

FORUM

The magazine of Gwent Police Federation

WINTER 2022

Season's greetings from
Gwent Police Federation

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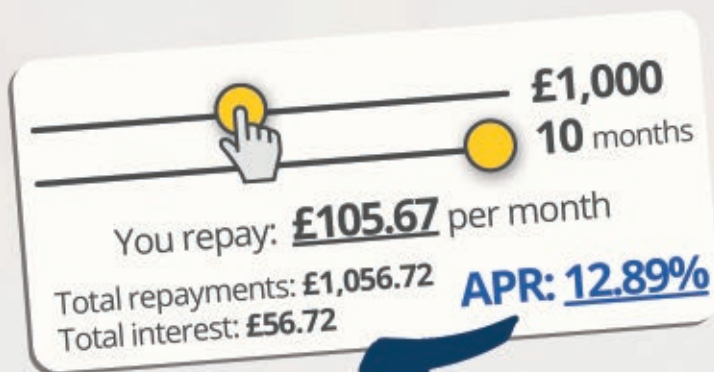
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After a year of tough times, we could all use a little festive cheer



By Matthew Candy, chair of Gwent Police Federation

It scarcely seems possible that we have arrived at December already. The countdown to Christmas has well and truly begun, and let's face it, this year – with soaring inflation making all of us poorer – we could certainly use a little festive cheer.

As always it will be a busy time for colleagues. For those putting in shifts while the rest of population tucks into their Christmas dinner, being separated from loved ones will bring the sacrifices of the job into a sharper focus.

I know it can be a depressing time of year for many. So, I urge you to look out for your colleagues and to remember that your Fed reps are here to help whether that's practical support or just a sympathetic ear.

Elsewhere in this edition we look back at some of the key moments from 2022, and I thought I would share a few personal highlights with you.

The police uplift is starting to make an impact. I welcome all our new colleagues. It feels like we have been banging our collective heads against the wall for years now saying there are simply not enough officers. Finally, this year things were moving positively, however, with pay still inadequate and too many experienced colleagues feeling burnt out, Government

must beware of the revolving door effect.

It was also great to see Special Constables admitted to the Federation for the first time. These dedicated volunteers provide more than just extra pairs of hands – they are valued members of our teams and put themselves in harm's way to protect the public just as regular officers do. I'm delighted the Federation can finally take them under its wing and provide legal support and representation.

This change came about through extensive lobbying by the Federation. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, which came into law in the summer, also brought in much needed (and overdue) legal protections for police drivers. As a roads policing officer by background, I know how important these hard-won changes are.

In June, I took up my post as chair of Gwent Police Federation. I stood for election because I care about the rights and conditions under which police officers are expected to work. And, as I said at the time, my aim is to ensure fairness for our members.

To lead your Federation branch is an honour. But it's never easy and certainly not now, when colleagues are facing greater challenges than I can recall in my 15 years in policing. Having stepped up to the mark during Covid, we continue to be under-appreciated by Government – our pay having failed to keep pace with inflation.

In September we sadly lost Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, arguably our nation's greatest public servant. I am proud of the 140 plus officers from Gwent who took part in policing the funeral – one of the biggest policing events in British history – and I was privileged to play my own part in that operation.

While a sad occasion, the funeral went without a hitch and truly showed policing at its finest.

Looking ahead to 2023, we can safely say that police pay will remain high up the agenda. The Federation will continue to fight for fairness. For now, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas with your loved ones and, while I appreciate many of you will be working at least part of the festive season, I still hope you have a chance to rest and recharge.

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First Minister honours brave officer



Sergeant Menna Watkins with First Minister Mark Drakeford.

Menna Watkins takes part in a discussion around policing with North Wales nominee Clare Larkey-Jones.



Nicky Ryan, the Federation's Welsh lead, and national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn at the reception.



Gwent Police's national Police Bravery Awards nominee Sergeant Menna Watkins has met the Welsh First Minister at a special reception.

Sgt Watkins joined fellow award nominees from the Welsh forces at the event in Cardiff.

First Minister Mark Drakeford, Welsh deputy minister for social partnership Hannah Blythyn and minister for social justice Jane Hutt hosted the reception at Cathays Park 1 which is the Welsh Government building in the city centre.

