

federation



West Midlands Police Federation

December 2020/January 2021

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Welcome

Welcome to the December 2020/January 2021 edition of *federation* - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role – though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

Cover photo: St Andrews, The Police Treatment Centres Harrogate centre ready for the festive season.

See Pages 18 and 19.

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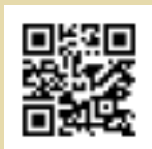
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What's inside

04 Chair's introduction

06 A message from the Chief Constable

06 Public sector pay freeze 'disgraceful'



07 Pensions survey: please let the Federation know your views

08 Public backs policing during pandemic

09 Tax relief available for home working

09 Sam offers support to officers nationwide

10 Home Office seeks to protect officers with new road traffic legislation

11 Officers urged to keep their own insurers informed

11 Force has recruited almost 300 extra officers

12 Giles reflects on 30 years in policing: 'This job is like no other'

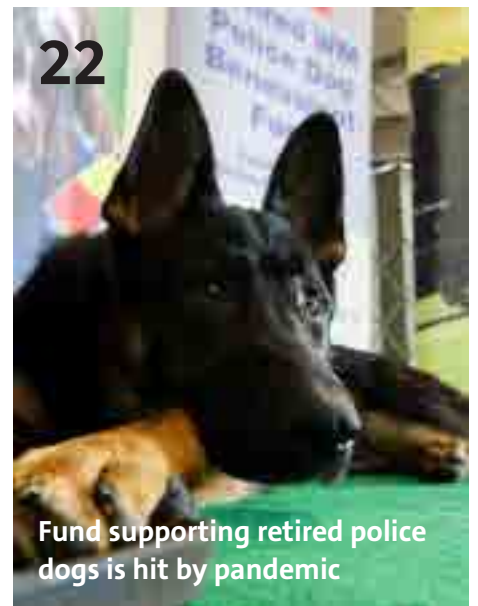
15 Officers with CVD can now apply for Taser training

15 Court breakthrough

17 Late Mum helped motivate sergeant honoured by Queen

18 Force makes switch to Police treatment Centre for rehabilitation support

21 Multi-faith chaplaincy will offer support over the festive season



22 Fund supporting retired police dogs is hit by pandemic

26 West Midlands Police Federation review of the year 2020

31 Support the Benevolent Fund this Christmas

35 Why do more people get divorced in January?

35 Retirement seminars - 2021 dates are set

Advertisers

02 McAlister, family law

14 George Burrows, Group Insurance Scheme

16 Police Insure, motor, home, motorcycle and travel insurance

20 George Burrows, financial health check

24 Irwin Mitchell, family law

25 Golden Charter, pre-paid funeral plans

32 NARPO, member services

32 Gorvins, police and family law

33 Warren & Co, independent mortgage advice

33 First Call Financial, independent mortgage advice

34 Slater & Gordon, family law

36 Slater & Gordon, police law

2020: what a year it has been



By **Jon Nott**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

It's now just over a year since I became the Federation chair. And what a year it has been.

Of course, I came into the role knowing there would be a number of challenges to face, the ongoing issues around police pensions being top of that list, but more about that later.

However, while I am sure I hit the ground running and soon adapted to the life of a full-time Federation official, just like almost everyone else I was unprepared for everything being turned upside down when the pandemic struck.

When the first lockdown was announced, the Force acted swiftly to enable as many people as was practical and possible to work from home, buying more than 1,000 laptops, for example. It was also prompt in terms of ensuring that officers and staff had access to the personal protective equipment (PPE) they needed.

I am keen to acknowledge that the Force responded well as the crisis unfolded.

However, I think it's those who have been

on the frontline throughout the pandemic who deserve the real praise; the police officers and the police staff. But I also want to recognise the police volunteers. I know a number of Specials put in extra hours of their own time to support the Force and their communities and they should be commended for this.

All these people, certainly in the early days of the lockdown, were pretty much facing the unknown and yet they got on with their jobs, did what they could to help protect the public from Covid-19 while also carrying out their usual duties.

They knew they were putting their health at risk, because so much of policing cannot be done in a socially distanced manner, but they also had in the back of their minds that they could pick up the virus and unwittingly take it back to their loved ones. Some officers took the difficult decision to move out of home so that they didn't put vulnerable family members at risk.

So many of our Force team went above and beyond to ensure that they could continue to serve their communities, fight and prevent crime, keep order, protect the vulnerable, and, in addition, encourage people to abide by the Government restrictions. It is also worth saying here that the seemingly ever-changing restrictions – which officers had to try to understand and then work with the public to follow – added to the challenges they faced.

The public got behind us and a recent survey has shown that they have largely supported our efforts. But this has not been

universal. We have still encountered people who have not wanted to comply with the Government restrictions and where this has been the case we have had to rely on the four Es of engage, explain, encourage and, as a last resort, enforce.

While there was a reduction in crime during the first lockdown, there was an increase in the number of assaults on police officers and, one of the most shocking things for me has been the way in which some individuals have sought to weaponise the virus by spitting and coughing over officers while claiming to have Covid. Crime has now returned to more normal levels too.

I want to put on record my thanks to all officers, staff and volunteers for their commitment to policing during 2020. It has definitely been a tough year both for those on the frontline and those who have had to adapt to working from home. While I am sure those home-working appreciate that they have not faced the same risks to their health, they have had their own challenges. Working from home with young children is not easy and neither is working from a dining room table in the midst of family life. The lack of separation between home and work can be particularly difficult in policing. There are some things you need to leave at the office and I know that has taken its toll.

When taking on the chair's role, I knew that there was a lot of anger and frustration within the membership around the pensions issue and it was something I was keen to address.

While we all accept that we cannot

“ So many of our Force team went above and beyond to ensure that they could continue to serve their communities, fight and prevent crime, keep order, protect the vulnerable, and, in addition, encourage people to abide by the Government restrictions. ”

change what has come before – whether we agree with it or not – my aim has been to meet this head-on. It is for this reason that I asked the Branch Council to set up a working group of representatives, myself included, to form a pensions working group.

This group has met several times and the most important outcome, I think, has been that it commissioned an online survey of all West Midlands Police Federation members to seek their views.

I am grateful to all members who, having received the link to the survey, have sent in their responses. I will admit that some of the comments do not make easy

“ I want to put on record my thanks to all officers, staff and volunteers for their commitment to policing during 2020. It has definitely been a tough year both for those on the frontline and those who have had to adapt to working from home. ”

reading but then I am a firm believer that you shouldn't ask a question if you don't want to know the answer.

We asked for your views, and I give you an assurance that we will act on them.

If you have not yet filled out the survey – or you have not received a link – please contact us by emailing westmidlandspf@polfed.org

We really want to hear from all members. It is one entry per member and entries must be received by 18 December. We will inform members of the results as soon as possible but it is likely to be early in the New Year.

Finally, I would just like to wish you all the very best for Christmas and for the New Year. I know it is going to be far from everyone's usual festive period but I hope that you still manage to at least get some down-time.

COVID-19 (coronavirus)



Stay at least 2 metres
(6 feet) away from other
people



A message from the Chief Constable

I think we are all looking back at 2020 as something of a blur.

This year we have all been through what would have been unthinkable to us all last Christmas. The initial lockdown featured rainbow pictures, clapping for carers and deserted streets. The end of Lockdown 1 was a relief and, as we built back, the autumn and winter spikes have hit us hard. We are missing family, friends and this year will see none of the celebrating we do as teams. Coming together as colleagues, brothers and sisters is so much of what makes policing a family.

In policing we fight short battles and not long wars. This is a long war and it has required us to be thoughtful on how we keep the public on track with these restrictions. We have been asked to do something we have never done since our founding in 1829; police the most extreme personal

restrictions on liberty ever imposed.

I am so proud of what you have done and how you have done it. Common sense policing, sound planning, good humour and a firm but friendly style has seen us navigate these times. It has been a team game.

