

DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2014-078

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING
HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2014, 4.00PM
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG**

PRESENT: Mr E J Harry - Chair
Councillor Tom Bond - Newport
Councillor Lisa Winnett – Blaenau Gwent
Mrs Laura Buchanan-Smith
Mr Martyn Evans
Sgt Julie Pearse - Dog Section, Gwent Police
Sian Curley – Scheme Manager, OPCC
Jessica Tippins – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC
Maria Chapman – Scheme Administrator, OPCC

The meeting began at 4.05pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Val Dudley, Ms Gill Mason, Mr Paul Harris and Inspector Emma Smith.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Mrs Curley (SC) gave the update on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner who sent his apologies.

Reasoning was given behind the length of time between this meeting and the previous meeting. This was due to NATO operations. SC passed on to the board that the Commissioner was pleased with how the force managed the event.

SC informed the board on the Commissioner's Partnership Fund. This was a pot of £150,000 created from proceeds of crime which local community groups could access to fund projects which meet the Commissioner's priorities. We were informed that the Fund had received over 500 applications totalling over £2.4million. Of these, over 60 community groups were successful.

The visitors were updated on the opening of the Commissioner's new Victim's Hub which is due to open on the 1st of April 2015. The hub is being created using money given to the Commissioner from the Ministry of Justice. The hub will be based in Blackwood and made up of statutory bodies and charities all working together to improve victim's services.

It was also commented that the OPCC is now beginning its budget setting process. MC informed the group that the Commissioner has been

holding a consultation with the public around this through an online consultation with the public which asks their thoughts of the precept level, whether they feel the Commissioners priorities are still relevant and if they value station re-openings.

SC advised that if the board had any questions for the OPCC to raise them with herself or MC and they would get back to them as soon as possible.

3 ANNUAL NOMINATION OF CHAIR

Mr Harry (EH) was elected to remain chair of the board.

4 CONFIRM MINUTES OF MEETING OF 1ST MAY 2014

We received and confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on the 1st May 2014. The following was highlighted:

Section 4 – Operational Update from Dog Section

It was noted in the first paragraph that PS Pearse's line manager was Paul Thomas. PS Pearse (JP) informed the board the line manager is in fact Paul Evans.

Concerns were raised in respect of the number of visits being carried out by the scheme. JP advised that as far as she was aware, there had been visits in every month except September. It was raised that the visits were going well and that they were trying to ensure the dogs which haven't been seen recently are the ones being visited. JP also informed the board that PD Uzo is back on duty. Councillor Lisa Winnett (LW) commented that the visits were extremely useful and the staff at all sites are very knowledgeable.

MC advised the group that no visit forms had been received by the OPCC for a while but understood NATO may have caused a backlog. LW suggested that volunteers call the OPCC when a visit has been completed. MC commented this would be useful. JP stated she would email the OPCC when a booking has been made and if a visit has not been completed.

JP asked for a copy of the rota.

JT

Mrs Laura Buchanan-Smith (LB-S) asked if the rota can be altered as she is unable to attend some visits.

JT

LW advised that people are not completing visits and not informing the group. SC advised the group that if any members are unable to attend a visit that they inform the OPCC as they will need to find a replacement.

LW raised a query on the attendance of the Caerphilly and Monmouthshire councillors. MC advised that reminders had been sent to

their leaders.

It was relayed that Caerphilly Councillor Elaine Forehead (EF) was scheduled to complete visits but was not trained in filling out the forms. JP advised that the staff at the visit will assist her with this. **JP**

A message from Gill Mason (GM) was passed on regarding arranging a meeting with EF.

LW raised a query to see if the blue forms could be put in the mail or given to the handler at the visits. JP stated that it would be ok to hand the form to the handler at the end of the visit and it will be passed on internally. **JP**

EH enquired about feedback surrounding the malnourished South Wales Police dogs mentioned in section 5 of the last meeting. MC informed the group that she had followed this up and that the matter had been actioned.

5 PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR EMMA SMITH (RSPCA) ON COMPLETION OF RSPCA REPORTS

This was postponed as Inspector Emma Smith was unable to attend due to an emergency callout.

6 OPERATIONAL UPDATE FROM THE DOG SECTION WITH A DEBRIEF ON THE DOG SECTION'S NATO ACTIVITIES

JP gave the group the update on the dog section. Hundreds of dogs were brought in to Waterton and other forces for NATO. 4 explosives dogs worked at the Celtic Manor. PD Elvis will be retiring early due to his nervous nature. Mr Martyn Evans queried where PD Elvis will be housed. JP advised the group he will either be going to Guernsey to live with a relative of his handler or housed with a Police Officer.

