

Decision log PCCG-2020-039

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING  
HELD REMOTELY ON 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020 at 4:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Mr Martyn Evans – Chair - Animal Welfare Visitor (ME)  
 Ms Jennifer Deasington - Vice Chair – Animal welfare Visitor (JD)  
 Mrs Lisa Winnett – Animal Welfare Visitor (LW)  
 Ms Louise Crawford - Animal Welfare Co-Ordinator, Dog Trust (LC)  
 Mr Martyn Smith - Chief Inspector (MS)  
 Mrs Nicola Warren – Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)  
 Mrs Ceri Davis – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

**The meeting commenced at 4:07 p.m.**

	Notes and Actions	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Gillian Mason, Laura Buchanan-Smith and Sergeant Julie Pearse.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings</b>	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. We noted that all actions had been completed.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Dogs Trust Introduction</b>	
	LC thanked the panel for inviting her to the meeting.  LC informed us that she had worked within Cheshire Constabulary for thirty years, as a dog handler for fifteen years and then the Dog Unit Sergeant for a number of years before retiring five years ago.  LC informed us that her role as the Animal Welfare Scheme Co-Ordinator for the Dogs Trust involved liaising with Police Forces and Offices of	

<p>Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure the majority of the Police Forces have signed up to an Animal Welfare Scheme.</p> <p>We were advised that the Dogs Trust could provide visitor training and use their expertise to assist the force with kenneling requirements.</p> <p>Forces were asked to sign a local agreement which enabled the Dogs Trust to provide them with dogs that had been identified as suitable for working.</p> <p>LC advised us her role covered the whole of the UK and Ireland and this was on a part time basis.</p> <p>ME informed LC of our visiting process, how often a visit took place and how often kennel visits were undertaken.</p> <p>LW advised LC that the Force dogs were very well looked after. In addition to the Animal Welfare (AW) visits, visitors also attended dog training days and Force open days which had given them a good insight.</p> <p>LC informed us that the main charity for retired Police Dogs was the 'Thin Blue Paw' foundation which supported working and retired dogs. Many Animal Welfare schemes had set up independent charities prior to the Thin Blue Paw charity was set up. However, some of these charities now gave donations to Thin Blue Paw due to it being a bigger charity it could release the pressures on a small charity. Details of the Thin Blue Paw foundation to be sent to NW.</p> <p>LC informed us that the Dogs Trust offered training for new AW recruits and refresher training. This included a full training day, involving the local vet to provide input on diseases and common ailments in dogs, a member from the force training department to ensure the new visitors were aware of the training equipment and the training methods that would be used. This would give the visitor the necessary knowledge on what to expect and what was needed to ensure compliance. LC would provide input on the welfare element and what standards were expected.</p> <p>A discussion was held regarding the recruitment processes and guidance on application questions. NW agreed to circulate the relevant recruitment documentation and advised the visitors to send in any question suggestions for consideration. If appropriate they would be incorporated within the documentation.</p> <p>ME thanked LC for her introduction.</p> <p>MS informed us that the dog unit Sergeant would normally undertake home visits but since Covid 19 regulations had been in place, the visits had not been taking place but would be reinstated in due course. LC advised us the Dogs Trust expected home kennels to be inspected once every two years as a minimum and the visits should be recorded in the same way as the visitors' reports. The dogs should also have a health check every twelve months.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LC</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NW/Visitors</b></p>
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	LC confirmed that there was a shortage of general-purpose dogs nationally due to an increase in demand. However, the numbers in their care were slowly increasing.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Scheme Update</b>	
	<p>NW advised us there were currently seven visitors on the scheme and visits were not being carried out at present due to Covid 19 lockdown regulations.</p> <p>NW advised us that all visitors should have received the risk assessment and Operational Policy via email and agreed to circulate it again for those who had not yet completed it.</p> <p>NW informed us that all visitors whose tenure was due to expire in 2021 had agreed to the extension of tenure until March 2022.</p> <p>NW advised the visitors that the recruitment process would now be carried out online due to the implications of Covid 19.</p> <p>NW asked if the Chair or Vice would like to be involved with the recruitment process and received confirmation that they would.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the tenure for AW visitors as the scheme could lose their experienced visitors if the tenure remained in place. NW agreed to raise visitors' concerns with the Head of Assurance and Compliance.</p> <p>A discussion was held around the use of digital visit forms via an app on a mobile phone. NW advised she was advised that this had not been introduced as there was a security issue with visitors using their own phones, but she would contact the Digital Service Division department to ascertain if it could be done.</p> <p>NW advised the recruitment drive would be advertised in the Police and Crime Commissioner's newsletter and on the website.</p> <p>NW informed the visitors that the Chair had been invited to complete a guest blog for the Commissioner's newsletter and the website to advertise what the Animal Welfare visitors do and the importance of the scheme. This had not been arranged to date. NW to contact the Communications team to arrange.</p>	<p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Operational Update from the Dog Section</b>	
	MS advised the visitors that a summary of the operational work had been provided to NW for circulation to the visitors.	<b>NW</b>

