

CONNECT



POLICE
Federation

WINTER 2023

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WEST
MERCIA POLICE FEDERATION

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM YOUR FEDERATION

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Pocket diaries are now available for Federation members. These are funded through advertising and not from your subscriptions and will be delivered across the Force by a Fed rep.

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Chair: Barry Horton
Secretary: Pete Nightingale

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

By **Barry Horton**, chair of West Mercia Police Federation



Welcome to the winter edition of Connect - your final magazine from the Federation in 2023. Christmas is fast approaching and I hope you manage to get some well-earned time off with loved ones.

As I reflect on the year, I look at the many challenges our members have faced and continue to face. While we received a pay increase, it was not necessarily the reward officers were hoping for and deserved. I want our members to know that we are constantly fighting for better pay and a reduced workload. We have called on the newly appointed Home Secretary, James Cleverly, to do what he can in 2024 to make policing the attractive and respected career that I entered. You will see in this issue that your Fed reps recently met with local MPs, and I look forward to more of these liaisons in the

New Year. These meetings are essential if we want to get our voices heard by the Government.

I was saddened to hear about the football violence that took place outside Villa Park at the end of November. I have nothing but praise for officers - ours and all those from forces across the country - who supported our neighbouring force in the West Midlands that night. While I am extremely grateful to hear that none of our members were seriously hurt, the violence that took place was shocking and the behaviour of those involved was totally unacceptable.

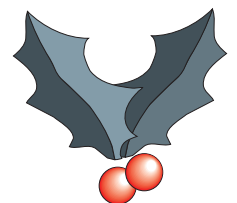
Sadly, assaults on officers is an ongoing issue and one that understandably is having a severe impact on our members' morale. Our officers cannot continue to go out, simply wanting to protect the public, while living in fear that they might be subjected to assault. Whether it is physical, verbal or racial - whatever the abuse - our members are experiencing, it is not acceptable. As your Federation, we will be working hard to combat these issues.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage all members to prioritise their mental and physical health - not just now, over Christmas and as we enter the New Year - but throughout the whole of 2024.

Recognise your boundaries and the signs of burnout. Check in on your colleagues, friends and family and, most importantly, speak up and reach out if you feel you need that support.

And, at a time of reflection, I also want to celebrate our members and the ongoing pride I feel upon hearing about the brave and courageous tasks they take on, daily.

Enjoy the festivities and stay safe.



IMPORTANT NOTICE: PENSIONS FORECASTS

West Mercia Police Federation has been funding individual pension forecasts for officers using the services of independent financial adviser Steve Grange.

This arrangement will end on 1 January 2024.

"In light of the McCloud judgement, there is now more certainty concerning the information and benefits of officers' pensions. We therefore encourage officers to contact pension administrators XPS for pension forecasts and annual benefits in the future," explains Pete Nightingale, secretary of West Mercia Police Federation.

"If any officers have less than 10 years' service left, and they have not yet used this service from Steve, they can still arrange to do so until the end of the year.

"I would like to personally thank Steve for all his work which I know has been really welcome and well received. He has provided information and predictions for more than 400 police officers to date."

MP VOWS TO GIVE OFFICERS A VOICE

The MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham has pledged to give West Mercia Police Federation a voice in Parliament following a 'very productive meeting' with the branch's secretary and conduct lead.

Daniel Kawczynski met with Pete Nightingale and Lesley Williams in November as part of the branch's commitment to engaging and strengthening relationships with local MPs.

Pete said the meeting was 'very positive', giving representatives from West Mercia Police Federation the opportunity to discuss with Mr Kawczynski some of the ongoing issues impacting police officers.

"Meetings with MPs are hugely beneficial for everyone involved. Ultimately, we can bang the drum as much as we want locally but, if we really want to see a difference, these engagements are crucial," said Pete, who said the meeting was open to all MPs local to the West Mercia area.

"I hope that from such meetings, MPs like Mr Kawczynski will be able to better understand the issues we are facing and then represent us in Parliament, giving us a voice when it really matters."

Pete explained that Mr Kawczynski spoke to them about the concerns he had in his constituency, which were mainly around anti-social behaviour and rural crime.

"Upon hearing Mr Kawczynski's concerns, we then spoke to him about several issues that are impacting our officers that are likely to therefore be impacting his constituents," continued Pete.

