



COMMISSIONER'S DIARY

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

3 March 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) and the content of these blogs is copied below for the Panel's information.

TALKING HEALTH RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPLITZ

Monday 11 January

As usual the week began with a day of briefings. The first briefing of the day was a demonstration on the Establishment and Resourcing tool. This is a posh name for business intelligence software which enables the Force to see where officers and staff are working, the role they are doing and the skills and qualifications that they have.

Licensing of premises for the sale of alcohol is a matter for the local authority, but Wiltshire Police do have a small number of officers who work closely with local authorities on licensing as advisors.

Among the powers that can be used in relation to licensing there are some powers, such as the late night levy which at present we don't access use in Wiltshire and Swindon. Indeed, it is not my call whether we should use these but I am keen that a proper evaluation of schemes we are not using is undertaken by the local authority. Today I was pleased to meet with a local Chippenham councillor to listen to concerns about licensing on his patch.

In the afternoon I met with the service manager for children, family and community health to discuss work we might do together in Swindon to support children who are vulnerable, especially those who might be victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). I was sorry to hear that a project I supported in Swindon would not be continuing in to the future. We now need to reassess where support for young people in Swindon should be channelled. It is important for me that this office is not seen as solely holding the police to account. **The Innovation Fund** that I started on coming to office has funded many opportunities to reduce crime and to divert young people from anti-social into positive activities. Whilst the conversation is inevitably about spending less money I am determined that we continue to support young people as they will make up tomorrow's society.

In the evening I attended Pewsey Area Board meeting at Woodborough Social Club. This is only the second evening I have been out to speak about the precept for next year but during the coming month my office and I will be out practically every day speaking on the subject. The proposition is that a further £3.12 a year for the average (band D) property is paid towards the costs of policing and I am at pains to point out at these meetings that this is new money to be spent in support of community policing. It is never easy to ask for money although I am heartened that Wiltshire Police is one of the lowest cost forces in the country and yet still has good ratings from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) the policing equivalent of Ofsted.

Tuesday 12 January

It was relatively quiet day, which allowed me to catch up with work in the office and have non-scheduled conversations with staff and officers.

The highlight of the day for me was a visit to **Splitz Support Service** in Trowbridge. Splitz received a grant of £3,000 from PCC funds which is administered for me by the Community Foundation. Splitz is a registered charity which offers support for children, families and adults experiencing separation, divorce and domestic violence and abuse. They are using the funding to support their **Teenztalk** project which enables young people to learn about healthy relationships and gives them the skills to manage their emotions. I was really pleased that I was able to catch up with the team; they are providing a good service for young people in Wiltshire so it is always good to hear how the project is going.



Wednesday 13 January

After a quiet day yesterday, today the diary was very full and indeed in the morning there was a major conflict between appointments which meant I was unable to attend a meeting of the Wiltshire Compact Champions held at the Devizes Corn Exchange. I was pleased that Pam Gough, Policy and Community Area/Locality Lead from my office was able to attend in my place.

The Compact promotes good working relationships between the public sector and voluntary sector organisations. It encourages good working practices, sharing of information and partnership working. You can find out more about the compact at <http://wiltshirecompact.org.uk/the-compact/summary/>

The meeting was a chance for public and voluntary sector organisations to meet up, get to know each other, and share ideas for future working.

I attended a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel at Monkton Park in Chippenham. The major agenda item was my proposal for the budget for the coming year. This is obviously what I am consulting the public on at present at Areas Boards and Localities. It is important that this panel have time to consider the medium term financial strategy which sets out where our assumptions for future funding will come from and also have sight of the reserve that we plan to hold. This was very much an information giving meeting as the precept will not be agreed until after consultation has closed on the 2 February.