Speaking after the event, Sgt Watkins said: "I was overwhelmed with how lovely it was, meeting the First Minister who is such a lovely man. We were all treated so well once again and are very grateful."

Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn, National Board member for the Welsh region Zac Mader and Welsh affairs lead Nicky Ryan were also at the reception.

Nicky said: "We are extremely proud of the officers from the Welsh forces who were

nominated for Police Bravery Awards this year.

"Each of them has shown incredible courage in very difficult circumstances and although they have all played down the parts they played, they are fully deserving of this recognition from the Welsh Government.

"The reception at Cathays Park 1 was a fantastic event and I am so pleased the First Minister took time to meet and speak to the brave officers who give so much to their communities.

"During the reception, the ministers took a real interest in the effects the incidents for which the officers were nominated for the awards had upon them as individuals and how they were subsequently supported.

"It is important that policing feels it has the support of the Welsh Government and events like this show the unique and vital role our members play in Welsh society is recognised by our elected leaders."

Sgt Watkins was nominated for the



prestigious bravery award after an incident which began to unfold when she responded to reports of a man being threatened with a knife.

She spoke to the alleged victim at the scene and was trying to get more information about the suspect when he charged through the crowd of onlookers and lunged towards her.

She deployed her Taser as he ran towards her and then handcuffed him and waited for back-up to arrive at the scene.

Sgt Watkins and her partner, Justin Jones, who is also a serving officer on the firearms team with Gwent Police, joined fellow nominees from across England and Wales for the Police Federation Police Bravery Awards ceremony in London last July.

“ I was overwhelmed with how lovely it was, meeting the First Minister who is such a lovely man. We were all treated so well once again and are very grateful. ”

The reception included an informal discussion between the brave officers, Federation officials and the politicians.



Police drivers: new legislation now in effect



Police drivers are being reminded to read a frequently asked questions document giving guidance on new regulations which came into effect at the end of November.

The new regulations set out the prescribed training that will give trained police drivers the better protection in law afforded to them under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

"The new regulations will have an impact on all officers who are trained to drive police vehicles and they must familiarise themselves with the new provisions," says Tim Rogers, police pursuits and driver training lead for the Federation nationally.

"I cannot stress highly enough how important it is for them to make sure they are fully aware of the changes and how they will affect them.

"Critically, their driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful, competent driver, as was previously the case, but they will now be judged by those of their careful and competent colleagues who have completed the same level of prescribed training.

"The change in the law, which means police officers' skills and professional training will be recognised, is welcomed but we are sounding a note of caution too in that we must now ensure that all drivers are 'in ticket' with their training.

"My advice to any officer who is not up to date with their police driver training is very simple – don't drive a police vehicle because if you do you could be vulnerable to prosecution."

Tim has visited a number of Federation branches around the country, explaining the changes, how they impact officers and highlighting the importance of officers only driving when they are 'in ticket'.

National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) police driving lead DCC Terry Woods has welcomed the

legislative change: "I believe this is an excellent step forward for police drivers. Standardisation throughout the UK on police driving courses is essential in providing a minimum standard to all officers and making the roads safer for all.

"I would urge officers to ensure they understand the new legislation and the importance of compliance with the relevant driving refresher requirements."

“ My advice to any officer who is not up to date with their police driver training is very simple - don't drive a police vehicle because if you do you could be vulnerable to prosecution. ”

The regulations will be enshrined in law through The Road Traffic Act 1988 (Police Driving: Prescribed Training) Regulations 2022 and came into effect on 30 November.

The new FAQ document has been produced by the Police Federation of England and Wales and the NPCC and aims to help officers better understand the new laws regarding their driving.

"Quite simply, the previous legislation did not recognise the training that police response drivers undertake and the tactics they may need to employ when responding to emergencies or pursuing criminals," says Tim, who for eight years has led a Federation campaign to change the laws affecting police driving.

"This new legislation is a great stride forward but, for the new test to be applied, officers must

be driving for police purposes and have undertaken the prescribed training as set out in the regulations.

"Police driving schools have had months now to ensure that they are compliant with the requirements of the legislation and have undertaken self-assessment exercises.

"But the onus is on the individual officer to make sure that they only drive when they are up to date with the prescribed training as defined in the regulations and legislation."

Training must be delivered by an accredited and licensed police driving instructor, in line with the nationally set learning standards.

