

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE MEETING  
HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2017, 4.00PM  
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG**

**PRESENT:** Mr Martyn Evans – Chair  
Councillor Lisa Winnett  
Mrs Gill Mason  
Mr Gary Lucas

Inspector Julie Pearse - Dog Section, Gwent Police  
Mrs Siân Curley – Scheme Manager, OPCC  
Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker – Scheme Administrator, OPCC  
Miss Jessica Tippins – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC

The meeting began at 4.00pm

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**ACTION**

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Chief Inspector Emma Williams (RSPCA), Ms Laura Buchanan-Smith and Mr Anthony Davies.

**2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF 3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2016**

The minutes were confirmed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. It was confirmed a letter had been sent to Mr John Harray thanking him for his service and wishing him well on his retirement from the scheme.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Lisa Winnett (LW) raised that she had faced difficulties contacting the Dog Section in order to arrange a visit in January. Inspector Pearse (JP) apologised for the difficulties LW had encountered. We were made aware that the Dog Section was currently undergoing a review as part of the Staying Ahead programme. As part of this, JP would be returning as the Dog Section Sergeant from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and will now be able to solely focus her time to the Dog Section. Visitors were therefore advised to still contact her in order to arrange a visit. If they were unable to contact JP direct, visitors were advised to contact the OPCC who would facilitate on their behalf. Miss Jessica Tippins (JT) confirmed she would send around an updated contact sheet to all

**JT**

visitors following the meeting. It was agreed that in future, all visits would be arranged as well in advance as possible.

JP confirmed to the group that unfortunately, due to the regional dog trials being moved forward and reduced resources in the Gwent Dog Section, there was not the possibility of having public dog trials as planned in January. However, a public dog trial would be planned towards the latter part of the year, with the intention of tying it into the school half term holidays. JP confirmed that she would ensure the group are kept informed of when this will be.

We were made aware that PD Monty had had a tumour removed which was cancerous. JP confirmed that she and the dog's owner were waiting to find out if the cancer was aggressive before determining the course of treatment. LW asked whether the force would pay for any treatment. JP confirmed they would, depending on advice from the vet. The force would also pay for any required treatment before a dog retired. Mr Gary Lucas (GL) from the RSPCA asked whether PD Monty was still suitable to be working as he was nearly 10 years of age. JP confirmed that the search dogs could continue working past 10 years of age if they appeared happy to do so and a vet confirmed they were healthy at regular check-ups.

#### **4 SCHEME UPDATE – VERBAL**

Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker (MVB) delivered the scheme update. She appraised the group on the actions of the previous meeting. It was confirmed the issue regarding partitioning in the Waterton kennels had been raised with the South Wales Scheme who would be discussing the matter at their next meeting in April/May. The Manager of the South Wales scheme would therefore provide a full update following this.

**OPCC**

We were also made aware that Deputy Chief Inspector Emma Williams would be continuing to attend meetings, offering advice and support from the RSPCA. She would also remain available for visits should anyone require cover (subject to her availability).

MVB confirmed that a 6-8 week recruitment process would be commencing in the next few weeks with posters being placed in veterinary surgeries across Gwent and OPCC social media. It was agreed that two new visitors would be recruited. MVB also advised that as part of the scheme review last year all remaining members had signed a volunteer agreement which outlined their acknowledgement of the expectations and requirements as members of the scheme, for instance the need to conduct scheduled visits and the need to attend meetings. An annual check of each members involvement will be reviewed each year to ensure all requirements are being met and in instances where any member is not meeting the expectations of the agreement they would be contacted to discuss any difficulties and assess their future

**OPCC**

involvement with the Scheme. The next review of these agreements would be due in July 2017.

The issue raised regarding staffing at Waterton had also been looked into further by the OPCC with confirmation being given that staffing at the kennels were at adequate levels.

MVB confirmed to the group that she had been made aware of an incident by JP earlier that day regarding dogs being locked in their sleeping quarters without access to exercise and fresh water. It was understood that no Gwent dogs were involved in this incident. JP clarified that although she was awaiting a full update from the South Wales Inspector, she was aware of some staffing issues regarding working hours at the site. This therefore meant that on some occasions, officers carrying out basic training at the kennels were asked to assist in the day to day operations. Due to a miscommunication, some dogs had not been checked before staffing change overs which resulted in four dogs not being let out of their sleeping kennels following cleaning. She confirmed that the South Wales Animal Welfare Visitors had spotted the mistake and the matter was resolved quickly with no harm coming to the dogs involved. She stated that although this was not acceptable, she was reassured that the matter had been addressed and that steps had now been put in place to ensure this did not happen again.

LW raised that some handlers had commented on the new practise of sharing operational cars. This meant that officers were having to load cars before their shift and empty/clean them at the end. Among the concerns raised was that this was impacting on the time officers were actually operational. JP confirmed that under the Staying Ahead review, the decision had been made to reduce the Dog Section fleet which meant that officers were no longer personally assigned vehicles. Mrs Siân Curley (SC) confirmed that as she sits on the Staying Ahead review board, she would feed the visitors concerns back. GL asked whether any animal welfare issues had been raised by officers following this change. JP confirmed they had not.

SC

MVB advised that the next Gwent visit to Waterton was due in March. LW and Mr Martin Evans (ME) volunteered to carry this visit out. JT confirmed she would link in with JP to confirm when Gwent dogs would be in the kennels and feed this back to LW and ME.

JT/JP

JT confirmed she would circulate a new rota to reflect the current membership.

JT

- 5 OPERATIONAL UPDATE FROM THE DOG SECTION SERGEANT**  
JP delivered the operational update to the group. She made the group aware that two officers were currently on sick leave, PC Lloyd Wood and PC Mark Porter. Both were recovering well and it was hoped they would be back on duty soon. It was confirmed that whilst

they were on leave, their dogs had been placed in kennels. PC Wood had since been reunited with his dog and it was hoped PC Porter would have his back shortly. The group wished them both speedy recoveries.

PC Gavin Ashman was enjoying his new role in the Dog Section along with his new dog, PD Indie. Both were already showing good results. The second new officer, PC Rhion Weston was also showing promising results with his new dog, PD Bullett, apprehending three prisoners on only their second shift.

Mrs Gill Mason (GM) asked if the group could have an updated dog handler list. JP confirmed she would update this and send back to the OPCC for distribution. **JP**

We were updated on Gwent's success at the regional dog trials. PD Osma came 12<sup>th</sup>. PD Noah won both the 'Best Search Dog' and 'Best Young Dog' trophies. The group asked JP to pass on their congratulations to the whole team.

SC asked JP whether any of the Gwent dogs had been involved in the recent, highly publicised drug raids in Newport. She confirmed that both PD Olly and PD Taz were involved and successful seizures were made.

**6 RECRUITMENT**

This was discussed under item 5.

**7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No further business was identified.


The meeting concluded at 4.40pm.

**8 DETAILS OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Animal Welfare Meeting has been scheduled for **4pm** on **5<sup>th</sup> June 2017** 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.

**Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**

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

Signed	Date
	21/2/17
Contact Officer	
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Background papers	None

