



## COMMISSIONER'S DIARY

### POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

16 June 2016

#### Introduction

I write a weekly blog which provides a brief overview for the public of what I have been up. This is published on my website ([www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk)) and the content of these blogs is copied below for the Panel's information.

### JUDGING THE PRIDE OF SWINDON AWARDS AND DANCING AT SARASWATI PUJA

#### Monday 8 February

I spent the majority of the day in Trowbridge with Inspector James Brain and the staff. This gives me the opportunity to remind myself how policing is delivered at an operational level and a chance to talk to the officers working out in the community.

The day finished with a meeting with my finance officer Clive Barker to look at our financial position as we approach the year end.

#### Tuesday 9 February

The estate belongs to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) but is operationally used by the Chief Constable. We have been working closely with Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council over the past three years to make better use jointly of the estate; this is reflected in Swindon, Bourne Hill (Salisbury) and Monkton Park (Chippenham). However we do need to revisit the strategy to ensure that it has a long term operational base for policing in a regional context.

In the future, it is likely that more complaints about the police will be dealt with through my office rather than the Chief Constable's. In the meantime I had a briefing from Professor Alan Johns my Independent Appeals Adjudicator about current complaints concerning the Constabulary. Wiltshire had perhaps been ahead of the curve in that one of my first appointments as PCC was that of an adjudicator to work both with my office and the Chief Constable's. It gives some degree of independence to the organisation.

In the afternoon, I had a communications briefing before heading back to Swindon to pick up my wife to visit the theatre in Salisbury. Unfortunately there was a road collision between Swindon and Marlborough and we were caught up in the tailback. We sat and watched the time elapsing on the sat nav and missed the curtain up. We were both very disappointed not to be able to attend the play. We ended up having supper together in Marlborough before heading home, avoiding the scene of the earlier accident.

#### Wednesday 10 February

The morning was taken up with judging for the **Pride of Swindon** awards. These awards is made annually to people nominated by the public of Swindon for their work in making the city a better place to live. I was pleased to be part of the judging panel, which reduced a long list of nominees down to six awards and certificate winners. The winners will be announced at an event at the Swindon **Steam museum** on 17 March.

In the afternoon, I attended the Swindon health and wellbeing advisory board, which is a group of members who ensure that all the reports are available for the main health and wellbeing board later in the month.



During the evening I was due to attend a **Mercers' lecture** at Dauntsey's school. This was to be given by the economist Lord Desai. Unfortunately this lecture had to be postponed.

### **Thursday 11 February**

Today I had important meetings with the **Police Federation** and with officers who have responsibility for stop and search. I know that, like many forces, there is more we can do about our procedure. I am partly concerned about our ability to enable and facilitate ride-alongs, where members of the public are invited to observe stop and search in practice. I know from my own experience of going out with officers that this is not a technique used every day. My concern is that officers may feel pressured to stop and search someone because they have an observer in the car. I'm sure that in other cities and metropolitan areas the frequency of stop and search would warrant this observation technique. I'm very pleased that our stop and search scrutiny panel is up and running and I'm looking forward to meeting the panel members.

In the evening I went to a North Swindon police cadets meeting in Highworth. They have been preparing for a mock trial and this evening the Chief Constable Mike Veale and I saw the outcome of their work. I was very pleased that magistrates had given up their evenings to advise the young people on how a trial in court works and to act as a chairman. All roles, from prosecutor, defence, witnesses, court officials and reporters were undertaken by the young people as they went through a trial of a person accused of stealing a mobile phone. A lot of work had been done by both the students and their mentors in preparing for the evening. In a couple of weeks I will be attending the Wiltshire mock trials in Chippenham.

I think the students, magistrates and other volunteers gained a lot from the evening.

### **Friday 12 February**

A morning with no appointments was spent in the office before visiting Swindon Neighbourhood Policing Team at their HQ in the civic offices. I was pleased to catch up with the local commander, Superintendent Charlie Armstrong, and the team to hear about some of the challenges they have. I pop into the police base on a fairly regular basis as it's always good to have an update.

In the evening I attended a political supper at the Methuen Arms in Corsham.

### **Sunday 14 February**

Today I went to the Saraswati Puja at the Punjabi community centre in Swindon. I joined the celebration at about 5pm but it had been running all afternoon. The members of the community often pray and give thanks to Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, music, arts, wisdom and *learning*. I joined for the part of the event which involved dance and music performed by members for the community. It's the fourth or fifth time that I have been to this event, which is very colourful and brings together members of the diverse black and minority ethnic communities in Swindon

**ARE 'RIDE ALONGS' REALLY THE ANSWER TO GETTING STOP AND SEARCH RIGHT?**

### **Monday 15 February**

In the morning I had a briefing in preparation for the Commissioner's Monitoring Board this afternoon. The agenda includes the following topics: estates strategy, strategic alliance with



Avon & Somerset Constabulary, performance review, a review of partnerships with local authorities, budget monitoring, an update on Warminster custody and, finally, consideration of a note from the Home Secretary on the use of stop and search. Quite a wide-ranging agenda, I think you'll agree, and one which took up most of the afternoon.

