

Roads Ahead

Police Federation Roads Policing Newsletter

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Foreword

Alan Jones

Police Federation Lead on Roads Policing



Welcome to this edition of Roads Ahead, and on behalf of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Roads Policing (RP) Group, we send our best wishes to everyone during 2012. This year we will see much more upheaval and challenges to policing ahead of more reform announcements from the impact of Tom Winsor's second report, but these changes are not necessarily beneficial changes to the structure and operational deployment of officers.

The consequences of meeting 20 per cent budget cuts continues to cause alarm as forces slash numbers of police officer and support staff posts. Inevitably and predictably the outcome is now feeding its way into operational front line policing, something that is not lost on all roads policing officers across England and Wales. In this edition, we comment on the effect in Devon and Cornwall, a force proud and highly regarded for its high standards of RP personnel, but now feeling the results of the harsh fiscal climate.

Whilst the economic situation remains grim for the foreseeable future, we must never ever give up or ignore the consequences of a lack of investment in training and education. We lose experience and professional knowledge to ours and the wider public's detriment. Once lost, it will be hard to recover. I urge our ACPO colleagues across the country to recognise and never under estimate the tremendous value and capabilities in highly skilled roads policing officers.

The contribution RP officers make to fighting crime, dealing with collisions, public demands and enforcing the law proportionate to circumstances is exceptional. We pay our respects to PC Mark Goodlad who tragically lost his life in October on the M1 motorway whilst attending to a woman broken down on the hard shoulder. We also praise the efforts of all officers who have to deal with some horrendous and ghastly scenes of carnage and human tragedy, whilst supporting bereaved family at times of distress. No more demanding or atrocious was the appalling incident on the M5 motorway where seven people were killed in November in a scene of utter devastation.

We'll always endeavour to fight positively and with determination to highlight your concerns, and for that reason once again, we have supported and been pivotal in putting together another National Roads Policing Conference at Hinckley Island in collaboration with our ACPO colleagues. Most forces are represented, but appreciating only a limited number of personnel can be there, we hope to put together a summary of the proceedings as soon as possible for wider circulation.

I hope you find this edition informative, and if you have any suggestions or ideas for improvement or wish to make a contribution or comment, then please get in touch at roadspolicing@polfed.org

ACPO's new roads policing lead

The PFEW RP Group welcomes deputy chief constable Suzette Davenport, Northamptonshire Police, who has been appointed as the new ACPO lead for roads policing.

DCC Davenport, originally from North Yorkshire, took up the post on Monday 7 November. She started her policing career with West Mercia Police and has worked in a variety of roles across the force over a 20-year period, culminating with the post of divisional commander for North Worcester.

After a short spell at the Home Office in 2005, she was appointed assistant chief constable with Staffordshire Police and in May 2007 transferred to the West Midlands, where she led on

intelligence and neighbourhood policing. She is also vice president of the British Association for Women in Policing.

DCC Davenport takes over from chief constable Phil Gormley, Norfolk Police, who has taken on the role of ACPO lead for uniformed operations.



Suzette Davenport

Prosecuting drug-drivers to be made easier

At long last, after many years lobbying by the Federation RP Group, the government is now asking a panel of experts to look at introducing a law that would make those taking drugs and driving easier to prosecute.

Experts made up of scientists and academics will look at whether drug-driving rules could be implemented the same way drink-driving rules are by proving roadside testing is technically viable and establishing the effect of individual drugs.

The panel will also look at whether legal and medicinal drugs can impair drivers' reactions and the impact of taking a mixture of drugs and mixing drugs and alcohol.

According to Department for Transport figures (DfT), drug-driving was cited by police as a 'contributing factor' in 1,094 road traffic accidents in 2010, including 51 fatal accidents. We are unclear of the real scale of the problem.

Ellen Booth, Brake senior campaigns officer, said: "We need the government to follow through with its commitments to tackle this problem. For

too long the law on drug-driving has been totally inadequate. We need a ban on driving with illegal drugs in your system and we need roadside drugalysers. The longer this takes, the more lives will be violently and tragically lost."

