

Presentation given by Chris Lee and Terry Wilkins at the Autumn ACPO Conference held at Whittlebury Hall Hotel, Northamptonshire, Friday 21st November 2008.

Chris Lee, DCC Dorset Police, ACPO Lead, Police Support Volunteers

Today we are going to talk about the police Support Volunteers. They are members of the community who give their time freely to support the police. They do not wear a uniform, are not warranted, they are not specials, IAG, ICV or NW. They are Police Support Volunteers and perform a wide range of functions in support of police and civilian staff.

Our purpose today is to report on progress made in developing the PSV programme across England and Wales. We will touch on some of the barriers that have existed both cultural and attitudinal, such as staff fears and Forces being risk averse. We will be seeking ACPO's continuing support.

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<p>Citizen at Centre of Policing Neuberger Report 2012 Olympics Diversity</p>

This session is about Citizen Focus and volunteers are a good way of helping forces to achieve this. The guiding themes within Safer Neighbourhoods are the involvement of the community in dealing with problems. What better way than involving volunteers.

Baroness Neuberger the Prime Minister's Champion on volunteering has recently been examining the use of volunteers across the Criminal Justice System. Her report is due very shortly and Police Support Volunteers are strongly featured.

The 2012 Olympics will have a major impact on volunteering. 70,000 volunteers will be utilised. This represents a major opportunity for Forces to increase their intake but the key challenge however will be keeping the volunteers after the Olympics.

Volunteers help increase diversity. 57% of Police Support Volunteers are female compared to 21% for the Force. 7.7% are from an ethnic minority compared to 3.5% for the Force

I will now pass to the only person who is not being paid for today!! Terry Wilkins my PSV programme manager since 2006. Terry has been a volunteer for TVP for 10 years. Prior to that, he was a General Marketing Manager with the multi national company 3M, so has a wide ranging experience.

Terry Wilkins, Police Support Volunteer Programme Manager

The Police Support Volunteer Programme Board has just completed a second survey to fully understand the extent to which Forces across England and Wales are involved in the volunteer programme. Given that 38 Forces responded we are now able to provide with great certainty the situation across England and Wales and to compare progress against the first survey conducted in 2006.

As a result, we can say with confidence that today over 6000 members of the community contribute over 500,000 hours to provide added value support to police forces in England and Wales. Over half a million hours of enthusiastic and in a lot of cases skilled support.

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Police Support Volunteers Today

6250 volunteers

Contributing over 500,000 hours

Clearly the partnership between volunteers and the Police is working and one of the key reasons is that the process is mutually beneficial.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mutually Beneficial</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Volunteers</u> Want to provide support Happily provide vital link between the police and the community</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Police</u> Able to utilise a very economical enthusiastic support resource Gain differing levels of expertise and skill base whilst improving links with the community</p>
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In the 2006 survey volunteers gave several reasons why they decide to provide their gift of time to the Police Service.

- It's because they want to support an over-stretched important community body.
- It's because they want to be reassured that the police are doing good work.
- It's because they want to take good messages back to their community.

The Police Service also benefit by using volunteers because:

- The service is able to utilise a very economical resource base.
- The service can gain a level of expertise which often front line staff
- The service will improve its link with the community.

Strong dynamics indeed.

Volunteers are utilised in many different ways and considerable variance exists across Forces. This is because there is rightly no fixed prescription. Different Force demands reflect differing volunteer roles and in the next few minutes I would like to give you a taste of some of the volunteer activity.

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Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Typical roles

Administration
Public re-assurance
Front counter
CCTV
Speed watch
Restorative Justice
Anti-social behaviour
Crime prevention

25 Forces have now actively integrated volunteers into safer neighbourhoods.

60% of these volunteers are performing administration, secretarial and public reassurance roles.

Front counter roles for volunteers are prominent which in many cases mean that rural stations remain open. Other roles are helping reduce crime and improving links with the community.

Volunteers are also being used in more unusual and creative roles.

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Unusual roles

Mentoring
Horse Watch
Assisting a Force charity
Quality assurance checks
Mystery shopping
Role playing
Puppy socialising

To give you some examples.

Thames Valley Police Officers can select from a group of six volunteers with specific management experience to mentor them on business planning, people management and such like.

Several forces are utilising volunteers with experience at handling horses to advise on security and safety training.

Volunteers are being used by three Forces to look after puppy police dogs until they go for training – usually at 10 months old.

Volunteers are being used as actors with new police recruits.

Clearly within a volunteer organisation there is a vast amount of real world experience and it is satisfying to see Forces utilising the volunteer skill sets that are available to them. To date, over 100 roles have been identified as being fulfilled by volunteers across England and Wales. Let's listen to some of the practitioners.

