**Decision log: PCCG-2024-034**



**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD BOTH IN PERSON AND REMOTELY ON TEAMS**

**20th JANUARY 2025 at 6:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Stephen Lewis– Chair, Animal Welfare Visitor – (SL)

Andrew Watkins – Animal Welfare Visitor (AW)

Kirsty Buckland – Animal Welfare Visitor (KB)

Vikki Waite – Animal Welfare Visitor (VW)

Sarah Fowler – Animal Welfare Visitor (SF)

David Davies - Sergeant - Roads Policing Specialist, Operations (DD)

Louise Crawford – Dogs Trust

Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Ceri Hiscox – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CH)

**The meeting commenced at 6pm.**

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Helen Lawless and Inspector Emma Smith. RSPCA. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  DD informed the meeting that training courses were scheduled for the coming months and the visitors were welcome to observe. DD to confirm dates to NW. NW to circulate the dates to the visitors. | **DD/NW** |
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| **3.** | **Scheme Update** |  |
|  | NW informed the meeting that unfortunately Linda Mason had left the scheme due to having other commitments. However, she has remained on our Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. Linda passed on her thanks to the scheme members.  NW informed the meeting there were two dogs out of twenty who had not received a visit within a year (PD Maui and PD Max) and asked why they had not been available for a visit. DD advised the meeting Maui’s handler was on long term sick leave and Maui was in the kennels at this time.  DD confirmed following a short stay in the kennels a decision had been made for PD Maui to be assigned to another handler for the time being so he wouldn’t have to stay in the kennels for long periods. PD Max would remain with his handler at home for his welfare during his handler’s sickness period.  PD Maui’s handler was due to return to work shortly and an update would be provided at the next meeting.  A suggestion was made, and a discussion was held around a trial of a new process for arranging visits which could prioritise the dogs that had not been seen within the year. The intention was for DD to circulate the Dog handler’s rota at the beginning of each month, the visitors would then attempt to arrange their visit around those days of the handlers with the dogs that were next on the list to be visited.  DD confirmed it could be challenging at times when arranging a visit due to operational demand, visitor availability and ensuring the dogs due to be seen next were available. DD advised the meeting the two dogs that had not been seen within the year was due to handler circumstances and not as a result of the current process.  One of the visitors explained it would be difficult to attend during various times throughout the day due to work commitments.  NW informed the meeting that as all the dogs had been seen, apart from two whose handlers were sick, and if the suggested process was not suitable for all visitors the process would not be adopted.  It was agreed by the meeting the current process would remain in place with the possibility of exploring it again in the future.  LC asked what process was in place to check on the dogs if their handlers were sick.  DD confirmed that there were processes and checks in place to monitor the welfare of the handler and the dog during the sickness period. Also, dog food would be delivered and assistance offered when routine vet checks or vaccinations were required.  NW informed the meeting there was a new Facebook page for the Roads Policing Specialist Operations (RPSO) team which shared dog training clips should they wish to view them.    NW advised the meeting three new PDs had been added to the list of dogs to be visited.  NW advised the meeting there had been no major concerns raised on the visit forms from the past quarter.  NW informed the meeting an update had been received from the Scheme Manager at South Wales (SW) on actions taken to improve the Waterton facility. Although good progress had been made, there were still some actions outstanding which will be followed up with the Scheme Manager at SW.    NW informed the meeting a suggestion had been made that leather leads/harnesses could be cleaned and preserved with saddle soap.  DD advised the meeting it was the handler’s responsibility for cleaning the leads and may have been dirty due to operations carried out before the visit took place. However, if the leads/harnesses were faulty to the extent that they were not usable then they would be replaced. Every handler had their own method of cleaning their kit and was responsible for ensuring it was serviceable and fit for purpose.  NW asked the visitor to note any concerns on the visit report forms if the leads/harnesses being used were unusable, so this could be followed up with the Sergeant. | **All Visitors** |
| **4.** | **Operational Update from the Dog Section** |  |
|  | DD informed the meeting PD Kai’s handler was due to retire following thirty years of service and that PD Kai would retire with the handler. The handler’s additional dog PD Maize would move to another handler.  DD informed the meeting PD Missy’s handler had been promoted to another position within the force and that PD Missy would be retiring and remain with the handler.  DD advised the meeting PD Rizo was also being rehandled.  DD informed the meeting that PD Woody was recuperating from an operation, had a specialist check planned for next month and would then be retiring with his handler.  DD informed the meeting PD Neyo had been rehandled with a new handler with a new PD calledCali.  DD advised the meeting a Firearms support course had just been completed which was assessed by an instructor from the Joint Firearms Unit and assisted by an instructor from Dyfed Powys Police.  DD informed the meeting that collaborative training with regional forces was done to share experiences and ensure all are working to the same standards. PD Hades, PD Drago and PD Akela had all passed the Firearms training course.  VW asked if hydrotherapy was available to the PDs. DD informed the meeting there was no routine hydrotherapy available to the PDs within force but if it was recommended by a Veterinary practitioner then this would be followed up. |  |
| **5.** | **AOB** |  |
|  | NW informed the visitors their renewed ID cards were ready to collect from CH and asked that they advise NW or CH before collecting.  CH informed the meeting of the visit information for the handler that had a personal first aid kit and not a force kit. DD to follow this up.  LC informed the meeting that the Dogs Trust were looking to do two online seminars, one for Animal Welfare visitors and one for Scheme Administrators, for an opportunity for members to get together and share good practices.  LC to share more information.  A question was raised regarding the length of tenure and NW informed the visitors that there was a six-year tenure for the scheme and a three-year review. The three-year review was due, and the NW would be in contact to arrange a meeting to discuss visitor progress and any possible training required.  NW informed the meeting a scheme tenure was in placed to maintain the independence of the visits. | **All Visitors**  **DD**  **LC**  **NW** |
|  | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **6pm, on 7th April 2025.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 6:48pm**