"We spoke about the ongoing growing pressures of the job and capacity issues. We talked about officers having to go from job to job, with very few breaks. We highlighted the issues surrounding prioritising and discussed so many of our members are finding it a challenge to know what to prioritise, when they have so many tasks going on at the same time - including multiple time-consuming administrative jobs.



At the meeting are (left to right) West Mercia Police Federation conduct lead Lesley Williams and secretary Pete Nightingale with MP Daniel Kawczynski and Federation national deputy chair Tiff Lynch.

"We also raised issues surrounding the wider criminal justice system and the impact the backlog of court hearings is having on the public, as well as officers.

"To be honest, I think Mr Kawczynski was shocked to hear how tough so many of our members are finding policing at the moment."

Following their conversation, Pete said that Mr Kawczynski has now pledged to write to the chair of the 1922 Committee - a committee of all backbench Conservative MPs that meet weekly - about the issues police officers are facing.

He also wants to further engage with West Mercia Police Federation so he can highlight policing issues during Question Time with the Prime Minister which is held in the House of Commons every Wednesday.

And finally, he has pledged to engage with the Home Secretary about the concerns raised by the Federation.

The meeting was held at Portcullis House and was also attended by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) deputy chair Tiff Lynch.

[Read the full story.](#)

NEW HOME SECRETARY URGED TO GIVE POLICE "DESPERATELY NEEDED SUPPORT"

The secretary of West Mercia Police Federation has called on the new Home Secretary to allow officers to do their job without 'undue political interference'.

Pete Nightingale was speaking following the appointment of James Cleverly to the position.

The former foreign secretary replaced Suella Braverman, who had been sacked from her role.

"I think Ms Braverman's position was becoming untenable and causing a distraction for all," he said.

"I'd like Mr Cleverly to support the police and allow us to get on with the job of policing

without undue political interference."

And Pete called on the new Home Secretary to take steps towards making policing an attractive and respected career.

"Not everything can be a priority," he said. "But giving the support that is desperately needed, restoring pay and reducing workload, would be a good start to making policing a more attractive career that is respected."

Posting on X, formerly known as Twitter, Mr Cleverly said he was honoured to be the new Home Secretary.

"The goal is clear. My job is to keep people in this country safe."

FEDERATION MEMBER IS HOSPITALISED FOLLOWING FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

Federation branch secretary Pete Nightingale says a West Mercia Police officer had a lucky escape after being hit by a flare during the violence outside Aston Villa's stadium.

The officer, who has not been named, was taken to hospital after being attacked by football hooligans in Birmingham on 30 November.

The injured cop, who is a West Mercia Police Federation rep, was struck by a flare, which set his jacket on fire. The jacket was removed quickly and he wasn't injured, but smoke entered his helmet and he was taken to hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation.

Pete said: "One of the officers who was hospitalised was a West Mercia Police Federation rep.

"He's not seriously hurt but it could've been far worse if he wasn't wearing the protective gear."

Officers from West Mercia Police and other forces were supporting their West Midlands Police colleagues at the Europa Conference League match between Villa and Polish side Legia Warsaw.

The serious disorder outside Villa Park has been described by some officers as 'unprecedented' and the worst violence they've seen at a football match in more than two decades.

One officer sustained a suspected broken hand and at least two others were injured.

Two police horses were punched and kicked, and several police dogs were also injured walking on broken glass after bottles were thrown at police lines. They're not thought to be seriously hurt.

There was a significant police presence at the game - including officers from West Mercia - based on intelligence and previous matchday disorder involving Legia Warsaw fans.

West Midlands Police said that 46 people were in custody the following afternoon after "90 minutes of sustained violence". No home fans were among the arrests, the Force said.

Pete said: "Officers are human beings and go to work to police a football match and don't expect to face serious disorder such as they faced at this match with missiles and flares raining down on them.

"Football is meant to be a family sport and there will have been young children there looking forward to a big European occasion.

"What happened is completely unacceptable and for those who are guilty of it, we should be looking for the toughest punishments possible to serve as a deterrent in the future."



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OFFICER WHO GAVE BABY CPR IS RECOGNISED WITH NATIONAL AWARD

A West Mercia Police officer who resuscitated a five-week-old baby after his heart had stopped has been recognised with a national award.

PC Mark Bates performed CPR, chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to revive the baby, who was in cardiac arrest.