I was back at HQ in Devizes for the afternoon. I had briefing meetings on the standards campaign and Community Speed Watch. Community Speed Watch has been very successful for the public of Wiltshire but we do need to ensure that it is continually reviewed so it is fit for purpose. I am also interested in how similar services are provided by adjoining



constabularies. The meeting today highlighted that development work had been undertaken to identify technology that would support services in both Avon and Somerset and Devon & Cornwall. Whilst our system works, I am always interested in making sure that our way of working is robust and we are using the best services available. I look forward to hearing back from the team in due course with their assessment of what other forces are doing.

In the evening I attended the NSPCC celebration and AGM at Lydiard Park House and Conference Centre, in Swindon. The conference centre at Lydiard Park is somewhere I have not been to often. In preparation for the evening I found my League of Pity badges; this was the junior section of the NSPCC when I was about 10 years old. The badges had the symbol of a blue bird on them and you received them for collecting various amounts of money for the NSPCC. I think in total I have seven badges which I remember being very proud of at the time.

The NSPCC does some excellent work; I must admit I was not aware Esther Rantzen launched it.

It was good to hear of the local work that the NSPCC are doing and indeed I hope we will have an opportunity for the director that spoke at this evening's event to come to HQ and speak at the breakfast club.

Thursday 14 January

Today began with a meeting with HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary) which visit every quarter to give me a briefing on current issues. The inspector was extremely complementary of Wiltshire Police and I am pleased that this is reflected in HMIC reports published to date.

That said we must never be complacent and I went through the recommendations of HMIC with the Chief Constable and his team to make sure we are taking on board any observations that are made.

Every quarter I have an update from the Head of Roads Policing on the deaths that have occurred on Wiltshire's roads, as well as a conversation about roads policing in general. In 2015 there were 27 incidents which sadly led to 31 fatalities. It is unusual for us to have more than one person lose their life in an accident. What was particularly apparent from the conversation was that there was not one single cause for the fatalities in Wiltshire although it was worth noting that around a third of those killed were bikers. It is very important to me that we continue to educate both those who drive and those who are yet to get behind the wheel about the need to stay safe on the roads. If you ever get the chance to see the Safe Drive Stay Alive presentation given to schools and young people by the Fire and Rescue service and partners I recommend you accept the invitation.

In the late afternoon I was interviewed by Swindon 105.5 about the ongoing campaign to recruit new custody visitors. Custody visitors play a very important role for the force in checking on the treatment of detainees in custody, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. Custody visitors help me to ensure that the police service is open and accountable to the public. You can find out more about Independent Custody Visitors on my [website](#).

In the evening I worked with the Filling Station feeding the homeless in Swindon. Readers may know that I am a trustee of this charity and when I am not on PCC duties I attend the station on a Thursday evening when we are giving soup and food to about 40 people in the town centre of Swindon. I drive the van once a month and help where I am most needed which sometimes can be to spend time talking to the community.



Friday 15 January

I had our 1-2-1 update with Assistant Chief Officer Zoe Durrant who leads on Transformation, HR and People Standards, Corporate Communications, Business Strategy & Improvement and People Development for the Force. We talked about the work the Force have done, and is continuing to do, to transform the hierarchy which the Chief Constable shared with the Home Office in a recent presentation.

More importantly from my point of view, I was updated on the Force's approach to diversity and the work it is doing following criticism after an employment tribunal. I am pleased that bench marking to see how we stand up against other forces will be starting shortly, but I am also frustrated that the solution is not something that will be apparent for some time. What is important that the organisation has diversity at the front of its mind in everything it does.

Following the NSPCC event on Wednesday evening I was pleased to share the details of John Cameron, the head of NSPCC helplines, with the member of staff who runs our breakfast club programme. I heard John speak at the event and I hope that he will be able to join us at some future date as he has a wealth of experience; most recently he has been the lead operational manager for the NSPCC in the Operational Yewtree investigation into allegations against Jimmy Savile.

I think I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that two of our senior officers will be attending the senior command course for the first quarter of the year. Their places as temporary Assistant Chief Constables in Wiltshire will be held by Julian Moss from Avon and Somerset and Mark Cooper from Dorset.