AT THIS STAGE A DVD WAS SHOWN OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF TALKING ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. (SIMILAR TO THE ONE SHOWN AT THE CONFERENCE AND RECENTLY SENT OUT TO EACH FORCE.)

I think the film portrays the mutually beneficial partnership that exists. The refreshing enthusiasm and sense of pride the volunteers feel because of the contribution they are making and are allowed to make is combined with the ability of staff to call upon willing additional support resources to add value to their endeavours.

I visited Dorset to see those two young volunteers featured in the film, assisting police officers, PCSO's and local community charities in helping disruptive children. It was a sobering experience. Two sixteen year old volunteers providing a vital link between the police and potential young offenders. They were magnificent. I could wax lyrically on the subject of the benefits volunteers bring but I could not possibly cover the subject as well as the telling statements extracted from our survey and made by police staff about volunteers.

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Volunteers are Valued

“Volunteers improve the efficiency of our Force and improve the professional and high quality of service we provide to the public”
Avon & Somerset Force

“Volunteers have helped to build trust with our communities”
Greater Manchester Police

Statements such as ‘volunteers help build trust’ and improve efficiency and professionalism are testament indeed.

Baroness Neuberger in her draft paper on ‘volunteering within the Criminal Justice System’ expresses a view that volunteers can add value, be that a passion, a personal touch or a claim to independence. She uses case studies to illustrate her points and one of these is the Lancashire Constabulary Volunteer Programme. She states:

Lancashire Constabulary describes its system for involving volunteers as ‘the icing on the cake’ for their police force. Their volunteers provide a bridge to the local community. The benefits they have brought to the force include:

- making the policing family more diverse and representative of those that they serve
- opening up an organisation that was perceived to be quite closed and opaque
- increasing public confidence and giving the police a more ‘human face’

The ability of volunteers to provide quality support, help build trust within communities and improve the quality of service to the public provides strong re-enforcement that volunteers are becoming a growing and important part of the police culture.

There have been hurdles to overcome to move the programme to the level it has achieved to day...Financial considerations, staff and union resistance, resources to co-ordinate and so on, but where a way has been found the benefits have been clear to see. In 2006 a Thames Valley Police business case study showed that for every £1 invested in a volunteer scheme the return gained is £4.

Clearly there is now a natural momentum in the Police Volunteers Support programme. This can be best illustrated by examining events during the past year.

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Natural momentum

New Unison Document

Six Forces started programme in last 12 months

Additional 1500 additional volunteers recruited in last 12 months

75% of all Forces will have PSV programmes by end of 2008

The fact that Unison, although still totally opposed to the use of volunteers have issued on the 3rd September a document outlining “what to do if a Force introduces volunteers.” The guidance is positive in that it covers a model policy, a model agreement, and a model volunteer specification.

Combine this fact with the growing recruitment and greater involvement of more forces in the past year and it is clear to see that many of the issues faced are being overcome.

What of the future?

Many Forces have been reaping the benefits of using volunteers for years...others are just starting and a few have yet to be convinced. This variance is understandable, but given that it is likely in the foreseeable future for police staff to continue to be over-stretched, for community engagement to grow, and because the economics make sense, then it is inevitable that the partnership between the Police and its volunteers will continue to prosper.

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Possibilities are considerable

Broaden the scope of volunteer roles
Utilise the skill base
Remove any institutional barriers

Broadening the scope of roles for volunteers, utilising the skill base that exists and removing any institutional barriers will ensure not only that staff receive even greater support, but that police remain an organisation in which volunteers choose to give their time.

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Support mechanisms

Programme Board
Volunteering England
Best Practice Sharing
Web site
Comparative Data
Expertise

Thankfully, support mechanisms are now in place to assist.

The establishment of a programme board, under the chairmanship of Chris Lee has helped to ensure that we have a wealth of information for sharing best practice and the conference held in February 2008 created awareness and significant contact network.

The development of the NPIA Police Support Volunteer web site provides excellent guidance and links to other support organisations

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By 2010

10,000 volunteer
Contribution of 1 million hours

Predictions from the survey say that **1million hours will be given freely from a total of 10,000 volunteers, by 2010.** This is indeed significant. To ensure that progress is maintained the support of ACPO is essential.

Chris Lee, DCC Dorset Police

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How can Chief Officers Help?

Chief Officer and Police Authority Support
Support services
Effective recruitment, training, induction & deployment
Volunteer Co-ordinator

Volunteers are making and will continue to make a significant difference to Forces around the country. The involvement of support groups and the appointment of a volunteer co-ordinator will ensure maximum emphasis. There is still a lot to be done and we need to continue to receive ACPO's support to ensure this happens.