

# FEDLINE

The magazine of Cambridgeshire Police Federation

WINTER 2023



**WISHING YOU A HAPPY  
AND SAFE FESTIVE SEASON**

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## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

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

**W**elcome to the final edition of Fedline for 2023. With Christmas fast approaching and the festivities well underway, I hope you all manage to get some time off with loved ones. It's no secret that in policing, we don't necessarily get to celebrate the festivities like so many of our family and friends do. So please, don't burn yourself out, and take some time over the next few weeks to reflect on the past 12 months and plan for the year ahead.

As I look back on 2023, I can't help but be full of pride as I re-read some of the fantastic stories and experiences told by so many of our members.

In July we saw Cambridgeshire detectives Lily Deacon and Craig Trevor honoured for the courage demonstrated when risking their lives saving a woman from a burning car. The pair travelled to London to celebrate with their colleagues from forces across the country at this year's national Police Bravery Awards. I was - and continue to be - incredibly proud of them both. I am so pleased that their actions were highlighted at a national level.

More recently, PC Guy Cunningham was named Officer of the Year at Cambridgeshire Police's annual awards ceremony. Guy accepted the award with such modesty, dedicating it to his team, however, he is fully deserving of such recognition. Guy consistently demonstrates his commitment and passion for policing, working in one of the county's most challenging and deprived areas.

PC Justin Bielawski received this year's Unsung Hero Award, as well as the Chief Constable's Grand Prix Employee of the Year. Like Guy, Justin has since paid tribute to his hard-working colleagues, but he shouldn't underestimate the impact his professionalism, diligence and can-do approach has in the workplace. You can read more from Guy and Justin later in this edition.

Of course, 2023 has brought with it several challenges too. Poor pay and increasing pressures on our officers continue to impact the morale of our members, not to mention the closure of canteens and a lack of rest time. Sadly, it seems that modern-day policing doesn't allow for the vital time that allows officers to rest and debrief following traumatic incidents. A simple conversation can go a long way - and if our members aren't even being given the time to talk, it's no wonder that mental health and wellbeing are at an all-time low. Are cuts being made in the right areas? I'm not entirely sure. I can't help but feel that the wellbeing, mental health and welfare of our officers is what's being sacrificed at the moment.

As we head into 2024, I pledge to do all I can to ensure your working environment, as well as current policies and procedures, are fit for purpose.

A milestone event that took place in 2023 was the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) announcing a ballot for members to see if we should seek industrial rights. We will continue to keep you informed and up-to-date with progress, but please, whatever you believe, voting in the ballot is your opportunity to have your say.

I hope that as we look forward to 2024, we will see change - and change for the better. I'm optimistic that the Government will announce the introduction of an Elizabeth Medal in honour of fallen officers. I'm also hopeful that our new Home Secretary James Cleverly, will throw his support behind policing and give us a voice at the table when police pay is considered. While we were given a seven per cent pay increase this year - I don't believe this reflects the hard work, commitment and dedication of our members. Pay needs to be a priority and I urge Mr Cleverly to get behind us and ensure officers are given the pay increase they deserve.

You'll see that I recently met with a number of our local MPs to highlight some of the concerns I have about the unfair disparity in payment between us in Cambridgeshire and our neighbouring forces, in that we are not in receipt of South East Allowance. I was joined by Chief Constable Nick Dean as well as Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston. And while everyone at the table seemed supportive of what I was saying, the decision unfortunately sits with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). That said, North West Cambridgeshire MP Shailesh Vera has pledged to raise our concerns with Mr Cleverly - which gives us some sort of hope.

Meetings like these are imperative to getting our voices heard and I look forward to hopefully participating in similar discussions and engagements in the forthcoming year.

For now though, I'd like to end by thanking you all for your continued support, engagement and, above all, undeniable hard work throughout the year. I end 2023 proud to be your chair and to represent so many fantastic officers.