JP praised the dog section on NATO stating all the dogs performed well. PD Buddy was given praise at the Celtic Manor's remote vehicle site. There was no finds by the dog section at this site. All members had praise for the dogs and handlers involved in NATO.

The sections new temporary Inspector is John Davies.

PD Bryn is also retiring as he has become unreliable with bite work. He has been relocated to the military where he has now taken on the role of a course dog.

PC Keith Allen is retiring. JP advised she has let one of his Police dogs retire with him but is still making her mind up as to whether she will let the second dog retire early too. PC Gareth Gwyn is also retiring after completing his 30 years. The dog section will be keeping his police dog

PD Jack to replace PD Elvis.

LW queried if these dogs and officers will be replaced. JP informed the group that she is unable to replace anyone until a full departmental review, as a part of the change management programme which the whole force is subject to, has been completed. LW raised the importance of the dog section and the possible impact not replacing the staff and dogs may have on policing.

MC queried how many dogs the section is losing. JP informed the group that two general purpose dogs were being lost. PD Kenny is also retiring due to hip and ligament issues and two new dogs are on a basic training course.

MC asked how many dogs and officers were in the section. JP informed the group that there will be 14 general purpose dogs once the training is complete in December, nine drugs dogs and two explosives dogs who will work with 14 officers.

LW queried how long it would be before JP would know if she can recruit new dogs and officers. JP advised that she has no deadline as of yet.

7 SCHEME UPDATE

MC advised that most of the update had already been covered when reviewing the minutes of the last meeting.

LW enquired as to the dates of the Dog Section's training sessions to see if the members could link in with them. JP advised that there is one session in November but this is a night session so may be unsuitable. There is also a session in December. Dates will be emailed out to members once they are known along with dog trial dates. JP

8 PRESENTATION BY SGT PEARSE OF CHANGES TO THE DANGEROUS DOGS ACT 1991

This was postponed to the next meeting as the officer presenting was unable to attend. JP

JP advised the board on the risk to dogs in action. We were informed that when handlers are trained, they are also trained to risk assess for themselves and their dogs. Unless there is an immediate threat to life, handlers will always go in to a scenario with their dogs. Spontaneous events are risk assessed at the scene by the handler. Dogs rarely enter a scene before it has been risk assessed unless there is an immediate threat to life. Dogs are trained to give passive indications when they uncover something such as the dog freezing on the spot. Dogs are not trained to poke or bite anything they uncover. When dogs and handlers are deployed into a crowd scenario where missiles or weapons are being used, the dogs always stay behind the shields until it is safe for

them to come out and control the crowd.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MC asked the group to finalise a date for the visit to Waterton. The group decided on the 20th October 2014. Arrangements have been made for MC to drive from HQ at 1.30pm. MC will also send out letters confirming this date and arrangement.

MC

LW invited JP and the dog section to a fun day in Blaina. JP accepted the invitation if the section was available. We were informed that the dog section often does school visits but due to NATO some of these visits hadn't taken place this year.

JP made us aware that the dog trials are looking to change venue as the current venue is overgrown and unsuitable. Venues being considered are around the Cwmbran area to keep it local and central.

The next meeting had originally been scheduled for 19th February 2015. JP informed the group she is unable to attend this meeting due to training. MC asked JP if there was someone who could deputise for her if she is unable to attend meetings. JP was unable to say for sure as it is dependent on rotas. She is also unsure about her attendance to other future dates proposed, the 8th June 2015 and 22nd October 2015 as rotas were still being finalised.

JP will send her available dates to MC and JT will send out details of the next meeting in due course.

**JP
JT**

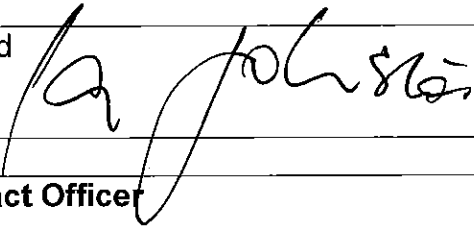
The meeting concluded at 5.05pm

Subsequent to the meeting the next Animal Welfare Meeting has now been scheduled for 4pm on 9th February 2015 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

Ian Johnston QPM, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

I have monitored the Animal Welfare Scheme Minutes and am satisfied with progress.

Signed



Date

5.11.14

Contact Officer	
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Background papers	None