



**June 2016**

### **Message from the new Police and Crime Commissioner Kathryn Holloway**

As a former journalist, I was always frustrated when politicians suffered from amnesia over promises immediately after they were elected. That is why it is important to me to show those who voted for me as Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as those who did not, that I have kept my word from Day One in the job.

I said during the Campaign that, at a time when the Force's frontline is stretched, I would make savings in my own office. That is why I have not appointed a Deputy on a salary of over £30,000 for a three-day week, as previously. I have given notice to the Press Agency who handled media inquiries, which is no comment on their performance, but as I am able to write my own. Finally, a Sergeant worked in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, who was paid by Bedfordshire Police from its funds, as a Staff Officer. I could not justify retaining this role either, especially when funded in this way. This amounts to over £100,000 of public money which will not now be spent in this manner.

I pledged to back seven Community Policing Hubs around the county, headed up by a Sergeant with both Police Constables and Special Constables with full police powers of arrest, plus Police Community Support Officers. The Deputy Chief Constable Mark Collins and I are finalising placements for these and we will deliver genuinely more visible policing. For example, we intend to place the Bedford Hub right in the town centre at the point of peak demand from the Night Time Economy and where it can be seen by shoppers and those working in the town by day.

I have had very productive discussions with the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and the Fire Brigades' Union, to move forward plans to share fire stations in areas where police stations have disappeared and next month will update you.

Finally I launched Project Boost the Frontline to do just what it "says on the tin" – looking at those officers we employ in desk jobs and whether any can be released to frontline duty, the support needed by those on restricted duties or long-term sickness to get back to the job they love and what practical steps I can take to boost the morale of our officers, looking after them so they can look after you.

If you wish to contact me about this newsletter or anything else, please email [policeandcrime.commissioner@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:policeandcrime.commissioner@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk). You can also follow us on twitter [@BedsPCC](https://twitter.com/BedsPCC) or Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/bedspcc](https://facebook.com/bedspcc).

## **First round of grant funding opens for services for abuse victims**

Police and Crime Commissioner Kathryn Holloway is inviting applications for the Victims' Commissioning Fund – a pot of £449,392 to be invested in projects that support victims of abuse in Bedfordshire.

Despite fears that all funds for projects supporting victims of the most traumatic crimes had



been distributed in full for Bedfordshire, the Commissioner has found more than £400,000 remains and invites applications for funding from organisations across the county.

Commissioner Holloway has focused this, her first round of grant funding, on projects supporting vulnerable victims.

She said: "Abuse in any form is unacceptable and all too often it is focussed on the most vulnerable in our society, leaving victims highly traumatised and struggling to move forward with their lives. There is a danger that abuse then becomes a vicious circle with repeat victimisation simply because the right support isn't available."

The Commissioner's priorities for awarding this funding will focus particularly on refuge provision for those fleeing domestic abuse and support for medium risk victims of domestic abuse; play therapy and counselling for victims of child sexual exploitation; youth-oriented projects to combat online bullying and gang related violence and vulnerable victims of sexual abuse and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Mrs Holloway continued: "It's vital to provide the type of help that's needed in our county and I want to see a range of support available which is easily accessible for the most vulnerable to help them to cope and recover and rebuild whole lives."

In the interests of total transparency and impartiality, instead of these grants being awarded at the discretion of the Commissioner, she will convene a selection panel to assess applications and presentations will be required.

## **PCC celebrates Independent Custody Visitors for National Volunteers' Week**

To mark National Volunteers' Week in June, the Commissioner has written to all of the Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) to thank them for their hard work.

The Commissioner wrote: "Even though I have been in office for less than a month, I am already impressed by the stories I have heard about the commitment of our ICVs. This year, our ICVs have attended a Death in Custody workshop with the force, participating in discussions and giving feedback, and attended the national and regional ICV conferences.

“Our custody visitors have flagged issues like broken lights, heating and toilets, as well as graffiti in the cells and cleaning charts by cell doors not being used. They are also reporting back issues such as mental health concerns and potential self-harm risks, which are hugely important to share with custody staff to safeguard those that are held in custody.”

The Commissioner also met with the volunteers during her first week in office, to emphasise the importance of their role in ensuring transparency in the police.

The PCC has a statutory duty to establish and maintain an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, which involves volunteer members of the public visiting police stations to check and report on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protections and confidentiality to detainees, the police and provides reassurance to the wider community.

We currently have 32 ICVs but always welcome applications from more potential visitors. The scheme has a dedicated, existing team of volunteers covering the county’s custody suites in Kempston and Luton and, on the very rare occasion, Dunstable. Volunteers make unannounced visits to custody in pairs once a week to each custody suite, during the day and night, seven days a week. Once on site the volunteers carry out a number of checks and file a report based on their findings for further action.