One highlight was the letter from Theresa May regarding stop and search. Wiltshire Constabulary has been identified as not complying with all best practice criteria. I now need to seek a report from the Chief Constable on his reasons for our non-compliance.

I know that one area of concern is around our lack of volunteers to "ride along" with officers and observe stop and search in practice. I need to understand exactly how this would work in Wiltshire.

I have spent many days with officers over the past years and I don't think they have had cause to use their stop and search powers whilst I have been with them.

Speaking to friends in the black and minority ethnic community, there is concern that so-called "ride alongs" could cause perverse behaviour. I look forward to hearing the chief's response to the Home Secretary's letter. Meanwhile I do know that the stop and searches are being reviewed by an independent scrutiny panel will share the chief's response when I have it.

The only additional scheduled meeting was a communications briefing and then, in the evening, a political meeting in Devizes.

## **Tuesday 16 February**

I was very pleased that the director of South West Forensics, Martin Bradford, spent the morning giving me an update. This is a joint operation between Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Avon & Somerset and Wiltshire to provide forensic services in the south west. Setting it up has not been without its challenges which I, with my fellow PCCs, follow at regional meetings.

Today is the first opportunity I have had to meet Mr Bradford on a one-to-one basis to find out more about how these challenges are being overcome, with particular reference to the service offered to Wiltshire.

We still have forensic operations based in Wiltshire. But some of the performance information that I had been used to accessing is not so readily available.

I felt that it was a very useful meeting and that Mr Bradford valued the time he had with me to share some of the issues first hand. It also enabled me to take some comfort from his explanation of how he will measure and monitor the performance of the unit. By performance I am not talking about targets, but activity of the unit in our county.

I also had a meeting today to review the use of so-called "out of court disposals" (OOCs). As readers may be aware, we have a team led by the retired high sheriff William Wyldebore-Smith, who look at the quality of our OOCs. We now also have a manager responsible for OOCs and a member of staff in my office who, in addition to looking after restorative justice, has an interest in this area. In summary, the quality of our disposals is very good, but there aren't many of them. It will be disappointing to replace quality with quantity, but I do feel we should be building on the firm foundations we have put in place and doing more.

In the evening I was invited in to BBC Wiltshire to speak about mental health. In particular they wanted to know some further details about a young woman who was held in police custody for some 15 hours.



I take mental health issues very seriously and there is a lead officer working in the Force with responsibility for understanding the Constabulary's contact with people suffering mental health episodes.

Luckily the numbers are reducing and I now have agreement with the health and wellbeing boards in both Wiltshire and Swindon that we will look at individual cases on a regular basis.

This particular young woman had a mental health history and the police were in contact with mental health workers from the very first moment they were tasked. Unfortunately the places of safety in the county were full and, as a result, she was taken in to custody. There were delays both in her being visited in custody by mental health professionals and those professionals having assessed her as being in need and finding her a bed in an appropriate unit. In the end she was taken to a unit in Oxfordshire.

I understand that a new four-bed mental health unit will be opened in the county by this summer which will further reduce the likelihood of custody being used as a place of safety.

We have halved the number of times custody is used as a place of safety in the last year, but we still have some way to go before the practice is fully replaced.

### **Wednesday 17 February**

I spent a very cold morning with a colleague in Amesbury market, meeting the public and listening to their concerns, before returning to the office in the afternoon for a one-to-one meeting with Zoe Durrant, the assistant chief officer.

### **Thursday 18 February**

I was pleased to note that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has praised Wiltshire Police, in a report out today, for "demonstrating a strong commitment to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, protecting the vulnerable and reducing offending".

The Force has been awarded a 'good' rating for effectiveness by HMIC for the way in which it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

In the report HMIC has acknowledged the consistency of the Force, which also received a good rating in the 2014 HMIC's crime inspection.

I have noted HMIC's findings that some improvements are needed by the Force on how they understand and respond to missing children.

But, overall, I am delighted to have received this encouraging report that, once again, speaks volumes for the leadership of the Force and the officers and staff who work tirelessly for the communities of Wiltshire and Swindon.

Today I had a work placement student join me and, as well as giving her some insight into the role of the PCC, she helped me to write my blog for last week.

Other meetings in the day were on the topics of CCTV provision in the county and the commissioning spend for 2016-17. The office day finished with an interview for Salisbury's Spire FM on the latest IPCC report.

In the evening I was on driving duty for the homeless charity, the Filling Station, feeding some 40 individuals who live on the streets of Swindon.

