

FEDLINE



**Brave Leo recognised at
Police Bravery Awards** - see Pages 2 and 3

View from the chair

By **Liz Groom**, chair of Cambridgeshire Police Federation

Welcome to this mini-edition of our members' magazine which puts a firm focus on PC Leo Clarke, our nominee for the Police Bravery Awards 2021.

Leo was horrifically injured when called to an incident but has battled back to work and says he is pleased to be able to get on and do the job he signed up for.

Like so many of the nominees put forward for the bravery awards, Leo felt that he was just doing the job he was paid to do. But the reality is that job often means putting your life on the line, and that has to be recognised.

This year has been challenging, the pandemic adding to the pressures policing is under, negative media headlines having a damaging impact on officer morale. Added to that we have the pay freeze and continuing uncertainty around pensions both serving to have an impact on officers.

As a Federation, we have been putting a great emphasis on officer wellbeing and this is something we will continue to build on in 2022.

As we approach the festive season, I wish you all a happy Christmas and all the best for 2022. Enjoy time with your loved ones and stay safe.

Cover photo: PC Leo Clarke outside the famous black door of 10 Downing Street. Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography.



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Brave Leo is honoured at awards ceremony



PC Leo Clarke and his partner Sophie with Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston (left) and Assistant Chief Constable Vicki Evans.

A courageous Cambridgeshire officer who suffered serious head injuries when he was attacked after being called out to a domestic incident has been honoured at the national Police Bravery Awards 2021.

PC Leo Clarke (24) joined nominees from across England and Wales at the ceremony in London on 9 December attended by policing minister Kit Malthouse, shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick.

Leo and his partner, Sophie, were joined at the event by Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom, Assistant Chief Constable Vicki Evans and Police and Crime

Commissioner Darryl Preston.

PC Clarke was nominated for the bravery he showed when he responded to reports from a man saying he was unable to control his adult son who had mental health issues.

He arrived at the incident as the lone officer and found the man and his son outside the house. The 27-year-old man was in an agitated state and started shouting at the officer before attacking him.

A witness described how PC Clarke suffered several blows to the head before his attacker went back inside. The assailant was arrested at the scene when other officers arrived and warned him they would use a Taser unless he surrendered.

PC Clarke, who had been a police officer

for just 18 months at the time of the attack, then left the address and returned to Thorpe Wood Police Station but started to feel unwell.

A welfare check by a supervisor revealed he was squinting and had started to slur his words. He was taken to Peterborough City Hospital where his condition continued to deteriorate and doctors discovered he had a bleed on the brain.

Emergency surgery was performed to stop the bleed and PC Clarke remained in hospital for five days.

The surgery has left him with scarring across his head but he has recently returned to work.

His attacker admitted causing grievous bodily harm without intent and was sentenced to one year and eight months when he appeared at Peterborough Crown Court.

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Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom: “I felt honoured and proud to accompany Leo to the awards ceremony. He has shown incredible resilience and determination in overcoming his injuries and returning to a job which he says he still loves. I am pleased that having returned to work he is now looking forward to continuing his career and serving the communities of Cambridgeshire just as he originally intended when he joined the Force.”

Four West Yorkshire Police officers who detained two attackers who murdered a man with a samurai sword were named overall winners at the awards ceremony organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

The colleagues were honoured for their professionalism during a horrific incident in January 2020 when they responded to reports of a man being viciously attacked outside a pharmaceutical factory in Huddersfield.

The officers – one of whom was in the first two weeks of her career – were confronted by the barbaric sight of attackers hacking at the victim with a sword and knives when they arrived at the scene. They bravely managed to detain both assailants, despite the offenders still being in possession of the murder weapon and knives.



Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

Home Secretary Priti Patel addresses the bravery awards nominees. Leo can be seen third from the right.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson praised the “dedication and conscientiousness” of all the nominees and paid tribute to their bravery.

He said: “Acts of bravery in policing are, necessarily and thankfully for us all, commonplace. Every day, local and national media is awash with examples of police heroism. Be it confronting dangerous and violent people, rescuing members of the public or working day and night on the most harrowing of cases, bravery is a defining characteristic of the police.”

“It is this unflinching bravery, alongside your dedication and conscientiousness, that inspires my steadfast support for the police.”

“I am bowled over by the nominees. You are a credit to your forces and your illustrious forebears in policing. I salute each and every one of you.”

Kerry McMahon-White, head of partnerships at Police Bravery Awards sponsor Police Mutual, said: “The role of a police officer has never been easy, but the last 18 months has seen you continue to protect the public while battling the unprecedented impact of Covid-19, putting the safety of others before yourself with unwavering commitment.”

“I thank each one of you for the sacrifices you have made with resolute dedication in the most difficult of circumstances.”

“To all of you who have been nominated; your acts of bravery are exceptional and this evening we pay tribute to your remarkable heroism and dedication.”

“All at Police Mutual are honoured to be able to support those who have gone above and beyond and offer our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all nominees.”



At the awards ceremony are Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom (left) with PC Leo Clarke and his partner Sophie.

