

FEDERATION



West Midlands Police Federation
October/November 2022

SHARON'S MARATHON EFFORT

Pages 12 and 13

A FOND FAREWELL TO FORCE CHAPLAIN

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WELCOME

Welcome to the October/November 2022 edition of **Federation** - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role - though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

Cover photo: Belfast hosted this year's National Police Memorial Day. Photograph by Anderson Photography.

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Federation is produced by XPR (UK) Ltd on behalf of West Midlands Police Federation.

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Many processes seemed to be managed so much better before



By **Rich Cooke**, chair of West Midlands Police Federation

As we head into colder months, it's clear the seasons are changing - but something that isn't changing, and unfortunately seems to be a constant theme at the moment, is the complete lack of regard those in power have for the work-life balance of police officers.

Recently, I raised concerns about the repeated cancellation of colleagues' rest days, at the same time as we find the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) regularly block booking our officers for court cases over extended periods of time, which is restricting their ability to make

plans or book holidays. This is unacceptable and, although we know both are a reality of a career in policing, the frequency of such demands are too often destroying our personal lives and leading to understandable resentment of the job.

Only recently I received an email from a detective who had been block booked for court the whole of September and October. This is madness and I've been raising this repeatedly with the Chief Constable since the beginning of the year - and will continue to do so until we see change. Such issues are acknowledged, but I am frustrated and we need to see urgent progress.

I know it can be different, because for most of my 22 years' service, such things were rare to non-existent. You would never see officers

being asked to book two months in their diary - barring a major murder trial. Two months of uncertainty, and time officers can't make any plans at all. Today's world of policing is fast becoming a sharp contrast to our past, when officers were treated with a basic respect which resonated through our systems, and was more than lip service.

With regards to rest days being cancelled, from the Tory Party Conference to numerous football fixtures and, of course, the Commonwealth Games, this is leaving many drained and fed up colleagues in need of a holiday. This is a major concern for me. Not only is this further increasing stress levels, but increasing fatigue. It also could well lead to future problems of skills retention when public order trained colleagues stop putting

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themselves forward for over-time - unfortunately, it's a vicious circle.

I'm also echoing the feelings of our branch secretary, Tim Rogers, when I urge the new Prime Minister and Home Secretary to repair the Government's damaged relationship with the police, and correct the mistakes that have previously been made.

That leads me onto my continued calls for more officers to be Taser trained. The STRA (Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment) has been written but we still haven't seen the final product to provide feedback.

“ CONGRATULATIONS TO SHARON JOHNSON, WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THIS YEAR'S LONDON MARATHON IN SUPPORT OF HER HUSBAND, CHRIS. A HUGE WELL DONE.

Three years ago we had around 1,461 Taser-trained officers, but that figure is outdated. Disappointingly, we now have only around 1,000 "in ticket" Taser officers. With an average of 200 assaults on colleagues every month that number should be far, far higher - in fact, every officer who wears our uniform and others should have the option to carry a Taser. While I don't expect that to happen just yet, it won't stop me campaigning for what is right and giving all of us the protection we deserve.

Since the last magazine, I've taken part in this year's Police Unity Tour and let's just say it was extremely gruelling - every pedal was physically hard but it was worth it; it clearly means so much to the relatives of those we're all cycling for. I'll be back on the saddle next year, and I hope more from our Force will join me.

I'll end by passing on my congratulations to Sharon Johnson, who successfully completed this year's London Marathon in support of her husband, Chris. A huge well done to Sharon and the team from West Midlands Police who completed the 26-mile route. Our Federation is extremely proud of you all and your continued fundraising efforts.

Chris mentored me when I first became chair of the branch, and I've enjoyed taking part in some of the previous numerous fundraising efforts of #WMPMND. I class both Chris and Sharon as friends, and we continue to follow their story, never giving up hope that a cure for this terrible condition can soon be found.

To all of our members, look after each other and keep safe.

Knife crime: 'We have to get a grip on it'

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has called for a tougher response to knife crime and urged politicians to prioritise making Britain's streets safer.

Rich was speaking after three people were stabbed when they tried stop a phone snatch robbery in central London on Thursday 6 October.

A group of two or three masked knifemen attacked a pedestrian in Bishopsgate on Thursday morning and members of the public suffered stab wounds when they tried to intervene.

Speaking on Jeremy Kyle's Talk TV breakfast show the following day, Rich said a more visible police presence may have prevented the attack.

He said: "You have to ask yourself, if there was more of a visible presence of officers in communities and on the streets of the City of London, our capital, would this have actually happened?"

"If you go to somewhere like New York, with the presence of police there, would it have happened in a city like that?"

"We have got to get back to having that visible police presence but it is not going to be cheap."

Rich said policing had to deliver a stronger response to street crime and also called for maximum sentences to be imposed on offenders convicted of carrying a knife.

"We need to be much stronger as a police force," he said.

"About 10 years ago there was a big push within the criminal justice system and policing to keep young people out of custody

and some people may say quite rightly so.

"But when we think about knife crime, a lot of the individuals who commit this are young people, 10 to 17-year-olds and, of course, we don't want them in custody."

"But when we are talking about really serious offences like knife carrying and violence and children being killed, we have to start putting decent members of the public first."

Rich said tackling street violence and knife crime involved short-term and long-term strategies.

He said: "The long-term solution is definitely communicating out into the communities and putting that social side into place, addressing the root causes."

"However, in the short run, how are we going to save lives today and tomorrow? It is about using our powers unapologetically - stop and search, Section 60s when we have an incident."

"We have inspectors who are unfortunately reluctant to use those powers because of the tacit messaging from leadership and from Government over the past few years."

"None of the politicians I have seen are willing to prioritise getting the streets back under control."

"But we have to get a grip on it and it is about tough, unapologetic police tactics and sentencing that has to fit the gravity of these offences because if you carry a knife you are a potential killer and we have got to start treating them in that way."



New ministers urged to tackle crisis in policing

West Midlands Police Federation is calling on the Government to repair its damaged relationship with the police after years of cutbacks.

Branch secretary Tim Rogers said the new administration would have to acknowledge the mistakes of previous governments and take urgent measures to correct them.

He said: "The previous administration was forced into announcing a very slight reinvestment in policing due to the mistakes its predecessors had made with austerity.

"Successive governments took the police service to the point of inefficiency with years of cutbacks and ill-judged cost saving measures and the last administration was eventually forced to take action by starting to reinvest but much of it felt too little too late.

"The new Government now has the opportunity to make its mark by ordering a review of how policing is funded and how officers are paid and the right calls could have a really positive impact on our members.

"There is also a lot of pressure on the service to meet the targets for the Police Uplift Programme and that is another issue that will continue to create more problems.

"The Government has to make a priority of giving forces the ability to recruit the right people and that all goes back to pay and conditions."

Tim said the Home Secretary should meet Police Federation officials to discuss ongoing issues faced by members as soon as possible.

He said: "Our views on the policies of previous home secretaries are well known so hopefully the latest incumbent will start to sort out the mess over police pay and pensions that has been kicked down the road for so long.

"Our members have been very badly treated in recent years so the time is now right to correct some of the mistakes of the past and start showing them a bit more respect, acknowledge the risks they take and properly



reward them for the incredibly difficult jobs they do.

"Police officers hold a unique position in society and I fear that previous governments may have lost sight of the importance of the role they play in keeping this country safe and secure, particularly when the cost of living crisis has led to warnings of civil unrest by angry members of the public in a new winter of discontent."

The Police Federation said it would continue to drive home its message that it is unacceptable that police officers have seen a 25 per cent real term pay cut over the last 12 years.

It has also written to the Prime Minister about the crisis in policing, drawing attention to the serious concerns over police pay and working conditions and pointing out that this year's pay award will barely cover soaring energy costs faced by members this winter.

Tim added: "West Midlands Police officers

have only ever asked to be treated fairly and with respect and I hope the Home Secretary takes measures to ensure that happens.

"Hopefully we can now move forward together with the Government to create a police service our members are proud of and that the public deserves."

Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn said the importance of good relations with the incoming leadership could not be overstated.

He said: "We are now in an inexcusable situation where we have police officers resorting to food vouchers to feed their families and one in seven officers struggling to cover monthly essentials.

"The Home Secretary must ensure officers have a proper welfare provision, the correct equipment and enough colleagues to ensure they can do their jobs properly and provide the level of service the public expects of them."

“OUR MEMBERS HAVE BEEN VERY BADLY TREATED IN RECENT YEARS SO THE TIME IS NOW RIGHT TO CORRECT SOME OF THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST AND START SHOWING THEM A BIT MORE RESPECT, ACKNOWLEDGE THE RISKS THEY TAKE AND PROPERLY REWARD THEM FOR THE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT JOBS THEY DO.

Federation chair calls for massive investment in policing in TV interview

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation has spoken about officers' frustrations with the criminal justice system during an interview on national television.

Rich Cooke called for tougher sentences for people caught in possession of weapons, during a discussion on policing and the criminal justice system with presenter Jeremy Kyle on Talk TV.

Rich said: "Most of my colleagues would agree we need tougher sentences but unfortunately the powers that be – chief officers and above – don't seem to agree.

"They seem to be too busy making excuses for criminals. There's confused messages going through the criminal justice system.

"Even at the point of arrest, I can tell you examples of people who have been found with knives in areas where murders have happened and because they're still classed as juvenile, they've been refused detention in custody.

"That's because of protocols within the system and they need to stop. And what the police need to do, because I speak on behalf of the police, is make sure that whenever anyone's caught with a knife they're kept in

custody, they're charged and they go before the courts."