### **Friday 19 February**

I had an early start to drive across the plain to Salisbury for a meeting with John Glen MP. This is the first of a series of meetings I will be having with all our MPs over the next couple



of weeks at which I am updating them on the governance I exercise and how I assess the constabulary's performance against my Police and Crime Plan.

I give each of the MPs an analysis of crime in their constituency area. I also share with them the independent inspection results from HMIC and my analysis of the challenges around future finances. Readers may be aware that Wiltshire's share of the national policing fund is considered small and I will be seeking the support of our MPs in pressing for a review of the funding formula in time for next year.

This weekend I am attending the South West Conservative conference in Bournemouth. This will be the first opportunity I have to meet those who may be colleagues in the next four years ... that is if I am returned to the post!

## A WARM WELCOME FOR THE I.C.E CARD

### Monday 22 February

Monday morning started with an update on finances from the Chief Finance Officer. Now that the precept has been set, attention turns to the year-end accounts. As I monitor these every Monday morning I can safely say there are no surprises to report.

With the election coming up there is a certain amount of interest in how PCC offices have been operating over last three years. This morning I had a telephone interview with Deloitte, who were looking to compare and contrast how the PCC offices have been running up and down the country. I hope my input was of some interest to them.

In the afternoon I spent an hour at the Great Western Hospital in Swindon where they checked on the technology that I carry with me (or in me) and as far as I can tell they seem happy that it is all working as it should be.

It was back to Devizes for an audit planning meeting before the committee meet in a couple of weeks' time.

In the evening I gave a short presentation to Conservative councillors at Swindon Borough Council before heading home around 8pm.

### Tuesday 23 February

This morning's communications update was followed by a briefing on mental health. Blog readers will be aware that I now report on mental health to health and wellbeing boards in both Wiltshire and Swindon and in particular on incidences where people with mental health issues are held in custody.

There has also, I understand, been a change in the provision of mental health support. This was being done in the Crime and Communications Centre (CCC) at Devizes and secondly by health professionals in a car, who attend incidents in Swindon. I understand a review has been undertaken and, from a date in March, the mental health cover and presence in our CCC will be extended to cover the period 8.30 – midnight seven days a week and the car service withdrawn. The whole experiment is subject to a review by the University of the West of England. I look forward to reading the report in due course. I'm sure the Constabulary will have found it worthwhile, as I am sure will those in mental health services.

In the afternoon my Chief Executive and I attended a meeting with the Clerk to the Justices and the Bench Chairman in Chippenham. I was concerned by some comments made by a chairman of the bench in a Claire's law application. I felt there may be a training need within the bench and indeed I was concerned to ensure that the correct training was being given to





officers of the Constabulary. I'm sure that this can be addressed sensibly and quickly rather than becoming a running sore between the two organisations.

I attended a Mercers' lecture at Dauntsey's school in the evening, which was given by Professor Lord Winston, entitled "Modifying humans: Where does genetics stop?" I had only heard of Lord Winston in reference to the science of fertility but in fact his lecture was, to quote Lorna Frankel, who wrote the review for Dauntsey's school "an experience unlike any other".

### **Wednesday 24 February**

Today we had a Wiltshire Criminal Justice Board away day at Cleeve House in Seend. This is the first time under the chairmanship of Chief Constable Mike Veale that I can remember the board looking at the work undertaken by the various agencies who are members. I think we all came out with a better understanding of the pressures other agencies face, and where we could work together for the better of Force, agencies and victims.

It was a disappointment that a couple of senior members of agencies were unable to attend, as we did feel that their nominees were not empowered to help with such a planning day. However we all came away feeling it to have been a worthwhile use of time and we will build on the ideas shared over the coming year.

In the evening I attended the Melksham Area Board where I spoke about the precept, notwithstanding that it has already been agreed. I was pleased to have the support of the meeting on the raised precept level.

Before Melksham I had a quick trip down to Bristol to the dentist which made for a fairly full day.

### **Thursday 25 February**

Blog readers will be aware that I wear my 'say no to violence' T shirt on the 25th of each month and today was no exception.

My morning began at Dauntsey's School with a governors meeting and was followed in the afternoon by a meeting of the Youth Offending Board in Swindon.

I was disappointed that neither the police nor the magistrates were represented at this meeting as we were discussing the work programme over the next year. There was a certain feeling of déjà vu after yesterday's Criminal Justice Board meeting. There are certain meetings I feel we can miss, but some we really shouldn't.