Stephen White, Federation National Committee said: "We recognise the challenges this brings, but believe that a solution to the present unwieldy and time consuming procedure can be found that satisfies legal requirements to ensure justice is done with procedures acceptable to the processing of offenders."



South Yorkshire trial new initiative to tackle vehicle theft

South Yorkshire in partnership with radio, Hallam FM, is trialling a new initiative in the fight against car thieves.

Officers from South Yorkshire will supply Hallam FM with the details of cars that have been reported recently stolen. The presenters will then announce the details to listeners and encourage them to report any sightings of the vehicles.

Inspector Craig Clifton of South Yorkshire Police's Roads Policing Group said:

"Approximately 50 per cent of cars that are reported stolen are recovered to the owner, however, when a vehicle is promptly reported stolen the chance of recovery increases by 16 per cent. By working with Hallam FM it means that we can potentially increase reported sightings and further improve the chances of recovering recently stolen vehicles as well as sending a clear warning to would-be car thieves."

New 3D technology to help speed up road collision investigations

Roads police officers will be awarded with new 3D laser scanners in a bid by the government to speed up road collision investigations.

The new technology, which quickly digitally replicates a three-dimensional scene of an incident with accurate measurements, is part of the government-led CLEAR initiative, which is aimed at reducing delays caused by accidents on the roads and the £1bn loss they create for the economy.

Approximately £2.7m is being released from the DfT and NPIA to 27 forces across England and Wales to buy the scanners, including Thames Valley Police, Kent, Surrey, West Mercia and Sussex.

ACC Sean White, ACPO Lead on Collision Investigation said: "Forces will be in a better position to manage such critical events in a more efficient way and present the most accurate and detailed evidence from the laser scanning devices to court. The equipment will make a real difference to improving the capability of collision investigators, reducing delays for all road users and re-opening motorways and other strategic roads at the earliest opportunity."



RP Lead, Alan Jones, said: "Having raised our concerns at the National Roads Policing Conference some 3 years ago, we are pleased about the benefits this new piece of technology will bring to roads policing and collision investigation officers. Speedier scene assessment and evidence gathering will help tackle the chaos and misery road closures present. It will reduce the time spent collecting data at the scene and should considerably improve traffic efficiency, helping to address the multibillion pound problem this is. We will work alongside officers and other agencies to monitor the equipment in the initial stages and ensure the equipment is fully realised."

Transport Select Committee update

An announcement was made last week that the Transport Select Committee will hear oral evidence from those who made submissions to the Government's Strategic Framework for Roads Safety launched last May. On behalf of the roads policing group, we made a submission and have been invited to give evidence on the 7th February. We will keep you updated on any further developments.

Motoring scam mastermind jailed

A man who masterminded a nationwide scam to help drivers escape penalties has been jailed. Colin Lowndes, 41, from Greater Manchester, helped over 700 motorists escape convictions including speeding penalty points and parking fines.

Offenders would pay Lowndes up to £400 and hand over their notices for intended prosecution (NIP). They would then submit false nominations using false names from 11 addresses linked to Lowndes. This would generate further notices to the 'driver' repeatedly until the legal time frame to prosecute had expired. The prominence of the

addresses raised suspicion at ticket officers across the country and led to raids last May where cash and hundreds of NIP documents were recovered.

After admitting conspiracy to pervert the courts of justice, Lowndes was jailed for seven years and his accomplice, brother-in-law, Lee Foster, from Hyde, was also convicted and jailed for 18 months.

Officers across 26 different police forces found 728 offences connected to the scam between August 2006 and April 2010. As part of a wider investigation more than 250 motorists who supplied their NIPs to Lowndes and Foster were arrested.

Cyclist casualties rise in recession

The number of cyclists killed in the UK has risen during three of the last four recessions a report in the Guardian has found.