NEWS ROUND- UP

Chair selected for new term of office

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom has vowed to continue introducing initiatives to improve officer welfare after being returned unopposed for another three-year term of office.

Liz, who became chair in 2017 after serving for a year as vice-chair, said the branch now put a stronger emphasis on officer wellbeing and she wanted to build on recent successes with the help of the executive and workplace representatives.

She said: "I think since I became chair we are far more welfare driven as a council. We now have two welfare caravans - the second moved forwards by our branch secretary Scott Houghton - provide free tickets for our officers to get some respite from work and deliver welfare hampers to officers who are seriously ill and injured.

"We have also supported team building initiatives, things like cooking hot dogs at New Year."

Liz said one of her biggest achievements as chair was securing training and awareness of post-incident procedures (PIP) for recruits and making sure all new officers receive this training before they hit the streets.

She also said the use of social media to keep members up to date had also improved in recent years.

"We now engage with social media, of course, and we now always send officers to the bravery awards," added Liz, "We hardly ever sent a nominee before which was strange as our officers do brave things every day.

"I think we have a more engaged membership as a result of all this."

Liz said she was looking forward to continuing working with Scott Houghton, the branch secretary.

"We make a good team," she added, "Over the next three years I want to build on that work around welfare with the help of our exec and workplace reps. We can be more visible at stations with engagement events and we are always thinking of new ways and initiatives to help our members get some respite from the demands and challenges of their day to day role, which have only increased since the onset of the pandemic."

Branch secretary "honoured" to be re-elected

Scott Houghton says it's a pleasure and an honour to represent police officers in Cambridgeshire after being re-elected as the Federation branch secretary.

Scott, who began working in the branch office in July 2020 and took over as secretary in January, hopes his re-election shows he's doing a good job in the role.

"It's a really good feeling to be elected back in," he said, "I feel I've done a lot of work in that short time as both secretary and CAPLO (conduct and performance liaison officer).

"Our office had been neglected over the years and was falling apart so it required a lot of work to put right - and that is still ongoing.

"I'd hope that the re-election means the Branch Council is happy that I'm doing a decent job. It's a tough job and I didn't realise how tough it is, especially around the misconduct and the emotion that brings with the job."

He added: "It's a pleasure and an honour to represent the Police Federation as secretary of Cambridgeshire and do believe I have the attributes, knowledge and experience to lead our local branch moving forward.

"I've built a good relationship with Liz Groom, our chair, which is important so that we sing from the same hymn sheet."

Harper's Law plan welcomed by Cambridgeshire Police Federation

The news that offenders convicted of killing emergency workers in the course of their duties will receive mandatory life sentences has been welcomed by the Police Federation.

The Ministry of Justice said it would change the law "as soon as possible" following a campaign by Lissie Harper, whose husband PC Andrew Harper was horrifically killed in August 2019.

Liz Groom, chair of Cambridgeshire Police Federation, has also supported this latest development.

"PC Andrew Harper's death shocked the nation. Having only married Lissie a few weeks earlier, he had his whole life in front of him and we can only imagine the devastation his death caused his young wife, his family, his friends and his colleagues," said Liz.

"But Lissie has shown incredible determination in driving this change in the law and it seems fitting that her husband's name will live on in a law that will ensure those who show scant regard for the lives of the very emergency service workers who seek to serve and protect the public are appropriately punished."



Federation issues warning over new pensions guidelines

The Police Federation has warned the Government that the unexpected publication of new guidelines regarding unfair discrimination caused by the 2015 pensions reforms must not further delay the settlement of pension claims by retired and serving members.

Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) has issued new guidelines advising public sector pension remedy claimants and schemes to halt claims until new legislation had been created to reduce the potential for tax consequences.

Previous Government advice made it clear Federation members who moved to reformed pension schemes on or after 1 April 2015 and retired were entitled to be treated as a member of their legacy scheme for the remedy period, if they wished.

However, the new HMT and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) advice on drafting the remedy through the McCloud Bill has now described the uncertainties caused by the Government's original guidelines as 'considerably greater than was previously thought'.

Fears that conduct hearings could turn into kangaroo courts

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom fears changes to independent misconduct proceedings could unduly influence future hearings.

Liz, and branch secretary and conduct lead Scott Houghton, say they are concerned about the fairness of misconduct hearings after new advice from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) for chief constables to make submissions to chairs.

NPCC chair Martin Hewitt, in his keynote speech at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and NPCC Summit, said it has asked all chief constables to chair more accelerated hearings, "wherever the grounds are met, to swiftly determine the facts", and to make submissions to legally-qualified chairs "wherever appropriate, so that sanctions always meet the gravity of an offence".

Chief constables have also been advised by the NPCC to seek judicial reviews where dismissal is not the outcome, and it wants the College of Policing guidance amended.

"The current system is fair, open and transparent and, while we'd like to see the process speeded up, these moves feel like they will undermine it," Liz said.

Scott added: "Telling chief constables to chair accelerated hearings or to make submissions to chairs before they've received all of the evidence could unduly influence future hearings."