Tim is keen to stress that there is only one standard and any divergence by any force or senior officer will mean they are denying officers the ability to respond on blues and twos.

"The new law demands that an officer's driving, when an incident makes the inquisition necessary, is assessed by a professional, knowledgeable and competent individual," he said.

"Each force must have an appropriate mechanism by which these nationally agreed and enshrined in law standards are assessed. Locally, officers will have a driving standards unit. Nationally, and for matters requiring subject matter expert (SME) evidence, there is the NPCC SME group.

"Members of this group have received training at the West Midlands Police Federation office, delivered jointly by the Federation and the NPCC, and with continuing professional development (CPD) each year. As agreed by the Federation, the NPCC, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Independent Office for Police Conduct and the Home Office, they are the only people who can provide the evidence."

As a result of the change in legislation, police driving schools are likely to be licensed in a similar way to firearms units, since there is a higher incidence of risk, and the College of Policing will issue new Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

[Read the FAQs.](#)
[Read the 'prescribed training' statutory instrument.](#)



Federation national deputy chair Tiff Lynch with Bryn Hughes.

Home Office urged to support Elizabeth Medal for fallen officers

Campaigners calling for an Elizabeth Medal to honour fallen police officers are urging Home Office ministers to meet them to discuss their proposals.

Calls for a posthumous award, which would be similar to the armed forces' Elizabeth Cross, are being led by Bryn Hughes whose daughter PC Nicola Hughes was murdered alongside her colleague PC Fiona Bone when they responded to a fake 999 call in Manchester in 2012.

But despite widespread support among MPs, Police and Crime Commissioners and senior officers, there has been little indication that the Home Office is ready to give proposals for an Elizabeth Medal the green light.

Police Federation national deputy chair Tiff Lynch appeared with Bryn on BBC Breakfast to discuss the campaign and explained why such a medal was so important to the families of fallen officers.

When asked why the UK did not formally honour its emergency services personnel who died on duty, Tiff said: "That's a good question and it's a question that we are asking and have been asking.

"It's not until you walk in the family's shoes that you get that understanding and that feeling of how much this means to them.

"There is currently no formal recognition from the state. We have spoken with numerous

MPs and we have not met one MP who doesn't support this campaign.

"Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and the PCC's office also fully support it and Philip Davies MP, who wrote an open letter to the Home Secretary, has said himself that 'we are here to make the laws'.

"Let's make this law so all emergency service workers are formally recognised for the sacrifices they actually make when they die in the execution of their duty."

Tiff said there had been "a lot of talking" but not much action and said she had no idea why it was taking so long to get an answer from the Government.

She said: "What we are asking for is someone from the Home Office to come and meet with us to discuss what the need is and how we can actually move this forward and get the cogs turning one way or another."

Campaigners believe emergency services workers deserve the same recognition as military personnel who are posthumously honoured with

the Elizabeth Cross which is presented to relatives of those killed in action.

Gwent Police Federation chair Matthew Candy said: "It is very important that officers who lose their lives while carrying out their duties are given full recognition and properly honoured for their sacrifice.

"An Elizabeth Medal would be a fitting acknowledgement and mean a great deal to the families of our fallen colleagues.

"It also seems right that a medal named after the late Queen, who devoted her life to service and public duty, should be given to police officers who give their lives serving their communities."

Bryn said to receive such a medal did not bring anyone back but it "gives the family recognition".

He added: "I don't think it's been an intentional process that there's been no official recognition, it's just that it's not been focused.

"There's a lot of people saying we should have it and it just needs that final push to say let's go ahead."

“ There is currently no formal recognition from the state. We have spoken with numerous MPs and we have not met one MP who doesn't support this campaign. ”



Oscar Kilo launches new initiative to tackle fatigue

The national police wellbeing service, Oscar Kilo, working with former cop and owner of Nutrivival Anna Earl, has launched a brand new programme designed to help officers and staff optimise their nutritional practices, combat fatigue and support long-term wellness.

The 'Nutrition for wellbeing programme' was launched earlier this month and is designed to promote long-term health through food, looking at diet and how it can impact a person's long-term health and life expectancy, as well as performance, energy levels and mood.