The baby was taken to Telford Hospital and then Birmingham Children's Hospital where, tragically, he died eight days later.

Mark, who has received an honour from the [Royal Humane Society](#) for his actions, said the fact he could give the baby and his family a few more days together was the main award for him.

"I am proud to be put forward and to

have received this award," he said.

"It was really sad circumstances but I'm glad we were able to give the family that little bit of extra time together - that was the main award for me.

"They were able to spend New Year with him, get him christened, take hand and footprints and spend some time together as a family."

The incident happened at around 5am on 29 December last year. Mark received a call from the ambulance service that a five-week-old child was in cardiac arrest.

Mark and his colleague, who were minutes away, attended to find the lifeless baby lying on the floor and his first aid and CPR training kicked in.

[Read the full story.](#)



PC Mark Bates.

MALE CHOIR HAS BEEN HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES FOR 60 YEARS

From taking the stage at the Royal Albert Hall to socially-distanced singing in a barn during the pandemic, members of the Hereford Police Male Voice Choir certainly has some fascinating tales to tell from the past 60 years.

Originally formed exclusively for police officers in 1957, the group - which currently has 70 members - now consists of male musicians from all walks of life, including doctors, dentists and undertakers.

And with the choir actively inviting others to join its 'band of brothers', West Mercia Police Federation thought it was a great opportunity to find out more from its current members.

"The choir is a family in itself, and we would now welcome any new members who want to join us," said chair Ray Williams, who told how the choir have travelled internationally to sing at events, including visits to Germany and Ireland.

"You don't have to have any experience singing - all male musicians and singers are invited to come along."

Ray, 63, joined the choir in 2011, having retired from West Mercia Police, where he served for 30 years, with his last role being a detective sergeant.

He is married to West Mercia Police Federation's conduct lead and treasurer Lesley Williams, who supports the choir by volunteering as treasurer.

The choir was initially formed to mark the centenary celebration of Herefordshire Constabulary.

Long-serving member and secretary David said: "There's a real comfort felt in being part of the choir. There's a sense of



Hereford Police Male Choir with their musical director Alison Houlbrooke.

family in the police, and that's the same in the choir."

Father-of-three David, 64, a retired inspector, joined the choir in 1988, after transferring to West Mercia Police from the Met that year.

Fellow member, Rob Bowen has described the choir as an 'escape from everyday life.'

"There is no doubt in my mind that singing is good for you and your mind," said the father of two and grandfather of three, who joined the choir in 2013 having retired from West Mercia Police in 2009.

Many describe the choir as a 'lifeline' and a 'support network', both of which were clearly felt when the world was brought to a halt by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Around 30 to 40 members of the choir would meet virtually via Zoom each week,

to catch up and also practise.

"We would have a chat and also try to get a bit of practice in," continued Rob, "It was a huge help for so many people, during dark times."

When restrictions were relaxed, the group started to meet in person again - but this time, outdoors, and in a lambing shed.

"To comply with social distancing, we would meet in a barn that belonged to one of our patrons. We would sing to an audience of sheep, cows and birds - looking back, it was such a surreal experience really."

If you are interested in joining the choir or would like more information then [visit their website](#) or contact David by calling [07939 272453](tel:07939 272453) or emailing david.coulson@btinternet.com

[Read the full story.](#)

FAQs

answered by branch
conduct lead Lesley Williams

STUDENT OFFICERS: WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM SUBJECT TO REGULATION 12 OR 13?

I am a student officer and I have been told that my probationary period might be extended, what should I do?

If you have been told (by HR or your line manager) that your probationary period might be extended, it sounds like you have been given notification of Regulation 12.

What is Regulation 12?

Regulation 12 of the Police Regulations 2003 allows for the chief officer to extend the probationary period in the 'circumstances of a particular case' to address areas such as identified performance or attendance issues. This could also occur if an officer has been absent for a significant period of time and is unable to demonstrate the necessary competencies within the relevant time period and/or where further development has been agreed upon but additional time is required to achieve competence.

If this sounds familiar, you should contact your local West Mercia Police Federation representative immediately. Your Federation rep can offer advice from the earliest stage and support you through the process to ensure you are provided with appropriate guidance and any necessary adjustments you may require.

Will I automatically get an extension if I am notified of Regulation 12?

No, in some cases, the extension can be declined. Each case is considered on their particular circumstances. An extension is given under the discretion of the Chief Constable, who will provide written confirmation of the extension if approved.

