


Looking ahead

- a message from the national Federation chairman

 2005 is going to be an exceptionally important year for you and the Federation as together we seek to tackle some of the Government's proposals for radical reform which will fundamentally change forever the way we police in England and Wales. This process was started by the former Home Secretary, David Blunkett, and will now be seen through by his successor Charles Clarke. We are clearly witnessing steps to politicise policing with Government plans to make National Crime Squad (NCS) officers who transfer to SOCA no longer independent, impartial sworn officers of the crown. Instead they will be staff allocated powers on an ad hoc, when needed basis.

The Federation wholly supports the creation of SOCA but fears that under current plans it will become a stand-alone ineffective British FBI. Fighting serious and organised crime is a key policing activity and it is therefore essential that it is staffed by fully sworn police officers and completely integrated into, and complements, the current policing structure. Only when policing is adequately funded, resourced, integrated and delivered on a local, national, cross-border and international level will it be truly effective.

David Blunkett's sudden departure last month couldn't have come at a more crucial time for policing. Although we had disagreements I am sure he will be remembered for supporting the Federation's call for community policing, giving us a record number of police officers and, at long last, putting victims at the centre of the criminal justice system. We look forward to working with Charles Clarke to ensure the proud traditions of British policing continue to be delivered to the highest standard.



Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales

The Federation believes in effective community policing by consent and will do everything in its power to prevent a future where sworn officers are only seen or heard in confrontational situations. Last year we started to hear chief officers openly talk of increasing numbers of PCSOs rather than police officers. The Federation will stand firm against this and seek assurances from all political parties ahead of a general election that they will continue to maintain the record number of police officers.

Last year we held the first National Police Memorial Day service at St Paul's Cathedral. The letters we received from the hundreds of families of fallen officers who attended made all the efforts to secure this national day worthwhile. Our thanks go to Joe Holness, the police officer who

fought long and hard to see his dream of a day to remember fallen colleagues come to fruition. Regrettably the list of fallen officers grows each year. Some deaths, such as the murder of DC Mick Swindells in May last year, receive much media attention but we should take time to reflect on other officers who also died and leave behind family, friends and colleagues. We will again pay tribute to them all at the 2005 National Police Memorial Day to take place on Sunday 2nd October at St David's Hall in Cardiff.

Police officers face extremely difficult and potentially life threatening situations every day, many of which we highlight at our annual Police Bravery Awards. We heard stories of selfless acts of courage and bravery, which never cease to amaze myself and the other judges. Following on from

the success of last year we are hopeful that the 2005 Awards will again be televised on Sky One.

Last year there was again much focus on diversity in the police service, although all too often when we talk of diversity we think of race. Perhaps that is not surprising when the media so often choose to focus just on this very issue. But as Sir Bill Morris had to remind reporters who interviewed him after he published his report into practices within the Metropolitan Police last month, diversity is about race, gender, religion, disability - anything that makes us different. The police service took positive steps to encourage exclusivity ahead of the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act to include police officers from October last year. It is absolutely right that, with reasonable adjustments, disabled officers should still have a full and rewarding career in the police service and the Federation were integral in ensuring and promoting fairness for all.

This year the Police Federation Conference takes place in May and will be hosted in Blackpool. A key area for debate will be the implications of police reform and plans for workforce modernisation. We will also look at the role of a police officer and what the future holds. We will examine the changing face of policing the nighttime economy, the growth of a job culture and the politics of policing this. We will also focus on the developing gun culture and what action is needed to stem this.

We have an interesting and busy year ahead. In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a happy, healthy and peaceful 2005.

Jan Berry
Chairman
Police Federation of
England and Wales