The amazing work to ensure you have the right PPE was incredible, the hard work of our trace teams, the work on creating Covid secure work places and the distribution of IT has made it all possible. We have also had to carry on providing normal business as violence and crimes like domestic abuse have soared. Well done. As this returns to a new normal, I shall be looking at how we recognise these achievements.

Finally, this Christmas will be one of hardship for those who have lost jobs, it will mean Christmas is frugal for many



children and our elderly may see less of their families. As a Force, we are making a big charitable Christmas push. I hope you can all join in so we can continue to help those in need at this special time.

Have a great Christmas... and we really do need a 'Happy New Year'.

By Dave Thompson, Chief Constable of West Midlands Police

Public sector pay freeze 'disgraceful'

Rewarding the police officers and other public sector workers who led the nation's response to the pandemic with a pay freeze is disgraceful, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced during a Spending Review statement, on 25 November that most public sector workers would be subjected to a pay freeze.

"Police officers have been on the frontline throughout the pandemic, not only putting their own health at risk but also knowing that they could be taking the virus back to their own families," says Jon.

"They have had to adapt to changes to Government guidelines over and over again and then work with their communities to encourage people to work within those restrictions.

"They have given their all and yet this appears to have been totally ignored by the Government. This is going to be a further blow to officers who have suffered 18 per cent cuts to their pay in real terms during the austerity years.

"We are currently in the midst of the largest-scale recruitment process for many years, after almost a decade of falling officer numbers due to Government funding cuts, but how are we going to attract the right calibre of recruits when officer pay is becoming less and less attractive, particularly when you consider the very real dangers police face on the streets?"

Incremental pay rises are unaffected by the pay freeze. National Federation chair John Apter has also condemned the Chancellor's announcement.

On the day of the Spending Review, he said: "I appreciate the devil will be in the detail, but the headlines from today's announcement do nothing to show appreciation to police officers and other public sector workers who have kept the wheels turning during 2020."

John added: "A handful of officers will get the additional £250 for the lowest paid workers, but only those who are already on an appallingly low starting salary for the dangerous job they do."

Pensions survey: please let the Federation know your views

All members of West Midlands Police Federation are being asked to complete a short pensions survey.

The survey has been put together by the West Midlands Police Federation's Pensions Working Group.

The group was formed after the Government announced its proposed remedy to the discrimination found in the implementation of the 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme.

"I put forward a paper at the July meeting of the West Midlands Police Federation Branch Council addressing the issues around the police pension and instigated the working group to consider in more depth the situation that our members found themselves in," says West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

"I was acutely aware of the feelings of those in the Pension Challenge but felt that it was also important to find out the views of the wider membership too.

"Having been established, the working group had to very quickly consider a response to the Government's proposal for the remedy to the discrimination found in the implementation of the 2015 Police Pension Scheme. It submitted this response on members' behalf and this will now be considered, with other submissions, by the Treasury."

A link to the pensions survey has been circulated and hundreds of members have already submitted their responses.

"We would like as many members as possible to take part in this survey since the findings will then govern our branch's actions going forward. I would urge officers

to respond to the survey but also get in touch with us if they would like further information about their own circumstances in relation to their pension," says Jon.

"We are monitoring the responses as they come in and will consider what members have to say. It is strictly one entry per member so that we can be sure of an accurate result."

The survey closes on 18 December 2020 and the Federation will notify members of the results as soon as they have been verified.

The Police Federation of England and Wales had previously decided not to launch its own challenge to the new pensions scheme but earlier this year launched a Group Action on behalf of officers.

If you have not received a link to the survey, please email the Federation office at westmidlandspf@polfed.org

“We would like as many members as possible to take part in this survey since the findings will then govern our branch's actions going forward.”



Public backs policing during pandemic

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange has praised members' efforts during the pandemic as new figures show a huge vote of confidence from the public.

Crime figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that between 90 and 92 per cent of adults were satisfied with the way local police were responding to the pandemic.

Steve said: "It's been an unprecedented period for policing and has given us a lot of challenges but it's one that our members have really stepped up to.

"They've worked with their communities to enforce the lockdown and to protect the public and key workers, and these figures show the respect they have from the public.

"They're a real vote of confidence from the public that we're doing a good job in difficult circumstances for everyone."

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) figures found that more than two thirds of adults gave police a positive rating for the work they were doing in their local area. Around half said they were doing a good job and one fifth said they were doing an excellent job.

The new ONS figures also show that

crime dropped by 16 per cent in the West Midlands Force area in April, May and June.

Victim-based crime fell dramatically with theft offences down 41 per cent, robbery down 43 per cent and shoplifting down 53 per cent.

However, public order offences went up by 35 per cent, and stalking and harassment was up 57 per cent.

Steve said: "Lockdown meant that in a lot of instances the opportunity to commit crimes was taken away, but our members continued to work tirelessly on the front-line to keep people safe and in carrying out targeted operations.

"It's always positive to see crime figures come down, but we're now seeing a return to pre-lockdown levels.

"And, with coronavirus restrictions still in place, it's stretching our resources and increasing the pressure on our members. They continue to do a brilliant job in very challenging circumstances."

John Apter, the national Federation chair, added: "The 12-month period this survey relates to was prior to and during the Covid lockdown, and it's already been widely reported that crime fell during this time. Therefore, the results come as no surprise.

"Although crime fell during the pandemic the pressure on the police remained. Policing had to adapt to a situation unlike anything we had experienced before and continues to do so even as the national lockdown was lifted and crime returned to pre-lockdown levels. That pressure has increased with local lockdowns being rolled out and because of the additional challenges they bring to policing.

"It's so good to see the vast majority of the public have positive views of the way my colleagues have responded to the pandemic. This is despite unfair coverage in certain sections of the media.

"Policing the pandemic has been incredibly challenging, and my colleagues have more than stepped up to do the best they could in the most difficult of circumstances. It's clear the public have recognised this.

"Policing must retain this positive relationship with the community and work together. With multiple level restrictions coming into place in different parts of the country, the pandemic is certainly not over - and neither are the challenges to policing it has brought."

[Find out more about the ONS figures.](#)

“It's been an unprecedented period for policing and has given us a lot of challenges but it's one that our members have really stepped up to.”



Tax relief available for home working

Officers and staff required to work from home due to the pandemic can apply to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for tax relief.

This is due to the extra costs incurred by home working including increased electricity and heating bills.

Since working out the costs can be difficult, a general rate of £6 a week is applied and you are entitled to the tax relief for the

whole year even if you have only had to work from home for one day from 6 April this year.

The tax relief is generally applied through an adjustment to your tax code unless you are already paying tax through the self-assessment process.

MoneySavingExpert Martin Lewis comments: "If you believe you have higher increased costs than £6 a week, you can claim more but you will need evidence of the cost

increases and be able to apportion these specifically to the fact you are working from home – and this becomes a much more laborious process."

- Please remember tax is a personal liability and officers should always check what they are entitled to when HMRC sends through their tax codes for the following year to ensure any that become invalid are removed.

Sam offers support to officers nationwide

Officers from across the country have contacted West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative Sam Hughes for help and support after she put together a list of tips and advice for anyone diagnosed with a serious illness.

Sam came up with the list after receiving treatment for breast cancer and spending hours trawling through paperwork and websites trying to decipher what help and support was available to her and what the deductions taken from her wages each month actually entitled her to.

Her story was featured in the July edition of this magazine and was then picked up by the national Federation magazine POLICE.

"After the articles were published, I was contacted by officers from as far afield as Devon and Cornwall, Wales, Suffolk, Norfolk and Sussex," said Sam, "I heard some quite disturbing stories, for example, one officer explained she was struggling to get appropriate body armour after having had a mastectomy but I also had some nice feedback from officers who received the guidance I had put together.