I am a student officer and I have been told a case conference is to be held to look at whether my career in the police will be terminated, what should I do?

Regulation 13 (Discharge of a Probationer) of the Police Regulations 2003 provides the grounds on which a Chief Constable may dispense with the services of a student officer at any time during their

probationary period.

The Police Regulations 2003 states that: The services of a constable may be dispensed with at any time if the chief officer of police considers that they are not fit, physically or mentally, to perform the duties of their office OR that they are not likely to become an efficient or well conducted constable.

This decision can only be made by the Chief Constable.

If you have been given notification of Regulation 13, you should contact West Mercia Police Federation immediately.

When should I contact the Police Federation?

The sooner you get in touch with the Police Federation, the earlier we can offer advice. This will mean the procedure is carried out correctly and the right support is put in place.

Who can be notified of Regulation 12 or 13?

Any student officer - no matter what their entry route into policing - can be notified of Regulation 12 or 13.

Regulations 12 and 13 do not apply to those who are outside of their probationary period.

Can I be notified of Regulations 12 and 13 at the same time?

In short, Regulation 12 can lead to a student officer being notified of Regulation 13. For example, if after one or more periods of extension under Regulation 12, an officer does not demonstrate satisfactory improvement, a recommendation can be made to the chief officer to dispense under Regulation 13.

If you are given notification of Regulation 12 or 13, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Federation. Early intervention from the Police Federation will enable us to understand your specific circumstances and give the necessary time to ensure support and adjustments are provided.

Will a Federation representative be able to represent me?

Yes, that is exactly why the Police Federation exists. A West Mercia Police Federation representative will be able to have those conversations with your line managers and be present at any relevant meetings or case conferences.

I am a student officer and I am struggling

If you are a student officer, you might be worrying or concerned about:

- **Managing your workload**
- **Sticking to deadlines**
- **Shift patterns**
- **Balancing police training, life and studying**
- **Your mental health and wellbeing**
- **Living with a neurodiverse condition, for example, dyslexia, autism, ADHD.**

These are just a few examples that can have a huge impact on your overall performance or attendance. If you are struggling, then get in touch with a Federation representative as soon as possible and we will help to put the correct support in place when necessary.

You might unknowingly be living with a neurodiverse condition like dyslexia or autism - both are more common than you may realise. By contacting the Federation, we can work with you to ensure the correct tests are carried out, which will mean you receive efficient support moving forward.

I am worried about admitting that I am struggling

There are many reasons why you might be struggling but it is nothing to be ashamed of. At West Mercia Police Federation, we provide a non-judgemental, safe space for anyone to talk.

Remember, the earlier you get in touch with your local Federation representative, the sooner we can ensure the right support and guidance are put in place.

2023: A year in review

JANUARY



● 2023 began with the welcome news that Bryn Hughes had been [made an MBE](#) in the King's New Year Honours. Bryn's daughter, PC Nicola Hughes, was murdered in 2012 alongside fellow Greater Manchester Police PC Fiona Bone, and he has been campaigning for a posthumous award for fallen officers. West Mercia Police Federation chair Sarah Cooper said: "It is right that he has been honoured."

● The Government's recruitment drive saw [officer numbers at West Mercia Police increase](#) by 41 to 2,395. But the Federation's latest pay and morale survey uncovered [record levels of dissatisfaction](#) among the West Mercia rank and file with 86 per cent of West Mercia respondents reporting feeling worse off financially than five years ago.



● In happier news, Tracy Ruff and Tim Viner talked about how [climbing and abseiling](#) had helped them come to terms with trauma and boosted their confidence. So much so that the officers had become ambassadors for the Climbing Out charity.

FEBRUARY

● The Federation welcomed plans for a [joint headquarters in the heart of Redditch](#) for West Mercia Police and the fire service. Pete Nightingale, interim chair of West Mercia Police Federation, commented: "We will scrutinise the detail, for example, it is vitally important that police and staff are provided with secure parking on site."

● Home Secretary Suella Braverman pledged £150 million to [improve the mental health crisis care response](#). The funding would include £7m for specialised mental health ambulances, she said.

● Pete Nightingale commented on figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales which showed that [nearly 1.7 million women aged 16 and over had experienced domestic abuse](#) in the year to March 2022. "Our colleagues are doing vital work investigating these evil crimes and getting justice for the victims but can only do as much as our resources and police numbers allow," he said.

