



View from the sidelines

Clive Chamberlain, chairman of Dorset Police Federation

Trimming the fat?

Mrs Chamberlain recently accused me of having no willpower. To evidence this she cited 0900 hours on January 1, a time when I was tucking into a hearty breakfast. The issue being that every New Year resolution I had sworn the previous evening was broken, especially the one about eating and living more healthily. As January and February have come and gone, I have felt the odd twinge of guilt so am now resolved to do something before I turn fifty next month.

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On seeking advice from one of my more fitness orientated friends as to how I might become svelte he told me something that came as such a jaw-dropping revelation that I can't believe it has taken me forty-nine years to 'cotton-on'. I have always believed that I was genetically programmed to be large, that I didn't have to eat food to pile on the weight. For example, if I so much as look at a doughnut through the window of a cake shop I might just as well cellotape it to my backside; I don't need to physically ingest it. However, the simple fact, so he told me, is that my daily calorific intake is obviously much greater than the energy that I expend in a day, so apparently I need to re-adjust this. Easier said

than done, but I am going to give it a go. I am giving up the fatty foods have bought a mountain bike, and am going to try and enjoy the “journey”.

The reason I am boring you with this is that if I publicly state my intention it will be more difficult not to do it and, it may well be in your interests to encourage me. My fifteen-year-old son is so disgusted by his father's slothfulness that he has threatened to e-mail someone named “Gok Wan” volunteering me as the “ultimate challenge” for his TV Programme, *How to Look Good Naked*, and I don't think that any of you would want to see that in high definition.

Last month the Home Office was at it again – attacking police officers, no doubt in an attempt to make the public think that in addition to being lazy and unwilling to leave police stations we are all soon to reach tax-exile status due to the amount of overtime we are paid for receiving off-duty telephone calls. They have announced plans to cut police overtime budgets by £70 million, but as usual are strong on rhetoric but short on detail with no hint as to how this will be achieved.

What the Home Office fail to publicly acknowledge is that forcing officers to work compulsory overtime is infinitely less expensive than employing enough police officers in the first place. Paradoxically a high level of overtime actually suits them; it's just that they don't admit it. Keith Vaz, chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, has recognised this, he warned that it cannot be good for the health of officers and added: “Those forces in which the use of overtime is extensive should seek to increase their recruitment numbers.”

The solution is clear - scrap the lunatic plan to civilianise everything and employ enough fully warranted police officers. Go on – you know it makes sense.

Clive is laying off the sweet treats so we're not forced to see him looking good naked



Overtime is less expensive than more police officers



Photography: Guzelian