"I can remember while I was undergoing my treatment thinking that it would have been helpful to have had a tick list summing everything up for me. I didn't know where to turn to when I was



Sam Hughes.

diagnosed, so I wanted to be able to offer support and practical guidance to help make other people's journeys that little bit easier. The last thing you need when you are having treatment and feeling unwell is to have to go through lots of paperwork or online resources to find out what you want to know.

"At the point of being diagnosed, you are bombarded with information but it can

be hard to decipher what you actually need to know. I am pleased that those who contacted me after seeing the articles were able to make use of the guide I had put together and I am hoping to build on this too."

West Midlands Police Federation is now working with Sam to have the tips produced in a booklet format so that it can be more widely circulated.

Sam is liaising with the Force HR managers to implement a programme of changes to how the Force helps and supports people on long-term sick. This includes designated points of contact, a buddy system, and changes to working practices to make the process easier for officers who are off sick and need support.

She has also encouraged Federation members to ensure they subscribe to the Group Insurance Scheme after receiving 'absolutely fantastic' support from the Red Arc counselling service provided through the scheme.

"They really provided me with a life-line," said Sam.

Sam, who is based in the review and allocation team as part of the Public Protection Unit, can be contacted by emailing Samantha.hughes@polfed.org if you would like a copy of the tips she has collated.

Home Office seeks to protect officers with new road traffic legislation

The Home Office has confirmed that it will seek to give police better protection when they stop vehicles after a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers making off during a police stop.

Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and the national Federation's response and driver training lead, has been heading a Federation campaign to amend two sections of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which would give police officers the authority to require drivers to turn off their engine when stopped and also to demand, where appropriate, that all occupants leave a vehicle.

"I have been advised that the Home Secretary wants the Home Office to lead on this and potentially have it introduced as an amendment to the Police Powers and Protections Bill which is due before Parliament early next year," says Tim.

"This is a major step forward and a considerable success for this campaign

and sadly, we are seeing more and more incidents in which officers are put in a position of vulnerability due to this flaw in the legislation

"While it is currently an offence to fail to stop for a constable in uniform, once the vehicle has stopped, the obligation on the driver is satisfied. We can ask people to provide information and documents but this means officers have to get out of their own vehicle to make the request or check any documents produced. This means they are then in an incredibly vulnerable position since the driver can make off, putting officers' lives at risk.

"Having the fairly general power to stop vehicles is meaningless if we can't engage with the driver. A power to instruct the driver to turn the engine off, remove the keys, open the window or door and get out does appear to be a necessary, yet long over-due, addition to the legislation.

"Clearly, police officers are currently vulnerable and they should rightly expect the Government to prioritise their safety

and enshrine that in law."

The Federation campaign called for:

- **An amendment to Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act to extend the obligation on motorists to stop to an obligation to stop and switch off the engine**
- **An amendment to Section 164 of the Road Traffic Act to require occupants to get out of a vehicle when required to do so by a police officer.**

In support of the changes to legislation, Tim collated a series of testimonies from officers who have been involved in incidents in which drivers have made off from a police stop.

Tim has already led a successful Federation campaign for a change in the law that will allow police officers' special training and expertise to be taken into account in the law rather than their driving being judged against the standards of the careful and competent driver. That change to legislation is part of the Police Powers and Protections Bill.



Officers urged to keep their own insurers informed



Officers are being reminded of their obligation to report accidents that arise from incidents while driving police vehicles to their own insurance companies.

Due to improved sharing of information between insurers, some officers have been encountering difficulties when renewing or applying for car insurance because a claim has been recorded on the Claims and Underwriting Exchange (CUE) personal injury database.

Any recorded incident in which someone is injured or damage occurs will be stored on the database which means when an officer seeks a personal car insurance quote, this information will be populated automatically.

Therefore officers should contact their insurer if they are involved in any such incident and should declare them when seeking a quote for a new policy.

An agreement from the Association of British Insurers means officers do not have to report incidents while driving a police vehicle in circumstances where "tactical options" were performed.

"It was agreed that this was not an accident since it was part of the range of options and tactics available to police drivers which enables them to protect the public. It was deemed unfair to have an officer penalised for doing this," says Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands

Police Federation and national Federation lead on pursuits and police driver training.

"The Federation secured this agreement back in 2013/4 which was most welcome. Many of us are all too aware of the impact any disclosed claim can have on our own private insurance premiums.

"Through the better sharing of information between insurance companies, however, it is now apparent that officers are being challenged by their insurers for not having disclosed accidents by definition under the Road Traffic Act 1988."

Tim cites one example of such a challenge: officer on a P1 call using blue lights and two tones comes to a line of traffic, in a parting of the waves moment, a member of the public mounts the pavement and, through no fault of the officer, collides with a lamp post. This currently is a disclosable accident.

He adds: "We see this as grossly unfair and are again actively seeking a further exemption to report in circumstances pertaining to driver tactics such as the example given here. You are obliged though at this time to report collisions in work vehicles to your own insurance companies.

Tim is also urging the Force to better communicate this vulnerability to officers.

"It's reasonable for officers to assume their liability doesn't go this far and the Force has an obligation to inform them about this," he explained.

Force has recruited almost 300 extra officers

The Force had recruited 292 extra officers through the Government's uplift programme by the end of September this year, according to Government statistics issued today.

West Midlands Police was given a Year 1 allocation of 366 officers as part of the Government's plans to recruit 20,000 more officers over a three-year period.

"Given that the Force had to pretty much start from a standstill with this recruitment process given the years of austerity when recruiting came to a halt, it is steadily making up ground and is well on the way to reaching its target for the first year," says Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"Of course, we welcome these additional officers but it will be some time before we truly start to see their impact in terms of sharing the workload.

"During the budget cuts, officers were stretched to the limit, meeting increased demand with reduced resources, and we now need to see a sustained and consistent recruitment programme so that we can get our numbers back to where they should be if we are to provide a high quality policing service for our communities."

National Federation chair John Apter, responding to the Government's update on the uplift, said more needs to be done to attract new police recruits with previous life experience and those from military or public sector backgrounds.

He explained: "To have a healthy mix of new recruits with life experience is good for policing and essential. We will continue to raise this point with the Home Office. As the programme continues, it is also vital for the service to be more representative and reflect the communities we serve. More needs to be done to recruit officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

"While good progress has been made, we need to continue to do all we can to ensure policing is an attractive profession for all members of the communities we serve."

Giles reflects on 30 years in policing: 'This job is like no other'

Giles Dean says police officers are in a unique position to make a difference to people's lives as he prepares for retirement after almost 30 years in uniform.

Giles, who chairs the West Midlands Police Federation Health and Safety Committee, was speaking as he looked back over a career which began in 1991 when John Major was Prime Minister and (Everything I Do) I Do It For You was number one in the charts.

"This job is like no other," he said, "The highs are very high, the lows can be very low and on any given day you don't know what will be in store for you.

"We have unique and privileged insights into people's lives when they're at their most vulnerable or exposed. By talking and understanding, we can learn so much about the human condition and use our experiences to help others in the future.

"Given all of the changes that have happened, and all of the moaning and complaining that I have done over the past 30 years would I do it all again?"

"In a heartbeat, yes."

Giles added: "Catching the 'bad guys' is, and always has been, the fun bit and my first nine years on response were probably still the most chaotic, scary and exciting times of my career. I look back on those days and the team with a great deal of affection.

"I'm very grateful to be coming out of the other end relatively unscathed. Apart from the usual cuts, grazes and bruises, the worst injury I received was a couple of fractured ribs.

"I've seen the job damage the physical and mental health of some colleagues over the years and have supported many of these people as a Fed rep.

"It has also damaged a lot of relationships and there's no doubt that shift work and over-time can very be difficult for some partners to cope with, so many thanks



Giles Dean prepares for retirement.

to my wife Lisa for being so understanding."

