



News & views

WINTER 2023 News and views from Derbyshire Police Federation

A photograph of a Christmas tree decorated with lights and ornaments. In the foreground, there are two wrapped gifts: one in silver paper with a red ribbon and one in red paper with a white ribbon. The scene is set on a surface covered with white artificial snow.

**Season's greetings
from Derbyshire
Police Federation**

CHAIR REFLECTS ON 2023



By Tony Wetton, chair of Derbyshire Police Federation

Welcome to the winter edition of News & Views, your final Federation magazine for 2023. With Christmas just around the corner, I hope that you have been able to schedule some much-needed and well-deserved quality time with loved ones.

As I look back on 2023, I can't help but be full of so much pride, as I re-read some of the fantastic stories and experiences shared by our members. Kicking off the year, our secretary and treasurer Kirsty Bunn reflected on her career to mark International Women's Day. It comes as no surprise that Kirsty's passion for policing stems from her strong desire to help people - something that she brought with her into the Federation office some years ago, where she continues to provide tremendous support and representation to our members.

We've also heard about the positive impact the Force's Neurodiversity Support Group is having. Temporary Chief Inspector

Clare Preston-Davies, who helped launch the group, explained at the time that 120 people were already benefitting from its support - and that number has now grown to nearly 150. Later in the year, we heard from student officer Ryan Banner, who explained how the Support Group had proved 'invaluable', as he waits to be assessed for ADHD and autism. I look forward to hearing more about the group in 2024 and hope that by sharing such stories, we're helping to build understanding and remove the stigma surrounding neurodiverse conditions.

Another story that springs to mind is that of PC Sam Brassington, who gave us a glimpse into the role of a dog handler. It was great to hear of Sam's love for his job, as he revealed how he and his furry sidekick Stark tackled training together before the pair qualified this summer.

In July, our national Police Bravery Award nominee PC Laura Nicholson joined colleagues from forces across England and Wales at this year's ceremony in London. Our deputy chair, Tenielle Hardwick, supported Laura at the ceremony, and I was extremely proud to see Laura recognised for her brave actions.

Of course, it would be remiss of me to shine a light only on the positives from 2023. Earlier this year we were given a pay increase of seven per cent - a pay rise of sorts but not necessarily the reward I know our members were hoping for. As we look ahead, into 2024, I want you to know that as your Federation, we will continue our fight for better pay. We now have a new Home Secretary, James Cleverly, and I hope he will genuinely listen to The Police Federation as the undisputed voice of policing and have our back in times of need.

The new year also presents itself with an opportunity for members to have their say. The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has committed to balloting its members on the question of whether we should pursue gaining industrial rights. I

would encourage all members to vote - we will keep you well informed and updated as and when the process progresses.

Recently, we have encouraged members to take part in the latest PFEW pay and morale survey. I'm under no illusion that morale is still low within policing and I'm sure concerns around poor pay, high demand and challenging workloads will be reflected in the results released next year.

As your Federation, I want you to know that we are continuing to work hard to combat the issues you face, individually and collectively. Please keep feeding back to us and reaching out when you need support - our door is always open.

Please take some time to prioritise your mental health and wellbeing, not just over Christmas but as we continue into 2024. Look out for yourself and each other.

With retirement fast approaching, this will be my last Christmas as your Fed chair. Please know that I'm heading into my final months in the role you put me into so very proud of all the hard work, dedication and commitment you continue to show to the job day in and day out.

Enjoy the festivities and stay safe.



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Details for the branch officials and workplace reps can be found on our [Meet the team page](#).

'I WANTED TO STOP OTHER PEOPLE GOING THROUGH WHAT WE WENT THROUGH'

A Derbyshire officer has told how a collision involving a drink driver that left his mum seriously injured motivated him to join the police to prevent it happening to other families.

Acting Sergeant Cam Spowart was just 14 when the car his mum was driving was in a crash with a vehicle that had pulled out in front of them.

While Cam emerged from the collision relatively unscathed, his mum was badly injured and has since developed a number of disabilities that have had a big impact on her life.

"My mum was completely knocked for six," he said. "I got out of the car fairly okay - the airbag went off, I can remember that - and saw my mum and she wasn't in the best of states.

"She got lifted out. I had to see all that and it wasn't the best.

"While we were there the driver, came out unscathed. She was under the influence of drink and drugs and tried to flee.

"Fortunately we had some members of the public there who managed to stop her from leaving."

He added: "My mum got taken to hospital without me. I was worried if it'd be the last time I would see her."

Cam said the incident was life-changing in a number of ways.

His mum had a thriving graphic design business that she was unable to continue with because of her injuries, while Cam took on a role of carer.