● A new report showed that nearly nine out of ten recruits who joined up under the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) were intending to stay in the service until retirement.

MARCH

● Research revealed that police pay had [declined by 17 per cent](#) since the turn of the century. The Federation said serving officers deserved to be treated with respect and rewarded for their unique role in society.



● Neil Austin, 58, a retired West Mercia Police detective superintendent who was diagnosed with prostate cancer, [urged others to get tested](#) as he shared his experience to raise awareness. The grandfather of six was marking Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and expressed gratitude to a colleague who encouraged him to get tested, leading to an early diagnosis.

● Tiff Lynch, the first female deputy chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, [spoke about her cancer diagnosis](#) in an interview on International Women's Day, 8 March.



● West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) John Campion agreed to cover the costs of Police Federation membership for the Force's Special Constables.

APRIL

"It has been a tumultuous time for policing pretty much since I joined the service and there is lots of work to do," said Barry Horton as he became the [new chair of West Mercia Police Federation](#). Barry called for an overhaul of the police pay system and expressed support for officers to have a say on the [right to strike](#).



● The Federation praised the courage of officers who [formed a human chain](#) to haul a woman to safety after her vehicle was swept downstream, with branch chair Barry Horton commenting: "Once again our members showed immense bravery and selflessness. They put their own safety at risk to ensure this woman survived."

● The Federation's national deputy chair Tiff Lynch highlighted that police officers were being assaulted on duty and still [having to pay for part of their rehabilitation](#) out of their own pocket, adding that 'cannot be right'. And West Mercia branch secretary Pete Nightingale warned that a [two-tier system for new recruits](#) would be created if a proposed Level 5 learning programme – equivalent to a diploma of higher education – was introduced.

Continued on Page 8

MAY



● Acting Sergeant Owen Beynon Brown, rode a horse called Firebrand alongside the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery at the Coronation of Charles III. The troop had the responsibility of firing a six-gun salvo from Horse Guards Parade as the crown was placed on the King's head. Owen, who is an Army reservist, reflected: "It's hard to put into words what being part of the coronation meant to me. It's not until after the event that I could think about what I've done and achieved."

● A West Mercia Federation member described the privilege and honour he felt at being an assistant referee at his first-ever international football match. Chief Inspector Mark Reilly helped officiate the Men's Deaf International between England and Germany in front of almost 1,000 supporters. "It really was such an amazing experience for me," said the 45-year-old father-of-three.

● The funeral of PC Andy Boardman, who had collapsed on duty in April, was held in Kidderminster. The 43-year-old, had served with Shropshire Safer Neighbourhood Team for Broseley and Much Wenlock.



JUNE



● PC Vicky Hallett was named [West Mercia's Response Officer of the Year](#) and a runner-up in the national award. Over a year, she had dealt with more critical incidents than some officers face in their careers. Vicky, who was presented with a certificate by Acting Chief Constable Alex Murray and Cumbria DCC Rob Carden, said: "I'm part of a fantastic team and we all work together to achieve the same goals. Everyone chips in and supports each other."

● West Mercia Police Federation urged the Government to meet its 17 per cent pay claim after Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley repeated his [calls for officers to be fairly paid](#).

Branch chair Barry Horton said police pay should reflect the sacrifices members make, the dangers they face and the stress of the work they do.



● "Whether I was in uniform or not, I would have done the same," said PC Chris Rogers, who was [nominated for a Police Bravery Award](#) after risking his life to save a man from drowning. Chris told how he 'went into auto-pilot mode' when he saw a man fall from a 30-foot bridge.

JULY

● The Government accepted the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) and announced a [seven per cent pay uplift](#) for police. The award was well short of the 17 per cent demanded by the Police Federation. Jeremy Hunt, the Chancellor, said it was 'important to avoid adding inflationary pressures and risk prolonging higher inflation'.

● However, it was no surprise later in the month when Home Office data revealed that [4,668 police officers resigned](#) between April 2022 and March 2023. This was the highest number since comparable records began and a 32 per cent increase on the 3,533 who left the service in 2021/22. West Mercia Police saw 78 officers resign.



● Cyclists representing West Mercia Police [took part in the Police Unity Tour](#) to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, with riders wearing a black armband in memory of West Mercia PC Andy Boardman. The 200-mile event was raising money for the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) charity.

