

NOVEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

HAVE YOUR SAY ON POLICING IN KENT



The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner is asking local people to give their views on policing priorities in the county.

In her Police and Crime Plan, the Commissioner sets the policing and community safety priorities that Kent Police delivers. The document is refreshed annually, and now Mrs Barnes is asking you what you think.

She said: 'The Police and Crime Plan aims to deliver a first class policing service for Kent and Medway, meeting the needs and expectations of our communities, and reflects my commitment to retain visible, community policing as the bedrock of policing in the county.'

'I have an obligation to review the plan every year, so please take a moment to think about it and use this opportunity to have your say.'

The consultation also provides an opportunity to give your views on the policing precept – the part of the Council Tax bill which helps fund the police service.

Mrs Barnes is also hosting a **Policing in Kent Conference on 21 November 2014** at Kent Police Training School, Maidstone, to give local people a chance to take part in discussions about the future of policing in the county.

To take part in the consultation and register to attend the conference visit www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/plan or call **01622 677055** for a copy to be sent in the post.

KENT POLICE LAUNCHES NEW RURAL TASK-FORCE



A new Rural Task Force dedicated to preventing and detecting crime in our rural communities has been officially launched by Kent Police.

The new unit was introduced by the Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes and Michael Bax, Chairman of the Crime Rural Advisory Group at the Kent Rural Crime Conference on 29 October.

It brings together officers from the Gypsy Liaison Team and the award-winning Rural Liaison Team into one coordinated unit.

The Rural Task Force will be focused on directly targeting those who cause harm to rural communities and listening to people who live there and will consist of officers, specially-trained to deal with wildlife crime such as hare coursing and poaching.

The strong relationship between Kent Police and the rural communities it serves gained national recognition on 9 October when the Rural Liaison Team received the Country Crime Fighters award at a ceremony organised by insurance company NFU Mutual.

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes said: 'Like many people in Kent I live in a rural community and – like many people in Kent – I know that the countryside can be both idyllic and also quite isolating and daunting.'

'That's why it's vital that every community in Kent gets the best possible policing service that we can afford and why I am delighted that we are launching the Kent Rural Task Force. The officers have already made great inroads into working with the rural community and we are seeing excellent results that they are able to achieve as a team.'

PCC'S ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED

Keeping her promises to the people of Kent is the theme in the annual report of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

Mrs Barnes said: 'As a relative newcomer to the political world, being an elected representative – for me – is all about keeping your promises.'

'The annual report is something that I warmly welcome because it is important that local people know that I keep my promises to them. I may not have been in the middle of the political maelstrom for very long, but the first lesson I have learned is to do what I said I would do, otherwise I risk losing people's trust.'

'Despite the distractions that sometimes come with public office, it's important to get on with the day job, to concentrate on what is important and to deliver on the promises you make.'

'Significant progress was made in 2013/14 which continues to be the case this year, thanks to many different people, and I pay grateful tribute to my very committed and hard-working colleagues and to the Chief Constable and his professional officers and staff, in recognition of their achievements on our behalf.'

Read the Annual Report at www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/plan

SOUTH EAST FORCES RUN BURGLARY

CAMPAIGN



Police in Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Thames Valley are working together to target cross-county burglars as the clocks go back.

For the first time, officers from each force will co-ordinate activities during a three-week burglary campaign to catch offenders and educate resi-

dents to try to prevent them from becoming victims.

The campaign is running between 27 October and 16 November, because in recent years the south east region has experienced a rise in reports of burglary in this period.

To deter burglars, police are working with residents to encourage them to 'Light it, Lock it, List it' by ensuring homes look lived in, are well secured, and that valuable items have been security-marked and logged on property marking databases. Knowing when the risk is greater means that residents have a better chance of being able to protect themselves against would-be burglars.

The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Ann Barnes, said: "I speak from personal experience when I say I know just how horrible it is to arrive home and find that someone has been going through your personal belongings. I wholeheartedly support this campaign, which seeks to make sure there are fewer victims of this awful, invasive crime."

NEW URBAN BLUE BUS FOR MAIDSTONE



The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner has helped to launch a new Urban Blue Bus for Maidstone.

The community bus has been a fixture in Maidstone town centre on Saturday nights for the past

five years, where volunteers provide both medical and emotional support to those in need – whether due to alcohol, drugs, assault or other reasons.

The bus helps over 600 people a year and saves the police and ambulance being called on hundreds of occasions. The new single-decker bus – partly funded by a £15,000 grant from the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner – replaces the previous model, and comes with a fully-equipped medical centre.

Speaking at the launch, Mrs Barnes said: 'I saw for myself the fantastic work that goes on at the Urban Blue Bus when I went to visit at the start of this year. From providing shelter to first-aid, this is all done for no financial reward by volunteers.

'I'm absolutely delighted to have been able to provide some funding for this wonderful new bus. For me, it makes perfect sense. It is undoubtedly a huge help to our officers policing the night time economy, freeing them up to deal with other issues. It's exactly the kind of partnership working I'm only too happy to support.'

PCC AWARDS FUNDS FOR PARTNERSHIP

WORKING

Community safety projects across the county have been given money by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner to boost partnership working.

Four groups ranging from those supporting victims of domestic abuse in Shepway and West Kent to a community hub to promote cohesion and integration in Dover have been awarded funds from the Partnership Fund.

One of the projects to receive funding is a trial in Dover of 'sobriety tags' – a screening device that registers any alcohol consumption and helps voluntary participants with their recovery.

Heidi Sutcliffe, Dover Community Safety Partnership Officer, said: "Dover CSP is delighted to have received funding from the PCC for the purchase of Sobriety Tags.

'Alcohol misuse is a public health concern due to its association with negative health outcomes as well as increased legal and social consequences.'

Mrs Barnes said: 'I truly value and recognise the excellent work undertaken by local Community Safety Partnerships and my aim for this money is to encourage multi-agency partnership working for the good of our communities across Kent.

'I'm absolutely delighted to be able to offer some additional funding for projects that support delivery of the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan.'

Find out more about the Partnership Fund and the projects to receive money so far at www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/partnership-fund.



RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT ON FIREARMS LICENSING

The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner has welcomed the Government's view that the current situation around fees for firearms licensing is "unsustainable".

Norman Baker MP recognised the need to achieve a balance between an efficient system and fair fees in reply to a letter Mrs Barnes wrote to the Prime Minister, David Cameron in August.

Mr Baker, Minister for Crime Prevention, also outlined a proposal to pilot an online licensing system.

Mrs Barnes said: 'I welcome Mr Baker's assurance to me that firearms licensing is a priority both in terms of public service and ensuring that a fair and effective service is provided.

'I repeat what I said in the summer – on behalf of the people of Kent I want to know why those who keep firearms and shotguns should not pay more towards the actual cost of processing the licences, rather than it being a drain on the public purse.'

Mrs Barnes wrote to the Prime Minister, David Cameron, after she was told that the shortfall between the cost to Kent Police of administering applications and renewals and the actual fee paid by those owning firearms and shotguns is nearly £700,000 every year – the approximate cost of 18 police officers or 1% of the Council Tax pre-cept.