The report suggests that when commuters swap train, tube and car for bicycles during times of austerity, the death toll rises.

Cyclist deaths across the UK rose by seven per cent in 2010 and the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured in the first half of 2011 rose by 12 per cent. This mirrors the number of cycle deaths between 1930 and 1935, which rose by 58 per cent and 1980 and 1984, which rose by 14 per cent. After both these periods of recession, the number of cycle deaths fell again.

Stephen White, Federation National Committee said: "This report shows that the increase in cycling fatalities is due to more people choosing



bikes as an alternative mode of transport in these tough financial times. It is a serious issue and we will do all we can to prevent these accidents and make our roads a safer place for cyclists."

Driving fines fall after roads police cuts

Devon and Cornwall police have reported the number of on-the-spot driving fines issued to speeding motorists have halved since the force axed its traffic officers, raising concerns that the regions roads are becoming more dangerous.

It follows a massive reorganisation by the police due to budget cuts in which it transferred traffic officers into the response unit to deal with all manner of 999 calls.

Statistics released under the Freedom of Information Act showed there were 14,007 tickets issued for motoring offences in the first six months of 2009. That fell to 11,747 in the same period in 2010 and to 7,302 in 2011. Fines issued for seat belt offences and handheld mobile phone offences

also dropped from 1,246 in 2010 to 768 this year and 1,854 to 1,299 respectively.

Sergeant Nigel Rabbitts, Chairman of the Police Federation of Devon and Cornwall said: "There has been a reduction in roads policing and enforcing the laws of the road because those officers are now away dealing with other things. If you reduce the chances of people suffering the consequences of their actions on the roads, then we are going to see a reduction in driving standards. Our members have real concerns about the loss of dedicated resources. They can only see the number of people being killed and seriously injured on our roads going in one direction and that is up."

Signing the Way



The government has introduced a new policy review, 'Signing the Way' on the design and implementation of traffic signs in order to reduce costs for Local Authorities and reduce inconvenience and frustration to road users.

The new regulations aim to reduce the amount of unwanted traffic signing on the roads and provide better information; provide signs for all road users, deliver effective reinforcement and local solutions built on local knowledge.

These would reduce inconvenience and frustration for the road user; provide better signing and enforcement and reduce clutter, maintenance and administration costs for Local Authorities.

Uncertainty over speed limits

Statistics suggest that the government's proposal to increase the motorway speed limit to 80mph would be expected to cause over a 20 per cent increase in deaths.

Using the widely accepted 'power model,' drawn up by the academic Rune Elvik from Norway's Institute of Transport Economics, an increase in average traffic speeds of just 3mph, a typical change of a 10mph rise, would be expected to cause 25 extra deaths a year on motorways and more than 100 serious injuries.

Road safety experts are warning the government that while motorways remain significantly safer than other road types, they are also especially susceptible to speed limit changes. They have also voiced concerns that if the guideline was to be applied to 80mph with the '10% plus 2mph' leeway by police, motorists could drive up to 90mph without facing prosecution. Supporters, however, believe raising the limit would aid the economy and reflect the advances in car safety standards.

The government is currently carrying out a detailed assessment to the potential economic, safety and environmental impacts of increasing the

national speed limit to 80mph on motorways and some dual carriageways.

RP Lead, Alan Jones, said: "We welcome the opportunity to join in a wider debate with the government around the issue of speed limits on motorways and look forward to taking part in the consultation process. It is a serious issue for everyone that needs to be looked at from every angle, including investment, infrastructure, enforcement and safety. We have our own apprehensions, particularly as it comes at a time when police resources, including roads policing units, are being further slashed due to the government spending cuts; however we understand the need to review the current legislation. This is an opportunity to look at the issue in a more holistic way and is not something that can be rushed."



