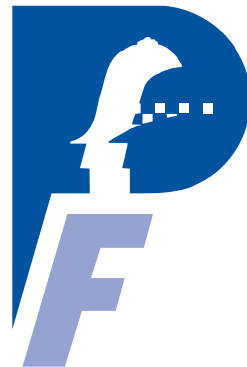


# Cambridgeshire Police Federation CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER



May 2006

## Chairman 'bewildered'

**THE CRIMINAL justice system has become so skewed that it seems to value the rights of criminals above those of law-abiding citizens, Jan Berry told the Home Secretary in her keynote speech to conference.**

And, she said, failures to deport foreign criminals had left her bewildered.

"Not for the first time police officers are clearing up the mess left behind by others," said Mrs Berry.

She urged Dr Reid to address police dismay at the failure to recognise the gallantry of DC Stephen Oake with a posthumous George Cross.

There was no such thing as a quiet year in policing and 2005 – 2006 had been no different, Mrs Berry explained. The events of July 7 were terrible atrocities but showed the best in British policing.

Moving on to the Stockwell shooting, she praised firearms officers before going on to criticise the IPCC.

"They have the luxury of hindsight. We do not. The IPCC reports must be fair; balanced; and above all, impartial. We will settle for nothing less."

She then turned to officer numbers, crediting the Government for maintaining the figure at 140,000 but attacking ACPO for suggesting they could police with 25,000 less officers.

"It is outrageous that chief officers are even harbouring such thoughts. The public will be put at risk. This is cheaper policing not better policing," she said.

Force amalgamations, the chairman told

the new Home Secretary, were 'a curious debacle'. The Federation accepted a need for change but mergers should be driven by what's best for the public and for policing.

### HOME SECRETARY IN CONCILIATORY MOOD

**JUST 12 days into his role, the new Home Secretary made a firm commitment to the ongoing police reform programme but pledged to work with the police service to bring about change.**

Dr John Reid was given a fairly warm reception – certainly warmer than his predecessor might have received – but there was a feeling that only time would tell if Dr Reid's promises came to fruition.

"I welcome the opportunity to work with you so that together we can build a world-class modern police service," he said.

He had started his keynote speech by giving credit to the work of the police service and admitted that being new to the post he did not have all the answers. He said three words described what it is all about – fear, security and fairness.

He stressed that he wanted a system that correctly balances individual rights and public protection but said that if this needed legislation then the Government would seek it.

The big issues, he explained, were how to deliver better services to the public, strengthen accountability, build a skilled and flexible workforce and create strategically effective forces

And his speech concluded: "I hope that we can work together to find a way forward to develop pay systems which are fair, transparent, recognise performance and reward special commitment. But you know as well as me that we are bound by what we can afford, and the settlements which I have in the spending review set very challenging limits on what is possible."

After the speech, the Home Secretary took part in a questions and answers session, with delegates asking about various headline issues. He pledged to at least consider putting a brake on the merger process – accepting that it might need to be slowed down – and said he would look into many of the issues raised.

## CLEAR MESSAGES By Mike McFadyzean, chair of Cambridgeshire Police Federation



**The annual conference provides an opportunity for officers to discuss important policing issues while also trying to influence politicians and decision-makers. In that respect, conference this year was a great success.**

This year we also considered extending Police Federation membership to specials, PCSOs and other police staff and the implications of police reform.

A clear message was given on both issues. Conference felt that the Federation is, and should remain, a staff association for police officers - and the Home Secretary was told that PCSOs should not be recruited at the expense of sworn officer numbers.

On a general note, I felt that at last we got the format and content of the conference right with a balanced combination of presentation and delegate involvement. Highlights were the 'in the firing line' session which gave an insight into the possible consequences when officers are called upon to use lethal force.

As for the Home Secretary, he appeared honest and genuine but only time will tell. It was obvious and expected that he still did not have a handle on some of the important issues.

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## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

**A WIDE range of issues affecting female officers in particular were discussed at the Monday afternoon eve of conference women's meeting.**

The meeting began with a tribute to PC Sharon Beshenivsky who was murdered in Bradford last year.

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, also praised Teresa Milburn who was injured in the same incident and Rachel Bown, who was shot in Nottingham earlier this year.

John Sturzaker of Russell Jones and Walker solicitors gave an outline of the provisions of the new police pension schemes particularly stressing that it made provisions for co-habiting partners if the relevant forms were completed.

He also explained women officers could take advantage of the chance to buy back survivor benefits – though it only covers the pensionable service from April 6 1988 to May 16 1990.

For more advice on the buy back provisions and more information on the new pension scheme, please contact the Federation office.

Other presentations during the women's conference covered the menopause, the effects of stress on a pregnant woman and her unborn child, the need for risk assessments during pregnancy, the need to promote a study into breast cancer cases in police officers and a uniform update report.

Officers were also told that people using Flint House's treatment and convalescence facilities will now need to prove they have paid the necessary subscriptions.

