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Weekly newsletter from Warwickshire's PCC

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## Police and Crime Commissioner Warwickshire

Friday 19th February 2016

### Building a safer Warwickshire



#### Welcome to my weekly newsletter

I'm Ron Ball, Warwickshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, and welcome to my weekly newsletter.

Here you will find out the latest news, what I've been up to during the week and how I am working to keep Warwickshire residents safe and supporting new projects and initiatives to tackle crime in the area. You can get in touch on 01926 413718 or email [opcc@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:opcc@warwickshire.gov.uk)

## Thought of the week: Latest HMIC report is a mixed bag

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Another week and another report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, this time looking at '[Effectiveness](#)'. Overall, it presents something of a mixed bag, with many positives but also highlighting areas the force needs to improved.

The report confirms that Warwickshire Police is good at investigating crime and managing offenders and goes on to state that "the public can feel confident that the force is working well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe". HMIC also praises the force for demonstrating a strong commitment to protecting people from harm and working in partnership to tackle problems of concern for the community.

However, despite being rated as good in two out of four categories being assessed, the Inspectors gave an overall grading of 'requires improvement', saying it found the force's approach to responding to vulnerable missing children and assessing the risks to domestic abuse victims is not always consistent, although where risk and vulnerability have been correctly identified, the force's response to victims is good. The report also found that the force needs to make improvements in how it understands and responds to serious and organised crime.

Overall, the findings are helpful and I have raised and will continue to raise these issues with the Chief Constable while I remain in office. I am confident that they are being addressed but it is unfortunate that the overall grading given by the report is somewhat at odds with the tone of much of the content.

While nationally there may be concerns about an erosion of neighbourhood policing, in Warwickshire we have a strong record of ensuring that Safer Neighbourhood Teams are able to concentrate on their role of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour in their communities. As their report makes clear, HMIC found good evidence that PCSOs and neighbourhood officers are rarely abstracted from their roles. Warwickshire Police and its alliance partner West Mercia Police have also led the way nationally in terms of recruiting new officers and ensuring the front line is strengthened.

In a number of areas work to improve the force's way of working was already under way at the time of the inspection and is now progressing well. As an example, the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is due to launch in May and, while this will initially focus on vulnerable young people, it will be expanded to cover vulnerable adults later in the year. I have been the major advocate for this to be set up and I believe it will build upon what the HMIC report notes as the "encouraging

start in ensuring the force is adequately prepared to tackle child sexual exploitation".

The report does however raise the need for the force to ensure there is a more consistent approach to the way it responds to vulnerable missing children – particularly those in care - and how it assesses the risks to victims of domestic abuse. While it is good that HMIC has found that vulnerable victims are generally well-supported, clearly this needs to happen on every occasion. The force will need to take into account the recommendations made by HMIC to see if improvements can be made.

The inspectors also raised concerns relating to Warwickshire Police's response to serious and organised crime. We are fortunate in Warwickshire that we face significantly smaller problems with serious and organised crime than forces in larger metropolitan areas, but there is clearly a need to improve our understanding and information sharing processes.

There is a programme of work now under way to significantly strengthen the force's approach. I have instigated the creation of a Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group, which will incorporate the police and a broad range of partners and will look to address all of the concerns raised in the report. I will be opening the first meeting later this month and will emphasise the priority that I feel this piece of work requires.



**Ron Ball**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire**

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### **Warwickshire projects get a £1.1 million funding boost**

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Police and Crime Commissioner Ron Ball and Deputy Commissioner Dr Eric Wood with a cheque to fund initiatives in Warwickshire.

This week I am pleased to announce that around fifty projects which focus on tackling crime and disorder in Warwickshire have been awarded a share of my £1.1 million Commissioner's Community Grant fund. The money has will support organisations and initiatives which help achieve the objectives of my Police and Crime Plan.

Applications to the scheme were oversubscribed and bids for funding were evaluated and scored against set criteria to determine their eligibility and suitability before a final list was determined.

Some of the successful projects receiving a share of the funding include:

- a Crimestoppers anti-crime initiative;
- Neighbourhood Watch;
- Barnardo's for its work in supporting vulnerable victims of child sexual exploitation;
- Street Pastor schemes;
- projects to help victims of domestic abuse.

This is the third year I have been able to provide funding for strong and innovative community-based initiatives which help to tackle crime and disorder in Warwickshire. Many of the schemes funded are designed to reduce re-offending and prevent crime from being committed in the first place, which ultimately is a much better and cost-effective way of using public money to enhance the quality of life across Warwickshire.

Community organisations play a big part in this and are very often well-placed to

deliver innovative schemes which address local needs and concerns, so I am pleased to see a mix of such projects receiving funding.

An additional £400,000 fund to tackle rural, business and cyber crime is also being finalised and will be announced separately in due course.