Oscar Kilo sleep and fatigue lead Dr Yvonne Taylor (pictured right) said: "It's no secret that the human body is not designed to be awake at night, which is one of the reasons why it's so important for shift workers to look at what they eat and when they eat."



"The nutritional wellbeing programme is a toolkit, incorporating webinars, short videos and downloadable resources with hints and tips to help keep on track."

The programme comes after results from the annual national policing wellbeing surveys indicated that fatigue is an issue within policing.

“ Eating nutritious foods at the right times can help a person rebalance, with certain foods providing a more gradual release of energy, keeping us fuelled for longer and reducing the desire to snack. This programme is about providing education, advice and support to all within policing.



"It's all about balance - nutrition, sleep and exercise are like three pillars that support and promote good mental and physical health," continued Yvonne.

"Eating nutritious foods at the right times can help a person rebalance, with certain foods providing a more gradual release of energy, keeping us fuelled for longer and reducing the desire to snack. This programme is about providing education, advice and support to all within policing."

According to research, shift workers are at greater risk of chronic health conditions than regular day workers, due to disrupted sleep and unusual eating patterns.

"Having been a police officer for almost 27 years, and working shifts for the vast majority of that time, I know first-hand what it's like. I have craved and eaten the wrong things in the middle of the night. I know how it feels to juggle work,

life at home - all sorts of things, which can lead to any of us snacking, emotionally eating or just not sticking to a healthy diet," Yvonne added.

"Having an easy-to-access programme in place, such as this one, created by Anna, will just make life easier."

The programme is bursting with hints and tips on how to live a more balanced, healthier lifestyle, as well as meal planning support and recipe ideas.

"With everyone's lives getting busier, it's hard to prepare meals at the best of times let alone if you're working shifts," said Yvonne.

"We've all fallen off the healthy eating wagon from time to time. Hopefully having this programme at hand will make preparing ahead just that little bit easier - helping to put a plan in place and providing additional support."

As part of the programme, a number of webinars will be taking place, each surrounding the topic of nutrition.

Alongside this nutritional wellbeing programme, Oscar Kilo also partners with Dr Sophie Bostock to provide a Better Sleep Toolkit and a number of sleep seminars, to provide further support for officers and staff, in all aspects of sleep health.

For more information on the nutrition for wellbeing programme members can visit the [Oscar Kilo website](#).

Welfare Support Programme offers support for Federation members

Don't suffer in silence. That's the message from Gwent Police Federation chair Matthew Candy for members who are struggling with their emotional and mental health.

Matthew said there are a number of issues facing members at work and at home that could have an impact on their wellbeing.

He encouraged colleagues to look out for each other, adding that the Federation will support members who may be struggling with their mental health.

Matthew said: "Policing is a unique job in society and we're often exposed to difficult or traumatic situations. Add to that the fact members are facing unprecedented demands on their time at work and on their income at home because of soaring inflation and rising energy bills, and it's bound to have an impact on some."

"We would encourage members to look out for each other, as often they're the best placed to know if someone is struggling.

"And if they are then the Federation is here to support you. Our reps are a valuable first point

of call and can help you access help.

"Don't suffer in silence – your Federation is here to help you."

That help includes the Federation's Welfare Support Programme. It's run by Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS), an independent charity providing medical welfare to the armed forces, veterans, NHS staff and emergency services.

The programme offers a wide range of confidential and independent services from clinical assessments to counselling with fully trained and accredited professionals.

More than 500 members have received timely and ongoing mental health support through DMWS since it started provided the programme in December 2020.

The Federation has announced it is continuing to work with DMWS until at least December 2023.



The following support is provided by the Welfare Support Programme:

- **Practical and mental support**
- **Clinical assessments and dedicated counselling**
- **Person-centred support (via telephone or face-to-face)**
- **Access to fully trained and accredited professionals**
- **Independent and confidential support**
- **Referrals to appropriate follow-on specialist support**

The Federation has received testimonials from members who have been supported by DMWS.

"That kind of support is priceless, and I count myself as being very lucky to have been provided with such help and support from such an amazing charity," said one member, adding: "I want it to be known what a difference it has made to me – especially when I have felt unsupported by others."

Find out more by contacting the Gwent Police Federation branch.

Knife Angel tours Gwent

An iconic sculpture has toured the Force area as a stark reminder of the devastating effects of knife crime and violence.