Giles said that one of the key achievements of his Federation work was helping to draft a motion from the West Midlands Joint Branch Board, which was

delivered in a speech by the then branch chair Tom Cuddeford, to the 2014 national conference that saw all 36 recommendations of the Normington report accepted, marking a pivotal point in the Federation's history.

“We have unique and privileged insights into people’s lives when they’re at their most vulnerable or exposed. By talking and understanding, we can learn so much about the human condition and use our experiences to help others in the future.”

“This included the direct election of the chair,” he said, “The scrapping of the rank boards and greater accountability and transparency for the Police Federation of England and Wales.”

But, closer to home, Giles has also put the health and safety of his colleagues at the heart of all that he does.

He explained: “I meticulously obtained data on the true level of spitting offences against officers which was used to bolster the Federation’s case for the provision of spit hoods.

“Never has the prevention of spitting been more important to protect officers and their families than it is at the moment.

“I chair the Federation’s health and safety committee and have been proud of the work the committee has done throughout the pandemic in visiting stations to check the locations have remained Covid secure, and in supporting colleagues with queries and concerns.

“I must give credit to the Force for being ahead of the curve, acting decisively at the very start and continuing to provide support and guidance to keep staff safe.

“Where there have been issues it has generally been down to individual complacency or the guidelines not being followed.”

Giles has always been based in Sandwell, but has performed a number of roles for West Midlands Police, from response constable, liaison officer and beat officer to custody sergeant, intelligence sergeant and neighbourhood sergeant.

“West Midlands Police was a very different place when I started,” he said. “The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 had just about become fully embedded, much to the chagrin of some older officers who probably looked a lot like I do today.

“Front offices had cutting-edge whizz-bang technology such as fax machines and telex machines.

“The equivalent of an email was a typed WG401 that was passed around teams and diligently signed by each officer to acknowledge receipt then passed back to be filed.

“Smoking in stations was still the norm and the CID offices in particular were a constant hazy fug

“Local intelligence officers protectively curated banks of index cards with information on local offenders that these days we would find via computers and more recently through our hand-held devices.

“We were also trusted with cookers and bars in police stations – although it would be a few more years before we would be trusted with email.

“But although the environment has changed the basic principles of what it is to be a police officer have not changed one bit. The oath that the new recruits take at their attestation is still pretty much the same as I took 30 years ago.”

Giles encourages officers to revisit their oath throughout their career.

“If you ever have doubt as to what you’re doing or why you’re doing it, consider the oath and the Peelian principles of policing as your benchmark and you won’t go far wrong,” he said.

“Policing by consent and preventing crime and disorder strips what we do down to the basics.”

Giles admitted that policing has not been without its challenges, and that not everything had changed for the better.

“The demise of the omniscient police officer has been an unfortunate side effect of austerity,” he said.

“The horrific cuts in police numbers and training provision have meant it’s been necessary to implement a production line-style division of labour to try to gain cost effective efficiencies in working practices.

“If you ever have doubt as to what you’re doing or why you’re doing it, consider the oath and the Peelian principles of policing as your benchmark and you won’t go far wrong.”

“The advantages this may have gained in the short-term are being offset in certain areas of business by the disadvantages of specialisation which includes lower worker motivation, higher employee turn-over, over-reliance on interdependence and monotony.

“Despite the increases in officer numbers, I do not expect that the structures will be changing any time soon.

“West Midlands Police will need strong employee development plans to prevent these outcomes.”

He added: “The pause on recruitment for five years has had a massive impact upon the demographics of the Force. In three years’ time it’s estimated a third of the Force will be under three years in service.

“There is a big gap in the establishment where we should have had some experience. There are also a lack of willing experienced tutors to cope with the numbers coming through leading to 3:1 student to tutor ratios.

“We have student officers coming straight out of their probation and being conscripted to become reluctant tutors.

“These officers should still be honing their craft and learning the job not having additional tutoring responsibilities that mean they could pass on naive mistakes and bad practices to the next generation.

“A good tutor has always been massively influential at this critical point in officers’ careers. To have this diluted in terms of both experience and tutor student ratios is a very concerning business risk.”

Giles said he doesn’t have any firm plans for what he will do after his retirement in February.

“Given the choice, I would love to do something more creative,” he said. “Something I don’t have to wear a uniform for and, most importantly, I enjoy.

“As the job market is flooded with job seekers, if I can’t find anything that fits the bill I am toying with an idea to set up a business with my son who leaves school this year.

“Apart from that, I have plenty of hobbies and interests that can keep me occupied.”



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Officers with CVD can now apply for Taser training

West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott has welcomed a change of policy by the College of Policing which will allow officers with Colour Vision Deficiency (CVD) to apply for Taser training.

The move could open the door for more officers to carry Tasers which Jon says could help protect them and the public.

Jon said: "Police officers with CVD face the same dangers as any other officer and are just as vulnerable to acts of violence against them.

"We know there's been an increase in the numbers of officers assaulted on duty and Taser is an important piece of equipment in allowing them to protect themselves, regardless of whether they have CVD.

"In 85 per cent of cases where Taser is introduced it results in a de-escalation of the situation. To deny officers with CVD the opportunity for the same level of training and access to equipment is discriminatory.

"The Federation is pushing for a wider roll-out of Taser. We need to ensure that officers who want to use Taser are given the training, equipment and support they need to do their job," he added.

In August, the Home Office also approved the new Taser 7, which uses a



green laser and is suitable for officers with certain types of CVD - which affects one in 12 men and one in 200 women.

Steve Hartshorn, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) firearms and Taser lead, said: "The Federation has been involved in actively challenging the College of Policing's previous position. This was not fair, valid or reliable, and we have been seeking a positive resolution.

"The new training and assessment process will allow officers with CVD to apply for Taser training and to be deployed operationally if successful.

"The college's revised process will be reviewed over time to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose. PFEW - via its network of local Federation reps - will be involved in that process."

Court breakthrough

Police officers will now be allowed to carry Taser in court after years of campaigning for a change in legislation.

Subject to local policy, officers will not have to remove the devices when attending court on routine business, such as giving evidence or delivering exhibits.

"This is good news for police officers," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "It makes complete sense for them to be able to have their usual items of personal protective equipment on hand at all times and Taser should be considered part of that.

"Having access to Taser while in court could enable officers to protect not just

themselves but the court staff and the public should the need arise."

The move comes after the Lord Chief Justice amended the Criminal Practice Direction.

Evidence gathered from front-line officers by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) highlighted the difficulties they faced when having to remove and store the equipment before being allowed into court - including lack of secure storage facilities and eating into their time.

Steve Hartshorn, firearms and Taser lead for PFEW, thanked Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi, who is the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for

less lethal weapons, NPCC Taser adviser Inspector Andy Harding and the team that worked hard for many years to secure the legislative changes needed.

"We would also like to thank Federation members who took the time to supply evidence to support the successful outcome. It has been very frustrating for my colleagues whose jobs have been impeded at times because of this," he said.

"This much welcomed and long-overdue decision means they can better protect themselves, the courts' staff and the public if faced with violence or threats of violence and we appreciate the judiciary and senior judges for listening to the concerns raised."



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Late Mum helped motivate sergeant honoured by Queen



Sergeant Joe Trusselle's listing in the Queen's Birthday Honours is the latest stage in his successful career as a police officer.

Joe has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for work that led to a huge reduction in anti-social behaviour. He was one of only seven police officers across the UK to be awarded the BEM.

Joe says the memory of his late Mum seeing him in his police uniform as a young recruit has been a motivation throughout his career.

"My family were all really pleased by my decision to join," said Joe, who joined West Midlands Police in 2005. "My Mum especially.

"She was quite poorly through my recruitment process and, looking back now, I guess that the updates along the way provided her with a little bit of a distraction from her illness.