He added: "We need far tougher sentences on knife crime. There's supposed to be rules around repeat offenders going to prison, and even those aren't enforced.

"We see time and time again, offenders with the most vicious weapons on the street that we have arrested, we have dealt with, we put them before the courts and they're released the same day.

"That's the most frustrating thing."

Rich called on police chiefs and politicians to back officers in their fight against crime.

He said: "Our officers are doing their damndest and they're so frustrated at the lack of backing from leadership, the lack of backing from politicians.

"Politicians are full of warm words yet they've absolutely decimated the police service over the last 10 or 12 years – make no mistake about it."

And he also called for a massive investment in policing, training, and infrastructure to get the police back into communities.

Rich said: "I think the problem is that the type of policing we need, which is rooted in local communities, has sadly disappeared over

the last 12 to 15 years.

"We've had this business culture in the upper echelons of policing, who've decided we need to treat the public like customers.

"They've taken away local police stations – mine has been turned into luxury flats. We're no longer in communities. We don't know what's going on as much. And we're far further away from the public than we've ever been."

He added: "It's not only about police officer numbers, it's about infrastructure. Numbers have gone up recently, we welcome that, but if there isn't a local station, if officers aren't invested in with training.

"The other day I was at Wolverhampton. There's one tutor constable per nine recruits on that particular day. So one experienced officer trying to train nine officers.

"Normally it would be one to four, but even one to four is a disgrace. The new recruits are being let down.

"Give us the investment in terms of training, we need forensic investigators to back us up, we need less bureaucracy, we need people to back us on stop and search, because there are far too many mixed messages on stop and search, so we can go out there and really tackle the criminals.

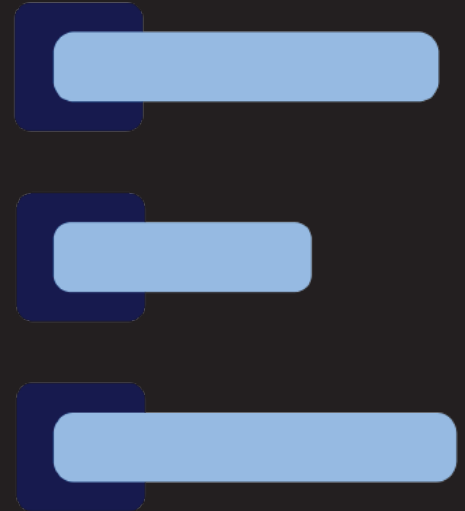
"Believe you me, that's what we all want to do," he added.

[Watch Rich's interview on the Talk TV YouTube channel.](#)

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PAY & MORALE SURVEY 2022



West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has thanked members who “made their views known” by taking part in the Police Federation’s 2022 pay and morale survey.

The survey was combined for the first time with the demand, capacity and welfare survey and was designed to gain the views from officers on the frontline.

It covered issues including pay, morale and wellbeing and the findings will be used to support the Police Federation’s campaign for fairer pay for officers.

Rich said: “I know how frustrated colleagues are at present having gone through a summer of disruption and yet another decrease in our real pay and the findings of this year’s survey will be used to press for positive change.

“The Police Federation needs current, empirical evidence from our members,

now more than ever, to fight on their behalf so although it took time and effort to complete the survey it is a massive help when we put together cohesive arguments that can gain traction with influential people, media commentators and the public.

“We will use the findings as part of our campaign for better pay and conditions and for reform of the pay system. The more members who complete the survey the stronger our voice will be, so I am extremely grateful to those who made their views known.”

Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn added: “We greatly appreciate members taking the time to support the service by filling in this survey, the evidence and insights from the findings will be used to inform our policies and direction going forward. Your opinion matters to us, we are listening.”

“ WE WILL USE THE FINDINGS AS PART OF OUR CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER PAY AND CONDITIONS AND FOR REFORM OF THE PAY SYSTEM. THE MORE MEMBERS WHO COMPLETE THE SURVEY, THE STRONGER OUR VOICE WILL BE, SO I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN.

‘Make **your** views known’ in pay and morale survey

Tim represents branch at Labour conference meeting

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers has taken part in talks with politicians at the Labour Party Conference.

Tim was part of a Police Federation delegation which travelled to Liverpool for an engagement meeting which took place away from the conference itself. The conference ran from 25 to 28 September.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper, shadow policing minister Sarah Jones, West Midlands Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Tom McNeil, Commons Home Affairs Select Committee chair Diana Johnson and shadow minister for employment rights Justin Madden were all present.

Tim said the meeting gave both sides the opportunity to raise issues facing policing and how they could work together to address them.

“WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW IS SIMPLY TRYING TO QUICKLY RESTORE THE BALANCE BUT ARE ONLY LOOKING AT OFFICER NUMBERS. THE INFRASTRUCTURE WAS ALREADY CREAKING BUT NOW IT HAS IMPOLODED.

He said Ms Cooper was particularly interested in the recruitment and retention of officers and the Police Uplift Programme, the challenge of meeting its targets and fears that the quality of new recruits could be compromised.

Policing infrastructure in relation to recruitment was also discussed during the conversation with the Federation delegates suggesting important support structures lost alongside 25,000 officers needed to be properly replaced to cope with the uplift influx.

Tim said: “What we are doing now is simply trying to quickly restore the balance



Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper.

but are only looking at officer numbers. The infrastructure was already creaking but now it has imploded.”

Issues surrounding learning and development were also discussed and it was pointed out that some experienced officers are reluctant to get involved with tutoring because of the numbers expected, the quality of the recruits and the risks they feel are being imposed upon them for little or no extra remuneration.

Tim said shadow policing minister Ms Jones was keen to see entry routes being reviewed and was interested in the scenario at West Midlands Police in which seven police officers who are operationally competent are being progressed through Regulation 13 and leaving the Force because they have failed to pass their degrees.

He said: “These officers are competent but unable to pass the academic side of things. But, of course, we are massively invested in the degree programme with the only clear winners being the university.”

The meeting came after Ms Cooper promised Labour would take on an extra 13,000 police officers if it won the next election.

She outlined how a Labour Government would recruit more police officers, PCSOs and

Special Constables in an effort to cut crime and restore confidence in the police while also bringing back the last Labour administration’s focus on neighbourhood policing.

Ms Cooper said: “We are announcing this week that we have got to return to neighbourhood policing. We have seen the clock hugely turned back on the policing in our communities that Labour brought in.”

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She added that focusing on neighbourhood policing was “about both expanding policing in our communities, but it is also a reform because it’s about the way in which we police, if you’ve got police embedded in those communities, providing intelligence and working together”.

Bringing police officers into communities, she argued, was “incredibly important in terms of prevention, in terms of preventing people being drawn into crime, in terms of keeping people safe and in terms of following-up”.

Ms Jones told the same event that a Labour government would overhaul police standards, including officers’ social media use.

She said: “It’s for us to make sure that those brilliant police officers, which is the majority of our police officers, are not being dragged down by those few who are not expressing the cultures and the behaviours that we would expect of them.”

Ms Jones explained Labour would speed up police misconduct proceedings and introduce compulsory training on subjects such as violence against women and girls and racism.

Support to pro at pol



Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead on response driving and police driver training.

Support for bid to protect officers from vehicle stops

A Federation campaign for a change in the law which would mean officers could require motorists to get out of their vehicles after a police stop is set to be reinvigorated with the support of a Conservative MP.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation lead on response driving and police driver training, has led the campaign after a growing number of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers who when stopped by police refused to get out of their vehicle and instead drove at them when making off.

He was among a group of Federation officials who attended an engagement event with MPs arranged during the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham which ran from 2 to 5 October.

"During this meeting I had a very interesting conversation with Jane Hunt, Conservative MP for Loughborough in Leicestershire, who was interested in our work to secure an amendment to Section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 or a new power under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)," says Tim.

"Albeit this was not on the list for discussion, I took the opportunity to ask her to be the sponsor for our previously unsuccessful bid for a change to legislation to be reinvigorated. She kindly accepted.

"We need more to be done to protect police officers. Far too many have been injured by those who use their vehicles as a weapon to seek to avoid arrest when stopped by police. A legal requirement for people to leave their vehicle when asked to do so by a police officer could reduce the number of incidents where officers are injured in these circumstances.

"We have gathered a body of evidence from officers who have been injured or who have felt at risk in such incidents and this will support our bid for legislative change."

Ms Hunt was also familiar with the Federation's successful campaign to give police drivers better protection in law with their driving set to be judged by the standards of their trained peers rather than the previous 'careful and competent' driver under the provisions of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

She was supportive of the Federation's calls for an amendment to the act so that the

way officers' driving is assessed is set out in law rather than in new Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and also agreed to ask the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to respond to a Federation request for the DPP guidance to be updated in line with the legislative changes.

The engagement meeting in Birmingham was attended by a number of MPs including Bob Blackman (Harrow East), Louie French (Old Bexley and Sidcup), Mark Eastwood (Dewsbury) and Andy Carter (Warrington South). Others in attendance included Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mould.

Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn and deputy chair Tiff Lynch were also joined by a number of Federation officials including Nicky Ryan, the Welsh lead, Steve Taylor from the Federation's Parliamentary Working Group, and Dave Bamber who leads on the Special Constabulary.

One of the main areas of discussion was the Police Uplift Programme and the risks to its success due to attrition rates.

"Both Jane and Andy were understanding of the tension and pressure caused by the ambitious uplift target. They understood our concerns re the infrastructure not being capable of supporting such rapid growth and would be supportive of realignment of the funds which could mean taking some of the £17 billion funding and using it to create the supportive structure the police service needs to support the 20,000 extra officers recruited through the three-year uplift programme," says Tim.

