

WINCHESTER GREATER SECTOR – NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE REPORT

CORHAMPTON & MEONSTOKE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – WEDNESDAY 8th MAY 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen, I apologise that neither PCSO Owen REEVES or I can be with you this evening at your Annual Parish Assembly.

As usual with policing there have been a few challenges this year for the neighbourhood police team as uncertainty about the wider Hampshire Constabulary funding for 2019-20 remained unclear until well in to the new year. It is now confirmed that for the first time in several years we will actually have an opportunity to invest with plans for recruitment of police constables, police community support officers (PCSO's) and police staff investigators (PSI's) during the next few months.

On a local level I currently have four officers less than I did at the same time last year with two of my police officers having gone to different roles and two of my police community support officers having left the team which can create some challenges and cause some difficult decisions about how and where we deploy our resources. The Police and Crime Commissioner however has expressed his commitment to maintaining neighbourhood policing and increasing visibility in communities.

The last major review of how we operate force wide in Hampshire was undertaken in 2014/15. We are currently reviewing neighbourhood policing across the force in conjunction with projected establishment figures for the year ahead which is likely to result in a small increase in officers on neighbourhood police teams so I do anticipate that the two police officers that I lost will be replaced, but alongside that there are likely to be further demands on the team, specifically regarding safeguarding and managing offenders in the community. How we engage with our communities is also being considered with increased opportunity to use technology and social media for engagement opportunities. I will hopefully have a clearer indication about what this will mean for me and my team over the coming weeks.

In September 2018 the team and I were required to re-locate to Fareham for four months whilst Bishops Waltham underwent some minor refurbishment. There had been some uncertainty around the future of Bishops Waltham Police Station for at least the last two years so the investment in the building provides a reassurance that we will remain as a team in the heart of the community for many years to come. We have been back at Bishops Waltham since the middle of January so I hope the rumours that the site was being converted to housing, a café or many other varied suggestions have now been dispelled.

The refurbishment does not extend as far as having a front office facility reinstated but the team and I work permanently from this base which also provides us with a facility to interview suspects. A further positive message is that following the refurbishment we are also now home to a small team of Countrywatch officers with two police officers and a police staff investigator now working from Bishops Waltham. PC Ian Bassett is the Countrywatch officer responsible for the Meon Valley and his knowledge and enthusiasm for rural crime is providing a really positive impact across the district.

If you follow news about crime statistics, the national figure during the past twelve months has seen an increase across most crime types. Locally a really significant challenge for us has been the commission of crime by an organised crime group who we have identified as being responsible in a significant number of vehicle crimes and non-dwelling burglary including offences committed throughout the wider Meon Valley. The group are responsible for crime across at least ten counties, but Winchester District led by Chief Inspector Mark Lynch have been central to getting

several members of the crime group arrested, convicted and jailed. An example of the crime being committed by this group was the opportunist theft of a motor vehicle from a property in Stocks Lane in October stolen from the owners driveway whilst he briefly left the vehicle to open his garage to put the vehicle away. The vehicle was recovered in Wiltshire and to provide a very brief snapshot around the groups offending the investigating officer wrote;

“(suspects were).....arrested in the Wiltshire area having been arrested from a stolen Audi S5 from the Fareham area displaying plates (stolen from another car) from the Winchester area and having keys to a stolen Vauxhall Signum from Meonstoke which was parked next to a caravan they were residing in Wiltshire.”

The constant and evolving challenge for police is the fact that criminals are travelling further and identifying vulnerable areas to commit crime. In addition many crime types are changing so that investigations are global, specifically the fraudulent scam type crimes that affect so many older or more vulnerable victims.

I am grateful to local residents whether active members or not within neighbourhood watch which has generated multiple calls during the past twelve months about suspicious people and/or vehicles within the parish. One of these calls enabled the team to respond to a male calling door to door selling goods in an aggressive manner. We were able to respond and locate the male within twenty minutes of the call. In addition the intelligence that these calls generate is invaluable. Thank you.

Complaints about motor vehicles using the A32, and predominantly issues caused by motorcycles continue to provoke discussion about how the situation can be improved. It is now more than a year since CANS (Communities Against Noise & Speed) were formed and that group continues to represent residents and to present views to police, highways and other partners. My team will be supporting colleagues from the Road Policing Unit with some operations again this spring and summer. In addition a direction for increased presence from the safer camera unit will also see the mobile camera vans featuring very prominently on Wednesday evening, Saturday and Sunday on roads around the A32. Local residents do need to be aware of course that the officers involved in these operations and specifically the camera units will not be differentiating between motorcycles, cars and other motor vehicles so although the increased presence is prompted by high use of the routes at these times by motorcycles, everybody using the road needs to remember their responsibilities to use the road network legally and responsibly.

I am so sorry that I cannot be with you to answer any questions or concerns in person but your parish clerk has my contact details which are also available on the Hampshire Constabulary Website so if anybody has a specific concern or question that you would like me to answer, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stuart Gilmour
Police Sergeant 2183
08/05/2019