In the evening I was driving for the Filling Station charity, feeding the homeless on the streets of Swindon

### **Friday 26 February**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) today published its police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections in which Wiltshire Police was graded as "good". The annual inspections consider whether forces keep people safe and reduce crime (how effective a force is), whether these activities are being carried out at the most appropriate cost (how efficient a force is), and how forces are ensuring they have the confidence of their communities (the public legitimacy of a force). I am pleased that HMIC has recognised Wiltshire overall as 'good' for the service it is providing to the communities in Wiltshire and Swindon

In the morning I had my quarterly meeting with representatives from Unison. This helps me to understand the issues that are being addressed by both employees and the Force.

In the afternoon I attended the launch of 'In Case of Emergency' (I.C.E) cards at Salisbury city Hall. This is a credit card sized card that allows people to write their name and the name and phone number of the person they would like to be contacted in an emergency. The scheme is designed to help vulnerable people feel safer when they are out and about. I am pleased that I was able to sponsor the I.C.E cards and support the launch of this initiative.



### **Saturday 27 February**

I am in charge of the dogs all weekend as my wife is visiting our daughter in London. I did manage to escape on Saturday morning to attend a political briefing at County Hall

## **KEEPING WILTSHIRE SAFE WITH WILSAR, SAFE HAVEN AND SWINDON REFUGE**

### **Monday 29 February**

Monday 29 February; an extra day. Hooray!

The day began with two briefing sessions. Firstly, for the Commissioners Monitoring Board (CMB) which was held this afternoon, and secondly, in advance of a **Police and Crime Panel** meeting being held on Thursday. These meetings give me an opportunity to go through the agendas, minutes and action points with my office prior to the meeting.

CMB, which wasn't well attended by the Senior Management Team, discusses a number of programmes and projects running across the Force and with partners, along with the day to day performance of the Force. Today's CMB covered the Strategic Alliance with Avon and Somerset; some exceptions on performance which have arisen from a meeting earlier in the month, and in particular, in respect of a backlog within the High-Tech Crime Unit which we have allocated funding to reduce. The Chief Constable gave an update on the Wiltshire Criminal Justice away day held last week and I updated the Force on the Youth Offending Team meeting I attended last week which was not attended by the police.

We also had a presentation on parking enforcement on public roads in Swindon and Wiltshire, and the enforcement of 20mph speed limits. I hope both of the papers presented will be signed as a Memorandum of Understanding between the local authority, the police and my office which clearly explains who is responsible for the enforcement of these regulations. Since parking was decimalised over 20 years ago I really do think it's time local authorities understood the position of the police and their position in law for the policing of parking regulations.

We also discussed IT and estates and were given a briefing by the Director of Intelligence for the Force on the operational model for the county. Finally I took a report on the procurement for a service to attract and recruit specials in the county.

## Tuesday 1 March

It was a cold start to the day in Salisbury where I was at the market. Unfortunately it was poorly attended and indeed it was one of those days I felt sorry for those making a living by trading. I did still have some interesting conversations with local residents.

In the afternoon I had a meeting to discuss diversity benchmarking. This was followed by the usual communications briefing for the week.

## Wednesday 2 March

Today I visited Safe Haven in Salisbury at the **SP2 Community Centre**. Although we have not been involved in funding the SP2 Community Centre I was impressed that St Paul's Church had capitalised on a former liability and working with a housing provider had created an excellent community space, in which Safe Haven (a recipient of a PCC grant) operate. I was really pleased that I could pop into Safe Haven; they run a weekly drop in session for people whose lives have been impacted by violence or abuse and offer important long term support to help people get their lives back on track.



In the afternoon I had a briefing in relation to the South West Police collaboration ahead of a programme board meeting later in the month.

I attended an evening meeting in Grittleton where I gave the precept presentation to the Rural Parish forum. This is a subset of the Chippenham Area Board, so in the first instance I was feeling that they should have already heard the presentation at the Chippenham Area Board. However, the area covered by this board is so large and diverse due to being split by the M4 motorway, it was well worth hearing the views of this subgroup and giving the presentation.

This is something I hope the Force will take on board; attendance at area boards is good but this may not be the only or best way to get the message across.

## Thursday 3 March

After a blood test in Wroughton I attended the Police and Crime Panel meeting held at the Corn Exchange in Devizes. There was a certain end-of-term atmosphere at the meeting, but I think we met the challenges of the committee in the review of our performance (and that of the Constabulary) over the last year.

## Friday 4 March

After a late start to the day I visited Andrew Morrison, the MP for Trowbridge, and gave him a briefing on the performance of the Constabulary and a brief analysis of crime in the Trowbridge area.



In the afternoon I was due to visit the MP for Swindon South to do likewise but in the end he invited me to meet Nicki Morgan the Minister for Women and Equalities at the Swindon Refuge. We have put some money to ensure those attending hospital (and some doctor's surgeries), who have suffered domestic abuse have access to an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). It was very useful to meet with the Minister and share what we were doing in Swindon and across the county.