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### Get a unique insight into policing

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Warwickshire Police is looking for local people to join the second South Warwickshire Citizens' Academy - an exciting opportunity which I fund to give residents an understanding about how local police work to protect the community from harm.

Members of the public over the age of 18 can enrol in the ten-week course, which runs at Warwickshire Justice Centre (Newbold Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4EL) / Leek Wootton every Wednesday from 6:30-8:30pm, beginning on 13 April 2016.

Police officers, police staff and supporting agencies/organisations will deliver presentations on key topics covering crime prevention and detection, recording crimes and incidents, road safety, forensic investigation, police use of firearms, internet safety, and the role of Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Participants will also be encouraged to request subjects of interest to them to ensure they get the best possible benefit from the time they invest.

The previous Citizens' Academies have proved a great success and demonstrated how valuable the programme can be not only for the police but also for the people who take part. The participants really do get some fascinating insights into the world of policing and I've been pleased to see their continued interest in policing, even after graduation from the scheme.

I am delighted that the programme is once again taking applications and I would urge people to consider getting involved. Find out more information and register at [www.warwickshire.police.uk/article/10791/How-do-I-find-out-more-about-Citizens-Academies-in-my-area](http://www.warwickshire.police.uk/article/10791/How-do-I-find-out-more-about-Citizens-Academies-in-my-area). The closing date for applications is Monday, 28 March 2016.



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## Giving the police cadets a run for their money!

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When I look back on my time in office, I am very proud of the decision I took to reintroduce the police cadets to Warwickshire. It's been a real success and gives the cadets a real taste of police life, as well as helping us engage with young people in the community.

The cadets help support local policing priorities through volunteering, working with partner agencies and positive participation in their communities. They also take part in a variety of activities including self-defence training, marching, team building, role playing and Outward Bound events. All of this can result in them gaining a Level 2 Award in Leadership & Team Skills awarded by the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM).

One of the other activities they get up to is fitness training - many will wish to go on to become police officers, for whom good levels of fitness are a must. Having given a presentation to the cadets a while back, I rather rashly promised that I would join them when they took the 'bleep test'. So it was that on Thursday evening I found myself in the gym at Bedworth Police Station, sports kit in hand, waiting to take the test.

I'm pleased to say I made level six of the bleep test - which all things considered is not too bad for someone who had a hip replacement in June! I also proved a dab hand at press-ups too - it appears my sessions at the gym and cycling have proved worthwhile! It was a fun evening, and I'm pleased to support the cadets in whatever way I can.

[Find out more about the cadets scheme here.](#)

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### In the news this week

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Laser attacks on police helicopters are becoming a problem, as this shot from an National Police Air Service camera shows. Picture courtesy NPAS Barton.

You may well have seen the national news story about a [Virgin Atlantic aircraft having to return to Heathrow](#) this week as a result of a laser attack aimed at the

pilots. Sadly, this is also a problem that is rearing its ugly head with pilots flying police helicopters too.

Why anyone would want to do this to a civilian aircraft utterly defeats me, but it is perhaps easier to see why some people might choose to attack a police aircraft in this way. The question that is brought into sharp focus is why would a law-abiding member of the public want a laser anyway?

My old union Balpa (British Association of Airline Pilots) have understandably called for lasers to be treated as offensive weapons, which is precisely what they are being used as in these instances. When culprits are apprehended, sentencing needs to reflect just how serious an offence this is. We shouldn't have to wait for a serious accident first.

*Other news stories that may be of interest this week:*

**Police Professional: New laws designed to 'keep children safe' – from adult sites and from arrest**

**Nuneaton News: Police to crack down on people parking illegally in Atherstone**

**Financial Times: Crime agency to be given powers over SFO in shake-up**

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## Diary look ahead: Monday 22nd - Friday 26th February

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*Here are my key diary appointments for the coming week:*

**Tuesday 23rd February**

2.00pm - Appearing at the Home Affairs Select Committee, Westminster

**Wednesday 24th February**

9.00am - National Crime Agency PCC engagement day, London

**Thursday 25th February**

1.00pm - Meeting with Councillor John Horner, Warwickshire County Council Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, OPCC Warwick



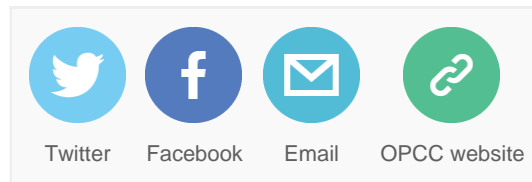
**Friday 26th February**

9.00am - Meeting with T/ACC Steve Cullen, OPCC Warwick

3.15pm - Meeting with Nadhim Zahawi MP, OPCC Warwick

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**Keep up to date with the latest news from the Warwickshire PCC**



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