I have met Mark at a formal Commissioner's Monitoring Board meeting already but this afternoon was the first time we had for an unscripted chat; it was interesting to hear Mark's thought on how we do things in Wiltshire. I was also pleased that he was a person who will challenge the systems and methods here in Wiltshire. In many ways the secondment of staff from other constabularies is something that perhaps we could encourage in the future for its own sake rather than to cover a temporary absence.

I had an update before the end of the day from a Superintendent who leads the Strategic Hate Crime Group. The Force is in the process of setting up a strategy group and I am pleased it has been suggested that my office should have a part to play in it. I am pleased to offer my support and look forward to hearing the developments.

In the evening I attended a political meeting in Sherston, which I must admit could have been one of those quiz question on Wiltshire radio because it is somewhere that I haven't been as Commissioner before. After three years it is something of a novelty.

Whilst the blog for the week is at an end I must remember to phone Warminster community radio tomorrow morning for a live interview on my percept proposal.

A BUSY WEEK MEETING PARTNERS

Monday 18 January

The usual briefing day; today this was on the custody rebuild and the agenda for the monitoring board later today.

I'm beginning to feel some frustration over the pace at which the custody rebuild is being progressed. This is an instance where being in the public sector is not an advantage, as one



has to deal, rightly, with many partners with differing agendas and time scales. The team should be under no illusion as to what is required.

The Commissioner's Monitoring Board discussed the budget, use of Avon and Somerset motorcycle assets, the Special Constabulary, licencing staffing, mental health triage, job related fitness, misconduct hearings in public and mobile and remote working. We also discussed the support which is being made available to Swindon to tackle gangs. I'm pleased that I shall be meeting the Home Office soon to discuss the provision available.

In the evening I attended the area board meeting in Tidworth at the Wellington Academy to give the precept briefing. There was broad agreement, which is good. Also on the agenda was the "mens shed" initiative; it is a good example of a community using its assets, in this case, the time of older men and women, for the good of all.

Tuesday 19 January

Today started with my regular update from the Black Police Association (BPA). Work continues, and I commend those that are working on this agenda in the Force, for there is much to do.

With the recruitment of Specials being reviewed and relaunched I hope that the BPA will be included in the review of how we approach and invite the community to become Specials.

I also had a meeting with the Fire Chief designate. He and I have met at various area and locality boards over the past few weeks and so this was an opportunity to build on some of the informal conversations. I would like to see some simple wins around the estate between our two organisations, for us to make real difference to the service for local people.

Readers will be aware that my home computer has been hacked. Having established that it was my computer and not the office one, the Constabulary interest waned very quickly, having referred me to Action Fraud.

Today I went on line and reported the occurrence, but I must have done something wrong as at no stage did the questions ask who I was or take my contact details. I suppose this experience is good for commissioning. It is real and I'm feeling as if I am losing the will to live as well as losing my data and being unsupported. There is more to do, and I will have to check if I made the correct choices on the report as I still have no crime number!

Towards the end of the day I spent a little time looking at the independent report that has been done on the Constabulary's Tri Force arrangements for roads, dogs and firearms in advance of a presentation which will be delivered to the region on Friday.

Wednesday 20 January

Up this morning before the birds as I have a breakfast meeting with the Home Office at 8.00am with some fellow Commissioners to discuss the announcements on the future governance of the Fire Service. This meeting was held before the quarterly Association of Police and Crime Commissioners meeting (APCC).

At the main meeting, which seemed a bit thin on the ground, we had an update from the various standing groups. The day seemed to be described by discussion about the election and the future management of the organisation itself.

Regrettably I had to leave before the speaker on female offending, to catch a train to the dentist in Bristol. Unfortunately there was an incident on the line just outside Paddington which delayed the train departure by a couple of hours, so no dentist today.



Thursday 21 January

It was the Dauntsey's School estates committee meeting this morning, which I chaired before heading back to Swindon for a meeting of the Youth Offending Team.

I haven't been able to attend a Youth Offending Team meeting for a while and it was good to hear that the Restorative Justice reviews are appreciated.