In the evening I attended two Conservative AGMs, the first in Swindon and the second at the Manor House in Castle Combe.

### **Saturday 5 March**

The High Sheriff Lady Gooch and I hosted a speaking event at County Hall in Trowbridge at which Ahtsham Ali, the Muslim advisor to the Ministry of Justice, spoke to some 120 guests from the Wiltshire community. Both Lady Gooch and I had heard Mr Ali speak at Erlestoke Prison and were keen that his words should be heard by a wider audience in Wiltshire.

His speech entitled 'Analysing the roots of religious extremism' was extremely interesting and balanced. I was pleased to have had the opportunity to share the knowledge I received from listening to him at Erlestoke with a wider audience.

Whilst at County Hall the High Sheriff made an award to Nazma Ramruttun for her services to the community of Swindon and in respect of her work to integrate and represent hard to reach groups, including women members of the BME community, and appropriate to the topic of the day those of the Islamic faith.

On the way back home from Trowbridge I called in to a training session being given in Devizes for volunteers of **Victim Support**. This gave me an opportunity to thank both the charity and the volunteers for all they do to support victims of crime in the county.

In the evening my wife and I attended a service at Salisbury Cathedral to celebrate 25 years of the **Wiltshire Air Ambulance**. Of course the Air Ambulance is completely separate from the police but for the bulk of the 25 years the police and medics shared the same piece of kit. The arrangement came to a natural end when the National Police Air Service (NPAS) was formed. The charity has raised an amazing amount of money which has enabled them to purchase their own aircraft.

### **Sunday 6 March**

**Wiltshire Search and Rescue (WILSAR)** ran exercise Ironman at Lydiard Park in Swindon to simulate a search for a high risk missing person. I was pleased to join them at the start the day as it became apparent in the search scenario that they would need to search the lake at Lydiard and more search volunteers would be required. The car park was quickly filled with police, WILSAR, Ambulance Service, Fire and Rescue and the Community resilience team from Swindon Borough Council.

WILSAR representatives came from all over the county to help in the search, and it was good to welcome members of the Dorset Search and Rescue teams who had come along to observe the activity. It was impressive that such a large contingent of volunteers could be directed so quickly.

Thank goodness it was only an exercise but it was interesting to watch and heartening to know that Wiltshire has such resilience.



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO POLICING AND THE RULE OF LAW

### Monday 7 March

The diary for today is quiet, which is a big relief as I was working last weekend and next. However it didn't stop two of the usual weekly briefings.

The first was with the crime prevention lead for the Force, who has a wide portfolio including relationships with [The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust](#) and [Community Speed Watch](#) as well as directing the crime prevention initiatives within neighbourhood teams. We discussed the training of PCSOs and of specials, who also form part of the prevention strategy. Over the coming months, I will be working with colleagues from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service over their proposal for a new safety centre in the north of the county, an initiative that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) supports.

Later in the day I had an update from the finance team. I am glad to report that they had no surprises for me as we move to the close of the year.

This was a quiet day to catch up on reading and post in the office.

## Tuesday 8 March

Today is **International Women's Day** and I would like to take the time to recognise the women working in Wiltshire Police across all ranks and roles. It was interesting to see that, in the last police officer intake, we welcomed into the Force in November, ten of the 14 new officers are women.

In the afternoon I travelled to Warminster to meet the sector sergeant who, with me, is attending a meeting of the Tisbury Community Safety Partnership later today.

I left those at the meeting in Tisbury reassured that the Chief Constable and I are both committed to local policing.

## Wednesday 9 March

This morning I set up with a colleague the PCC tent at Marlborough market. I think we are getting near the end of our market visits and it seems that the usual market stall holders were taking an early break. That said we did see a number of people out on such a cold and bleak day.



In the afternoon I attended a meeting of the Wiltshire and Swindon Health and Wellbeing Board at which we discussed the **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**. Of particular interest to me was the Swindon and Wiltshire strategy to reduce domestic abuse. It is particularly pleasing that the community safety partnerships of both authorities have come together to tackle domestic abuse across five priorities: victims, survivors, children and young people, perpetrators of domestic abuse and continuous employment.

I am very pleased that my office is able to make a contribution to this important work. We have commissioned Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) at both Great Western Hospital and doctors surgeries, as well as working with Avon and Somerset colleagues around the domestic abuse agenda.

In the evening I went to Dauntsey's School to watch a performance by the juniors of Alice in Wonderland. This was a pleasant break from the usual engagements for a PCC.

## Thursday 10 March

At least the weather is better today as I am spending the morning at Devizes market. Devizes, as many of you will know, is the busiest of the markets in the county and we had many more visitors than yesterday. I had my photo taken by Geoff Hawkins who publishes on his website a photo of somebody he encounters every day of the year. Today he chose me to represent **10 March 2016**. Click on galleries and follow the link to 366 strangers. A fascinating project.