"My mum is an absolutely amazing person," he said. "She is so selfless.

"Because of what happened to her, she had to give up the work and I had to step up and look after her.

"Two of the disks in her spine exploded because of the crash.

"She developed a number of disabilities such as fibromyalgia, and because of the stress of it all she developed other illnesses.

"Both of our situations completely changed," he added.

It also prompted a change in career plan for Cam, who had initially wanted to follow in his dad's footsteps and join the army.

Cam said: "Because of what it caused my mum to go through, I decided to go down a different career path, one that was still uniformed but which meant I could remain home and be there for my family.



Acting Sergeant Cam Spowart.

"I also wanted to stop other people going through what we had to, and that's why I decided to go into the police.

"I made sure I got my qualifications, I got some life experience and then applied to the police."

As fate would have it, his first arrest was a drink driver.

"No-one knew about mine and my mum's situation," he said. "I didn't tell anyone at training school because I didn't want to make a fuss about anything.

"When I made my first arrest it did feel a little bit like fate.

"It felt like I had been set on this path, trying to find my purpose, where I wanted to be and what I wanted to be doing.

"We went through the process and he

got charged from our police work, it was a good feeling that perhaps we've prevented something happening, someone being hurt or worse.

"After having that experience with my mum, to perhaps prevent it from happening to someone else, it felt like things coming full circle."

Now 25, Cam is an acting sergeant on response, and says the job can bring with it huge satisfaction.

"We have challenging days, the same as any job," he said. "But it's those points where we see really good outcomes that make it worthwhile.

"The positives outweigh the negatives. It's a very rewarding job, and you feel like you're achieving something good."

2023: a year in review

JANUARY

Bryn Hughes, a leading light in the Federation's campaign for a posthumous Elizabeth Medal for officers killed on duty, [was made an MBE](#) in the King's New Year Honours. Bryn is the father of PC Nicola Hughes who was murdered in 2012 alongside fellow Greater Manchester Police PC Fiona Bone. Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton said: "We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Bryn on his MBE which is richly deserved."



With public sector strikes sweeping the country, Tony declared that police officers should [not be deployed to fill the gaps](#). He also commented on the Prime Minister's pledge to clamp down on rogue officers in the wake of David Carrick (the Met officer jailed for life for sex attacks on women): "Nobody wants corrupt people serving in the police - least of all the officers themselves," he assured.

Special Sergeant Rob Jones (26) told how he still gets [such a buzz during every shift](#) after seven years of volunteering. Rob, who works for Rolls Royce by day, believes he gets the best bits of the job as a Special.



FEBRUARY

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper pledged Labour would [invest in community-based policing](#) if it wins power, with a promise of £360 million to fund town centre patrols. And Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, came out in favour of a pay award for police officers that [keeps pace with inflation](#).

An anti-violence campaign that involved an [11-foot bee sculpture](#) visiting Derbyshire was hailed a 'huge success' after the monument prompted engagement from thousands of school children and members of the community.



MARCH

Branch secretary Kirsty Bunn [reflected on her 22-year career](#) in an article to mark International Women's Day. Kirsty initially wanted to work in forensics but discovered an excitement for working out in uniform on the frontline. "I loved being a beacon of help for the community," said 45-year-old Kirsty.

The Federation called for a [17 per cent pay rise](#) for members after independent research by a non-partisan think tank revealed the extent of the real-terms decline in their wages. Chair Tony Wetton backed the move and said it was time for police officers to be properly rewarded for the work they do and their unique position in society.

A retired senior officer who was [one of the first BAME officers to join Derbyshire Police](#) 40 years ago was on a mission to improve retention, culture and diversity within police forces. Kul Mahay (56) braved 26 rejections until he saw an advert from Derbyshire Police calling for more BAME cadets.

APRIL

Tiff Lynch, the Federation's deputy national chair, raised the issue of police officers assaulted on duty [having to part pay for their rehabilitation](#). She referred to the situation where enhanced rehabilitation for officers is only available to self-funded individuals. Tiff said: "I will be advocating, as part of that Police Covenant, that no police officer will have to pay for their physical or mental rehabilitation for injuries that have been caused in the line of duty."



The Federation found common ground with the Government over proposed reforms that would ensure officers [no longer have to record frivolous allegations of offensive speech](#) or Twitter spats as crimes. "Our members strive to deliver the best service possible, but that can prove a challenge if they are stuck behind a desk," commented chair Tony Wetton.

Derbyshire Police easily [exceeded its target for recruiting new officers](#) under the Government's Police Uplift Programme. The Force was allocated an extra 283 officers but succeeded in appointing 351 to bring the total workforce to 2,178 officers.