"Something that will always stay with me was being able to let my Mum see me in my uniform just after my fitting and shortly before she passed away.

"This was a very proud moment and, on reflection, probably let my Mum know I was going to be OK as I was embarking on a stable career.

"It was with these motivations that I was able to throw myself into my new venture just a month after she died."

Joe's motivation and dedication to the job saw him awarded the British Empire Medal for services to community policing.

Joe, who moved to Small Heath and Highgate earlier this year, will receive the medal for his work in Wolverhampton over a 14-year period.

"It's an absolute privilege to have been honoured at a national level," Joe said. "It has given me a real sense of achievement around some of the work that I've done."

The medal follows him securing Home Office and Sport England grants to run projects aimed at keeping children out of trouble and a dedicated police van tackling anti-social behaviour.

His work led to anti-social behaviour falling by 59 per cent during one school summer holiday period as young people were engaged with sports and other activities.

"I kept a look-out for new funding opportunities and then tried to think how the funders' objectives could align to our priorities," he said.

Joe said that because of the coronavirus pandemic he is unsure about when he will receive his medal.

"It's a little up in the air," he said. "The Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire has contacted me and will arrange the presentation as soon as they're able to.

"The same goes for the royal garden parties which are hopefully going to recommence next year."

Joe is now a neighbourhood policing supervisor on Small Heath and Highgate but is due to move across to the Commonwealth Games, which come to Birmingham in 2022.

"It's an amazing opportunity where I will be responsible for implementing the security plan for a cluster of venues that will be utilised for the games," he said.

Joe, who joined the Force in 2005, said he wanted to be a police officer from a young age.

"No matter how much of a cliché it sounds, I guess, like many of us, I just wanted

to be able to help people and make some sort of difference," said Joe, who was initially posted at Wolverhampton Central with a police development unit tutor.

"My early days were really enjoyable. My first response team was such a brilliant bunch of people, from the oldest in service to those my own age.

"My closest friends today are people who I met on that team 15 years ago."

Indeed, meeting those friends are among the highlights of his career to date.

"My highlights are meeting so many fantastic people over the last 15 years and seeing all of the fantastic work taking place every day," he said. "Obviously being promoted and being awarded my British Empire Medal are also high on that list.

"I'm a self-confused optimist, so I've not really had any low points. Clearly, things have changed as a result of a reduction in police funding but taking positives from this, it's shown me how resilient we all can be."

He credits his late grandfather-in-law, Joe Davies, as being a big influence on his career.

"He rose to the rank of superintendent heading up Force operations," he said. "Joe has been a huge influence on my career, and I spent many an hour chatting to him about work.

"He was always so interested to know what things were like nowadays and it was so refreshing that, despite the differences, he saw how we needed to move with the times."

So, what advice would he give to influence a new recruit today?

"Just enjoy yourself and don't miss an opportunity to learn or be involved with something new," he said.

Force makes switch to Police Treatment Centres for rehabilitation support

The Police Treatment Centres (PTC) will provide physical rehabilitation and psychological support to officers from West Midlands Police from the start of next year.

PTC is a charity which provides treatment and support for injured and ill police officers and retired officers, including police-specific physiotherapy and rehabilitation, and a psychological wellbeing programme.

Steve Grange, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "A small monthly donation will give officers access to the expertise available at the Police Treatment Centres in Harrogate or Auchterarder.

"The centres have vast experience in helping people get back to work through physiotherapy and psychological wellbeing programmes specifically tailored for those working in the police service."

Almost 4,000 serving and retired officers attend the two treatment centres each year. Most receive intensive physiotherapy. Others seek support with stress-related conditions or anxiety and depression.

Each officer attending for physiotherapy is assessed on arrival and a tailored

Officers can attend their physiotherapy sessions from the comfort of their own home.

programme is developed based on individual needs. Treatment includes intensive physiotherapy; police-specific, personalised treatment; fitness classes; rehab gym; and treatment and hydrotherapy pools.

Officers can attend their physiotherapy sessions from the comfort of their own home through a new remote service. Sessions will be delivered online by video or, for members who don't have access to a

computer or the internet, over the telephone.

Any care or treatment advice will be provided at the appointment or emailed afterwards and any follow-up will be arranged as normal.

The remote service is suitable for our members who find it hard to travel or have dependents making a residential stay difficult. And during the Covid-19 pandemic, it also allows for social distancing.

The psychological wellbeing programme is designed for officers with mild to moderate anxiety and depression, and stress-related issues.

The two-week programme includes group sessions and workshops focusing on stress management, relaxation and mindfulness. It will also include group exercise sessions, individual counselling sessions and complementary therapy sessions.

As part of the new arrangement, all student officers will receive their first 12 months' subscription to the PTC free of charge.

And, any officers signing up to the PTC



before 30 April 2021 will not have to be a member for a minimum of 12 months before they can access treatment as is usually the case

The treatment centres are available to all serving West Midlands Police officers, PCSOs, Special Constables and detention and custody officers. Retired officers can also sign up at a lower rate.

Any serving officer who had previously been donating to Flint House will automatically be transferred to the PTC from 1 January 2021. Any officer wishing to stay with Flint House will need to contact payroll and also set up a direct debit for their subscription.

If you are not currently subscribing to Flint House but would like to find out more about subscribing to the PTC please visit their [website](#) where you can also find the sign-up forms.

You can also win prizes by joining the PTC lottery for as little as £1 per month. There are 10 monthly draws with a top prize of £1,000, and runners-up prizes of £500, £250 and £50.

There are also two superdraws each year with the chance to win a range of spot prizes. [Find out more.](#)



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"Caroline helped me put things into perspective and come away with a plan that will allow me to get back control of my finances. I feel in a good place to move forward."

Serving police officer, 2019

"I am very grateful for Caroline's support. She could see I found the whole situation very stressful but she took that pressure from me and was wonderful. She's a fantastic lady."

Serving police officer, 2019

"Not only did she help me to understand how the new pension will affect me but she also helped me save money!"

Serving police officer Bennett, 2019

"Visiting Caroline Harris was well worth the time. She helped put my mind at rest with informed information rather than guess work."

Serving police officer Skidmore, 2019

"Caroline cleared up any doubts about my pension and helped me understand my tax code better, which has resulted in a tax refund. I highly recommend any officer who is close to retirement come and speak to her."

Serving police officer Shippam, 2019



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The Rev John Butcher (third from right, front row) with the multi-faith chaplaincy team.

Multi-faith chaplaincy will offer support over the festive season

West Midlands Police's multi-faith chaplains offer support throughout the Christmas period.

Many of their celebratory events have been hit by the pandemic but the Reverend John Butcher BEM, Force chaplain, and his team of multi-faith Force chaplains will be offering pastoral support.

John said: "While it is Christmas, we have chaplains and faith advisers from many faiths in our team. And, although we're not able to do many of the events we did last year due to Covid-19, we're still celebrating Christmas and supporting everyone over this festive season."

Volunteering thousands of hours a year, the multi-faith chaplaincy performs a pastoral role, supporting staff and officers at times of stress, concern or crisis.

The chaplains also provide support around day to day business, help with neighbourhood police networking and provide faith diversity training for officers, including new recruits to the force.

The chaplaincy is available to any individual or group regardless of faith, religious tradition or no faith at all.

John explained: "It provides a team of people who are committed to working together to offer pastoral and spiritual care and support to those who work within the organisation and to their families.

"It is embedded within, but independent of, the organisational structures and this allows for confidentiality."

Each neighbourhood police unit (NPU) has a dedicated chaplain or team of chaplains spending time in their unit.

There will be a team of advisers from different faiths to assist those who require support from a person of their own faith.

"The chaplaincy team is committed to building up relationships within the organisation and to be alongside people in the good and the not so good times," John said.

"Their ministry is three-fold; to be a

presence that reminds us of our humanity; to be a pastor to assist people in times of need; to be a prophet in speaking out against real or potential injustice in the structures."