Other topics covered included the Federation's calls for amendments to Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) disclosure guidance which has left officers struggling under a huge workload.

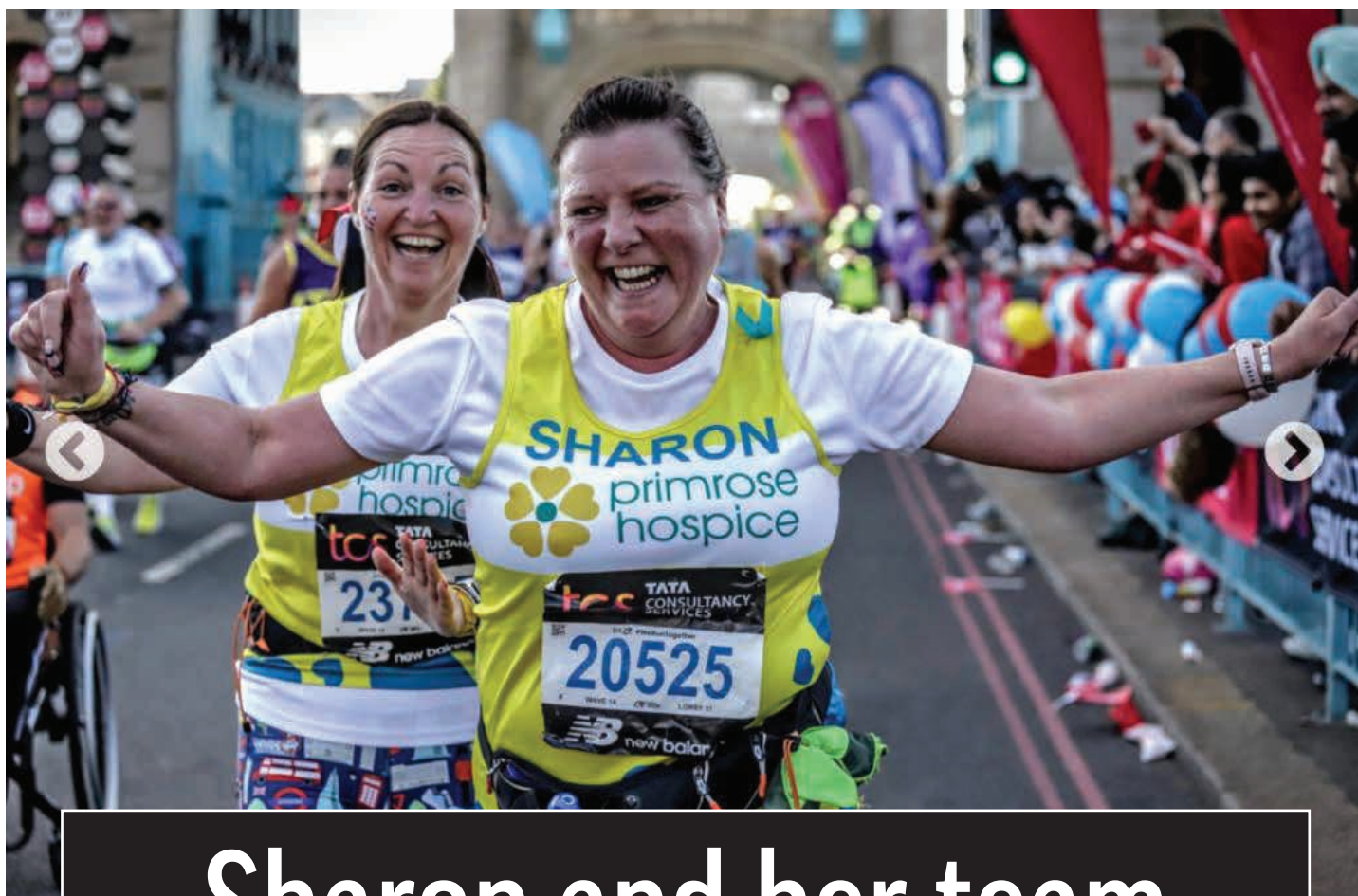
The CPS guidance, introduced last year and known as DG6, is having an huge impact on officers and staff.

Tiff explained: "Those at the meeting grasped what we were saying in terms of DG6 and Mark Eastwood in particular showed support for our campaign. All in all, the meeting was really productive, giving us the chance to have face to face engagement with MPs, explain the realities of policing and the challenges officers are facing.

"We need to forge effective relationships with MPs if we are to properly represent our members' views and help politicians develop a deeper understanding of the pressure officers face, the ever-changing demands of policing our communities and the need for more consistent long-term funding in policing.

"The Government's number one priority should be the safety and security of the public and policing has a massive part to play in that."

“ WE NEED MORE TO BE DONE TO PROTECT POLICE OFFICERS. FAR TOO MANY HAVE BEEN INJURED BY THOSE WHO USE THEIR VEHICLES AS A WEAPON TO SEEK TO AVOID ARREST WHEN STOPPED BY POLICE. A LEGAL REQUIREMENT FOR PEOPLE TO LEAVE THEIR VEHICLE WHEN ASKED TO DO SO BY A POLICE OFFICER COULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS WHERE OFFICERS ARE INJURED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. ”



Sharon and her team complete London Marathon

“Without a doubt, it was Facetimeing Chris at the halfway point that kept me going,” says a former West Midlands police officer who successfully completed this year’s London Marathon in honour of her terminally ill husband.

Sharon Johnson (51) finished the 26.2 mile route on Sunday 2 October raising almost £11,000 for [Primrose Hospice](#), the charity which is supporting her husband and former Assistant Chief Constable Chris, who is living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

Sharon was joined by a trio of her previous co-workers and best friends, Kristal Taylor, Sally Duff and Shereen Ballintine.

“Am I glad I did it? Yes. Would I do it again? No. It was without a doubt, the hardest thing I have ever done, both physically and mentally - but what an experience,” said Sharon, who we caught up with two days after the event.

“Everyone who knows me knows that when I say I’ll do something, I will do it. There was no way I wasn’t crossing that finish line on

Sunday.”

The team was running for Chris (55) who was diagnosed with MND in 2018. He worked up until 2020, which is when his condition worsened and he was forced to retire, 29 years after first joining the police.

Sharon added: “When I got home, I was greeted by a big bunch of flowers, a card and a bottle of fizz. Chris was in bed but awake because he knew I’d be coming home - I went in and gave him the biggest hug, and he told me how proud he was of me. I just burst into tears.

“I think he’d got so sick of me talking about how I was running the marathon, but now he’ll just have to listen to how I actually completed the marathon.”

Sharon explained that having run the first 17 miles, she started to experience problems

with her left calf, admitting that she was in ‘absolute agony’.

“People were tracking me and they thought I had given up,” continued Sharon, who has two children with Chris, after the couple married in 2001.

“The pain was horrendous. But I gave myself a very good talking to and carried on. To be honest, it’s the crowd that keeps you going, they are just phenomenal. They’re giving you sweets, high-fiving you and shouting your name.

“The atmosphere is just incredible, you can’t beat it.”

At that point, Sharon received a message from her sister-in-law, who was at home with Chris, telling her that their fundraising efforts had hit the £10,000 mark.

She added: “From then on, it was mind over

“ **EVERYONE WHO KNOWS ME KNOWS THAT WHEN I SAY I’LL DO SOMETHING, I WILL DO IT. THERE WAS NO WAY I WASN’T CROSSING THAT FINISH LINE ON SUNDAY.** ”



Chris and Sharon Johnson are greeted by Chief Superintendent Sallie Churchill and Chief Constable David Thompson at the recent Commonwealth Games.

body but there was never any question that I wouldn't cross that finish line. I needed to dig deep but I did it."

To help with their fundraising efforts, Sharon and the team received sponsorship for each mile run, with Chris donating £20 for mile 26.

"I did a Facebook Live video during the final stretch and dedicated my final mile to Chris," Sharon said.

"I remember it wasn't too far from the end and a woman who was spectating said to me, 'you've got this, you've done something amazing today, you have run the London Marathon'. At the same time, Buckingham Palace came into sight and the tears just started flowing. I don't know if I was elated or just relieved, it's such a strange feeling."

Chris's fundraisers completed the run in six hours and fifty minutes, slightly longer than hoped for due to Sharon's injury.

"I'm in a lot of pain now, I'm very sore. My bottom half isn't currently working," laughed Sharon days after the marathon. "But I did it, and I did it with some of my best friends - could I ask for better friends really? What an achievement."

"When we crossed the finish line, we just hugged each other. It hasn't hit me yet what I've done. I don't think it will hit me for a while."

Shining even more of a light on Sharon's inspirational story is the BBC, who contacted her and asked if they could share her experience as part of the weekend's marathon coverage.

"This is huge for Primrose Hospice, I'm so happy that I've been able to get their name out there, to the nation. It will mean so much to them."

So far, Sharon and the team have raised



Team Chris.

nearly £11,000 for Primrose Hospice, a local charity which provides vital support to people living with life-limiting illnesses, as well as their families.

"It's been unbelievable really. We've had donations from family, friends, old colleagues and even Charlotte Hawkins, from Good Morning Britain, has donated, as well as our local MP Sajid Javid," added Sharon, who says she has since received hundreds of messages from friends and family, congratulating her for running the route.

