



Dave Griffiths, secretary of Gloucestershire Police Federation

## Extraordinary people

Outbreaks of disorder at water distribution points have required a firm police presence to ensure fair and equitable distribution of bottled water.

Our colleagues in Gloucestershire have been magnificent, abandoning their shift pattern at a day's notice to move to 12-hour tours of duty, often performed in very unpleasant conditions. As if the flooding has not been bad enough, residents of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury have also suffered power cuts and a lack of running water. For those living in this area, probably the majority of Gloucestershire officers and staff, there is no hot shower to look forward to.

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So how have we coped? The force has put into place a very effective Gold, Silver and Bronze structure. Resources have been stretched to the limit, but the way that agencies have worked together, under the leadership of Tim Brain, chief constable of the force, has been admirable. The cuts to our budgets over recent years have become very apparent, and it is testimony to the dedication and flexibility of our team that we appear to be winning the battle, and all this against the backdrop of having to fight for a fair pay rise. It beggars belief. Just what would happen if goodwill was withdrawn?

The welfare of colleagues has been at the forefront of the Federation, addressing issues that have arisen. Some colleagues have suffered flooding, in places that have never been flooded before. Such was the volume of rain that fell on the County on July 20 – up to five inches, that drains simply could not cope.

Houses have been deluged with a rainwater and sewage mix that permeates carpets, woodwork and plaster. When the sun does eventually appear, I dread to imagine the smell. Thankfully, most appear to be insured.

As I write, we are told that we will be without running water for a further two weeks. It is only when something is not there that you really miss it. Turning on a tap has become a natural reflex. Clothes cannot be washed or toilets flushed. Severn Trent Water is struggling to replenish the thousand plus bowsers placed around the area, and this is leading to otherwise peaceable residents becoming frustrated and angry.

On July 26, BBC2 started showing the series *Heroes*. There are numerous heroes throughout Gloucestershire, many of whom will go unnoticed. Many are police officers and staff who simply get on with the job and their families, who offer unerring support with no recognition. I am immensely proud to represent them.

### What do you think?

If you have any comments about issues raised, write to the letters page in *Police*.