibility for the Gwent dogs. JP also clarified that the feeding regimes for South Wales dogs are also down to South Wales, however if our volunteers have any concerns they can report back on issues by writing them on their forms / contacting the OPCC. This information will then be fed back to South Wales either by the OPCC or by JP, however Gwent Dog Section and the Gwent Scheme cannot manage the situation for South Wales' dogs any wider than that, as that falls under South Wales Dog Section and the South Wales Scheme's remit.

GL agreed with JP's comments and clarified to all that an important learning point for everyone is that the Scheme members must not come to conclusions during their visits e.g. what is/isn't normal behaviour etc, the Scheme are there just to observe and report back to the OPCC/Dog Section. Scheme members should not make assumptions about things and should also bear in mind that there is always going to be a reasonable explanation about potential issues that arise. The Scheme's job is to record it appropriately and then let the people deal with it who are meant to deal with it.

## **7 WATERTON – NEXT VISIT DUE FEBRUARY 2018**

JT advised that the next visit to Waterton was due in February and that the last five visits had all been conducted by LW, as such in the interest of fairness it would be beneficial for others to take a turn. It was noted that it would be valuable for the new volunteers to attend along with one experienced Scheme member if any of them were interested. GL volunteered to attend as the experienced member, all three newly recruited members expressed an interest in going to Waterton. It was agreed that GL will email all three to see who he can co-ordinate a convenient date with in February to do the visit. It is possible that more than just two visitors can attend if all are available and want to go as there have been groups of four visit before. GL will link in with JT and JP accordingly once a convenient date has been agreed between himself and the new members to check which Gwent Dogs will be there.

GL

GL/JT/  
JP

**8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**


It was requested that GL be sent a copy of the Waterton visit form.

**OPCC**

The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

**9 DETAILS OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Animal Welfare Meeting has been scheduled for **4pm** on **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018** in **Conference Room 1**. Please can all visitors note that they will be required to go to the main Police Headquarters reception to gain access to the meeting room. Attendance before 4pm is advisable as the main reception doors are locked from 4pm.

<b>Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent</b>	
I have monitored the Animal Welfare Scheme Minutes and am satisfied with progress.	
Signed 	Date 9/11/17
Contact Officer	
Name	Jessica Tippins
Position	Temporary Engagement Officer
Telephone	01633 642200
Email	<a href="mailto:Jessica.Tippins@gwent.pnn.police.uk">Jessica.Tippins@gwent.pnn.police.uk</a>
Background papers	None