Police Pursuits

After a number of years looking at bringing organisation and national governance to a central body overseeing police pursuits, the policing minister has finally signed off the agreement. All forces must now have a dedicated ACPO lead ensuring compliance with standards and that all staff authorised to partake in, or control and direct police pursuits are suitably qualified. This is a positive step in addressing many concerns previously raised over variations on a theme. A national road show is being conducted by the NPIA, sharing good practice and system procedures for those tasked with operational matters. Thanks go to ACC Andy Holt, from South Yorkshire and the working group, which included federation representation, for their painstaking work to get to this stage.

New data management system rolled out

The One Box Driver and Vehicle Data Management System, sets out the requirements for the next generation of event detection and fleet management system, customised for the emergency services. Rather than wait for an incident to happen, the DVDMS, monitors both the driver and vehicle in real time, against a pre-set driver and vehicle profile, allowing interventions to be made before an incident happens.

Jim Hammond, Chief Superintendent, ACPO ITS Working Group said: "Taking the DVDMS from a concept to reality in police forces has been a challenge, both for the technology suppliers and the forces in getting the systems installed and working. The trials now cover 10 forces and one ambulance trust, with the final systems being installed in early January. From those forces

already fitted we are starting to get some very positive results. The equipment is delivering reliable data and is now starting to generate real information that can lead to the safety improvements and financial savings."

The project team will conduct a mini review of the fitted systems in Mid-January and the most promising of the systems will be shown at the Police and Security Exhibition at the end of January. The trial for all systems will last six months, which will provide a clearer picture of the benefits from DVDMS.



New website

Being conscious and eager to develop a wider pool of communication links, the Federation and ACPO are actively looking to create a suitable RP website where all the latest news, events and information will be readily available. We hope to have more information about this within the next few weeks and will keep you updated with our progress. If you have any recommendations or there is anything you would like to have on the website that would be useful to you, please get in touch and email us at roadspolicing@polfed.org

Tighter laws for dangerous driving

The government has announced significantly tighter laws around dangerous driving, with drivers who cause serious injury receiving much longer jail sentences.

The new offence, 'causing serious injury by dangerous driving,' was brought in October by the Ministry of Justice and will carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison. The maximum sentence for death by dangerous driving is 14 years.

Andrew Howard, head of road safety at the AA said; "These law changes should make sentences more proportionate to the devastation dangerous driving causes and should also deter people from driving badly."

RP Lead Alan Jones said: "Road crashes caused by selfish acts of dangerous driving are crimes, they are not accidents. When victims sustain life changing and appalling injuries resulting from reckless driving, then the law must make an example of, and punish, those offenders. There can be no excuse for such irresponsible behaviour on our roads. We therefore welcome the announcement by the Justice Secretary that the government will now take this crime seriously by increasing the sentence to a level which reflects the gravity of the consequences. We hope this sends a very strong message that drivers will adhere to, and we will do our level best to prosecute those who cause such horrendous incidents on our roads."

National Roads Policing Conference & Exhibition

19-20 January 2012.

Hinckley Island Hotel, Leicestershire

The theme of this year's conference is "*The Challenge of Change*" which is particularly pertinent as it endeavours to deliver the vision of the "*Policing the Roads Strategy; enhancing the safety and security of all roads users*", in the current fiscal climate. The speaker list this year is broad, with good support from Chief Officers who will present on business area activities. The Road Safety Minister, Mike Penning, has again agreed to attend and provide an insight into the government's approach and priorities to roads policing.

The event provides opportunities to mix learning with discussion and to ask appropriate questions in respect of topical issues. In addition delegates will be able to meet and network with key people from around the UK, all of whom have an interest in and make a significant contribution to roads

policing. It offers an important opportunity to interact and develop professional knowledge and awareness

at both an operational and strategic level.