Their fundraising efforts come a year after more than 300 officers as well as their families and friends took part in the Rock 'n' Roll Liverpool Marathon and Half Marathon as part of team #WMPMND. To date and including the money raised from this year's marathon, Sharon and her colleagues have almost hit the £80,000 mark, shared between the MND Association and Primrose Hospice.

She started running shortly after Chris received his diagnosis although back then she admits she could barely manage half a mile.

"I quickly realised that running was good for my mental health and gave me something to focus on," adds Sharon.

Over the past few months, Chris's condition has dramatically deteriorated. Other than his fingers, he has lost all movement in his body from the neck down and he relies on Sharon to help him with almost everything, including eating.

"When Chris was diagnosed we both said that we would live for today and nothing would stop us. It's really important to us that MND doesn't take over our lives," Sharon added.

The couple recently attended the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games, after Chris received a special invitation.

"When we found out Birmingham was

going to host the Commonwealth Games, Chris was still at work. After he retired having been diagnosed, Chris kept in touch with Ian Reid, the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, and he was promised an invite to the opening ceremony. I remember Chris always said to me, 'if I'm still here,'" explained Sharon.

"So when the invite for the opening ceremony landed, it was so special. We had reached a huge milestone.

"We were at the ceremony, soaking up the atmosphere and Chris looked at me and said 'I made it'. It was very emotional, as you can imagine, there were lots of tears that day."

You can still [donate to Sharon and the team's JustGiving page](#).



Sharon and friend Kristal Taylor.

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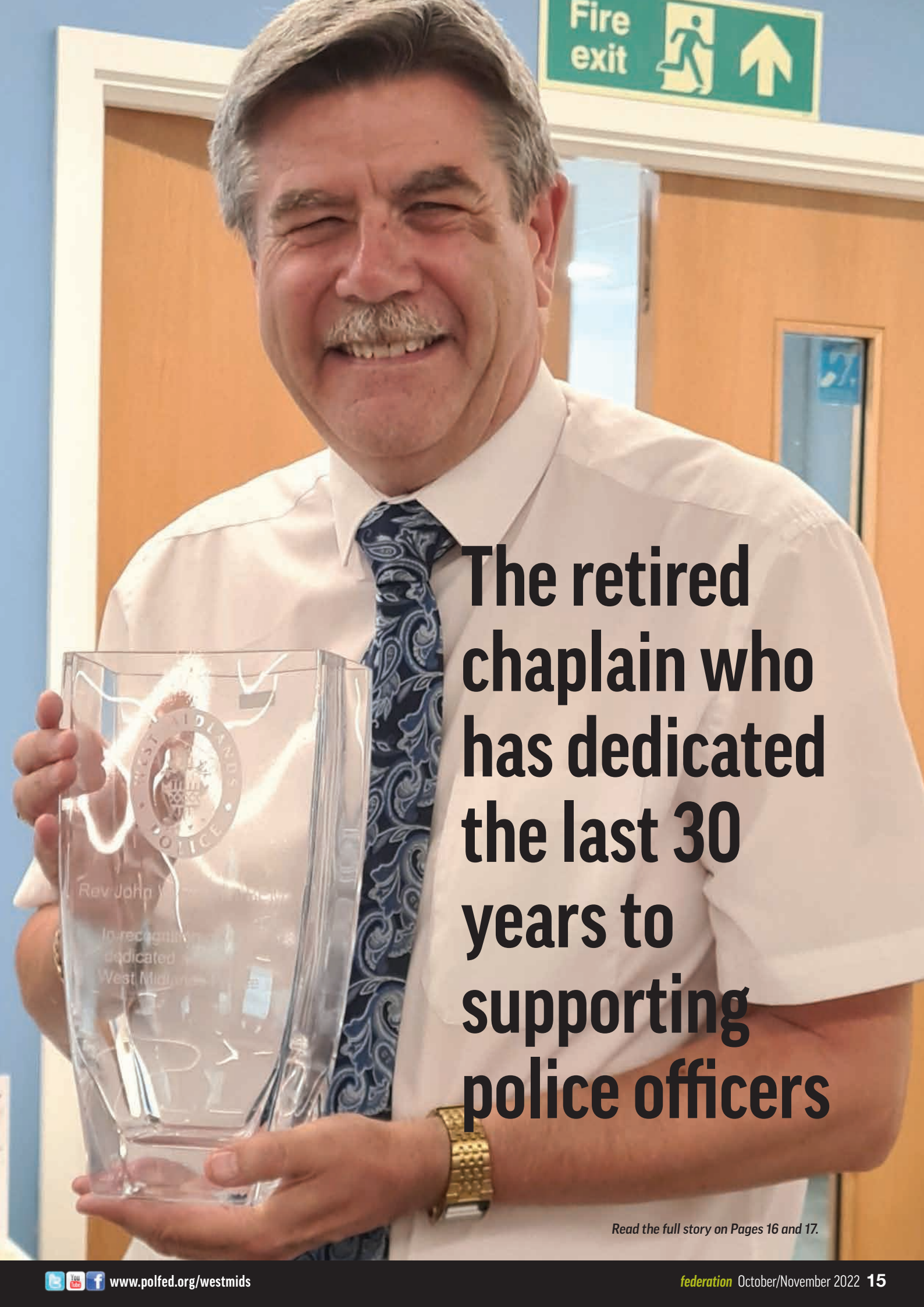
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The retired chaplain who has dedicated the last 30 years to supporting police officers

West Midlands Police
Rev John [Name]
In recognition of
dedicated
West Midlands

Read the full story on Pages 16 and 17.

FORCE STALWART



John Butcher and his family on the night he received his BEM.

After spending three years studying to be a minister at Bible College, John Butcher never thought life would lead him into chaplaincy with the Force. Here we are, 30 years after he first started working with the police, John, now retired, looks back at his captivating career, which saw him successfully grow the West Midlands chaplaincy team from just four to more than 150 volunteers across the region.

"Well, my story started when I was in Hackney," 66-year-old John began.

"I'd trained as a minister and moved down to London, with Hackney being my first church. The community had gang-related problems that included drug crime and multicultural issues. It was in the period of the Gulf War, and the police wanted there to be calmness in the area, so they got in touch with me and other people of different faiths, in hope that we would begin

to work together to tackle some of the problems."

Having been contacted by the Met Police, John started venturing out with officers on a couple of shifts. However, never did he imagine that a 'little visit out with the police' would lead to him volunteering and working with the police service for the next three decades.

"I did a night shift with them which was surreal. I was shocked to see what was actually happening at 3am, at a time when I thought people were asleep and tucked up in bed," explained John, who, having had such a positive impact on officers, was asked to volunteer more permanently with the Force.

"And I was delighted to help out," he continued. "Of course, I started helping out for two to three hours a week, and that grew and grew. The officers I worked with were so welcoming, I made a lot of friends during my

time there."

John continued to volunteer with the Met up until 2002, before moving up to Birmingham to take on a local church and join West Midlands Police as a voluntary chaplain.

In 2009, having spent seven years volunteering with West Midlands Police, the Force's lead chaplain was leaving and recommended John to take on the role.

Following an interview, John took on the role of lead chaplain part-time, upon the agreement that he would build a team of volunteers to support him from local stations across the West Midlands.

He recalled: "I was doing two days, then three and I was gradually growing the team to 10, then 20, then 30 and now we're on 131 chaplains and 20 faith advisers. Of course, as the team grew, my job grew too and I was soon working with the force full-time."

John says it is 'unbelievable' to see how much the chaplaincy team has grown. He added: "Although the role of officers has changed, they will always need our support. In fact, the need for support for officers has grown over time, due to the increasing pressures and stress of the job."

“ALTHOUGH THE ROLE OF OFFICERS HAS CHANGED, THEY WILL ALWAYS NEED OUR SUPPORT. IN FACT, THE NEED FOR SUPPORT FOR OFFICERS HAS GROWN OVER TIME, DUE TO THE INCREASING PRESSURES AND STRESS OF THE JOB.”



John receives an award from Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine.

John believes that the chaplaincy team has three main roles, and that is to support officers and staff across the Force, to help train teams so they understand all the faiths better, and to network with members of the local community and the police.

“All the volunteers within the team are from different backgrounds or faiths, so they can understand so many issues that occur across the West Midlands,” he explains.

“ ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WITHIN THE TEAM ARE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS OR FAITHS, SO THEY CAN UNDERSTAND SO MANY ISSUES THAT OCCUR ACROSS THE WEST MIDLANDS.

“If people come to me for advice or support, I know that if I don't know the answer, my volunteers will. They are a very valuable team.

“And I firmly believe that the more the community and police work together, the better it is for everyone.”

John said it is an honour to be a part of the

‘police family’. He added: “I really respect the police for how they deal with their emotions and the situations that they are put in linked to their role. I have seen some of these horrific situations first hand. The police are human beings and need all the help and support that we can give.

