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## **DAVENTRY DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING REPORT**

for Parish Councils, Stakeholders, NHW & Police Liaison Representatives

As the District and Parish elections finish and we settle into the new political year, it is timely for me to write with an update for those who have a stake and interest in Daventry District. As I have said before, ours is a District of around 250 of the county's 900 square miles, and 80,000 of the county's 750,000 population. We have over 70 of the county's 258 parishes. This, in the context of a county of 308,000 households, 2500 miles of road and over 150,000 young people when we are also told we are the fastest growing county in the country.

My privilege is to serve in this District as your neighbourhood policing team sergeant and as our network of contacts increases and our relationships become more meaningful, I have the pleasant challenge of working out how to service the growing number of requests and invitations to attend parishes and community association meetings to give an update on policing. I therefore provide this report for general use and consumption, with the offer of attending meetings spread throughout the year to answer questions or elaborate as requested.

Much has happened in the past year, and I give an operational update later. On the organisational front, I also have much to report. In November 2017, the force's new policing model was launched, not without teething issues. It is still bedding in. It was designed to align resources to demand, based on threat, harm and risk. In other words, we have placed officers where the greatest levels of vulnerability exist.

This means, paradoxically, that our safe District fares less well in the numbers of officers and staff. Whilst the neighbourhood team is now smaller, however, we are now left more to get on with our core role of engagement, problem-solving and prevention. This is how the team now looks:



**Command:** Inspector Kevin Byrne is in charge of the neighbourhood policing teams across Daventry District and South Northants District. Sgt Micki Simons heads up the policing team at South Northants and until recently, I have been heading up the Daventry team on my own. However, I am delighted to say that I have recently been joined by Sgt Chris Thomas, on transfer from neighbourhood policing in Hertfordshire and we are currently devising how to divide the not-inconsiderable workload! We are ably supported by Katrina Heath, our team coordinator who manages our diaries and keeps us all in order.

**The Rural North team** is based at Brixworth and comprises PC John Hutchings, PCSO Steve Sangster and PCSO Jo Wright. During the past year, Jo has increased her working hours to full time. Specials Sergeant Stephen Coleman also works from Brixworth supporting the rural and town teams. We are hoping that in the weeks ahead, the team will be boosted by the arrival of a new PCSO sponsored by a group of local parishes.

**The Rural South team** is based at Daventry and comprises PC Francesca Smith and PCSO Kevin Thompson. This patch also has a number of sponsored PCSOs with PCSO Carl Barton funded by Woodford Halse Parish Council, and PCSOs Les Conopo and Duncan Cumming sponsored by Crick Parish Council and DIRFT (Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal). There is also the possibility of more sponsored officers in the future.

**The Daventry town team** comprises PC Stuart Rands, PC Paige Fox and PC Susan King, working alongside PCSO Kirsten Bates, PCSO Paul Harris and newly-arrived PCSO Mia Ball who is sponsored and funded by Daventry Town Council working alongside the council's new Ranger. Another recent arrival has been that of PCSO Matt Taylor who returns to us on the town team after a secondment to a project.

The team is supported by SC Jack Jamieson, and we are hoping to see more special constables working with the neighbourhood team, following a recent advert which has been sent to all serving special constables.

Much work has gone into the initiative made possible by the Police & Crime Commissioner to allow parishes and organisations to increase visible policing by funding extra PCSOs and I am extremely grateful to those parishes who have supported policing in this way which in no way detracts from parishes who do not or who cannot sponsor. We envisage having six new sponsored PCSOs by the end of the calendar year, which great news in my view. Response policing is still provided from Daventry and Weston Favell police stations according to which is the nearest and most available resource and, contrary to folklore, Daventry Police Station remains a 24/7/365 police station. The front counter opens Monday thru Saturday 10am to 4pm (the hours based on customer use) and if you cannot walk to the front station, the front office can be contacted in those hours on extension 341010, which is useful if you have a neighbourhood policing query which doesn't fit in with the 101 or 999 numbers.



We are committed to having a base in the rural north of the patch, but in the longer term, the plan is to co-locate with Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue resources where possible, so within the next two years, but not imminently, I expect that our current base at Brixworth will relocate.

