



Will Riches, constables' central committee

## Keeping it 'real'

The Federation's constables' central committee is launching its own Real Policing Pledge which outlines concerns affecting police constables and will seek support from politicians on a number of key issues.

The pledge, set out in a leaflet, will be sent out to prospective parliamentary candidates from the main parties, current MPs and Welsh Assembly members and peers this month, to gain backing for the campaign. The launch follows the government's own Policing Pledge which lays out what is expected of forces across the country; such as response times, time spent on the beat for neighbourhood teams and meetings with the public to look at policing priorities.

**"They ask candidates to pledge, if they are elected, to uphold the Office of Constable as the bedrock of modern policing, maintain the number of warranted constables, ensure all constables are adequately trained to do their jobs, commit to maintain an effective ratio of constables to support staff on community policing teams and honour Police Negotiating Board agreements."**

The constables' central committee will turn this on its head in their campaign to ask politicians to back a pledge for their commitment to solving some of the issues facing police constables in a 'Real' Policing Pledge. They ask candidates to pledge, if they are elected, to uphold the Office of Constable as the bedrock of modern policing, maintain the number of warranted constables, ensure all constables are adequately trained to do their jobs, commit to maintain an effective ratio of constables to support staff on community policing teams and honour Police Negotiating Board agreements.

There are 140,000 police officers in England and Wales, around 110,000 of them are police constables. The demands they face are ever changing and always pressing yet the constant process of piecemeal reform has done little to address the needs and concerns of police constables.

Current 'workforce modernisation' plans are creating a large number of specialist non-sworn police staff in operational roles. This undermines the resilience of police services to respond to unknown demands and reduces the opportunity for constables to gain the valuable experience they need.

It must not be forgotten that a warranted police constable is fully trained and able to discharge a wide range of tasks and duties from statement taking to crowd control and first aid. A constable will respond to orders sometimes at a moments notice and this is not the case for their civilian colleagues.

The constables' central committee recognise it is imperative that we seek to influence the opinion formers and policy makers of government and, with the impending general election, believe that it is timely to undertake that process now.

It is hoped that candidates will recognise the importance that is placed on policing by their constituents and will publicly support our campaign. Those who do so will feature on our website which supports the Real Policing Pledge.