

*Direct Line:* (01536) 535661  
*Direct Fax:* (01536) 315120  
*Email:* davidpope@kettering.gov.uk  
*Our Ref:* RF  
*Your Ref:*

Dear Chief Constable

The Kettering Borough Rural Forum is a vibrant and effective group of Parish Councillors representing the Rural Area of Kettering Borough. It is a place where debate is wide-ranging and somewhere where the collective view of a large part of Rural Northamptonshire can be heard rather than many separate meetings creating a complicated matrix of communications.

The membership of the Forum are particularly keen to invite you to our next meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017. They feel that, whilst their local police team do the very best with the resources available, it would be both reasonable and desirable for an item on the agenda which introduces yourself to the forum and gives an opportunity for a two way conversation on policing our area from the most strategic level.

Please see the attached minute from our last Forum Meeting.

Many colleagues feel that with the pressures falling on police resources in other areas, that, what some members defined as "good old fashioned policing", was falling away leaving both the reality of visible policing and the perception of the fear of crime to increase leaving rural areas in particular feeling disproportionately vulnerable to crime.

Please see the appendix with comments from two colleagues subsequent to the meeting.

One long standing and highly dedicated colleague also made the point that it would be pleasant, if not reassuring, that when police officers do visit our villages that a wave of acknowledgement from officers, and occasionally stopping to garner knowledge from people going about their business in our rural areas, could benefit information gathering and improving the confidence of local people that there is a tangible police presence.

The item relating to information-sharing relates to the damage caused as a result of road accidents which causes damage to street furniture and landowners assets such as hedges, fences and buildings. Often if there has been a police attendance it is not recorded and passed on to the local authority or land-owner so that costs of replacement can be recovered through insurance companies.



You will note that this same letter is being sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner so that ideally the Forum will have the opportunity to listen to and question both aspects of strategic policing in our area.

This letter will also be sent to the MP for Kettering seeking his/her attendance at the meeting to give the political view.

Looking forward to hearing that you can make time to come to our meeting, and to meeting you in person.

Best regards

Jim

Cllr Jim Hakewill

### **Draft Minute Kettering Borough Rural Forum**

#### **16.RF.53      POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER MEETING FEEDBACK**

Feedback was provided by Stephen Chester and Cllr James Woolsey in relation to a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Northamptonshire held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017. A number of other forum members had attended a meeting with the PCC at Wootton Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> January.

A number of concerns were raised regarding the policing and visibility of officers in rural areas, and whether the views of rural residents were being listened to. Particular concerns were raised in regard to the non-attendance of police when contacted regarding burglary offences and the perceived lack of priority that crime type had in the overall police crime strategy.

The forum also raised the issue of information sharing between police and local authorities to allow damaged public property to be repaired at expense of person that damaged it.

Following discussion it was

**AGREED** that a letter be drafted to the Chief Constable and the PCC, including NALC to state:-

- i) that the rural community wished to know whether its views were genuinely being listened to by police and the PCC
- ii) To raise concerns regarding attendance of police at crimes such as burglary
- iii) Whether police visibility was being affected due to the weight of resources aimed at tackling cyber-crime; and



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CENTRE



MANAGEMENT TEAM  
OF THE YEAR

*Working with and on behalf of local people*

- iv) To extend an invitation to the Chief Constable to the next meeting of the forum in order to answer issues raised in the letter outlined above

Parishes were requested to forward any comments for inclusion in the letter to the Chair. A copy of the letter would be emailed to Philip Hollobone MP.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CENTRE



MANAGEMENT TEAM  
OF THE YEAR

*Working with and on behalf of local people*

## Appendix - A response to the request for further thoughts on local policing

- a. Whilst crime and the social backdrop constantly evolve – and the style and nature of Policing needs to itself evolve in order to remain contemporary – underlying human behaviour and emotions fundamentally remain largely unchanged over time. Thus I can't see that the fundamental principle of the Community Officer is any less relevant now than it was in my brief time as a Police Officer in the early 80's. In those days an experienced officer would be assigned semi-permanently to a locality, in which he would work varied shifts so as to gain as complete a local knowledge as possible. Such officers were the source of an enormous amount of the 'intelligence' that the collator at each station was able to hold (no doubt now that this is computerised this collation will be a more central function). On many occasions a local officer was either able to pre-empt particular crimes or undesirable outcomes himself- or provide information enabling others so to do. As such the Police were able to intervene meaningfully at a 'tier one' level, which as any criminologist will tell you, is the best way to prevent an individual escalating his activity to tier 2 and tier 3 crimes, as Stephen Mold referred to them at the recent meeting. This is why I say that there is a potential for such initiatives to self-fund.
- b. A local, visible, recognisable presence gives confidence to people (visible policing was the number one priority on the recent Northants survey), and encourages people to share information with the Police. The object in a democracy such as ours is that the Police do their job by consent, and if they are losing the goodwill of the likes of local councillors etc – who are a key part of the backbone of our communities, and who are logically amongst the most law-abiding etc – then it is of concern as to exactly whose goodwill they are still able to retain. Public confidence is essential to their role (unless we want our rule of law to become entirely remote and autocratic and to resemble elements of a dictatorship), and local visible policing is worth its weight just for perception alone.
- c. On a specific aside, no one I have spoken to really believes police officers are in no way reluctant to enter travellers sites, and treated them the same as the settled community. Unfortunately local experience belies this.
- d. A caveat to all this - we must be wary not to under-estimate the significance of cyber-crime, and its potential impacts, just because it is 'hidden', and we are largely of the dinosaur-generation. That said, does this sort of Policing require the same sort of resource as what I referred to as 'old fashioned policing'? And does it even need to happen locally? By definition, such crime is not geographically specific in its very nature".



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CENTRE



MANAGEMENT TEAM  
OF THE YEAR

*Working with and on behalf of local people*

"I understand the role of PCC was introduced as an elected position in order to have policing priorities respond directly to constituents and not to rely on direction from central government. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure the PCC is aware of our views about priorities, as clearly as possible and preferably in writing. As constituents ourselves and as representatives of constituents, we should be prepared to write, over and over again if necessary, to make sure we are understood. We can then ask him to tell us what he has heard from his constituents about what they want, and what he is doing about it."



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CENTRE



MANAGEMENT TEAM  
OF THE YEAR

*Working with and on behalf of local people*