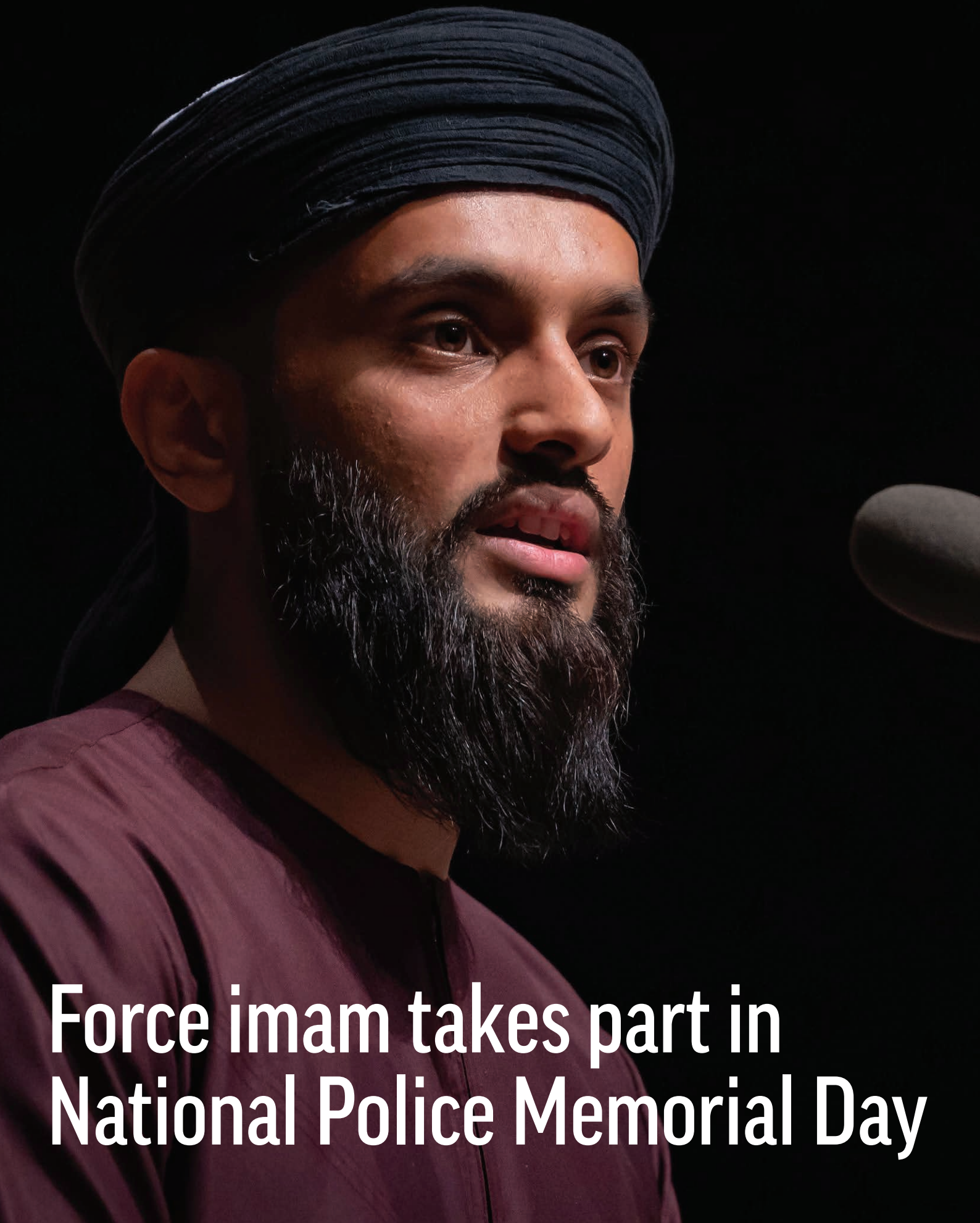
“Although I've never been a police officer

myself, I am so thankful for them and the work that they do.”

A highlight of John's career was of course being awarded the BEM (British Empire Medal), an achievement that was celebrated this year - having been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic - with a visit to one of the Buckingham Palace's garden parties.



John Butcher (third from right, front row) with the multi-faith chaplaincy team.



Force imam takes part in National Police Memorial Day

West Midlands PC Emad Choudhury spoke at this year's National Police Memorial Day service in Belfast.

Emad is the West Midlands Police imam and faith lead, and co-vice chair of the West Midlands' Association of Muslim Police.

He read from the Muslim Tradition during the service on Sunday 25 September, which honoured fallen officers' commitment, bravery and sacrifice.

He said: "My message to my fallen colleagues, my friends, my family. You have not just given up something for someone else, but you have saved humanity.

"Know that a sacrifice is never in vain, when you give up something valuable knowing Allah awaits you with something more valuable.

"He is just by nature and will grant you your due reward. I pray you are reunited with loved ones at the gates of heaven where there lies no sacrifice, no hardship, and no tears."

Emad also [posted on his Twitter](#) that he was honoured to be speaking at the event in memory of fallen colleagues.

"A time to celebrate their legacy of an ultimate sacrifice," he said.

Emad was joined in the congregation of almost 2,000 people at Belfast's Waterfront Hall by secretaries of state, police chiefs and family and friends of fallen officers.

Rich Cooke, West Midlands Police Federation chair who represented the branch at the service along with workplace representative Rod Rose, said: "The National Police Memorial Day service is always a poignant occasion, but

Standards are lowered in the act of remembrance.



Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.

especially in Northern Ireland where so many colleagues were murdered during the troubles. It was very moving to see the policing family come together to pay their respects in person for the first time since the pandemic. It was great to see our Honour Guard there, who do such a tremendous job for us and were ably led by Sergeant Ben Westwood.

"The service and sacrifice of our fallen

colleagues will never be forgotten by any of us."

Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who gave a reading during the service, said: "To all the officers who lost their lives while working to keep us safe, we thank you and we honour you.

"Their bravery and commitment to their duty was unflinching. Society owes them and

Continued overleaf

“MY MESSAGE TO MY FALLEN COLLEAGUES, MY FRIENDS, MY FAMILY. YOU HAVE NOT JUST GIVEN UP SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE, BUT YOU HAVE SAVED HUMANITY.



NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY



Home Secretary Suella Braverman addresses the congregation.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography.



Rich Cooke, West Midlands Police Federation chair, and Rod Rose, workplace representative attended the service.

their loved ones a debt we cannot repay, but it is one we will not forget.

“As Home Secretary I make a promise to give police the powers and tools they need to do their jobs safely.”

During the service, candles were lit by relatives in remembrance of officers throughout the country who have lost their lives, one from each of the four nations of the United Kingdom.

Representing England was Kat Dumphreys, widow of PC Nick Dumphreys, who died on 26 January 2000, aged 47. He sustained fatal injuries when the police vehicle he was driving was in a single vehicle collision on the M6.

Liam Kelly, chair of the Police Federation for Northern Ireland, read the names of officers who have lost their lives during the past year – PC Daniel Golding, Metropolitan Police, PC Craig Higgins, Greater Manchester Police, PC Alex Prentice, Northamptonshire Police, and PC

Darryl Street, Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

He said: “National Police Memorial Day is an occasion to reflect and celebrate the best in policing not only in Northern Ireland but throughout the United Kingdom.

“Daily we see officers stepping up to the mark to safeguard communities and, sadly, on occasion, some officers are injured or lose their

lives in the execution of their duties. This weekend, we say to assembled families that the police ‘family’ recognises, appreciates, and empathises with what you are experiencing and will never forget the sacrifices your loved ones made.”

There was silence as petals of remembrance, representing all who have lost their lives, descended from the gallery as the orchestra played Abide with me and the Last Post was sounded.

Canon David Wilbraham MBE, national police chaplain and co-ordinator of National Police Memorial Day, said: “This is the first time the National Police Memorial Day family has been able to gather in remembrance since the pandemic. Today we held those lost in honour - their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.”

“KNOW THAT A SACRIFICE IS NEVER IN VAIN, WHEN YOU GIVE UP SOMETHING VALUABLE KNOWING ALLAH AWAITS YOU WITH SOMETHING MORE VALUABLE.”



Candles were lit in memory of officers from all four nations.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography.

The standard is lowered in an act of remembrance.



Force comes together to remember Rob Ling



Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, addresses the memorial service.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke joined family members, the Chief Constable, the assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, and serving and retired officers on Friday for a memorial service in honour of DC Rob Ling.

Rob was fatally injured in South Africa on 7 October 2002 when an unmarked police car overturned while he was escorting two murder suspects as they were extradited. He was 27. Rich was among those to address the service, which included Rob's parents, Bob and Ann, along with Chief Constable Dave Thompson and others.

The West Midlands Police Honour Guard was also present. A bugler played the Last Post at the end of the service which was led by police chaplain Matt Hopley.

"It was wonderful to see so many current and retired officers gathered to mark the 20th anniversary of Rob's death and to meet his parents Bob and Ann Ling again," says Rich, "Members of the police family will always remember Rob and keep his family in their thoughts."

Rich took the Federation's welfare van to the event at Sutton Coldfield on Friday 7 October and was able to provide tea and biscuits to guests.