The Knife Angel is made from more than 100,000 seized and surrendered blades and is visiting Newport as part of a national anti-violence tour.

The 27ft sculpture – the national monument against violence and aggression – was created by artist Alfie Bradley and the British Ironwork Centre in Oswestry, Shropshire.

It aims to raise awareness of how violent and aggressive behaviour affects our communities; to educate and encourage people to renounce violence as a means to solve problems; and to act as a memorial for the lives lost to violence and aggression.

Matthew Candy, Gwent Police Federation chair, said: "The Knife Angel is an iconic piece of art which highlights the impact of knife crime and aims to educate people about its consequences, and we're pleased to have hosted it here in Gwent."

"Our message is that there's no place for knives on our streets. All too often our members see at first-hand the devastating effects that knife crime and knife violence has on people, their families and their communities."

"Carrying a weapon doesn't make you safer but is more likely to put you at risk of being involved in violence or of getting injured."

"We hope that as many people as possible visited the Knife Angel while it was here in Gwent, that it opened up conversations, and that it makes people think again about carrying a weapon."



An officer viewing the Knife Angel.

Fed chair welcomes retention of non-degree entry route to policing

Gwent Police Federation chair Matthew Candy has welcomed the Home Secretary Suella Braveman's decision to ensure a non-degree entry route into policing is kept open.

The move comes after a backlash from chief constables, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and Police Federation leaders who all warned a blanket degree requirement for all new officers was having a serious impact on recruitment options.

Sixteen PCCs wrote a letter to Suella Braverman warning that up to 10 per cent of their officers were studying for the qualification rather than fighting crime with over-stretched colleagues on the frontline.

Responding to the news that Ms Braveman was planning to abolish the requirement, Matthew said: "I think common sense has prevailed here and it is encouraging that our views on this issue have been taken seriously and acted upon.

"We have always said you don't need to have a degree to be a good police officer and equally we would never stand in the way of a recruit who wanted to take an academic route into policing - both should be perfectly acceptable.

"By taking away the degree requirement the Home Secretary has left us with the best of both worlds so we welcome her comments and look forward to more common sense decisions in the future."

Since last year, recruits have been required to have a degree or to join as an apprentice while they earn a qualification.

The College of Policing stood by the change and insisted it gave officers recognition and accreditation as professionals.

But Ms Braveman told a conference for police chiefs that she had asked the college to consider options for a new non-degree entry route, alongside the process for recruits who took higher education.

She said: "I have asked the college to build on their work by considering options for a new non-degree entry route, to deliver officers of the



Home Secretary Suella Braveman.

highest calibre, which will complement the existing framework.

"In the meantime, the current transitional non degree entry route will be kept open. Our

police force must be open to those who do not have a degree or want one.

"And I will take the scissors to any red tape that gets in your way."

PCC launches budget survey

Gwent Police Federation members are being encouraged to have their say in the Force's 2023/24 budget planning.

Jeff Cuthbert, Gwent's Police and Crime Commissioner, is asking residents for their views on police funding for the next financial year.

The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for setting the amount residents pay towards policing each month, with almost 40 per cent of the Gwent Police budget of £173 million now coming from local council taxpayers.

Matthew Candy, Gwent Police Federation chair, said: "Gwent Police - like so many forces across the country - is facing tough funding and spending decisions.

"We're in the grip of a cost of living crisis with high energy and fuel prices diverting vital

funds from frontline police services, and the uncertainty over public services thrown up by the autumn statement.

"So it's vital that members of the Gwent community have their say and share their thoughts on the budget - and that includes our members and their colleagues."

Mr Cuthbert said: "Continuing economic uncertainty, particularly in relation to funding for public services, means that the future financial position for policing remains uncertain and extremely challenging.

"Daily demands are growing, costs are rising, and the money available to protect communities is shrinking. At the same time the cost of living crisis is hitting our residents hard.

"We will not know how much money the UK

Government will give police forces until December 2022. I will continue to lobby the UK Government for more money for policing, but we cannot wait until then to begin planning for the year ahead.

"Our financial modelling tells us that a rise in council tax of £25 per year for the average property is our best chance of attempting to maintain current service levels. Even with this increase there will be a significant deficit which will need to be balanced by efficiency savings.