MAY

Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton responded to the Home Secretary's [calls for "common sense policing"](#) saying "I have yet to hear Suella Braverman talking about common sense funding - we need a new long-term funding model". Ms Braverman said the public



wanted to see police officers "pursuing good old-fashioned criminal justice rather than social justice" and accused some forces of taking partisan positions.

Derbyshire Police Federation welcomed a project to [create a digital police memorial](#). Officially launched at the Tower of London, it will draw on data from the Police Roll of Honour Trust.

Labour MP Harriet Harman and London Mayor Sadiq Khan called for the automatic dismissal of any serving officer who is convicted of a serious criminal offence, with chief constables also given the power to reopen misconduct investigations. But Derbyshire Police Federation warned that this could hand "undemocratic powers to chief officers under the guise of police reforms". Derbyshire Federation chair Tony Wetton added his concerns that policing was ["being used as a political football"](#) in this case.

JUNE

Derbyshire Police Federation repeated calls for a 17 per cent pay rise saying it was "outrageous" to suggest that Police Federation members should [take a financial hit to help the Government reduce inflation](#). "What a kick in the teeth that would be for hard-working, dedicated police officers," said Tony Wetton, branch chair. The Federation continued to withhold its support for the Police Remuneration Review Body which it branded "unfit for purpose".

The Force was making "great strides" in [supporting officers with neurodiversity](#), according to Temporary Chief Inspector Clare Preston-Davies who co-founded a support group. "I think the fact that we have 120 members in just 18 months demonstrates just how diverse the Force is," said Clare. "If we're able to raise awareness and educate people around neurodiversity then it will make a huge difference for our officers when they approach members of the public."



Officers [took part in Light the Lakes](#) to raise money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS). And Derbyshire Police Federation [marked Response Policing Week with a tribute](#) to frontline officers. Chair Tony Wetton said: "Every day there are stories of response officers doing amazing things. Brave officers enter quick-changing and often confusing and dangerous situations, never knowing quite what their shift will bring. That is true heroism."

JULY

PC Laura Nicholson represented Derbyshire at the national Police Bravery Awards in London. Laura was nominated after [tackling a man who was choking her colleague](#). Laura and her partner Ben attended a Downing Street reception before attending a glittering evening ceremony. After hearing stories of police bravery Laura declared: "It made me feel proud to be a police officer."



Derbyshire Police Federation secretary Kirsty Bunn

[reacted to news of a seven per cent pay offer for police](#),

announced by the Government. "We asked for

an increase of 17 per cent to make up for many, many years of low or zero per cent pay rises. However, a seven per cent pay rise is the best our members have received for many years so there will be mixed feelings."

Unfortunately, the rise was too late for some. In July, Home Office figures showed [record numbers of police officers had quit](#) across England and Wales between April 2022 and March 2023. The 4,668 who had resigned included 71 from Derbyshire. Federation chair Tony Wetton said it was "proof that things have got to change" around pay and workloads.

A helpline was made available to police officers who are [suffering from addiction](#).

AUGUST

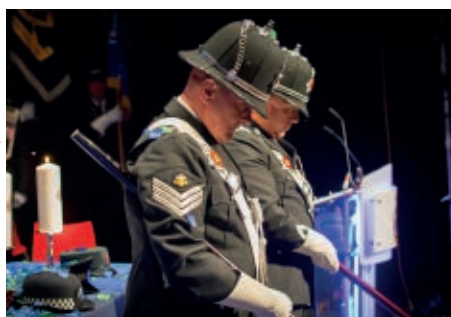
Derbyshire Police Federation welcomed moves to [outlaw zombie knives](#) and machetes, give police more powers to seize and destroy them and increase sentences for anyone caught carrying them. Maximum sentences for importing and carrying the knives were being increased to two years.

Federation chair Tony Wetton praised the Federation's National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF) for highlighting the [impact of data protection legislation on officers](#). Our #SimplifyDG6 campaign seeks to amend disclosure guidance which currently places significant time pressures on officers and ties up valuable resources. "Too much time and resource is being spent redacting case material before a charge has even been laid," said Tony.



Police chiefs were [reminded of their obligations to protect police drivers](#). New legislation fought for by the Federation affords added protection from prosecution providing officers are in ticket. Tim Rogers, national pursuits and driver training lead for the PFEW, warned: "There is no movement on this whatsoever. As chief officer, you are responsible for the messaging to your officers on this critical change."

SEPTEMBER



Eight police officers who lost their lives on duty in the previous 12 months were [honoured at the National Police Memorial Day in Cardiff](#). Derbyshire Police Federation chair Tony Wetton joined Derbyshire Chief Constable Rachel Swann and families of fallen officers at the service. PC Mark Atterbury also attended the service as the standard bearer for the Force.