Back to Devizes to the dentist before heading to Corsham for the Area Board meeting and my presentation of the proposed precept which again was well received. It was also a chance to catch up with the local officers, who gave their report to the Board. Another late night!

Friday 22nd January

It was my turn to chair the South West Regions Commissioning Board in Bridgwater. The agenda for the day is mapped from 9.30 through to 3pm, covering the Regional Organised Crime Unit, forensic, regional ICT, Programme Board Update, National Specialist Capabilities Programme, Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and a presentation on the review of Tri-force undertaken by City Forum and Thames Valley Police. In all it was a rather full day and if the diary has looked thin for this week, the agenda papers for today are thick and have required a number of hour's preparation. In fact I've forgotten one of the most important agenda items which was the governance of the South West Police Collaboration. It's not for me to say how the meeting went, as I was chairing, but it was pleasant to get to the end of the day and find that everyone, both Chiefs and Commissioners had not found any blockages, and where there were differences, commitments had been given to find solutions. Let's hope that the team build on that consensus.

SHINY NEW CAR HELPS TO SLOW SPEEDING DRIVERS

Monday 25 January

A confession: Today I failed to wear my "No to Violence" T shirt. The campaign continues and I shall try to remember next month.

The morning was taken up with an additional Commissioner's Monitoring Board at which I said formally that I would be asking the Police and Crime Panel to support a 1.9 per cent increase in the police part of council tax, known as the precept.

In the afternoon I attended a Community Speed Watch event in Shrewton. Volvo Cars has generously lent us a white estate car with "police community volunteer" markings (see picture below). Speed Watch are using it as an additional speed warning sign and it is used by other volunteers who have duties around the county. We are all very obliged to Volvo for this kind gesture. The event brought together teams from across the county and gave me an opportunity to speak to the group about their experiences over the past year.



Back to the office for a briefing on the finances and also to plan a consultation around the new stalking legislation.

In the evening I had an area board in Devizes to attend, which is conveniently held next door to the HQ building. I spoke about the precept and invited final comments to include in my report to the Police and Crime Panel in February.

Tuesday 26 January

An early start to drive to Netheravon primary school where I attended a presentation by Life Education Centre who are recipients of a grant from the Police Property Act, run on my behalf by the Community Foundation. They were spending two days at the school with their mobile classroom (see picture below) in which all the lessons are given by a specially trained teacher. The team visit primary schools and teach each year group specific topics which range from being nice to people, to awareness of alcohol and drugs, through peer pressure, which is important for those moving up to secondary school. Unfortunately the charity does not provide the service for Swindon schools. This is something which I would wish to encourage them and Swindon to consider for the future.



Back to the office where I was interviewed by our Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Kier Pritchard who is currently on a three month senior leadership course. This was done over the Lync video system. One of his projects is to write a paper on the Wiltshire Police policy of stripping out layers of management, bringing the Chief Constable closer to the front line. I am very supportive of the change. We have introduced the technology which enables it. Senior officers can brief their teams remotely and, indeed, teams do not have to return to base to record activities or be tasked. There are no longer chief superintendents or chief inspectors in the Force.

After lunch I had a brief meeting with an independent film producer who is working on a project for national TV about missing people. Readers may know that our Chief Constable



has national responsibility for missing people and I commissioned the charity Missing People to work with Swindon and Wiltshire councils. This arrangement with the councils has now been replaced by them with an in-house service. I need to ensure that the service provided by the councils is as good and robust as that which I was providing through my funding of the charity service. One of the main activities is to undertake an interview with young people when they return home after a period of unexplained absence. The concern is that they may have been subject to abuse or coercion whilst away. I am very supportive of this film being produced as it will increase awareness of the dangers which young people in Wiltshire and Swindon can experience.

I suppose the next session will be good training for when this film is made because I was given a short training session by our communications team. This was about making short videos which we might share on social media and upload to the website. I am also experimenting with recording audio clips on my smartphone which I subsequently email to the media.