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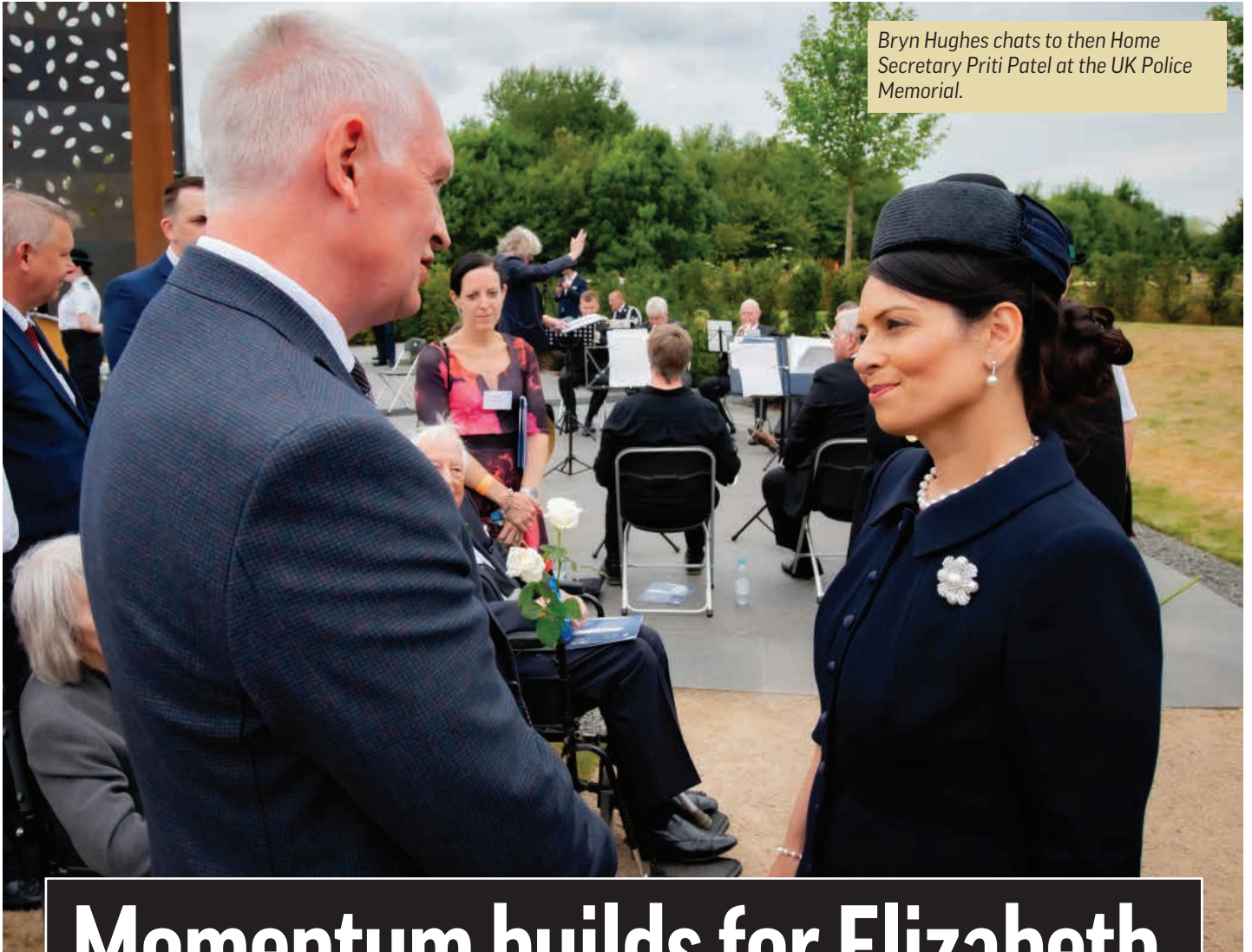
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Bryn Hughes chats to then Home Secretary Priti Patel at the UK Police Memorial.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

Momentum builds for Elizabeth Medal for fallen officers

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have put their name to a letter calling on the Government to establish an Elizabeth Medal for fallen police officers.

Military personnel already receive a medal if they are killed in the line of duty and the campaign for the new medal calls for police officers to be similarly recognised.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said: "I met Bryn several years ago now, sadly after Nicola was murdered on duty with

her colleague Fiona Bone, and count him as a friend. I know from him the difference such recognition would make. It is only right for police officers who give their lives in serving their communities to be honoured with a posthumous award.

"The Police Federation and the Police Superintendents' Association have already got behind this campaign and I am pleased that the majority of PCCs are now adding their support.

"Let's hope the Home Secretary is equally supportive."

The campaign was started by Bryn Hughes and Paul Bone, fathers of PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone, who were tragically murdered by a gunman in Great Manchester a decade ago.

Bryn is a former prison officer who campaigned to establish the dedicated UK Police Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. He also runs the PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund to help children whose parents have been murdered.

Speaking about the Elizabeth Medal campaign, he said: "For the likes of me and other family members, it would be a nice feeling to attend certain remembrance services wearing that medal in their memory and their honour."

“THE POLICE FEDERATION AND THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION HAVE ALREADY GOT BEHIND THIS CAMPAIGN AND I AM PLEASED THAT THE MAJORITY OF PCCS ARE NOW ADDING THEIR SUPPORT. LET'S HOPE THE HOME SECRETARY IS EQUALLY SUPPORTIVE.

Former traffic cop Geoff Brown enjoying his trip down Memory Lane.



Blue Light Breakfast makes ex-traffic cop's day

A West Midlands Police Federation member has helped give a retired officer a trip down Memory Lane after learning he was suffering from dementia.

PC Dean Wainwright went above and beyond after staff at The Knowles care home in Tile Hill, Coventry, told him they wanted to arrange a Blue Light Breakfast for former West Midlands traffic cop Geoff Brown who is now a resident.

But what started out as a small event became a major celebration featuring a classic police car, a police motorbike, a mocked-up crime scene, visits from serving and retired officers and a slap-up sausage and bacon breakfast.

Dean said: "My father is in The Knowles and the manager told me they had another ex-police officer in the care home whose dementia was progressing and that they wanted to do a Blue Light Breakfast for him.

"They said they wanted to make it really special because Geoff is a former Coventry traffic officer and one of the first guys on the new BMW bikes back in the 1970s. So I promised to see what I could do."

Dean then tracked down some of Geoff's former colleagues who all attended the special

Geoff Brown was a Coventry traffic cop in the 1970s and 1980s.



breakfast and he also managed to locate a 1990 Rover Vitesse traffic car which he took along to The Knowles on the day which he arranged and attended during days off.

Staff there had pulled out all the stops to convert the home's front garden into a dummy crime scene complete with body lay-out, CSI numbers and blue and white tape.

And the highlight of the day was when Dean took Geoff out for a ride in the old police car and "patrolled" the local neighbourhoods.

Dean, who is based in Park Lane, Aston,



Dean Wainwright with a 1990 Rover Vitesse police car.

and works with the West Midlands Police drone team and in corporate communications, said: "It was great to see Geoff enjoying himself and being able to recall his time in policing.

"The police family never forgets one of its own and Geoff spent many years as part of our traffic team in the '70s and '80s.

"The care home came up with the idea of the Blue Light Breakfast and I tried to create a traffic police theme as much as possible.

"I managed to track down some of his former colleagues, who kindly came along, and was able to source a vintage car.

"We also had some of the current Coventry neighbourhood team pop in, and all the other care home residents seemed to enjoy the occasion."

The Blue Light Breakfast caught the attention of the BBC Crimewatch Live team who featured the event on one of their national broadcasts.

And as a result the initiative has gathered pace with similar events taking place in other care homes across the region.



The fundraising team.

Family take on challenge in memory of former sergeant

The family of former West Midlands Police Sergeant John Rollason have successfully conquered Snowdon in his memory after he died following a three-year battle with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) at the age of 60.

On Saturday 8 October, the weekend that would have been John's 62nd birthday, his daughters Laura and Ann-Marie, along with Ann-Marie's husband, police officer Dan Fox and several others, climbed more than 1,000 metres to raise money for the MND Association.

Their fundraising efforts came just over a year after father-of-two and grandfather-of-three John died in May 2021, having been diagnosed with the disease back in 2018.

"We carried a photo of Dad with us, so it was as if he was taking on the challenge by our sides. He was definitely there in spirit," said 33-year-old Laura Rollason, who explained that the last challenge her dad took on before his diagnosis was climbing Snowdon.

"He was so proud of climbing Snowdon and he loved a challenge. That photo kept us going and helped us get through the more difficult parts. We got the photo out once we reached the top, I know he would have been very honoured that we had completed the climb in his memory."

The team raised more than £2,000 for MNDA, a charity which aims to improve care and research for those living with Motor Neurone Disease.

"Prior to his diagnosis, Dad was a very fit and active man, which was probably one of the

worst things about him living with the disease - it took away his independence and stopped him from doing the things he loved, like running or playing golf," added Laura.

John, known to many as 'the Sheriff of Bartley Green', joined West Midlands Police back in 1980, spending more than 30 years in the Force before retiring in 2011.

Laura said: "Dad was extremely proud to be a police officer. He joined when he was 19 and the police quickly became his family, the Force gave him a sense of belonging."

As John died during the coronavirus pandemic, it meant that attendance at his funeral was limited due to restrictions. However, as a mark of respect and in honour of John, hundreds of his former colleagues turned out to line Bournville Station to watch as his hearse drove past on its way to his funeral service.

Laura recalled: "When Dad died we heard so many lovely stories about him from his friends and former colleagues in the police. And the amount of people who travelled and turned up to pay their respects was overwhelming."

"People called Dad an 'inspiration' and said he had 'made them the police officer they were'. We saw just how much of an impact he had on people. You know your parents have an impact on you but when you hear how much they have influenced other people's lives, it's incredible."

"One of my favourite stories that he ever told me was about one of the people he had previously arrested, who chased him down the



Daughter Anne-Marie with photo of John.

street. Dad was panicking because he remembered arresting him, but once the offender had eventually caught up with him, it turned out, he wanted to show him a picture of his baby and tell Dad that he had turned his life around. That sums up the kind of man my Dad was. He was firm but fair."

As well as Dan, five other serving officers joined the team over the weekend, including his former colleague, Stuart Parker, along with Libby Hewitt, Gemma Wilkinson, James Hurdidge and Harvey Woodford.

"MND is such an unknown disease, doing this is as much about raising money for charity, as it is about raising awareness of the condition," said Laura.

"There's no cure for MND, which makes it a very frustrating disease to understand, even for the professionals. And until you experience MND, or know about it, it's hard to appreciate just how much the money we raise will mean."