"This is always a difficult decision to make and it is not one I take lightly. This year it is more difficult than ever and before I take a decision I want residents to have their say."

[Complete the survey and have your say.](#)

January

Officers were encouraged to make a new year resolution to get their finances in order. No 1 CopperPot, a credit union for the police family, promised to help Gwent Police Federation members to build financial resilience and avoid them turning to high-interest credit, such as pay day loans.

Gwent Police Federation chair Steve Thorpe criticised a BBC Panorama investigation which alleged “weak policing” was to blame for deaths on our roads. The documentary was looking into the reasons why deaths and serious injuries are higher than a decade ago, despite vehicles becoming safer.

February

The branch chair called for a reform of the College of Policing after a review found that it is regarded as ‘remote and irrelevant.’ “The findings are not a great surprise,” he said. “The college is not living up to its potential and must improve. My colleagues deserve the highest standards of training and a college that constantly analyses the data and rolls out best practices.” Former chief constable Andy Marsh, the new chief executive, promised a “new deal” between policing and the College.

Fundraising was underway on behalf of the Retired Police Dogs of Gwent, an organisation co-founded last year by Federation member Andy North. It aims to give former police dogs a comfortable retirement by financially supporting them in emergency situations, for example, sudden medical procedures or routine check-ups. Andy, a dog handler for 14 years, said: “These dogs give the best years of their lives to protecting the public, they deserved to be looked after.”

March

Workloads for detectives had increased since the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) introduced new guidance on charging, the Federation said. Some 93 per cent of officers who took part in our survey said their workload had soared, and almost two thirds were considering leaving their role. Nearly 60 per cent of detectives said their job as ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ stressful.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak was under pressure to guarantee a real-terms pay increase for police officers in his Spring Statement. The Federation published a letter pointing out that rank and file officers had suffered 20 per cent real-terms pay cut since 2010, leading to poor morale and financial hardship. Alex Duncan, national secretary of the Federation, said polling showed public support for a pay rise.



The Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales, chaired by Sir Michael Barber and carried out by the Police Foundation, urged radical reform to police culture, skills and training and organisational structure. This included the creation



of a new Crime Prevention Agency and merging back office functions for the 43 English and Welsh forces. Gwent Police Federation agreed with parts of report but took issue with the idea of requiring officers to have a licence to practise, to be renewed every five years and subject to strict conditions.

April

Gwent Police Federation backed calls for a posthumous award for emergency service workers who die in the line of duty. It would be similar to the Elizabeth Cross which is awarded to the family of British armed forces killed in action, said Bryn Hughes, the father of PC Nicola Hughes (23) who was murdered alongside her Greater Manchester colleague PC Fiona Bone by fugitive Dale Cregan in September 2012. “My daughter was the tiniest thing, just 5ft tall. When she died, a colleague told me: ‘She had the body of a lion cub, and the heart of a lion,’” said Bryn. Nicola and Fiona were the posthumous recipients of the first ever Women in Policing Award when it was launched by the Federation in 2015.



Steve Hartshorn, the newly elected national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said he was looking forward to ensuring “members’ voices are heard on the issues they face”. A Met officer since 1995, he had previously served as the Federation’s national lead for firearms and Taser.

The Police Roll of Honour Trust launched an appeal to fund a new National Welsh Police Memorial. Gwent Police Federation encouraged officers and staff to get behind the idea. Students from the University of Wales Trinity St David’s (UWTS) Swansea School of Architecture won a competition to design the memorial which will be in Alexandra Gardens in Cardiff.

May



Delegates at the Police Federation’s annual conference in Manchester voted to increase subscriptions to keep the finances on an even keel. Conference resolved 221-170 to support an increase in subs in line with the percentage uplift to police pay for 2022/2023.

Home Secretary Priti Patel was told she must recognise the devolved functions in Wales when making decisions on policing policy. The Federation’s new national chair Steve Hartshorn said the four Welsh forces often felt ‘forgotten or ignored’ by Westminster announcements. Steve had begun his keynote speech in English before telling Welsh colleagues: “Cydweithwyr prynhawn da a chroeso i’r gynhadledd.”



Gwent Police Federation joined calls for improvements to mental health support for officers during Mental Health Awareness Week. More than three quarters of officers across England and Wales have admitted to having experienced poor mental health.