Just before I left the office for a One Swindon board meeting, I gave some feedback to one of the candidates who I interviewed as part of the recruitment for the Chief Constable of Avon & Somerset Police. It was at his request and I hope my comments were both supportive and useful.

At 6pm I had a meeting of the One Swindon board, which brings together a range of public service organisations working in the borough. The meetings offer a good networking opportunity, but I do find that too many decisions are made outside the meeting in virtual conversations via email. I was unable to stay to the end as I had to give my precept presentation to the Swindon South locality.

Wednesday 27 January

Started the day with a visit to the chiropractor before going to an open morning at the CRI drug and alcohol project in Swindon. They were holding an open morning for agencies who refer clients. I fund part of this service through a commission to Swindon Borough Council for a drug intervention programme. I do have concerns over the didactic approach to the clients. I know from my experience of working with the homeless that users of drugs and alcohol often lead a chaotic lifestyle that does not work to appointments and timetables in the same way as many of us have to.

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day and I was pleased to attend a short service of remembrance at the Cenotaph in Swindon. It is pertinent that we were not only remembering the horrors of the Second World War holocaust, but also those victims of more recent conflicts. It was good to see young people from Swindon schools attending and laying their wreaths as part of their education. The atmosphere was quietly respectful. I was unable to attend the meeting held after the ceremony at which I understand there were a number of readings of testimony by victims and survivors.

Swindon Borough Council has been given support by the government to work to prevent gang culture growing in the town. We are in the second tranche of funding, the first tranche having addressed those areas with an identified problem. This money is to ensure that gang culture does not take root from bigger urban areas.

I was able to share with the peer review inspectors from the Home Office my expectations for the constabulary as expressed in the Police and Crime Plan.

In the evening I attended a Dauntsey's School governors event at Bowood.



Thursday 28 January

Today there is a certain conflict in the diary and I was sorry to have been unable to attend the memorial service for David Brewer, the clerk of the magistrates in Swindon, who recently died. Readers may know that I was a magistrate for some 20 years before taking this role and it was David who acted as a mentor and trainer to all of us who undertook that role.

My day was taken up as part of a recruitment panel for a new Chief Executive of Swindon Borough Council. I sat with four others as a stakeholder panel and we interviewed four candidates for the role. I am very pleased to have been invited to join the process as I think it reflects recognition by Swindon councillors of the close relationship that the borough has with the constabulary for the benefit of the people of Swindon. It was a strong field representing different strengths, backgrounds and gender. The panel's recommendations will be forwarded to the committee of councillors who will be making the final decision on appointment tomorrow.

After a long day interviewing I had to speak in the evening at Amesbury area board: an hour's drive away. My presentation and proposals on the precept were well received.

Friday 29 January

After a long day yesterday my diary is mercifully light for the last day of the working week. In the morning I visited ISIS Centre in Swindon. Concerns have been raised about the name. The centre provides support for women and its title derives from the ancient Egyptian goddess. The overarching charity is called the Nelson Trust. I am funding the position of Sue Lee, who works in Swindon as the sex worker outreach specialist. She is doing a fantastic job in supporting women who, through addiction and exploitation, find themselves working on the streets. I was also pleased to meet an old friend at the centre who has returned from Oxford to help in the work. This project has attracted some national attention and Sue recently won a well-deserved prize.

In the afternoon I had two media interviews, one with Joe Riddle of the Salisbury Journal, and the second with Simon McLean of Sam FM on the precept.

I am pleased to have finished a fairly hectic week a couple of hours early after being out every night.

PANEL BACKS MY PROPOSAL TO PAY £3 A YEAR MORE FOR LOCAL POLICING

Monday 1 February

This morning began with a briefing in the office in preparation for the Police and Crime Panel on Thursday. There was also an update on the freedom of information requests that have been received by the office.

These meetings happen every six weeks, enabling me to keep abreast of information which has been requested by the public both about my office and the Force. This is important to me because it is important to the public, although one has to admit that many requests are duplicates and some are very specific to ongoing operational matters.