## Counter terrorism

**OFFICERS were told of the ongoing process being used to try to counter terrorism during a closed session of the Police Federation conference.**

All those present gave an undertaking not to disclose the contents of the presentation so that no ongoing investigation is compromised.

However, officers were told that a DVD – Danger Peroxide - giving an indication of what to look for has been circulated to each force.

# In the firing line

**CHIEF executive Nick Hardwick defended the much-maligned Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) when he joined the panel for the 'In The Firing Line' debate.**

The IPCC was criticised for its handling of the inquiry into the Harry Stanley case and 'inappropriate' comments in press releases and Nick Hardwick won over few critics by neither exonerating the two Met officers involved or apologising for the six and a half years they spent under investigation.

TV presenter John Stapleton, who facilitated the session, suggested that the IPCC treated officers like suspects rather than witnesses.

One of the officers involved – Insp Neil Sharman – brought home to conference the effects of the inquiry. "I had done nothing wrong. No-one was listening to what I said. On more than one occasion I felt like walking away," said Insp Sharman.

Conference concluded by calling for firearms officers to have indemnity from prosecution providing they acted according to instructions and their training.

Human rights lawyer John McKenzie argued that human rights should be the entitlement of all citizens but added to applause from the conference: "It would seem human rights are not the entitlement of police officers."

## RESILIENCE AND TRAINING

**Resilience in the inspecting ranks and training for inspectors and chief inspectors were the two main issues raised during the Tuesday morning Inspectors' Central Conference.**

A Federation survey revealed issues around the inconsistencies in levels of training in the two ranks with all inspectors and chief inspectors being asked for their views.

It revealed:

- 44 per cent of respondents had received no training at all;
- 82 per cent of those who received training had not undertaken a refresher course;
- many officers who did receive training, only did a course months or years after they started in post.

The lack of training is placing inspecting ranks at risk – at risk of making a mistake for which they will be held accountable.

## 'Home Office in chaos'

**THE Home Office is in a state of chaotic disorder, claimed Paul McKeever, chairman of the Sergeants' Central Committee during the rank's separate conference**

He attacked the proposal for direct entry at inspector levels as 'divisive, unnecessary and elitist'.

In a year of exceptional change, police reform and modernisation were the main issues for debate at the sergeants' central conference.

Speakers included Liam Byrne, who took over as the new police minister days before conference, and Sir Ronnie Flannagan, HMI chief inspector of constabulary.

The debate developed on the role and future of sergeants in the service set against the background of modernisation.

Speaker Michael Craik, chief constable of Northumbria, urged the Federation to 'get on board' with the changes.

## Attack on IPCC

**The Independent Police Complaints Commission would be better titled the Institutionally Perverse Complaints Commission, Bob Elder, chairman of the constables' central committee told his rank's separate conference.**

He pointed out perverse was defined as deliberately deviating from what is regarded as normal, good or proper, persistently holding to what is wrong and wayward or contrary.

Mr Elder questioned whether the bubble raising sworn officer numbers to more than 140,000 was about to burst with increased civilianisation putting police staff into constables' roles and more PCSOs being recruited

The constables backed an emergency motion, put forward by Thames Valley, calling for an immediate withdrawal of membership of Eurocop – the European Confederation of Police.

The constables' conference also included a talkback session, chaired by Natasha Kaplinsky and Dermot Murnaghan.

# Threats to resilience

**PROFESSOR John Seifert gave an interesting and entertaining presentation on police reform during the opening session on the Wednesday of conference week.**

He was particularly critical of Denis O'Connor's report – the driver for the current police merger programme – saying it was the worst document he had ever come across.

"It was just gibberish towards the end. There is no evidence, no statistics. I have no idea what he was about," said Professor Seifert, adding that it appeared very similar to a report on the reform of the fire service called Bridging The Gap.

The O'Connor Report's proposed changes to the structure of forces were, he argued, 'stunningly arbitrary'.

"It's just a joke. There is no business case. It's just fluky geography. It's just bizarre."

The report, he explained, talked about economies of scale but made no reference to diseconomies of scale at a time when almost daily media reports complained about problems with big organisations.

The proposed mergers could lead to a shift in control and accountability, more power for senior management teams and three tier policing.

But he urged the Federation to watch its back, that it was reaching a turning point and must push policy and push the Government.

"You are going to be made a lot of promises. People will say they are people of good intentions," he explained, adding the cautionary quote, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions. But it's not intentions you need but absolute hard passion."

His presentation was followed by a speech from Alan Gordon, vice-chairman of the Police Federation, who highlighted the lack of resilience in 24/7 response policing.

Targets, he explained, were deciding what jobs were getting done and which were not.

The Federation accepted the need for some aspects of the reform programme but said there was also a dark side with a negative impact on police when reforms were not backed up by extra funding.

The 24/7 response policing was a casualty of the reform programme, he argued, pointing to a Federation led study by Dr Mike Chatterton and Emma Bingham involving research among 15 forces from August last year until April 2006.

Excerpts from the study revealed embarrassment from officers unable to deliver the service they felt the public deserved, responding to reports of minor crime four and five days later and starting a shift to find 50 to 60 jobs in the queue but unable to tackle them due to paperwork.