He added: "Each chaplain will do that in their own way, depending upon their personality, circumstances and how long they can give to their NPU.

"The NPU chaplain may well be at awards evenings, or be seen out on patrol. They will certainly be available for support in times of crisis whether that is to an individual or to the management team.

"They will be a confidential listening ear and will accept all confidences without judgment. Chaplaincy is never a vehicle for faith preaching. This is true regardless of the faith of the chaplain."

More information is available by emailing j.butcher@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk, by calling him on **07814 573067** or by searching 'Force chaplaincy' on the West Midlands Police intranet.

Fund supporting retired police dogs is hit by pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic is having an impact on the finances of the Retired West Midlands Police Dog Benevolent Fund.

Like many voluntary and charitable organisations across the UK, the fund has seen its income drop since the start of the coronavirus crisis because of lost fund-raising opportunities.

Terry Grove, treasurer of the fund, said: "Our fund-raising efforts have been drastically affected this year by the devastating Covid-19 pandemic.

"However, we're committed to supporting retired police dogs that have served West Midlands Police and our communities with such distinction.

"Every penny makes a difference in supporting our fabulous dogs, which is why the lost fund-raising opportunities because of the lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions have hit us."

West Midlands Police dogs have been protecting the lives of officers and the public since Kim and Flash were recruited to the Force in 1951.

"Since then, police dogs have played an important and vital role in locating criminals, finding evidence and ultimately protecting and serving their local communities," Terry said.

The bravery of police dogs is well-known and has been highlighted recently by the



Photos courtesy of Terry Grove

attack on PD Stark who was repeatedly hit with a machete while detaining a suspected burglar.

Assuming no serious injury, a police dog's career lasts an average of seven to 10 years. However, because of the type of work undertaken and their intensive training they do suffer wear and tear which can ultimately translate to knee, leg, back and hip problems

in later life.

Any injuries while on duty are covered by West Midlands Police but sometimes the injuries require ongoing medical attention after they retire and this is where the Retired West Midlands Police Dog Benevolent Fund can step in.

The fund was established in 2014 to support police dogs in their retirement and assist their handlers and adopters.

Run by a committee of members responsible for the management of the fund, it is independent of West Midlands Police.

Around eight dogs retire from West Midlands Police each year and there are between 30 and 40 retired dogs at any one time. The fund helps support handlers and members of the public who take on their

“Every penny makes a difference in supporting our fabulous dogs, which is why the lost fund-raising opportunities because of the lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions have hit us.”

Continued on Page 24



“ Families who take on retired police dogs receive no financial assistance. The cost of insuring them can be prohibitive and the cost of care and treatment can soon mount up. ”

care.

Terry said: "Police dogs don't receive a pension when they retire from active duty. Their care and ongoing treatment becomes the responsibility of their handler or adopter.

"Families who take on retired police dogs receive no financial assistance. The cost of insuring them can be prohibitive and the cost of care and treatment can soon mount up.

"The Benevolent Fund eases the financial pressure on people who look after the dogs with regards to veterinary fees so that they can live out a long and happy retirement. Without us, the decision to take on a retired dog can be a very difficult one to make.

"We aim to ensure that all retired West Midlands Police dogs enjoy the retirement they deserve, with the highest levels of ongoing medical care and treatment.

"Hopefully, any heart-wrenching decisions about the dog's future will not come down purely to financial considerations," Terry added.

The fund raises money through a membership subscription, sales of merchandise and donations from the public. It raises awareness through its website – retiredwmpd.org.uk - social media presence on Twitter and Facebook,



and attendance at events such as Crufts.

Indeed, it was from this year's Crufts - which took place at the NEC in March before the lockdown - that the fund received a £1,000 donation from PC Louise Mullen and her German shepherd Wolfie.

Wolfie topped The Extraordinary Life of a Working Dog category in the Kennel Club Friends For Life competition.

A firearms dog support team, Louise

and Wolfie were seriously injured in a road traffic collision in November 2018 while pursuing a group of robbers armed with machetes and chainsaws.

Despite suffering a fractured jaw, eye socket and back damage, wrist and ankle injury and extensive bruising, Louise was able to drag herself and Wolfie from their burning vehicle.

Wolfie suffered severe muscle damage and required continual medical treatment and physiotherapy alongside hydrotherapy.

However, he was eventually retired from service because of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Wolfie lives his retirement with Louise, and Terry said: "Their story underlines the close bond that handlers have with their dogs. "It's great that the fund can support them and their handlers in their retirement, and we want to be able to continue doing that long after the Covid-19 pandemic."

For more information on the Retired West Midlands Police Dog Benevolent Fund or to make a donation, visit

retiredwmpd.org.uk

The fund is seeking help in maintaining and developing its website and would like to hear from anyone who could help with this.



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West Midlands Police Federation

Review of the year



January

8 The chair of West Midlands Police Federation says the courts must use their full sentencing powers to punish those who assault police officers. Jon Nott speaks out after new figures from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) revealed it had prosecuted more than 50 assaults a day in the first year since a new law came into effect making it a specific offence to attack an emergency services worker.



13 From today Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) can bid for a share of the ring-fenced funding which it is hoped will equip 10,000 more officers with Taser. "This is great news," says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, "We have been calling on the Government for some time now to give forces the funding they need to train and equip more officers with these devices. All officers who want to be trained and equipped with Taser should be able to do so since it not only enables them to protect themselves but also their communities."

22 Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation response and driver training lead, says he has met with Home Office officials to discuss the finer details of changes under the Police Powers and Protections Bill which will allow for police drivers' skills to be taken into account in law.



29 PC Andrew Harper who was tragically killed on duty in 2019 is given a posthumous honour at the annual Police Federation Roads Policing Awards. PC Harper's widow Lissie, who he married just four weeks before he died, receives a standing ovation as she accepts a National Chair's Certificate recognising that he represented 'the very best of roads policing and policing in general'.

31 Steven Toal of the Policing Powers Unit attends the Federation's Roads Policing Conference to discuss new legislation to better protect police drivers. Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead on response and driver training, will be involved in forming the assessment process, with a common standard likely to be set by the College of Policing.

February



6 The Police Federation of England and Wales launches its 'Hear 'Man Up', Think 'Man Down' wellbeing campaign and the chair of West Midlands Police Federation says officers' mental health should be treated as seriously as their physical wellbeing. Jon Nott says officers also have to play their part in ensuring colleagues get support when they need it by not ignoring signs of mental ill health and talking to each other more.

10 A five per cent pay rise is one of 20 recommendations made to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) in a joint submission by the Police Federation of England and Wales and the Superintendents' Association. The chair of West Midlands Police Federation, Jon Nott, says: "Police officers' wages have not kept pace with the cost of living and in real terms we have actually seen their pay fall in recent years."

24 West Midlands Police Federation's conduct lead George McDonnell welcomes a call for all long-running Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) cases and legacy cases from the former Independent Police Complaints Commission to be reviewed. The Federation's demand comes after the IOPC withdrew a direction for Bedfordshire Police to hold a gross misconduct hearing which had left five officers in limbo for more than six years.



27 Legendary marathon runner Paula Radcliffe gives her backing to the #WMPMND runners taking part in the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in support of West Midlands Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson who has motor neurone disease. Paula's visit is the result of West Midlands DI Chris Jones contacting her about the campaign to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Primrose Hospice. She meets the Johnsons and gives an exclusive interview to Chris' wife, Sharon, and nine-year-old son, Harry.

March

- 2** The Force is awarded the seventh highest share of a £10 million Government uplift and receives £206,250 to equip a further 250 officers with Taser.



- 20** A national lockdown is announced to stop the spread of coronavirus. This includes school closures but the Government confirms that children with at least one parent or carer who is a police officer can continue to attend school. Officers are included in the 'critical workers' category and adapt to the crisis and continue to serve their communities.