● West Mercia Police Federation warned that a revised vetting code of practice could [render existing Police Conduct Regulations unfit for purpose](#). Branch conduct lead Lesley Williams said the 2020 regulations included important safeguards which could be bypassed if chief constables were given sweeping new powers.

AUGUST

Chief Constable Pippa Mills reflected on her time leading West Mercia Police in an [interview with the Federation](#).

"I feel like I'm leaving a much more cohesive Force, with all areas not just working in their own location but as part of a bigger team, sharing the same vision, strategy and values," she said. Pippa made history in 2021 when she became the first female Chief at West Mercia.





- The Federation welcomed [plans to train more officers to use Taser](#). Branch secretary Pete Nightingale said there was evidence to show the presence of a Taser carrying officer acted as an important deterrent against violent behaviour. "West Mercia Police faces some significant challenges in terms of geographical size and the large rural areas we cover and officers often find back-up and support is some distance away," he added.



- West Mercia Police Federation members [took on NHS staff in a cricket match](#) to promote mental health and wellbeing. A police team played the Black Country Health Gladiators at Stourport Cricket Club for the Blue Light Trophy (the Gladiators won by 11 runs). Fed rep Andy Forbes, who captained the team, said: "It's about 22 players enjoying themselves, having a game of cricket and then some light refreshments on a summer's evening and talking things through."

SEPTEMBER

- Federation branch secretary Pete Nightingale and West Mercia Chief Constable Pippa Mills attended [National Police Memorial Day in Cardiff](#). They were joined by police chiefs, politicians and religious leaders as well as the families, friends and colleagues of fallen officers at the service. Pete said: "The National Police Memorial Day service is one of the most significant dates on the policing calendar, made even more poignant this year with West Mercia's Andy Boardman sadly added to the Roll of Honour."

- PC Mike Poultney, who joined West Mercia Police four years ago after working in business management, said he would [not make the same decision today](#). He spoke out after a report revealed record numbers of officers were quitting their jobs. Mike had taken a salary cut to join the police. "We have reached a point where all of the new starters and student officers seem to be very young and live at home. Anyone with a family simply cannot afford to come across and do the job on the starting salaries anymore," he said.

- West Mercia Police Federation conduct and performance Lead, Lesley Williams, warned that [new powers to allow chief constables to sack officers](#) found guilty of misconduct would be a backwards step and hit morale. This followed a Government announcement that a gross misconduct finding would automatically result in dismissal, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Lesley said: "Legally qualified chairs (LQC) were brought in for independence and fairness. Why is that no longer required?"



OCTOBER

- West Mercia chair Barry Horton said the Police Federation annual conference in Manchester was [one of the "most important" in recent memory](#). With a general election due in 2024, Barry said: "It was a chance to put policing high up the agenda." There were sessions on police pay and conditions, conduct hearings, the impact of disclosure and redaction, and on life after retirement. "The things that really matter to members," Barry added.

- However, Home Secretary Suella Braverman came in for criticism for stopping short of giving the green light for a posthumous Elizabeth Medal for officers killed on duty, which the Federation has been campaigning for.

- [Mileage payments for dog handlers would be backdated](#), the Force said. It followed a High Court ruling involving Cleveland Police that handlers who are required to use their own vehicle to take their dog from the police station to their home, where the animal sleeps, should be paid an allowance.



- West Mercia PC Rich Edward walked [13 miles over eight summits](#) in the Langdales in the Lake District for Climbing Out. Rich wanted to raise funds to ensure the organisation could support others who are struggling with their mental health as well as creating awareness of the charity. "In 2021 I suffered a bit of a breakdown," he said. "I had a referral from work to Climbing Out as part of my recovery process."

NOVEMBER

- Federation branch secretary Pete Nightingale [called on the new Home Secretary](#) to allow officers to do their job without "undue political interference". James Cleverly had replaced Suella Braverman in the Prime Minister's latest reshuffle. "Not everything can be a priority but restoring pay and reducing workload, would be a good start to making policing a more attractive career," said Pete.

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) [revisited West Mercia](#) after an inspection in 2021 identified a number of areas as a cause for concern. The Force was found to have improved how it keeps victims updated on investigations and how it consults victims. The Force needs to improve how quickly it answers 999 calls. Branch secretary Pete Nightingale commented: "We need to invest in training, adequate staffing, and appropriate supervisor to staff ratio to help improve the service and meet the high standards that the people of West Mercia expect."