Volunteers are expected to carry out a minimum of four visits to the custody suites per annum and attend quarterly ICV panel meetings to discuss key issues raised.

For further information on the scheme, the role and the necessary application forms, please visit the Commissioner’s website at <http://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/Get-Involved/Independent-Custody-Visitors.aspx>.

## **Officers and staff commended for their long service and bravery**

The PCC attended her first Long Service and Chief Commendations Ceremony on 23 May – a quarterly event that celebrates officers and staff who have served over 20 years, as well as those who have been commended by the Chief Constable for acts of bravery and professionalism.

The ceremony was hosted by the Chief Constable at police headquarters in Kempston, where officers were invited to bring their families to witness the presentation of their rewards.

Eight officers and two members of police staff were presented with Long Service medals, while four officers received Chief Commendation certificates. One officer, DS Grant Maxted, was celebrated for the Commendation from the RAF following his secondment to an investigation into a historic and previously investigated sexual assault.

Mrs Holloway spoke at the event to say how important it was to celebrate these achievements, especially our four officers who were celebrated for their long service after starting together at Bedfordshire on the same day twenty years ago.

## Launch of the Police and Crime Plan for Bedfordshire

On 20 June 2016, PCC Kathryn Holloway launched her Police and Crime Plan, which outlines her priorities going forward.

These include:

- A return of more visible community policing across the county
- To rebuild public confidence in Bedfordshire Police
- To ensure the police are available when we need them most
- Putting victims at the centre of the way we police and prosecute
- A fair deal on policing, whether you live in the town or the country
- Protecting the police to protect the public, with a proper duty of care
- Genuinely being a commissioner for all communities
- Working with partners to break the cycle of serial offending and to prevent crime where possible.



The number one priority in the Plan is to make policing more visible in communities with seven Community Policing Hubs, positioned in areas where the public can see the difference. “For example, the Force is now finalising arrangements for a Hub based right on Bedford High Street, in the centre of the Night Time Economy’s pubbing and clubbing area but also seen by shoppers and workers in the town by day,” said Kathryn Holloway.

“As I promised during my election campaign, Bedfordshire Police is intending to position other hubs in areas where police stations have disappeared but fire stations remain, like Ampthill, and negotiations are at an advanced stage with the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service over sharing facilities with both the senior team there and the Fire Brigades’ Union being incredibly positive and helpful.

“I think we all appreciate that where more than one blue light service is based at one station it makes its future - and that of jobs there - more secure and, from the public’s viewpoint, it makes best use of buildings they are already paying for,” said Commissioner Holloway.

“Clearly the main towns and areas of demand like Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard all need Hubs too and the North of the county needs one, potentially at Biggleswade or, with the agreement of the Fire Service, sharing in Shefford,” she said.

Commissioner Holloway pointed to the need to rebuild confidence in the Force, which she believes has been eroded over funding arguments. “The public heard nothing but problems over funding for the past few years and that Bedfordshire Police is overstretched. Sadly they came to believe the Force couldn’t do the job properly.

“There’s no doubt Bedfordshire isn’t fully funded for the urban challenges it faces, particularly in the Luton area, but that doesn’t mean there are not areas of absolute excellence that I’m finding and that the public need to hear about. For example, Bedfordshire has gone from 41st in the country out of 43 for improvements in tackling burglary to the number one slot and the Operation Fidelity programme for tackling persistent burglars through daily disruption and over every minor infraction of the law, plus the Cybercrime Hub, dealing with online crime, are considered such examples of best practice that they’re attracting other Forces to come to Bedfordshire to see how it’s done. I need the public to know they have a Force to be proud of,” she said.

“Also, when things go wrong, as sadly they will from time to time in an area like policing, I need to explain the background as fully as I can within the law and the constraints of investigations like those of the independent watchdog on policing, the IPCC, so communities don’t leap to the wrong conclusions. Whatever the constraints at the time, I will stand by my promise not to preside over any whitewash and present the facts when able to do so,” said Commissioner Holloway.

The plan can be seen in full on the PCC’s website at <http://www.bedspsc.org/Our-Work/Police-and-Crime-Plan-2016.aspx>.

## **Upcoming events**

Leighton Buzzard Public Meeting – 30 June, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Leighton Buzzard Cricket Club

Bedfordshire Police Family Fun Day – 3 September 11am-4pm, Police HQ Kempston

Parish Councils Forum – 10 September (Further details TBC; all Parish Councils will receive invitations).