Special Constable David Holmes said a change in the law to allow volunteer officers to join the Police Federation was a vital step in him becoming the [first Derbyshire Special to receive Taser training](#). David works mainly on traffic policing. He said there had been numerous incidents during his seven years where Tasers could have helped de-escalate an incident.

Student officer Ryan Banner, who was [being assessed for ADHD and autism](#), encouraged his colleagues to be "open and honest" about living with neurodiverse conditions. He said it was a relief to be undergoing an assessment having spent years feeling like things were not "100 per cent".



OCTOBER

The Police Federation's [annual national conference got underway in Manchester](#), with members able to join virtually. Day one saw a hard-hitting discussion around leading in policing, a conversation focused on misogyny and a deep dive into mutual aid deployments.

National chair Steve Hartshorn called on the Home Secretary to "protect officers from burning out" and for a "five-year inflation-linked funding settlement" warning of a breakdown in the special relationship between the government and the police.

Derbyshire Chief Superintendent Dave Kirby, the Divisional Commander for North Division, [completed a 190-mile coast-to-coast walk](#) from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire in eight days to raise money for Dementia UK. Dave raised more than £2,700.

Kirsty Bunn cautiously welcomed the Force's stance on [new fitness test arrangements](#).



NOVEMBER

Federation branch chair Tony Wetton issued an appeal for Derbyshire officers to fill out the Federation's [annual pay and morale survey](#). "The more who take part, the louder our voices will be when campaigning for fairer pay and conditions," he said. The findings are expected to paint a picture of the realities of frontline policing in the Force.

The Federation held its [first men's health webinar](#) to change attitudes and behaviours. Derbyshire Police complemented this with a Men's Health Forum support network, meeting in person and online every two months. Detective Chief Inspector Adam Wilkins, a Federation member, said: "Stats show that men are less likely to get themselves checked out by the doctor, they're less likely to talk about the way they're feeling and more likely to die by suicide."

Wellbeing lead Helen Gallear used World Menopause Day to urged colleagues to [take part in the Everyone Pause survey](#). A good response rate would help the police service to develop and support for officers experiencing the menopause, she said.

DECEMBER

PC Mark Patermoster encouraged his colleagues to volunteer with the cadets. Cadet co-ordinator Mark who was a former cadet gave an inside into working with the inspirational young people. He said: "You see these young people leave the cadets as confident individuals which is fantastic to see."

VOLUNTEER WITH US, ENCOURAGES CADET CO-ORDINATOR

A cadet co-ordinator who was a former police cadet himself is encouraging more of his colleagues to volunteer with the inspirational young people.

Derbyshire Police Federation member, PC Mark Paternoster has given an insight into working with the cadets and he says seeing the journey the youngsters go on fills him with so much pride.

Now Mark is hoping to recruit more volunteers to help run the cadets, as he explains how demand to join is at an all-time high.

"Cadets spending a few hours a week with the group could turn out to have such an impact on them choosing the right paths in life - it so often sets them up for the big wide world," said Mark.

"You see these young people leave the cadets as confident individuals which is fantastic to see."

Mark took on the role of cadet co-ordinator in 2019, having previously been a cadet himself as a teenager.

He says that the cadet programme provides young people with unique opportunities, offering them fun but informative sessions. Young people between the ages of 13 and 18 can join, with 85 in the group as it stands.

"There's no shortage of demand," explained Mark.



"At the moment, we have on average four potential cadets apply for every one place - which is why I'm encouraging my colleagues to consider volunteering with us.

"We have 29 volunteer cadet leaders at the moment but the more we can recruit, the more young people we can support."

Earlier this year the group embarked on their first residential trip, which saw the youngsters take part in multiple physical and team-building activities including abseiling, climbing and kayaking.

"As well as the fun bits, the four-day trip was about learning too. The team had to cook their own food, tidy and wash up," continued Mark, adding: "The reality is though, that for some of the group, that was their holiday - that was their

only opportunity to get away."

Mark said that in some cases, the cadets offers young people much-needed 'structure'. He said: "It might be that their life is pretty chaotic, and the cadets gives them a focus, an element of organisation.

"For so many, the cadets gives them a sense of purpose. It provides them with a safe, warm environment, for a few hours a week.

"And of course, the relationship works both ways - the police can learn a lot from the cadets too. The cadets learn to trust the police and we get an insight into the issues young people are facing today."

If you would like to become a volunteer with the cadets, contact with Mark by emailing mark.paternoster@derbyshire.police.uk

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