Despite our reducing budgets (alongside all other services), demands on our resources doesn't slow down. We are often the service of first and last resort, especially out of hours when other services are no longer available. To give an indication of that demand, here is a snapshot of a month in the life of Northamptonshire Police. On average, each month, the force

- Answers 9019 emergency calls on the 999 system
- Answers 24,038 non-emergency calls on the 101 system
- Attends 23 road traffic collisions
- Administers 557 roadside breath tests
- Records and investigates 635 domestic-related crimes
- Deals with 264 domestic burglaries, 2139 thefts, 477 vehicle crimes
- Deals with 1,258 crimes of violence, 59 robberies and 135 sexual offences
- Deals with 613 incidents involving a person with mental health issues
- Conducts 102 stop-searches, leading to 20 arrests
- Issues 24 fixed penalty notices for driving whilst using a mobile phone
- Deals with 3,174 anti-social behaviour incidents
- Conducts searches for 154 missing people, missing on average for 74hrs
- Makes 968 arrests
- Issues 97 cautions, 97 community resolutions and 23 cannabis warnings

This snapshot is in the context of a county which is increasing in size at twice the rate of many communities, certainly the fastest growing county in the country. As a snapshot of the complexity of some of the increasing demand, there has been a 417% increase in reports of child sexual abuse since 2013. 69% of those victims were aged ten or under, 3% were aged two or under and 34% of unlawful images were category A images – involving rape or sexual torture of children.

I hope that this is a useful context for understanding the relative safety of our District against the demands of the county force and the burgeoning complexity of our demand which I have to balance against a rural district where the chief complaints in the villages is often parking around schools, speeding and overweight lorries.

My team is mandated to respond best we can to the locally identified priorities which, for the town are Visibility, Antisocial Behaviour and Drug use/dealing. On the rural area, the priorities identified are Visibility, Antisocial Behaviour and Speeding.



With a reduced team of officers ringfenced for Neighbourhood Policing Duties, we will never be able to place officers on every street corner. That demands creativity and flexibility on the part of all. I do expect my officers to be known by name and sight in their neighbourhoods and the sign of successful accessibility (a word I prefer to visibility) is that local people know when to dial 101, 999 or contact the local office, that they know how to email or contact the local officer, they follow their local policing team on social media (Twitter) or are signed up to Neighbourhood Alert. This is a system where you can opt to be included on messaging from the police, Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups. You choose what kind of messages you want to receive and we can target messages specific to your neighbourhood.

Looking ahead, we have to police in the complexity of a changing landscape with the County and District/Borough Councils, and a developing role for parish and town councils. We police in a society which is far less tolerant than it used to be, with increases in race and hate incidents and where it appears sometimes to be acceptable for people to be targeted because of who or what they are. I have been appalled at the way I have been vilified by some for merely tweeting about my experiences at the opening of Daventry's new Mosque. The intolerance even in our relatively passive community is a concern and one we watch closely.

Within that complexity, 2018 will see the appointment of a new Chief Constable as Simon Edens, our current Chief, retires after 37 years in policing. The Police & Crime Commissioner has started the process to advertise and appoint his successor in the autumn.

We will be sad to say farewell to PCSO Paul Harris as he retires in June. A popular and well-known face, Paul collapsed in the town centre in April having suffered a heart attack. After emergency surgery and a stay in the Coronary Care Unit, he is back home but won't be coming back to work. He will be sorely missed, but he had already volunteered to work beyond retirement age and we have ganged up with his wife to ensure that he now concentrates on his health to maximise what we hope will be a long and happy retirement, much-deserved. PCSO Matt Taylor has taken responsibility for Paul's beats.

We have worked closely with housing associations and Daventry District and Town Councils over the past year making use of the new ASB legislation. We have issued community protection notices, dispersal orders and closure orders on nuisance households both in the town and in the rural areas where required.

I believe we have stretched our contact and accessibility through good use of social media (it brings issues but much benefit) and most of my team now tweets or sends messages on Neighbourhood Alert.

We have had some great arrests and operations across the rural patch, with key criminals arrested and imprisoned. Please see the headlines in my review of the year which follows.



Working with the County Association of Local Councils we have instituted our network of Police Liaison Representatives – a councillor from most of the parish councils elected to be a liaison point. We met once in 2017 and with the elections now concluded, I will be setting up another meeting when I hope we will be able to hear from the Commissioner on his latest plans and issues alongside the findings of a study I have just conducted on rural dwelling burglaries – to bring a practical tactic for PLRs to take back so that we can creatively and effectively implement a hostile environment for burglars, empowering householders.

At a recent London summit of problem-solvers including the brightest neighbourhood officers in the country, I had the privilege of choosing between 100 or so neighbourhood policing problems and then listening to the officers to deduce what worked. I asked each of them the same question which was this, 'Where tactics worked, how much of this was down to the work of the police?' In every case, where neighbourhood policing and problem solving worked best and in a long-term way, the police were 25-30% of the solution, with community and other agencies rising to the challenge. I conclude here, as I conclude all my parish council meetings by assuring you that whatever our numbers, resources or challenges, you are assured of the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the neighbourhood policing team to keeping our safe District safe. But this relies on our loyal and supportive town and rural community working with us.

I look forward to seeing more of you throughout the following year. I hope you find the following review of the past twelve months informative and interesting, and that you can see the variety between our town and rural beats.

Yours sincerely



**SAM DOBBS**  
**Neighbourhood Sergeant**  
**Daventry District**

