

JULY/AUGUST 2015 NEWSLETTER

Commissioner gives Kent's youngsters a chance to have their say



Young people in the county are being encouraged to take part in a live web chat to have their say on local policing.

The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Ann Barnes, and Kent Police Assistant Chief Constable Jo Shiner are holding the online meeting on **Monday 14 September at 6pm** for one hour.

Mrs Barnes said: 'As part of my commitment to engage with young people and involve them in policing I'd particularly like to hear from 16-24 year olds in the county at the next web chat.

'It's a totally open forum and we want to hear their thoughts on any policing matter that's important to them; from local issues around crime or anti-social behaviour to their experience as victims of crime or how they feel they are treated by their local police.

'Young people often have the most refreshing views and ideas and web chats are a really convenient way they can get involved and find out what the force is doing to tackle the issues they raise.'

To take part, simply visit the Kent Police website and follow the [link to the web chat](#). If you are unable to join in live, you can send your question in advance to communications@kent.pnn.police.uk and it will be answered during the chat.

Kent Police Open Day attracts more than 10,000 visitors

On Sunday 12 July, more than 10,000 people from across Kent came to the force's headquarters in Sutton Road, Maidstone, to meet police officers and staff and to gain an insight into what our public servants do each and every day to keep us safe at the fourth annual Kent Police Family Open Day.

Things to see and do on the day included the dog section display team, seeing the NPAS helicopter take off and land and firearms and public order teams' demonstrations.

There were also stands from Kent Search and Rescue, South East Air Search, the Special Constabulary, Victim Support, Young Lives Foundation, the South East 4x4 Response Group, Red Cross, North West Kent Crime Prevention Panel, and Raynet - the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network, alongside the police and principle public sector partners Kent County Council, South East Coast Ambulance Service and Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

The Commissioner said: 'It was a great day out, and I'd like to personally give my warmest thanks to everyone who made the event what it was, especially the volunteers. What really made the day special, and what makes Kent such a great county, were the people who gave up their time and demonstrated their skills. Together they make our lovely county a safe place to live, work and visit.'



Would you like the Commissioner to speak at your event?

The Commissioner is always happy to attend parish council meetings, Rotary Clubs, civic societies and other community meetings to talk about her work, her priorities for local policing and the future for Kent Police.

If you have an organisation or group you'd like the Commissioner to visit please [email](#) or call 01622 677055.

The 'Summer of Stack'



For most of July Kent's roads were ground to a halt by Operation Stack, during which time the Commissioner repeatedly argued that local people, already overwhelmed by the disruption it caused, should not be paying for their police officers working round the clock to mitigate a national crisis.

Mrs Barnes said at the time: 'As Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner it is my duty to make sure the Chief Constable has sufficient resources to police the whole of Kent and Operation Stack is a very significant drain on those resources.'

The Commissioner was pleased and relieved when she received assurances that the Government will meet all reasonable, additional costs the force incurs in dealing with the policing of Operation Stack.

She said: 'It's only right and proper that the extra money Kent Police spends to deal with this national civil emergency comes from central Government coffers and not from our local policing budget. I am very pleased that the Home Office recognises this, because the force is having to look after every single penny because of past, present and future cuts to police funding.'

Commissioner warns of consequences of further funding cuts to come

The Commissioner has warned that Kent Police will have to endure an extra year of austerity, taking the total cuts to Kent Police's funding to an estimated £124million over ten years since 2010.

Reacting to a recent spending review announcement by the Chancellor, George Osborne, Mrs Barnes said: 'It's been announced that we're going to have an extra year of austerity. Since 2010 we've had £50 million of cuts to funding so far and the next four years could mean £61 million more. The extra year will mean another £13 or £14 million, so around £124 million will have been taken out of the Kent Police budget by 2020, which will have a huge impact on policing in Kent – and this is the best case scenario.'

At the same time, the Government is requesting feedback on their new funding formula which will change the way cash is distributed among the country's police forces.

Take part in the Government's public consultation [here](#).

Setting the Taxpayers' Alliance straight

In August, the Taxpayers' Alliance released some data comparing the costs of Police and Crime Commissioners' offices (OPCCs) with the costs associated with the police authorities they replaced.

They showed that OPCCs cost £2million less than the authorities, which were abolished in 2012. While this is good news, to directly compare the old police authorities against the new OPCCs is somewhat simplistic, says the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

She said: 'My office's annual costs are £250,000 less than the Kent Police Authority's – according to The Taxpayers' Alliance report – which is good news. One area where costs have increased is staffing. But the abolition of the Kent Police Authority meant 17 unpaid authority members with a range of expertise and backgrounds went at a stroke, as did the work they contributed in holding police forces to account – which was their primary job. The need for that professional input and analysis is still needed by the OPCC and the only way to fill that void is to appoint extra professional staff to do that work.'

'Given the extra responsibilities PCCs have, they must employ the right professional people with the right skills, while maintaining value for money for taxpayers. Regardless of demographics each OPCC has, by law, a responsibility to challenge the police force and the PCC needs the appropriate, professional staff to do so.'

The report also compared running costs of Commissioner's offices with the cost of police officers. Ann said: 'This is a red herring. We need both in order to provide a quality, first-class policing service which is held to account by elected PCCs on behalf of local communities.'