- Andy Bennett, West Mercia Police's driver training team leader, reminded officers of the need to be [authorised, trained and in date](#) with their driving skills.

DECEMBER

- In December, PC Dylan Darby told how wheelchair rugby has given him a [new lease of life](#) following a serious knee injury. The 32-year-old sport-loving cop said that playing wheelchair rugby has helped him 'get his competitive side back'. Now [Police UK Disability Sport](#) is aiming to raise the money for Dylan's own rugby wheelchair.





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FORMER COP WITH A PASSION FOR TRAVEL LAUNCHES TOUR COMPANY

Former West Mercia Assistant Chief Constable Geoff Wessell has launched an independent travel company aiming to give serving and retired police officers, NHS staff and emergency service workers the best possible holiday deals.

After a year of trading, Ginge Tours can provide a range of holidays and travel assistance. Geoff offers Jet 2, TUI and Easyjet Holidays for less than booking direct, and works with other providers to arrange everything from luxury sunshine breaks to skiing, cruises and more.

His highlights so far have been a multi-centre Bali holiday for a West Mercia Police staff member and saving over £900 on a

retired officer's honeymoon to the Maldives.

"I aim to provide the best value and price, not a discount, genuinely the best price I can achieve. With my Emergency Services Pledge, if my commission is over £100 – with certain conditions - you get half of that commission back in cash when you get home!"

Passionate about wellbeing, Geoff, who retired in 2021, provides great prices, stress-free planning and booking and financial security through his consumer protection provider 'Protected Trust Services'. Flight packages are ATOL certificate protected.

He asks: "Ultimately, if you can't trust a former police colleague, who can you trust?"

And the company name? "It was the nickname for the rugby trips I organised for friends for European Cup finals and Internationals. I still do these but a whole lot more now! 'Slightly Greying Strawberry Blond Tours' doesn't have the same ring!"

"I used to think it was cheaper doing it yourself rather than using an agent, how wrong was I? Get in touch before you book and I promise on most occasions I can get you a better price, even for those on police 'discount' sites.

For bookings in January and February 2024, quote "WMPFMag" and get an extra £25 off.

BOOK YOUR 2024 STAY AT OUR CORNWALL HOLIDAY HOME

Bookings can now be made for 2024 stays at the West Mercia Police Federation holiday home in Cornwall

The three-bedroomed property is close to Lusty Glaze Beach in the popular seaside resort of Newquay and is available at discounted rentals for Federation members and subscribers to the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme (GIS).

The property features:

- Three en suite bedrooms
- A spacious lounge/diner and fully fitted kitchen
- Private outdoor space
- WiFi
- Direct access to Porth Beach and the coastal path.

Federation members are entitled to a 10 per cent discount while GIS members receive a 15 per cent discount. If you are a member of both the Federation and the insurance scheme you will receive a 25 per cent discount.

Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis.

[Find out more about the holiday home.](#)



Lusty Glaze holiday home, Cornwall



FREE WILL WRITING SERVICE

A free will writing service is being offered to members of West Mercia Police Federation.

Accord Legal Services, a leading national provider of wills and estate planning services, will also extend the offer to officers' immediate family members.

Accord can offer help and advice on wills, protective trusts, Lasting Power of Attorney, Court of Protection, and care fees and inheritance tax planning. In addition, the company can provide free practical bereavement advice following the passing of a loved one.

To book an appointment email info@accordwills.co.uk and Accord's booking team will get in touch to arrange a suitable time. Appointments are conducted by telephone, Skype, Zoom or home visit and usually take around half an hour.

[Find out more about Accord.](#)

WEST MERCIA MAP MAKES IDEAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

A limited number of framed Giclee prints of an A3 sized map of the West Mercia policing area are available to buy from the Federation office.

The map was commissioned by West Mercia Police Federation last year and drawn by freelance artist and illustrator Laura Hallett who specialises in illustrated maps and whose clients include BBC Countryfile and the National Trust.

"These framed prints make an excellent present for a serving or retired officer," said Pete Nightingale, the branch secretary.

"While there are a limited number of framed prints, we do also have some unframed prints too."

The framed prints are £25 each, while the unframed prints are £20 each.

Please [contact the office](#) ASAP to avoid disappointment.





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