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| **Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**  I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct.  The above request has my approval. |
| **Signature:** |
| **Date:**  **26.03.2025** |

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| **Actions from Meeting dated 20th January 2025** | |  |  |  |
| **Minute Number** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Update** |  |
| **2.** | DD informed the meeting that training courses were scheduled for the coming months and the visitors were welcome to observe. DD to confirm dates to NW. NW to circulate the dates to the visitors. | **DD/NW** |  |  |
| **3.** | NW asked the visitor to note any concerns on the visit report forms if the leads/harnesses being used were unusable, so this could be followed up with the Sergeant. | **All visitors** |  |  |
| **5.** | NW informed the visitors their renewed ID cards were ready to collect from CH and asked that they advise NW or CH before collecting. | **All visitors** |  |  |
| **5.** | CH informed the meeting of the visit information for the handler that had a personal first aid kit and not a force kit. DD to follow this up. | **DD** |  |  |
| **5.** | LC informed the meeting that the Dogs Trust were looking to do two online seminars, one for Animal Welfare visitors and one for Scheme Administrators, for an opportunity for members to get together and share good practices.  LC to share more information. | **LC** |  |  |
| **5.** | A question was raised regarding the length of tenure and NW informed the visitors that there was a six-year tenure for the scheme and a three-year review. The three-year review was due, and the NW would be in contact to arrange a meeting to discuss visitor progress and any possible training required.  NW informed the meeting a scheme tenure was in placed to maintain the independence of the visits. | **NW** |  |  |
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| **Actions from Meeting dated 10th October 2024** | | |  |  |  |
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| **2.** | DD informed the meeting there was a 12-week training course currently running until December, visitors to contact DD should they wish to attend and observe. | **All visitors** | A visitor attended in early December. | **Complete** |
| **3.** | CH to circulate an updated list of dogs to be visited to all visitors. | **CH** | Updated list circulated to visitors. | **Complete** |
| **3.** | Members were asked if they would be interested in conducting a further visit to Waterton Kennels in addition to the usual rota, if so, to please contact the Scheme Manager. | **All visitors** | Two visitors have volunteered and are in the process of agreeing a dater for the visit to take place. | **Complete** |
| **3.** | NW requested that the OPCC be copied into the final confirmation date once visiting arrangements had been confirmed. | **All visitors** |  | **Ongoing** |
| **4.** | DD asked LC to keep Gwent in mind should any new dogs become available. | **LC** |  | **Ongoing** |