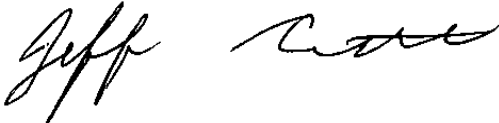
	<p>MS informed us that during the lockdown period the dog section had been very active as fewer people were out in the community due to lockdown restrictions which created ideal tracking conditions for the dogs.</p> <p>The dogs had been involved in operations with South Wales Police and the Joint Firearms Unit. MS advised us that more dogs were due to be trained in the Firearms Support role. This would provide additional capability when attending these situations instead of using lethal options. The Force would be using this method more once more dogs have been trained.</p> <p>A retired dog handler had been recruited on a temporary basis to ensure that new dogs could be accredited, and the remaining dogs could receive refresher training to ensure compliance with the accreditation as all dog training was initially suspended due to Covid 19.</p> <p>MS informed the visitors that due to various long-term health concerns a decision had been made to retire Police Dog Noah. Noah was remaining with PC North for his retirement. PC North was to have a new Force dog.</p> <p>MS advised us that PC North was currently networking with a charity who assisted with retired Police Dogs, but this was still in the early stages. NW informed us she had made contact with PC North regarding the charity and further information would be provided in due course.</p> <p>The Visitors asked for updates in between meetings while the AW visits were not taking place. NW suggested updates be provided outside of the meetings only if there was something to report other than usual practice. MS confirmed that an update would be provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for circulation when a dog was due to retire or if there were any potential career threatening or life-threatening problems with the dogs.</p>	<b>MS</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Update of Kenneling Arrangements</b>	
	MS advised the visitors that the review of the kenneling arrangements was a long-term project and Glascoed was being considered as an option. The kenneling would remain at Waterton in Bridgend until a definitive decision had been made.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	There was no other business to be discussed.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	The next meeting will be held at <b>4pm, on the 25th January 2021 in Conference Room 1 at Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog.</b>	

**Meeting concluded at 5:08pm**

**Actions from Meeting dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

<b>Minute Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Complete/ Ongoing</b>
<b>3.</b>	LC informed us that the main charity for retired Police Dogs was the 'Thin Blue Paw' foundation which supported working and retired dogs. Many Animal Welfare schemes had set up independent charities prior to the Thin Blue Paw charity was set up. However, some of these charities now gave donations to Thin Blue Paw due to it being a bigger charity it could release the pressures on a small charity. Details of the Thin Blue Paw foundation to be sent to NW.	<b>LC</b>		
<b>3.</b>	A discussion was held regarding the recruitment processes and guidance on application questions. NW agreed to circulate the relevant recruitment documentation and advised the visitors to send in any question suggestions for consideration. If appropriate they would be incorporated within the documentation.	<b>NW/ Visitors</b>		
<b>4.</b>	NW advised us that all visitors should have received the risk assessment and Operational Policy via email and agreed to circulate it again for those who had not yet completed it.	<b>NW</b>		
<b>4.</b>	Concerns were raised regarding the tenure for AW visitors as the scheme could lose their experienced visitors if the tenure remained in place.	<b>NW</b>		

	NW agreed to raise visitors' concerns with the Head of Assurance and Compliance.			
4.	A discussion was held around the use of digital visit forms via an app on a mobile phone. NW advised she was advised that this had not been introduced as there was a security issue with visitors using their own phones, but she would contact the Digital Service Division department to ascertain if it could be done.	NW		
4.	NW informed the visitors that the Chair had been invited to complete a guest blog for the Commissioner's newsletter and the website to advertise what the Animal Welfare visitors do and the importance of the scheme. This had not been arranged to date. NW to contact the Communications team to arrange.	NW		
5.	MS advised the visitors that a summary of the operational work had been provided to NW for circulation to the visitors.	NW		
5.	The Visitors asked for updates in between meetings while the AW visits were not taking place. NW suggested updates be provided outside of the meetings only if there was something to report other than usual practice. MS confirmed that an update would be provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for circulation when a dog was due to retire or if there were any potential career threatening or life-threatening problems with the dogs.	MS		

<b>Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent</b>	
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  04.12.2020

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
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<b>Background papers</b>	None