New figures for the national police officer uplift showed that Gwent Constabulary had grown from 1,324 officers in 2019 to 1,443 – an increase of 119. The Federation welcomed the rise but warned of a ‘revolving door’ effect with the Force losing officers as well as recruiting. The Federation’s recent pay and morale survey had found that a third of officers were worried about money and nine per cent were planning to quit.

June

A change in the law meant that Special Constables were able to join the Police Federation for the first time in their history. Interim Gwent branch chair Christopher Back said: “I am proud of the Federation for campaigning for this change. Specials face the same dangers and their contribution to public safety is appreciated by all of us – they should have access to the same support and representation as regular officers.” The legal changes also created an opportunity for Specials to take up Taser training.

Continued on Page 12

Andy Cooke, chief inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and a former detective himself, highlighted that the number of detectives in major crime units had dropped by 28 per cent. He called for chief constables to consider bonus payments to detectives. Glyn Pattinson, chair of the Police Federation National Detective Forum, commented: "I have the upmost respect for Andy Cooke and everything he talks about in this interview is exactly what we have been saying through the PFNDF for years."



Assaults against officers can hugely impact their mental and physical health, interim Federation chair Christopher Back said. He called on the courts to impose tough sentences like those the Federation had campaigned for. "We must send a message that if you are convicted of an attack against a police officer you can expect to go to prison," insisted Christopher. However, a report by the Transform Justice organisation claimed increased penalties for assaults against emergency workers had been ineffective in preventing incidents.

The Federation raised concerns over the number of forces 'misleading officers' and denying them their entitlements to Time Off for Dependents (TOFD) and Parental Bereavement Leave. Gwent Police's policy does not properly explain what TOFD is and fails to mention it is available for officers. The branch interim chair said: "It is disappointing to hear that so many forces, including Gwent, are being deliberately vague about TOFD and bereavement leave."

July

The Federation said a five per cent pay rise for police was 'divisive' as not all officers would benefit from it, and in any case, it would be wiped out by inflation. National chair Steve Hartshorn pledged to keep campaigning for fair pay. "Most officers will receive far below five per cent, leaving them worse off financially than last year with a zero per cent increase due to the current crisis," he said.

Gwent Police Federation members elected Matthew Candy as their new chair. He took up the reins promising to "create a strong and unified Federation that is not seen as toothless in the eyes of members." Matthew, who was based at Ystrad Mynach police station as part of the Roads Policing Specialist Operations team, joined policing 14 years previously. One of his first objectives would be to make the Federation more visible in the workplace, he said.



Sergeant Menna Watkins, who subdued and arrested a knife-wielding thug, was Gwent's nominee for the Federation's national Police Bravery Awards. She had responded to reports of



a disturbance when a suspect charged through a crowd of onlookers and lunged towards her. Menna deployed her Taser and cuffed him. She was invited to meet the Home Secretary at 10 Downing Street and attend a glittering awards ceremony in London.

August

A report by HMICFRS found most victims of burglary, robbery and theft were "not getting the justice they deserve" from overstretched police forces. It prompted Matthew Candy, chair of Gwent Federation, to call for a long-term funding deal and improved pay and conditions to tackle the crisis. "It would be naive to think 12 years of cuts and underfunding would not have a negative impact on the service we can provide," said Matthew.

Officers were given a five per cent pay rise. Unfortunately, they would be no better off due to soaring inflation. The Federation calculated a 30.3 per cent real terms pay cut for constables at the bottom pay point of the pay scale and an 18.5 per cent real terms pay cut for constables at the top pay point of the pay scale. The branch chair said: "Many of our members will find themselves worse off financially than they were a year ago when our pay offer was actually zero per cent." The branch backed national Federation calls for the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to be allowed to operate without Government influence.



The Care of Police Survivors (COPS) annual service of remembrance took place at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. It began as



always with the arrival of Police Unity Tour cyclists – around 300 of them. They were joined by the Blue Knights, retired police personnel with a motorcycle interest, and an American Ford Crown Victoria police car decked out with COPS livery. Emma Fields spoke movingly of the death of her husband, South Yorkshire PC Dave Fields, on Christmas Day. In the dark days following the funeral, Emma received a letter from the COPS, which put her in touch with other 'survivor' families, providing comfort and friendship.