Back at the office I met representatives from Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership regarding safety on the roads. We discussed how my office can help to get messages about road safety out into the community.



Later that evening I was pleased to be invited to attend the Force awards ceremony at Cumberwell Golf Club near Bradford on Avon.

A number of awards were given out including long service and good conduct awards to Police Constable (PC) Graham Briant, Inspector Roger Bull and PC Nigel Smith.

It is always a pleasure and privilege to hear of the good service that staff and officers give to the community and to recognise volunteers and members of the public who have helped the Constabulary at various incidents.

### **Friday 11 March**

After having my back stretched by the chiropractor I had a phone conversation with Claire Perry, MP for Devizes, on the state of policing in Wiltshire, particularly with reference to crime in her constituency. These briefings seem to be a theme for today. At lunchtime I met Robert Buckland MP for South Swindon. In the evening I met Michelle Donelan, MP for Chippenham.

At each of these meetings I gave a report covering the governance structures of Wiltshire Police.

I explained how I assess the Constabulary's performance, provided a briefing on crime in their constituency area, the results of HMIC inspections and the consultation and engagement that my office and the Constabulary have undertaken during the year. The briefings finished with a financial overview.

Blog readers will not be surprised to know that the message I wanted all MPs in our county to understand is that central funding does not do Wiltshire any favours. Indeed I'm using some £300,000 worth of reserves in the coming year to mitigate the unfair funding that Wiltshire receives. More about that in the new financial year.

In the afternoon I attended a meeting of the Wiltshire Public Services Board at which presentations on the counter terrorism Prevent strategy were given to partners by the Force and representatives of the council. Other business discussed was the Wiltshire housing strategy and an update on the merger of Dorset and Wiltshire's Fire and Rescue services. I think public service boards provide a good opportunity for the Chief Constable and I to share our message with other agencies and partners and learn what they are doing which we can build on together.

I stayed in Chippenham for a political meeting in the evening.

### **Saturday 12 March**

As a governor I attended the Dauntsey's commemoration service which was held at the school, celebrating 474 years of its foundation by William Dauntsey in West Lavington.

### **Sunday 13 March**

My wife and I joined the Chief Constable, my Chief Executive and their wives at the Rule of Law service held at Salisbury cathedral. This is a celebration of law in the county and it also marks the end of Lady Gooch's year as High Sheriff. I have been particularly pleased to have Lady Gooch's enthusiasm for the Volunteer Police Cadets harnessed by the Force and was pleased that one of our Swindon cadets, Ollie, was given a part to play by her in the service.



## A BUSY TIME AS THE ELECTION LOOMS

### Monday 14 March

A morning in the office, the bulk of which was taken up with preparation for the Commissioner's Monitoring Board which was held in the afternoon. The agenda included our regional work, both across the South West and, more particularly, with **Avon and Somerset Constabulary**. I also had reports on the capital plan update, which deals with proposed spending on such things as buildings, vehicles and IT. The plan runs through to 2018-19 and identifies where spending is planned over that period. This plan enabled my office to confirm two new contracts, but it is fundamentally a planning document. We have also been out to tender for new insurance providers to take up cover from 1 April. This arrangement has been made with Avon and Somerset and Gloucestershire Police as part of the Tri-force working relationship and is for a period that will allow arrangements to be looked at on a full regional basis in three or four years' time. The arrangement gave initial savings to Wiltshire which are partly offset by an increase in the national insurance premium tax.

We also discussed the West Coast Forensic Procurement Consortium and options available to us as it enters its final year. This consortium looked at the costs of forensic service providers to the region's police forces. The plan is now to look at the potential to work with other regions to get even better prices for forensic services.

The board also had reports on the planned appointment of Assistant Chief Constables and an update on the Warminster custody project.

### Tuesday 15 March

Only one entry in the diary for today, so an opportunity to spend some time clearing the desk. In the afternoon I attended a meeting of the restorative justice scrutiny panel. This panel, chaired by William Wyldebore-Smith, a former High Sheriff, looks in detail at the outcome of cases where restorative justice has been applied. The meeting examined 14 cases, involving both youths and adults. The role of the panel is to ensure that the quality of resolutions is maintained and that the process is used in appropriate circumstances. The annual report of the panel will be uploaded to my website.

### Wednesday 16 March

As blog readers will be aware, an essential part of a PCC's job is to hold the chief constable to account for the service the constabulary provides to the public of Wiltshire and Swindon.



Mike Veale was appointed Chief Constable in June 2015 and, as we complete one financial year and plan for the year ahead, I spent the morning with the Chief carrying out his personal development review. With the election imminent, it would not be appropriate for me to set objectives for Mr Veale, but it did give us the opportunity to review his first nine months in the post.