Of the substantial numbers of requests received, many are not relevant to Wiltshire.



The benefit of these requests is that the public are able to be better informed. However very often requests are from the Daily Mail looking to support a story which may be about another part of the country.

In the afternoon, I chaired a Commissioner's Monitoring Board and, as always, had a briefing with staff in advance. The agenda for the day included our strategic alliance work with Avon and Somerset Police.

Exceptions to performance were raised with the Senior Command Team (SCT), in particular the performance relating to response in the county and the recording of outcomes of cases. Both of these matters I have asked to be updated on every two weeks.

The meeting also received a report from the South West Regional Organised Crime Unit and the Tri-Force Collaboration in respect of roads, dogs and guns.

On a more strategic level, I was updated on negotiations that are being undertaken with Wiltshire Council in relation to the costs of shared premises. The board has also discussed the so-called purdah period in the run-up to the PCC elections in May during which time officials are heavily constrained in publicising details of developments that could influence voters.

A letter from the National Police Air Service regarding the use of drones by police was also discussed. This was a national discussion about whether drones were part of the air police service or not. I can see that drones could be useful for policing public events such as Solstice or the WOMAD festival. But this would be an operational matter for the Chief Constable. Finally, we discussed powers for volunteers which could be delegated by the Chief. We will revisit this matter once the government's Policing Bill is published and Mike Veale has had an opportunity to discuss it.

In the evening, I attended a Mercers' lecture at Dauntsey's school which was given by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. It was interesting to hear him speaking from an academic point of view about the relationships between different faiths and making the point that we needed to understand the historical context of our differences and, indeed, our similarities.

I am particularly looking forward to welcoming Ahtsham Ali, a senior Muslim advisor, to a meeting at County Hall in Trowbridge on Saturday 5 March. I have organised the meeting with Lady Gooch, the High Sheriff, after hearing Mr Ali speak at Erlestoke Prison.

I missed a short film item on the BBC programme Inside Out West about the so-called Battle of the Beanfield, involving hippies and police, which took place near Stonehenge in 1985. I'll have to catch up with it on iPlayer.

Tuesday 2 February

First thing this morning, I had a performance update where representatives of my office and the constabulary performance team take me through the latest statistics which are discussed in greater detail at a meeting attended by my office. These briefings enable me to challenge the Chief Constable at the monitoring board over performance, as indeed I did yesterday in relation to response rates.

I was pleased to have one of my regular meetings with the leader of Swindon Borough Council. Local policing is a joint enterprise between the council, health officials and constabulary, and in Wiltshire and Swindon the relationships are strengthening over time. It is essential that we maintain these regular contacts between my office and the two local authorities, as it is something that troubles me about regional policing. This contact at local level must be preserved, and I will be seeking a way to ensure that any regional activity has

local delivery which does not break that relationship between Wiltshire Police, the public and the two local authorities.

In the afternoon, as part of sexual abuse and sexual violence awareness week, I visited the sexual assault referral centre (SARC) in Swindon. This is run by Seqol and funded by health, the police and my office. The hashtag for the week is #itsnotokay. Fortunately, we have seen an increase in confidence by victims in reporting sexual abuse. This facility, which serves the whole of the county, is located in the north of the county, in Swindon. I am pleased that they're beginning to do some more work across the county and my office is encouraging yet more to be done. The facility itself is first class, with comfortable interview suites, which look far more like a lounge at home than a doctor's waiting room. The facility has access to medical support.



In the evening, I had to miss Kyle Files on ITV1. The presenter, Jeremy Kyle, visited the Force last autumn. He interviewed Inspector Steve McGrath about the firearms amnesty and filmed with roads policing officers.

Apparently he was investigating the issue of drugs on UK streets. He uncovered the issue of cocaine being taken in coffee shop toilets using the baby changing tables, confronted a self-confessed drug dealer, and followed officers during an arrest of a suspected drug driver.