"And Dad was so young when he died, it's so important for us to keep his memory alive."

[You can still donate to Laura and the team's JustGiving page.](#)



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A trainee detective who says she will be 'forever proud' that she was one of the last cohorts sworn in under 'inspirational' Queen Elizabeth II has written a poem in her memory.

Amelia Asquith (24), who studied English literature at university, admits that writing poems help her express her feelings and emotions.

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Amelia wrote a poem, which allowed her to 'express the sorrow' she has been feeling.

"I will be forever proud of the fact that I was one of the last cohorts to be sworn in under the Queen," says Amelia, who is student representative for her cohort and part of the first-ever West Midlands Degree Holder and Detective Entry Programme, a two-year work-based training programme with a specific focus on investigating.

"As a Force which served our Queen and country and now serve our King and country, it is so important for us to respect and mark the passing of the Queen.

"She served us for 70 years, she made us proud and it was time for her to be at peace. My thoughts are with her family and those in our country deeply mourning her loss."

Amelia's poem goes as follows:

**A message to our late Queen
Ma'am you served us for so long
And you took it in your stride,
You held us up, you were so strong
You filled us all with pride.**

**Seventy years you helped us grow
And we watched you grow too,
You may be gone but we all know
The Queen of our hearts is you.**

**You filled our lives with colour and light
You didn't leave us in the dark,
A rainbow filled the sky as you took flight
You left your beautiful mark.**

**We said God save the Queen today
And he answered our prayer,
We'll meet again some sunny day
And you'll live on within your heir.**

**So today we say God save the King
As we say goodbye to you,
This is not an easy thing
But you will guide us through.**

**Gone but not forgotten, returned to those you
lost,
We will forever remember no matter what the
cost.**

"This poem allowed me to express the sorrow and price I felt around the Queen's death. I'm not ashamed to say I shed a tear, the thought that she is all that so many of this



Amelia (right) holding the bear.

Trainee detective writes poem in memory of 'inspirational' Queen Elizabeth II

country have ever known just shows how long she served us and how different life will now be," added Amelia, who has followed in the footsteps of her father, Superintendent Phil Asquith, who is coming up to his 30th year in the Force.

"She was the image of a strong, independent woman in the role of a leader, who made waves and served our country. As a woman myself I found - and will always find - her truly inspirational."

Amelia recalls one of her fondest memories of Queen Elizabeth II was standing outside the front of Buckingham Palace to mark the wedding of William and Kate, the now Prince

and Princess of Wales.

She continued: "I remember it as if it was yesterday. I was standing outside the front of Buckingham Palace in a tiara and dressing gown, with a build-a-bear dressed up like Kate Middleton, which we called 'Kate Middle-Bear'.

"Witnessing the moment when the Royal Family stepped out onto the balcony filled me with a sense of pride that I hold with me until this day, because of the impact that occasion had on so many. The crowd outside Buckingham Palace was buzzing with excitement and people had come from all over the world to take part in this event and 13-year-old me was in awe of them all."

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Review of disclosure fails to address issues, says Detectives' Forum



Jon Nott.

The Attorney General's review of disclosure guidelines won't reduce the huge impact they're having on police officers and crime victims, says the deputy chair of the Police Federation National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF).

Jon Nott, who is a West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative, said the rules add to officers' workloads and stress levels while preventing timely results for the public, and the review fails to address these issues.

The Crown Prosecution (CPS) guidance, known as DG6, was introduced in 2021 by the Director of Public Prosecutions. It requires investigators to provide the CPS with trial-ready prosecution before it makes a charging decision.

Jon said: "It's 18 months or so since the rules were introduced and they've had a huge impact on our members with greater workloads, higher stress levels and lower morale, and they've impacted their ability to deliver timely outcomes for victims of crime.

"It's a huge issue for our members. This review won't change the situation and it fails to provide any meaningful solutions.

"We need the Government to work with us to mitigate the impact on our members and ensure we're doing the best we possibly can for victims."

Ben Hudson, chair of the PFNDF, which is leading the Federation's work on the issue, said the review did little to redress the shortcomings of the guidance.

He said: "We appreciate that the Attorney General's Office Annual Review of Disclosure has been sensitive towards the plight of police officers with regards to the redaction of case material, which is singularly responsible for overburdening case workloads.

"Though the review identifies several ambiguities, including adherence to data protection laws, it does not provide any major action points to redress the shortcomings.

"Instead, it seeks to blame our members' lack of understanding about the vital role disclosure of case material plays in the criminal justice system. It puts the onus on police forces to make every effort to alter the current culture around disclosure procedures.

"The review accepts that 'strictly speaking' redaction and data protection are not direct aspects of CPS Disclosure Guidance. However,

in the absence of a uniform code and lack of specific guidance, police officers, investigative officers, detectives and specialist disclosure experts are compelled to devote significant time and resources to the redaction of case material to ensure that data protection laws are adhered to, and personal information is not revealed, even between collaborating agencies."

The Federation said it's also problematic the review merely suggests a single source of authoritative guidance for the redaction of case material passed to the CPS is "preferable" but does not demand it despite identifying an acute need for one.

“ IT'S 18 MONTHS OR SO SINCE THE RULES WERE INTRODUCED AND THEY'VE HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON OUR MEMBERS WITH GREATER WORKLOADS, HIGHER STRESS LEVELS AND LOWER MORALE, AND THEY'VE IMPACTED THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER TIMELY OUTCOMES FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME. IT'S A HUGE ISSUE FOR OUR MEMBERS. THIS REVIEW WON'T CHANGE THE SITUATION AND IT FAILS TO PROVIDE ANY MEANINGFUL SOLUTIONS.

Commenting on one of the review's key findings that "the police do not always apply their discretion when offering information for disclosure under the rebuttable presumption" leading to needless redaction obligations, Ben said: "The remit of rebuttable presumption is too wide and impractical for police officers to comply with and to stand the test of disclosure they inadvertently end up redacting enormous volume of case material. This ultimately creates a burden on the CPS and justice delivery system as well as the officers themselves struggling under an impossible workload."

The Federation has launched a targeted campaign to appeal to the Government to make amendments to the Data Protection Act to simplify the redaction obligations placed on police officers, and calls on the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College of Policing and the CPS to work with the Federation to ensure all members receive nationally agreed face-to-face training on disclosure procedures.

Poem written by Fed rep honours murdered schoolboy

A West Midlands Police Federation representative whose heartfelt poem honouring murdered six-year-old Arthur Labinjo-Hughes says she is 'truly humbled' that his family chose to use her words on the schoolboy's memorial plaque.

Jess Davies, a mother-of-one response officer, wrote a poem about Arthur, a young boy from Solihull whose death shocked the nation after he was tragically killed by his stepmother and father.

Jess, who lives in Solihull and whose son is just five months older than Arthur, says the incident had a real impact on her and, after following the trial closely, felt like she 'got to know' the young boy through the stories written in the media.

"I just want to do something in his memory. I suppose in situations like these you feel so helpless," said Jess.

Jess admits she does not know why this particular case hit her, perhaps it is the fact that her own son is so close in age to Arthur, or that she works on the frontline in the area, and so felt close to the incident in some way.

She added: "I think that in many cases involving the murder of someone, the victim can lose their identity in some way, they become a person who was murdered. I suppose I wanted to help give Arthur his identity back; I wanted to put into words who he was.

"While I never actually worked on the case myself, I felt like I got to know him through the stories I read. I started to learn all these little things about him. So I used snippets of those stories to create the poem."

Jess's poem goes as follows:

Arthur

**Close your eyes and you'll feel him near
The most magical story you'll ever hear
A superhero with the biggest smile
He came into this world for a little while**

**How he loved his Squashies and football too
Singing keep right on to his boys in blue
The happiest soul with eyes so bright
The cheekiest smile, a sunny delight**

**Superheroes are real you see
They are here to look after you and me**



Federation representative Jess Davies.

**They touch our hearts and light up the sky
But then we must all say goodbye**

**This superhero could only stay a while
Heaven needed his superhero smile
We mustn't be sad for he has work to do
Little Arthur's shining love on all of you**

Jess wrote the poem after Arthur's stepmother Emma Tustin and father Thomas Hughes were sentenced to a total of 50 years in jail between them.

"I made a donation to the charity set up in Arthur's memory and sent the poem to the charity too. I said that I'd written it for his family and they could do what they wanted with it," explained Jess.

"When I saw that they had placed my poem on his memorial plaque, I was touched and truly humbled that they had actually put it to use."

“ I THINK THAT IN MANY CASES INVOLVING THE MURDER OF SOMEONE, THE VICTIM CAN LOSE THEIR IDENTITY IN SOME WAY, THEY BECOME A PERSON WHO WAS MURDERED. I SUPPOSE I WANTED TO HELP GIVE ARTHUR HIS IDENTITY BACK; I WANTED TO PUT INTO WORDS WHO HE WAS.



The memorial plaque.

The memorial plaque has been placed in Cranmore Green, in Shirley, Solihull - near to the now-shuttered house in which Arthur was murdered.

With a clear passion for preventing such incidents from taking place again, Jess was also put forward to help with Government research, which should support the future of policing.

"It's cases like this that remind us that we're human too. As officers, we might put on a uniform but behind our uniforms we're human, we have feelings," Jess said.

"Following Arthur's case has certainly made me change how I deal with jobs involving children, going forward. I'll do all I can to prevent cases like these from happening again."

Jess is also hoping to run a marathon in memory of Arthur by fundraising for the charity set up in his name [Arthur's Angels](#).