- 23** The Police Federation of England and Wales sets up a dedicated Covid-19 website page to combine all the advice on the development of the outbreak.

- 24** West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott repeats pleas for the public to stay home and stick to the latest Government guidance on social distancing and large gatherings. He also backs the Chief Constable's request for people not to call 101 or 999 with questions about staying at home.



- 25** A West Midlands Police detective inspector swaps his warrant card for a bass guitar and releases a charity single inspired by Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson's approach to his Motor Neurone Disease (MND) diagnosis. Chris Jones had signed up to run the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon to raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and Primrose Hospice which is supporting Mr Johnson and his family. But injury forced him to pull out.



- 31** The Force is praised for ensuring officers have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) during the coronavirus crisis. John Williams, deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation, says around 50,000 face masks have been made available to officers and staff along with gloves and hand sanitiser.

April

- 3** West Midlands Police officer PC Richard Bracey speaks about his agonising decision to move out of his family home and away from his eight-week-old daughter Isla-Rose and partner Kelly to protect them from coronavirus.

- 14** Force traffic officers club together to donate personal protection equipment (PPE) for staff at Erdington's John Taylor Hospice after a social media appeal.



- 17** Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, welcomes harsher automatic sentences for those using Covid-19 as a weapon. The interim guidance comes after officers report being coughed and spat at by people claiming to have coronavirus.

- 22** A group of Oldbury Neighbourhood Team officers solve the problem of hairdressers and barbers being closed and raise more than £2,000 for NHS Charities Together by shaving off their own hair. PC John Batsford came up with the idea for the sponsored event while barbers and hairdressers were shut.

- 29** The Police Federation of England and Wales cancels this year's national conference and postpones the Police Bravery Awards due to the pandemic.

May

- 1** West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange welcomes the Force's progress in recruiting new officers as part of the Government's three-year pledge to boost officer numbers by 20,000 over a three-year period. New Home Office figures show that 3,005 of the 6,000 recruits expected to be taken on nationally in Year 1 have now been recruited and the Force was allocated 366 of these – the second highest allocation of the 43 forces in England and Wales. The Force says it has recruited 233 of this figure.



- 7** This year's National Police Memorial Day Service is cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.



- 13** The Home Secretary praises police officers for their 'extraordinary professionalism' and 'unwavering dedication' in meeting the challenges of policing during the coronavirus pandemic. In a letter to the Police Federation of England and Wales, Priti Patel also thanks officers for their 'incredible work' in keeping people safe.

Continued on Page 28

- 18** West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott thanks Prince William for a letter of support to members during the coronavirus pandemic and for highlighting their wellbeing.



- 27** David Walliams becomes the latest high-profile celebrity to publicly support a group of officers, staff and friends from West Midlands Police and other forces nationwide who are running the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in the autumn to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) and the Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove. The author, comedian and star of TV show Britain's Got Talent records a video message backing the team who are supporting West Midlands Assistant Chief Constable Chris Johnson who has MND.

June

- 8** A move to allow Special Constables to join the Police Federation is backed by West Midlands branch chair Jon Nott. Jon has already applauded the work of Specials during the coronavirus pandemic and says he is looking forward to the day they will be welcomed into the Federation.



- 11** The Federation's retirement seminars programme resumes but with reduced numbers of officers being able to attend and social distancing and other safety measures in place.

- 26** West Midlands Special Constable Resham Nahal dies from complications to injuries he sustained after being hit by a vehicle seven months earlier when he was on duty. He was 53.

- 26** The first national police wellbeing survey reveals that half the officers who responded were getting less than six hours' sleep a night. Around 35,000 people responded to the survey, carried out by Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service, and the College of Policing, who will now carry out research with experts from around the world to consider ways to reduce the growing issue of officer and staff fatigue.

- 29** West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott fears the police and the NHS will be picking up the pieces if the re-opening of the pubs in England after the pandemic lockdown leads to drunken disturbances.

July



- 1** George McDonnell, West Midlands Police Federation's conduct lead, receives a Chief Constable's Award in recognition of his dedication to supporting members. George, who became the Conduct and Performance Lead Officer (CAPLO) in June last year, is presented with the award by Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

- 16** The Government announces the consultation process on the proposed remedy to the discrimination found in the implementation of the 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme.

- 20** West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott says the Force's uplift in new officers will play an important role in helping tackle knife crime. He also calls on the criminal justice system to ensure offenders receive the toughest possible sentences. His comments come as new figures from the Office for National Statistics show a slight increase in the numbers of knife crime offences in the West Midlands.



- 22** The 2.5 per cent pay award announced today is a step in the right direction to get police officers' wages back where they need to be after years of below-inflation salary increases, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott.

- 29** Members are urged to take part in the annual Federation Pay and Morale Survey.

August



- 5** PC Claire Merrell is praised for going 'above and beyond' by the family of an autistic dad who had been conned out of his pension and savings of more than £75,000.

- 6** PC Andrew Harper's widow, Lissie, launches a campaign for 'Harper's Law' to ensure those convicted of killing police officers and other emergency service workers face life in prison.

13 Women officers are urged to let the Federation know what they think of their public order and firearms uniforms as part of an assessment of the suitability of both uniforms.

14 The newly-formed West Midlands Police Federation Pensions Working Group announces it will carry out a survey among members.



20 West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Tim Rogers says forces should release police officers' body-worn video (BWV) footage to help protect them from unfair criticism and trial by media.

25 The Home Secretary approves a more effective Taser, paving the way for police officers to be equipped with the new devices.

September



3 West Midlands Police Federation representative Sam Hughes collaborates with HR on a wellbeing initiative to implement a programme of changes to how the Force helps and supports people on long-term sick after returning to work following treatment for breast cancer.

9 West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott welcomes an announcement by the Home Secretary that a Police Covenant will be introduced in legislation.

15 New legislation to double the sentence for assaulting a police officer is fast-tracked by the Government. The maximum prison sentence increases from 12 months to two years in a change in law that the national Police Federation has lobbied for extensively.



24 West Midlands PCs Paul Newman and Holly Necchi are nominated for a national Police Bravery Award. In July last year, Paul feared his eyes would be gouged out and then thought he would be drowned when he was attacked by a man who had fled a car when officers discovered a loaded handgun. Holly heard her colleague's cries for help and it was thanks to her that PC Newman survived the attack. This year's ceremony has been postponed due to the pandemic and is re-scheduled for 15 July 2021.

25 The shocking death of Metropolitan Police Sergeant Matt Ratana in an incident at a Croydon custody centre in the early hours of this morning will be felt by everyone in the policing family, says Jon Nott, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.



28 A virtual service marks National Police Memorial Day. HRH The Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister pay tribute to fallen officers.

October



5 West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott encourages members to use a new survey as a chance to express their views on policing the pandemic. He says this year's nationwide Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey is an opportunity for members to have their say on a range of issues, including policing the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.



8 West Midlands Police's share of £60 million of surge coronavirus funding is welcomed by Jon Nott. But the chair of West Midlands Police Federation says the £1,831,635 is not a problem solver and the extra money is likely to pay officers' over-time.

Continued on Page 30



12 Three West Midlands officers are among those listed in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Sergeant Joe Trusselle is named as one of only seven police officers across the UK to be awarded a British Empire Medal. He receives the award for services to community policing. PC Rani Gundhu and Sergeant Mo Najib are honoured with the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) which is awarded to police officers in the UK and Commonwealth for gallantry or distinguished service. Former Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Boycott also receives a QPM.



14 The Police Treatment Centres (PTC) will be providing rehabilitation to officers from West Midlands Police from the start of next year.



29 West Midlands Police Federation secretary Steve Grange praises members' efforts during the pandemic as new figures from the Office for National Statistics show a huge vote of confidence from the public.