I was attending the north Swindon locality board. This was the last opportunity to hear the public's views on my precept proposals, which I take to the Police and Crime Panel on Thursday.

Wednesday 3 February

I spent the morning in Royal Wootton Bassett market. I have to say it was a very cold day, but we were encouraged not to use our tent which offered some protection. The spot we were given instead was under the town hall, which was dry but very cold. The market itself did not seem very busy and our conversations with the public were limited. But the point is, I was there and ready to engage with the public. On advice of my PR team, I did have a haircut!

Back in the car at lunchtime, I drove over to Chippenham to visit the charity Waste Not Want Not (see picture below) that has been supported by the PCC fund run by the Wiltshire Community Foundation. This is a furniture project for those who cannot afford high street prices. It also offers work experience to people on probation orders and others in need. It is open to those on benefits and the elderly, offering very good furniture at affordable prices for those on low incomes, and giving opportunities to offenders to make a new start. Interestingly, a couple of people who had completed their probation orders were still helping out.



In the evening, I attended the final area board of the season at Wilton in the south of the county, where once again I gave my presentation on the precept, which I take to the panel tomorrow morning. The hours this week are already stacking up, but I shouldn't complain because what I do in the diary is exactly what the job entails.

Thursday 4 February

The main event of the day is my presentation of the precept to the Police and Crime Panel and I am very pleased to report that my proposal for a £3.12 average annual rise in the precept was unanimously approved by the panel. I am very glad that I had their support in a proposal which I think is important for the people of Wiltshire and Swindon, and for local policing in the county.

Back to my office in Devizes for a couple of meetings before speaking at a leadership event being held by the Chief Constable, in which he is setting out how he proposes to police Wiltshire and deliver my police and crime plan. This was a very useful evening in ensuring our partners from Swindon and Wiltshire understand the message of local policing and for the Chief to ensure he is known to the leaders in the county.

Friday 5 February

Today I was at the University of Bath, where MBA students who have spent some time with the Force over the last week gave their presentations on the way in which Wiltshire Police is transforming its operational model.

There were eight groups presenting during the morning, and I have to say that every presentation was very good, with a good balance of academic rigour and presentational skills.

I was particularly taken by a graphic use by one of the groups in their comparison of the hero/leader model where our Chief Constable was depicted on a medieval charger slaying dragons.

I know that the Force has gained from the work that the post graduate students have done and I am very pleased that the constabulary has established contact with the business school at the university.

It is something that we can develop over time and I would certainly be very happy to have students in my office as it benefits them and our organisation. Certainly the students in this group were not reticent in coming forward with ideas or criticism. We were entertained and had a very pleasant lunch with the dean of the faculty, a useful networking opportunity.

In the evening, I attended a political supper.



Saturday 6 February

My wife and I attended a function held at Tedworth house in Tidworth. This is a magnificently restored property which the Help for Heroes charity rents from the MoD and has converted to support wounded soldiers.

We looked at the accommodation - particularly the gym and training facilities for those injured, many of whom have lost limbs.

They have a first class indoor skiing facility which works on a process of a revolving water track. It really is a wonderful facility that has been built and it was good to meet the founder of Help for Heroes, Bryn Parry. We were warned at this meeting that there would be some negative publicity in tomorrow's press. I am beginning to feel I should take out a subscription to the Mail on Sunday.

Sunday 7 February

Today is "Visit my Mosque day", and I visited the Hazrat Shahjalal central mosque in Swindon, where I and other visitors were given a very warm welcome. We were given an explanation of the cycle of prayer and other activities that are undertaken within the mosque, all of which was very interesting to an Anglican. Indeed I did feel when we were watching prayers taking place that I had felt equally confused as to what was going on when visiting Catholic churches whilst working in Italy.

I think the concept of an open day is very good, as there is nothing more likely to create rumour and misinformation than a building opened only to members of the faith. The hospitality was excellent, and everything was very well and fully explained.

All in all, a fairly full week.