In the afternoon I watched an exercise being carried out in the Crime and Communications Centre at HQ. The scenario was around a gunman in a local supermarket. I have to say that it was easy to forget that this was an exercise and we should certainly thank those members of the public who gave up their afternoon to phone in to the control centre. They worked to a script, but the acting skills were impressive. The exercise was very well planned and the initial feedback from those who took part was positive. Evaluation will now take place.

### Thursday 17 March

In the morning I attended a governors' meeting at Dauntsey's before heading off to **STEAM, Museum of the Great Western Railway** in Swindon. This was for the Pride of Swindon presentations. I was among the panel of judges who considered the nominations. I was pleased that Big Breakfast Plus, a charity for which I was a trustee, was not only given a Pride of Swindon award, but also received a cheque for £1,000, voted for by those at the awards ceremony. Among the other award winners were several that my office has supported over the past years, notably Sue Lee, the sex work outreach worker from the ISIS Women's Centre, the BIOS youth club project and the Youth Offending Team volunteers. A great event for recognising the efforts of volunteers to make life in Swindon better.

In the evening I drove the van for the Filling Station soup run for the homeless.

### Friday 18 March

Today is **Child Sexual Exploitation awareness day**. I was very pleased to be joining people in Wiltshire and across the country to raise awareness of the need to keep our children safe. We have done quite a bit in Wiltshire and Swindon with partners, but I don't think we can ever be complacent.



This morning we had a strategic alliance board meeting at Portishead. This was the first opportunity that I have had to meet the new Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, Andy Marsh. He shared with the meeting the Avon and Somerset collaboration strategy statement which reflected the agreement that the two offices of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCCs) had made some months ago. Of particular interest to me was that local policing stays beyond the scope of the collaboration programme, but we recognise that services do need to be aligned wherever possible. Now that Mr Marsh is in post, I think the collaboration can move forward, but I have to recognise the limitations that might be caused by the PCC election.

I returned to Swindon in the afternoon to visit the Youth for Christ project in Stratton where I have funded the installation of a bench in the sports area which young people can use. This was funded from the Police Property Act proceeds which I am required to distribute to local charities. Bids are administered on my behalf by the Community Foundation.



In the evening I attended political meetings in both Salisbury and Warminster.

### Saturday 19 March

I had a ticket to watch Wales v Italy in the rugby union Six Nations championship. However, I decided that I should instead attend the mock trials competition run by the Magistrates Association in Chippenham court house. Seven schools took part, each prosecuting and then defending a case of shoplifting. The school that won last year's Wiltshire round went on to win the national competition. I hope that this year's winners, St Laurence School, Bradford on Avon, will enjoy similar success.



VICTORS: St Laurence School team with Lady Gooch, former High Sheriff, Martin Cook of the Magistrates Association and Mrs Brewer, widow of David Brewer, in whose memory the Wiltshire shield is named. Mr Brewer was clerk to the magistrates in Swindon for many years

## CLEARING THE DECKS AHEAD OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

### Monday 21 March

A meeting of the independent audit committee at which the major topic of conversation was the audit plans, both internal and external, for the coming financial year. This is a joint committee that oversees both the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the constabulary. All the work is looked at jointly which gives us economies of scale. As well as the audit plans, we shared with the committee the police effectiveness, efficiency and

legitimacy (PEEL) reports on Wiltshire Police produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

In the afternoon I had a briefing for a meeting tomorrow on hate crime and further briefings on finance and HR matters from Force leads.

### **Tuesday 22 March**

My agent for the PCC elections called and I also had a meeting this morning with Ben Holloway, the newly-appointed Communications and Digital Channels Manager. He has some interesting ideas about developing the Wiltshire Police website and the Community Messaging process.

In the afternoon I chaired the multi-agency **Hate Crime Board**. This is a new body looking at the various strands of hate crime. It was pleasing that a wide range of representatives from across the strands of diversity attended and I think that we can build on what has been a constructive first meeting.

### **Wednesday 23 March**

Today I am in Bridgwater in Somerset for the South West Police Collaboration Board. Bearing in mind that we are so close to the PCC elections, it was a very constructive meeting. We were able to agree a schedule of continuing work and, more interestingly, delay rather than terminate workstreams that not all PCCs or constabularies were happy to sign up to at this time.

### **Thursday 24 March**

After a morning in the office, we all went to a local pub for lunch to say farewell to Katie Broomfield who is leaving us today. She certainly goes with our best wishes for the future.

In the afternoon I had a meeting at Swindon Borough Council with the two leaders of Swindon and Wiltshire. We all agreed with each other which isn't always the case.