He concluded that there was not enough officers to satisfy the needs of the national police reassurance programme, the neighbourhood policing objectives and 24/7 response policing.

The session also included a presentation by Peter Neyroud, chief executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), who explained its role, saying it was police officer owned and led with the service needing to be fully and systematically involved in driving improvement.

## 'At last we've got it right' - delegates' feedback

**"I thought the Home Secretary's speech was middle of the road. He was non-committal. Although he went down well with conference, I am aware of his short temper and the bullying tactics he employs in his office to get his own way. I do not believe he will do us any favours – in fact things will get worse."** – Sgt Steve Davidson.

**"This was my first conference and I will be back next year. There was interesting, lively debate on some issues. I thought the debate on extending membership was an important issue."** – PC Beckie Williams.

**"Overall it was a better conference than previous years with a good balance of content."** – DS Fran Jones.

**"An exceptionally good conference – the best of the three I have attended. All sessions were interesting and well planned."** – PC Michael Dyke.

**"I enjoyed the input on terrorism and also the Question Time style forums. The Home Secretary did not answer questions on police officer numbers."** – PC Martin Monger.

**"I thought the Home Secretary was quite guarded but gave some small hope that Force restructuring will be conducted more slowly and with more thought."** – Tony Laud, JBB Secretary.

**"Overall, it was a very interesting and intense conference. The chair's speech to the Home Secretary was very good and motions were debated well rather than being hijacked as in previous years."** – PS David Smith.

**"The Home Secretary spoke for a long time – but said nothing. He has not been in office long enough to speak from an informed platform. Time will judge him – if he is allowed to remain long enough. The conference was an improvement on last year. The subjects under discussion were very topical and relevant."** – Insp John Van Wyk.

**"I particularly enjoyed the debating sessions with John Stapleton – his style and questioning were very good."** – Insp Paul Doxey.

## Officers reject routine arming

**RANK and file officers do not want to be routinely armed, despite increased threats to their lives, according to a Police Federation survey.**

Almost 90 per cent would like to see a further roll-out of Taser. For details of Cambridgeshire's responses to the survey, please contact the Federation office.

# CONFERENCE 2006 – the outcomes

**IN a refreshing break from previous years, Conference 2006 ended on a high note with praise from the floor for the organisation of the event, its content and the quality of the debate.**

Peter Smythe from the Metropolitan Police admitted at the end of the Thursday session that he had in the past been critical of the JCC over conference.

However he echoed the views of many when he said: "I think you got it right year – it was the best conference in years."

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation, must have been relieved, having herself taken the brunt of the criticism at the end of the previous two years' conferences perhaps, she joked, it was third time lucky.

Mrs Berry said it had been a busy week of important work before giving an overview of the outcomes of this year's conference.

## CUSTODY IN THE COMMUNITY

### Conference believed:

- Public servants should be accountable for serious failures of the penal system
- Prisoners should serve at least the minimum time imposed by the court before being considered for release
- Sentences should begin at the time of sentence regardless of time spent on remand
- Remand prisoners should not have to undertake mandatory drug rehabilitation and treatment programmes
- Rehabilitation in the community will not reduce re-offending
- Custodial sentences should not be restricted to persistent offenders or crimes of violence

## POLICE REFORM

### Conference believes that:

- The public do not receive the level of service they deserve from 24/7 response policing because of the competing demands in policing
- Neighbourhood policing teams will not be able to be implemented by 2008 without extra resources
- ACPO should commit to maintaining or increasing police officer numbers

## IN THE FIRING LINE

### Conference decided:

- Police officers involved in fatal incidents should be treated as witnesses, not suspects, until there is evidence to the contrary
- Authorised firearms officers are justified in handing in their authorisation unless they are guaranteed fair treatment
- Authorised firearms officers involved in a fatal shooting should have indemnity from prosecution - as long as they have followed instructions and training
- The IPCC is biased and must be accountable to an independent review body

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

- PDRs are essential to learning and development but the process needs to be overhauled
- PDRs should be fair and transparent and a central part of police officer development
- While supporting the acquisition of professional skills officers do not believe they should be linked to pay
- The Thames Valley model of PDRs is not as efficient as some claim

## ROADS POLICING SEMINAR

- HATOS are a significant and growing threat and there is a lack of commitment from ACPO and Home Office to roads policing
- Home Office performance targets need to reflect the important work road traffic officers contribute to policing
- Post incident procedures following road deaths involving police officers need to be tightened and training and accreditation standards must be consistent
- Concerns highlighted over the content of the Road Safety Bill
- Developing further communication and networking of roads policing contacts across England & Wales should be a priority

## THE CHAIRMAN CONCLUDED BY STRESSING THAT THE FEDERATION FACED TWO KEY CHALLENGES:

- ◆ Every single delegate had to go back to their force and help develop a service that was effective and fit for purpose
- ◆ In the face of the threat of a loss of 25,000 police officers and the change in the mix of roles in the police service, the Federation had to strive to protect political independence and professionalism