29 The Force has recruited 292 extra officers through the Government's uplift programme after West Midlands Police was given a Year 1 allocation of 366 officers as part of the Government's plans to recruit 20,000 more officers over a three-year period.

November

2 West Midlands Police Federation chair Jon Nott urges the public to adhere to the new national lockdown beginning on Thursday 5 November.



5 After a Federation campaign led by Tim Rogers, deputy secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national response and driver training lead, the Home Office confirms that it will seek to give police better protection when they stop vehicles after a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers making off during a police stop.



16 Members are urged to continue to use PPE.

17 West Midlands Police Federation (WMPF) launches an online survey to find out if its members would like WMPF to pay the legal fees of those West Midlands members who signed up to the Leigh Day pension challenge.



25 Chancellor Rishi Sunak confirms most public sector workers – including police officers – will face a pay freeze as the nation faces up to the economic fall-out of the pandemic.

West Midlands Police Federation
Review
of the year **2020**

Support the Benevolent Fund this Christmas

Buy a West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund charity e-card this Christmas and help raise vital funds for this worthy cause.

Each year the fund provides financial and practical support to West Midlands Police employees past and present.

Whether it's helping officers injured on duty, providing home modifications for those retired from the Force or giving a grant to someone dealing with a distressful life event, the Ben Fund is always there for its members who pay £2 per month for a life-time of support.

The Benevolent Fund has teamed up with www.dontsendmeacard.com and produced a selection of Christmas card designs. [Visit their charity page for more information.](#)

Select your card, write your message, choose your donation amount and then send to your family and friends.

By sending an e-card to friends and family and donating the cost of the card and the stamp you will be helping the Benevolent Fund raise vital funds.

This year the police charity has seen an increase in police colleagues turning to the fund for support and more than £62,000 has been given out to members in the form of grants, sickness vouchers and convalescence breaks.

John Williams, chair of the West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund, has thanked members for supporting the charity.

"I wanted to say a personal thank you to all our members for their continued support during these exceptionally challenging times, from simply keeping up membership subscriptions to sending messages of support," he said.

"This clearly demonstrates the close police family that exists between the Benevolent Fund and the West Midlands Police. This year has been extremely difficult for many of us and we anticipate our role, in supporting serving members, will be even greater over the next 12 months.

"Every penny we receive soon adds up and makes a big difference to the lives of those who turn to us for help."



These are just a few examples of how the fund has stepped in to offer assistance this year:

- **A stairlift for a retired officer to enable them to remain in the family home and not go into residential care**
- **Immediate financial assistance to help a serving officer carry out essential vehicle repairs in order to get to work**
- **The purchase of a mobility scooter to enhance the independence and wellbeing of a retired officer**
- **Quick, short-term financial assistance to a police staff member who needed help with the cost of their children's school uniforms and food essentials.**
- **Funded a specialised buggy/chair for a serving officer's severely autistic son**
- **Supported a retired member experiencing financial difficulties.**

Not a member of West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund? If you're a serving West Midlands Police officer or a member of police staff you can join for as little as £2 per month. It's deducted straight from your salary and provides a host of membership benefits, visit www.wmpben.co.uk for more details and to join.



West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund would like to thank its members for their continued support during a very difficult year and wishes everyone a safe and happy Christmas.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS



NARPO is a rank-free association of retired police officers, dedicated to improving benefits for its members.

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- **SOCIAL EVENTS –** Keep in touch with old friends and colleagues.

Annual membership fee deducted from pension:- £20.64 in 2018.

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With 20+ years' experience working with the police, Gorvins Solicitors, have been a leading provider of legal services to the Police Federation and all its members. We also act for officers, their partners, police personnel and families, so whatever level of support you require during the divorce process, we can help.

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Contact Warren & Co to find out dates for each location on:
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Why do more people get divorced in January?

By **Georgina Chase**
principal lawyer in family
law at Slater and Gordon



The start of a New Year is a time of reflection. It's common for resolutions to be made and people often look forward to the future, taking a closer look at their relationships and home life.

There's no denying that 2020 has been a particularly difficult year for many couples as a result of the global pandemic. With couples having to navigate two national lockdowns, as well as juggling home schooling, periods of self-isolation and caring for vulnerable family members, it's sadly no surprise that relationships will have come under additional pressure.

If you or your spouse work on the frontline, then the impact of the pandemic is likely to have affected all aspects of your working and personal life.

As family lawyers, we often see an increase in the number of divorce enquiries following the festive season. In fact, the first Monday of the New Year has often been referred to in the press as 'National Divorce Day'.

If there were already problems in a relationship, couples may find themselves putting on a brave face over the Christmas period for the benefit of their children or relatives. Christmas 2020 is likely to be

even more difficult with the ever-changing Government guidance about mixing of households.

Is my marriage really over?

If you're considering a divorce, this is the first thing that you must ask yourself. It's a personal decision that can only be made by you.

You may wish to consider whether there's any chance of reconciliation. You should think about seeking additional support from marriage counselling services, such as Relate, or discussing matters with your own support network.

What are the grounds for divorce?

There's only one overall ground for divorce in England and Wales and that's the irretrievable breakdown of your marriage.

'No-fault divorce' has received Parliamentary approval but has not yet come into effect. This means that if you and your spouse have not been separated for a period of two years or more and wish to start divorce proceedings in January 2021, you'll have to rely on the fault based facts of either adultery or unreasonable behaviour.

You can start divorce proceedings at any time, as long as you've been married for a period of at least 12 months.

Seeking advice

It's always advisable to seek legal advice from an expert family lawyer as early as possible. This does not mean that you have to issue divorce proceedings straight away. Instead, you'll be provided with comprehensive advice which will allow you to consider the options

available to you.

Seeking early legal advice can often make it easier to discuss your separation with your spouse before formally starting the divorce process.

We're often asked about protecting an officer's police pension on divorce. The pension can often be the most significant, and sometimes the only, asset of a marriage. Your spouse's entitlement to your pension will depend on a number of factors, including the length of your marriage, whether any of the pension was acquired prior to your marriage and mostly importantly, the needs of the parties.

Couples with children

If you have children and are considering divorce, you'll also need to think about future child care arrangements. Children of separated parents have been able to move freely between their parents' respective households, as an exception to the Government's 'stay at home' rules.

You should try to reach an agreement with your spouse about the most suitable and appropriate care arrangements following your separation. If you're unable to reach an agreement, you should consider mediation and seek legal advice. An application to court should be the last resort. The welfare of the children will be the court's paramount consideration.

If you need to speak to a specialist family lawyer, please contact Slater and Gordon Lawyers on **0808 175 7710** and we will be happy to help.

Retirement seminars – 2021 dates are set

Dates have been set for next year's West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars.

The seminars, which are for officers in their last three years of service, will be held at the Federation offices at Guardians House, Coventry Road, Sheldon, on:

4 February 2021

4 March 2021

1 April 2021

6 May 2021

3 June 2021

22 July 2021

26 August 2021

9 September 2021

7 October 2021

18 November 2021.

The retirement seminar programme was suspended during the early months of the pandemic but has since been resumed with social distancing and other safety measures in place. PPE is provided for everyone attending with cleaning stations and hand sanitisers also available.

Among the topics covered at the seminars are:

- **Managing change and uncertainty**
- **CV writing and interview techniques**



- **Transferable skills**
- **Pensions**
- **How do I manage money and these financial changes?**
- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **New horizons (what's next?)**
- **Savings**
- **Investments and finances**
- **Protecting your wealth.**

Members are being urged to register their interest in attending retirement seminars in 2021 by emailing the Federation

office at westmidlandspf@polfed.org

Please ensure you put 'Retirement seminar' and the month you would prefer to attend in the subject title and include your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, proposed retirement date and any dietary requirements in the email.

Places are currently limited to officers only. Partners were previously able to attend but available spaces have been reduced due to the safety measures in place.



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