'I wake up every morning and look forward to work' says student cop

A trainee officer says he cannot see his passion for policing ever going as he reveals he wakes up every morning looking forward to work.

Luke Jemson, who is now halfway through his three-year probation period, says that every day being different is what keeps his interest in policing at an all-time high.

The student cop is currently working on the frontline in the Force response team, a role he admits to really enjoying.

"I absolutely love the job," says 27-year-old Luke, adding: "When you've made an arrest, detained somebody or helped somebody get their life back on track again, you get a real buzz. I can't see the buzz I feel for policing ever going away. In fact, I think I'll only ever get more enthusiastic as time goes on.

"You join the police to make society a better place for everyone and that's something

I feel like I'm doing at the moment."

Luke previously spent a stint of time working in the missing persons team. He recalls helping the team catch a missing person who was wanted for 22 offences.

"Although my involvement in the entire case wasn't huge, we found the guy after a few days of us working on it. And there was a real sense of achievement felt among the whole team, that he'd finally been caught," explained Luke.

"This guy had been wanted for a number of domestic abuse cases against his partner and young child, so to catch him was really rewarding. In fact, it was probably the most rewarding job I've worked on so far.



Luke Jemson and a canine companion.

"His partner actually said to me that if we hadn't arrested him, she thought he would've killed her. And his child said that they weren't scared anymore. Knowing that I've had such an impact on people like that just reinforces the reason behind me doing my job."

Luke has also spent time working during the Commonwealth Games, an experience that he admits was tiring and challenging but also a great opportunity to meet colleagues from other forces across the country.

"Because I was working in the response team, it was business as usual for me but because of the Commonwealth Games, it was busy," said Luke.

"We were doing very long shifts, I think it was an overwhelming period for a lot of officers.

"But, it was great to meet colleagues from other forces and network with fellow police officers from across the country."

“ I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THE JOB,. WHEN YOU'VE MADE AN ARREST, DETAINED SOMEBODY OR HELPED SOMEBODY GET THEIR LIFE BACK ON TRACK AGAIN, YOU GET A REAL BUZZ. I CAN'T SEE THE BUZZ I FEEL FOR POLICING EVER GOING AWAY. IN FACT, I THINK I'LL ONLY EVER GET MORE ENTHUSIASTIC AS TIME GOES ON.

POLICE DO NOT CROSS

Open up, reach out and talk

“I’m urging all members to turn to their colleagues and ask them ‘how are you?’”.

Those were the words of the Police Federation’s national wellbeing secretary Belinda Goodwin as the organisation marked World Mental Health Day.

In line with the annual initiative, which this year was on Monday 10 October, Belinda is encouraging police officers to open up, reach out and talk about how they are feeling.

Her comments come after research showed that emergency service workers are twice as likely as the general public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, and they are also significantly less likely to seek help.

“Although police officers are held to higher standards within our regulations, we need to remember that we are human beings too. We are exposed to 400 times more trauma than everyday civilians and, whether we like it or not, this will have an impact on our mental health,” said Belinda.

“We can’t lose sight of how impactful simply asking a colleague how they are, can be.

“We need to start having more meaningful conversations with our peers and that means, not just discussing our performance but welfare too. Supervisors should be asking their team, ‘how are you doing?’, ‘how is the family?’ and ‘how can we support you more?’

“Peer-to-peer support is also huge. We need

to continue to provide members with that safe space to debrief with their colleagues, so they can talk through the incidents they have attended.”

This year’s World Mental Health Day is the first to follow the Covid-19 pandemic, a global crisis that had a huge impact on emergency services workers, with the police service being no exception.

In fact, research reveals that 66 per cent of police staff feel that their mental health has deteriorated following the pandemic, with 32 per cent admitting that they did not access support during this period.

“As we continue to recover following the Covid-19 pandemic, and the devastating impact this has had on so many of us, including our colleagues and their families, we need to really shine the light on our mental health and how forces can really support officers, as well as their loved ones,” Belinda added.

“Now, it’s more important than ever for forces to think about and implement support for our members, as well as their wives, husbands, sons and daughters. It’s time to start putting officers first, and to make sure we’re doing all we can to prevent them from breaking.”

Belinda continues to say that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) ‘is a reality for officers’ and can often ‘lead to some using harmful substances and behaviours in order to cope and get through the day’.

“As a Federation, we have previously looked at the impact stress has on our officers as a whole, but with a real focus on how this can lead to substance and gambling abuse,” she added.

“If you feel that you are spiraling or are relying on these harmful behaviours to survive, and need help and support, I would urge all of our members to reach out to the Federation.”

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke said members should not hesitate to contact their workplace rep or the full-time officials if they needed to discuss any concerns or issues.

He said: “We have access to some amazing organisations who can provide a wide range of different services offering help and support to our members should they find themselves in need.

“Officer wellbeing is our top priority and we have always done what we can to raise mental health awareness and wholeheartedly support any initiatives that promote positive mental health among our members.

“Their key message has always been about the importance of talking and reaching out and not suffering in silence and the Police Federation is there for its members night and day.”

[Find out more about World Mental Health Day.](#)



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RETIREMENT seminars

DATES ARE SET FOR 2023

Dates have now been set for next year's West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminars.

The seminars, which are for officers in their last three years of service, will be held at the Federation offices at Guardians House, Coventry Road, Sheldon, on:

12 January	2 February
9 March	13 April
11 May	29 June
20 July	10 August
7 September	12 October
9 November	21 December

Among the topics covered at the seminars are:

- Managing change and uncertainty
- **CV writing and interview techniques**
- **Transferable skills**
- **Pensions**
- **How do I manage money and these financial changes?**
- **Budgeting**
- **Starting your own business**
- **Taxation**
- **New horizons**
- **Savings**
- **Investments and finances**
- **Protecting your wealth.**



Members are being urged to register their interest in attending retirement seminars in 2023 by **emailing the Federation office**

Please ensure you put 'Retirement seminar' and the month you would prefer to attend in the subject title and include your name, work email address, personal email address, personal phone number, proposed retirement date and any dietary requirements in the email.

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McCloud and treatment of police pensions upon divorce

By Georgina Chase, head of practice at Slater & Gordon and the company's lead representative for West Midlands Police Federation



For many police officers, their pension has often

been the most valuable asset upon divorce. The Government's pension reforms to public sector pensions changed that for a significant amount of officers. From 1 April 2015, many of those affected were not only paying more into their pensions but were also retiring later, resulting in the projected value of their pension being lower than once expected.

However, in recent years, the pension reforms to public sector pensions have been deemed to breach age discrimination legislation. The Court of Appeal ruled in the cases of McCloud (pensions of judges) and Sargeant (pensions of firefighters) that pension scheme members were being treated differently depending on age, and that the Government failed to demonstrate that the transitional protection arrangements were based on a legitimate aim.

The Government now seeks to find a remedy and, almost 10 years later, the significant reform of public sector pensions is to be unravelled. The affected members are in general those with accrual before 1 April 2012 and after 1 April 2015. The schemes have until 1 October 2023 to introduce retrospective changes, with all members being treated consistently from 1 April 2022 onwards.

The impact of McCloud on the cash equivalent transfer value

In order to determine whether there will need to be a Pension Sharing Order of your police

pension upon divorce and, as part of your duty to provide full and frank financial disclosure, you will be required to disclose the value of your pension. This is known as your Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) and is the value that your pension would be given if you were able to transfer it.

Once the retrospective changes to the schemes have been introduced as a result of McCloud (October 2023 at the earliest), the CETV will be based upon these higher benefits.

However, until 2023 the CETV produced will not make any allowance for McCloud. As such, there will be many police officers who are set to receive a retrospective uplift to their pension, which will not be taken into account in the CETV disclosed upon divorce. This creates uncertainty over the accrued pension benefits at the point of divorce and thus the appropriate Pension Sharing Order or offsetting of the pension claim upon divorce, as a result.

For Pension Sharing Orders already implemented post-divorce, it is understood that both the spouse who has received the benefit of the Pension Sharing Order and the spouse who has shared their pension, may receive an uplift to their pension benefits; both therefore faring better than once expected.

The Pension Advisory Report and Pension on Divorce Expert reports

Following the guidance in the report of The Pension Advisory Group (PAG) "A Guide to the Treatment of Pensions on Divorce" published in July 2019, in the majority of cases, before a claim to a Pension Sharing Order can be determined, it is now more likely than ever that there will need to be a joint instruction to a Pension on Divorce Expert (PODE) at joint expense to prepare a pension report.

Many PODEs are refusing to provide for the implications of McCloud in their

independent actuarial reports and insist that a choice has to be made between having Pension Sharing Order calculations undertaken based on the CETV disclosed at present, which makes no provision for a possible McCloud uplift, or for parties to postpone dealing with pensions on divorce until the CETV does take account of McCloud.

It is thought to be unlikely that spouses will be prepared to wait until at least 2023 to resolve the financial aspects of their divorce due to this uncertainty following McCloud.

The Pension Advisory Group has confirmed that its July 2019 report is to be reviewed and updated and as further announcements from the Government Actuary's Department and the Police Pension Scheme itself emerge, there will be greater certainty of the impact of McCloud.

It is essential if you are embarking on divorce that the potential upcoming changes to the CETV are highlighted to your spouse's solicitor and/or the court and we would advise that a PODE report is obtained to identify whether a CETV will be affected by the McCloud ruling before financial claims upon divorce are determined.

When going through a divorce, it is imperative that you seek advice from a divorce specialist experienced in dealing with police pensions.

For more information, contact Georgina by emailing georgina.chase@slatergordon.uk





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