The conference sponsor this year is once again the Motor Insurers' Bureau who play a leading role in not only containing the scourge of insurance evasion, but provide a key support arm to operational officers in determining quick-time answers to road side problems in this regard. If you would like a copy of the agenda or further information, please contact Nyki Curtis on 01372 352073 or email nyki.curtis@polfed.org



M5 Crash: An Inspector's Story

On 4 November 2011, an incident occurred on the M5 Northbound near Taunton which turned out to be the worst motorway crash in the UK for years. It was widely reported nationally and internationally after 34 vehicles collided and seven people lost their lives. Whilst the investigation is on-going into the circumstances and causes, it is perhaps worth taking note of the comments made by Inspector Frazer Davey from Avon and Somerset Police, who describes his experience commanding this horrific incident:

"It was around 8.30 pm when I got a call from the communications control room who gave information that a collision had occurred on the M5 in Taunton. They said several vehicles had been involved; that people were trapped, vehicles were on fire and they needed immediate response.

When I arrived it was a scene of utter carnage and devastation. Nothing I have ever encountered prepared me to deal with what I saw that night. I have been to serious collisions before where people lost their lives, but never on this scale. Cars and lorries were all over the road. I saw people at the side of the banks being attended to by paramedics, fire officers and members of the public and I knew there were still others trapped inside that needed immediate help.

The fire was raging. The whole road was consumed by smoke and I could feel the heat of the fire on my face. Just as I passed a vehicle, it exploded into huge flames and I saw nearby fire officers dive over the central reservation onto the other side of the road. These fires were still burning two hours after I attended the scene. It was something from a Hollywood blockbuster movie, like nothing I have seen during my time in the police service.

My duty as the roads policing unit SIO (Senior

Investigating Officer) was more akin to managing any other critical incident. My role was to coordinate police response with other partner agencies including the ambulance, fire service and highways agency. I quickly formed a good working relationship with them



and set up a meeting structure whereby on every hour we came together to discuss what actions had been taken and to ensure that no one was hindering the work of others. Our primary concern then was still saving lives and doing everything we could to support those being treated.

At the height, I managed to access around 30 roads policing officers from nearby locations and those coming onto the night shift, to support the immediate activity. I eventually left the scene at 4am when I handed over to the temporary night shift inspector. I knew I had to record all my decisions I made that night as soon as possible before I forgot them, so I headed back to the office and worked for a further two hours making initial notes to write up later, finishing around 7am.

I think it's incredibly important that the motorways are policed. The potential for such an accident, triggered by such a small series of events for example fog, is always there. Roads policing officers are the only officers to routinely police the motorways. Without them and their presence, driver behaviour will deteriorate, making accidents like this potentially more common and consequences potentially more serious. Policing motorways and having a visible presence is vitally important."

Outstanding Achievement award

For the first time this year the RP Group, along with ACPO, will be making a national award to the officer(s) or individual(s) who has been judged to have made the most "meritorious and outstanding" contribution to the roads policing portfolio during the last 12 months. They will be presented with their award at the RP conference next week.

RP Lead, Alan Jones said: "We thank all those who made nominations and congratulate all those nominated for the award. We are pleased to announce we have been able to select a winner for this year's Outstanding Achievement award

with two very worthy runners up. This is the first time for the award and we hope the idea grows in interest and strength year on year, for there is some amazing commitment, energy, drive and talent out there.

"Thanks go to all those who nominated officers for an award and our commiserations to those unsuccessful candidates. It was a hard process selecting the winners from a pool of excellent nominations. We will be writing to all quite soon, but in our eyes you're all worthy winners. Keep up the tremendous work."



What are your thoughts and views?
email:
roadspolicing@polfed.org

Tribute to PC Mark Goodlad

We would like to send our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, colleagues and friends of PC Mark Goodlad a West Yorkshire roads Policing Officer, who died after being struck by an HGV on the M1 whilst helping a woman whose car had broken down on the hard shoulder.

This is a tragic example of the difficult and dangerous work roads policing officers face every day. Your legacy and name will live on Mark.

Farewell

The time has come to say goodbye to Chief Inspector Donald McMillan from the Northern Constabulary. CI McMillan, who was part of the roads policing team for some considerable time, retires in February and we wish him every success for the future and thank him for his positive contribution to roads policing.

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