September

Gwent officers who took part in policing Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, received the thanks of Police and Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert. More than 140 Gwent officers – including Federation branch chair Matthew Candy – were in London for the complex security operation – the biggest in British history. Matthew said: "Most police officers will never experience anything like this ever again and have described their involvement as an honour and a privilege."



National Police Memorial Day was held in Belfast, providing an opportunity for the policing family to remember colleagues who had been killed in the line of duty. The event included a tribute wall for people to add their own messages for fallen officers.

Meanwhile, a campaign for a posthumous medal for police officers killed on duty gathered pace. It was spearheaded by Bryn Hughes and Paul Bone, fathers of Manchester officers PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone who were murdered by the

fugitive Dale Cregan after attending an emergency call in 2012. A letter to the Home Secretary was signed by 26 Police and Crime Commissioners endorsing the idea of an Elizabeth Cross, similar to one which awarded to members of the British Armed Forces. Matthew Candy said: "Naming it after Queen Elizabeth II who dedicated her life to public service would be particularly poignant right now."



October



'Don't suffer in silence' was the message from Gwent Police Federation to members who are struggling with their emotional and mental health. The Federation had renewed funding for the Welfare Support Programme, a Samaritans-style mental health hotline for armed forces, veterans, NHS staff and emergency services personnel. Branch chair Matthew Candy said: "Policing is a unique job in society. We're often exposed to difficult or traumatic situations. Our reps are a valuable first point of call and can help you access help."

Sir Peter Fahy, the former chief constable of Greater Manchester Police, urged the Government to reduce the demands on police forces, saying they were "struggling to deliver basic services" because of workloads. Sir Peter spoke out after the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) pledged to send officers to investigate all home burglaries as part of a new set of standards they hope will result in more crimes being solved and more offenders prosecuted. Sir Peter told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "The Government needs to remove from policing all these additional tasks that have been taken on. Most frontline operational officers are very frustrated."



Newport artist Andy O'Rourke was commissioned by the Force to paint a mural featuring the community officer Val Bryan, who has been serving members of Pillgwenlly, Newport since 1994. Val, who retires in January, said: "A colleague told me about the mural, and I was very shocked. I feel honoured and really appreciate it, but I'm just doing my job." Having grown up in Lewisham, London - during a time when there was a very 'them and us' attitude to police officers - the 57-year-old father of two spent his time in policing trying to develop strong links with the community.



The Knife Angel was coming to Gwent to serve as a stark reminder of the devastating effects of knife crime and violence. The 27ft sculpture iconic sculpture is made from more than 100,000 seized and surrendered blades and features in a national anti-violence tour. It was due to be displayed at the Friars Walk shopping centre throughout November. Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert said: "The Knife Angel's visit to Gwent is an opportunity for us to engage with our residents, particularly children and young people."

November

Gwent Police Federation chair Matthew Candy welcomed the Home Secretary Suella Braveman's decision to ensure a non-degree entry route into policing is kept open. The move followed a backlash from chief constables, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and Federation leaders who all warned a blanket degree requirement for all new officers was having a serious impact on recruitment options. Matthew said: "I think common sense has prevailed here and it is encouraging that our views on this issue have been taken seriously and acted upon."



Police Federation national deputy chair Tiff Lynch appeared on BBC Breakfast with Bryn Hughes to discuss the campaign for a posthumous medal for

fallen police officers and explain why such a medal was important to the families. Tiff said: "It's not until you walk in the family's shoes that you get that understanding and that feeling of how much this means to them."



Police drivers were urged to ensure their training was up-to-date to benefit from protections in law that are afforded under the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. Tim Rogers, police pursuits and driver training lead for the Federation nationally, said: "Their driving will no longer be assessed by the standards of the careful, competent driver, as was previously the case, but will now be judged by those of their careful and competent colleagues who have completed the same level of prescribed training."

December

The Federation criticises plans to house prisoners in police cells as "a failure of Government". The Government had written to the National Police Chiefs' Council to request the use of up to 400 police cells because prisons are too full.



Members were encouraged to open up about bereavement and loss and to seek support if they're grieving.



A new factsheet had been produced for [Grief Awareness Week](#), which ran from 2 to 8 December, and aimed to raise awareness of the impact of grief and to break the taboo around talking about it.

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