My final briefing for MPs happened today as I visited James Gray, MP for North Wiltshire. He had no issues with the performance of Wiltshire Constabulary and it was interesting to discuss the challenges offered by working with the newly-amalgamated Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In the evening I attended a meeting of the **volunteer police cadets** at Lydiard Park Academy in Swindon. They did tremendously well at the sleep-out held at police HQ back in December and we were pleased to hand over a cheque to Threshold Housing Link for £3,841. A good effort by our cadets.



Tomorrow is Good Friday and the start of the four-day Easter break. When we return to the office on Tuesday, the pre-election purdah will be upon us.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

### Week ending 13 May

I must apologise to readers for the absence of any blogs during the so-called purdah period in the run-up to last Thursday's PCC elections. Legal constraints meant that such material could not be published on official websites.

With the election over I thought I'd write a short piece for the record about the campaign.

In some respects, my campaign mirrored the activity I have been undertaking since 2012 as your PCC .... namely, consulting the public. I did this by attending markets up and down the county. We also set up and ran a website, and I will be raising many of the comments and questions raised with the chief constable in the coming weeks.

The election process, with a first and second preference, was confusing for some electors, and I think this was reflected in the large number of spoiled papers.

That is not to deny that some papers were spoiled as a protest. Many were concerned that they did not know the candidates.

I know that my campaign was widely publicised by volunteers, but there was no public funding for candidates, and such information that did exist was publicised by the website [choosemypcc.com](http://choosemypcc.com). After that it was up to candidates to do their own publicity.

The turnout was higher than the first time the elections were held, perhaps because they were held in May this time rather than in cold and wet November, and perhaps because, in Swindon, there were other elections at the same time.

In four years' time the PCC election will coincide with the general election, all things being equal, which will have a major effect on turnout and on the voting decisions taken by individuals at the ballot box.

The election count at the Oasis Leisure Centre in Swindon ended with the result being announced at around 5.30am on Friday. Having said a few words for radio and TV I headed to bed for the morning.

On Saturday morning I was invited to do a Desert Island Discs type show on Flame FM in Swindon. Sunday was a family day, rare at the best of times.

So back to work today (Monday 9 May). I'm pleased that we will be working with the same commissioners in the South West region, with the exception of Devon and Cornwall which has a new PCC.

Policing is challenging, but with the support of partners, and with some changes in legislation from central government to give better governance to regional collaboration, I believe that Wiltshire Police is in a good position to build on what has been achieved in the last four years and to be a better and more efficient force, whilst maintaining the fundamental principle of British policing, in the future.

## **CUSTODY IS NOT THE RIGHT PLACE FOR SOMEONE IN A FRAGILE MENTAL STATE**

On Tuesday I spent some time visiting the custody unit in Melksham. I feel it is important for me to visit different police stations, see how the operational side of policing is working and meet staff.

On this occasion my visit was prompted by a report I received from one of our Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs).

Part of my role as commissioner is to ensure that Wiltshire Police is transparent and accountable through me to the public. We are in the process of establishing a number of independent panels to scrutinise the work of Wiltshire Police and help us to implement good practice. One of these is the Independent Custody Visitor Panel.

ICVs are members of the community, who volunteer with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and, once trained, visit custody units unannounced to check on the welfare and conditions of people who are detained.

Last week one of our ICVs highlighted to me a visit she had just made to Melksham. I am pleased to say the ICV was not concerned about the treatment by Wiltshire Police of the detainee. She was questioning if custody was the right place for this particular detainee.

The female was being held in custody because, following her arrest, it had become apparent to officers that she was unwell. She was having a mental health crisis and needed medical care and support.

When someone is detained by the police and identified as being unwell, officers can no longer continue with their investigation until the person is well enough for them to do so.

The priority for custody staff is to get that person the medical help they need.

So I was concerned to hear that the female detainee had been kept in a police cell overnight and in to the next day because no hospital beds were available.

I decided to visit Melksham Custody to see if I could understand what it might be like to be in that person's situation.

Although it is clean, light and airy, it is not a pleasant place to be (and that is no reflection on the dedicated custody staff), but then no custody unit is.

Taking off my shoes and socks, jacket, tie and braces I sat on the bed in a cell trying to imagine what it must be like to be there for up to 24 hours, like some of the detainees who have recently spent time there under the Mental Health Act.

Imagine sitting in a cell with nothing to do and in a fragile mental state. It must be quite a lonely place to be. Particularly when the only reason you are there is because you are mentally ill.

It is certainly not the right place for someone in need of treatment.





Regular updates from the Force Mental Health Liaison Officer tell me these are not isolated cases both locally and nationally. I sit on the Wiltshire and Swindon Health and Wellbeing boards and regularly raise this issue. Together with partners we are working to find a solution. This cannot come soon enough.

As mental health week draws to a close I can assure readers that I will be continuing to press the case for improved NHS services, so those suffering a mental health crisis in Wiltshire have access to a hospital bed as soon as they need it.