Enjoy the festivities and remember to look out for one another. Keep safe.





# OFFICER ASSAULTS: 'OFFENDERS SHOULD GET PRISON SENTENCE'

**A**ssaults on police officers should carry an automatic prison sentence, says Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom.

Liz has called for tougher punishments for people who attack officers with assaults in the county rising to more than one a day.

[Figures shared with the BBC](#) showed that in the year to June there were 38,079 assaults on officers in England – a rise of six per cent in three years.

In Cambridgeshire alone there were more than 500 assaults on officers, an 18 per cent rise from three years ago, with five officers assaulted over the weekend of bonfire night.

Liz said: "Sadly, this is every day now and it seems to be getting worse. We take

these matters very seriously and we hope they're charged and go to court.

"The issue is that there still doesn't seem to be a suitable deterrent.

"It should be an automatic custodial sentence if you assault a police officer – that's the only way to stop it happening.

"It sends a message that if you assault an officer you're going to prison without question."

She said that society also had a role to play in making it unacceptable to assault a police officer.

"This is a small number of people who do it, and we need the courts to deal with them seriously and take action," said Liz, who was speaking during an interview on the Dotty

McLeod Breakfast Show on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

"I have no idea why we're seeing these increases and why people think it is acceptable to do that.

"I've been in the police for more than 27 years now and, when I first joined, even among the people we deal with, they thought it was unacceptable to assault a police officer.

"But it just seems to be that doesn't exist any more, and I'm not sure why that is. We've got a responsibility as society to make sure it's absolutely unacceptable to assault an officer.

"It shouldn't be part of the job," she added.

## BRANCH CHAIR MEETS MPS TO HIGHLIGHT 'UNFAIR' DISPARITY IN PAY

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom met with county MPs to highlight the 'unfair' disparity in payment of the South East Allowance with neighbouring forces.

Liz hopes the meeting with North West Cambridgeshire MP Shailesh Vera and Jonathan Djanogly, the Huntingdon MP, will help to bring officers inline with colleagues in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, who are in receipt of the Allowance.

Liz said it was particularly unfair for those officers who work in collaboration with other officers from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, who are paid more for essentially doing the same job.

She said: "In Bedfordshire, their officers get an additional payment of £1,500 per year and in Hertfordshire they get an extra £3,000 per year.

"It's especially unfair for the 149 officers we've got working in collaboration with colleagues from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in our armed policing unit, our roads policing unit, on major crimes.

"We're the only force that collaborates with two other forces in receipt of the south east allowance that doesn't receive it.

"So our members can be sat on a desk with someone who gets £3,000 more than them for doing the same job. It's a massive fairness issue."

As well as the MPs, Liz was joined at the meeting by Chief Constable Nick Dean and Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston.

It is the latest stage of a two-year campaign to get the payment introduced in Cambridgeshire.

Liz said: "Our MPs are supportive, our Chief Constable is supportive and our Police and Crime Commissioner is supportive.



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Vera office X

*At the meeting are (left to right), Joshua Richards (from the office of Lucy Frazer MP), Jonathan Djanogly MP, PCC Darryl Preston, deputy national Federation chair Tiff Lynch, Federation national wellbeing lead Belinda Goodwin, Cambridgeshire Police Federation detective lead Stuart Taylor, branch chair Liz Groom, Shailesh Vara MP and Nick Dean, Cambridgeshire Chief Constable.*

"They all agree we should get it, but it's not their decision. It sits with the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB).

"The Federation isn't working with the PRRB at the moment.

"We did meet the PRRB last year during the pay negotiations and their reps did come to the Force.

"I put it to them then, but there wasn't a huge lot of interest and it certainly wasn't reflected in the report that went to PRRB.

"We're in this position because it's not in our budget set by Government, so our Chief can't give it, even if he had the money, which he doesn't."

She added: "We've been trying to move it forward for some time, but it feels like we're banging our heads against a brick wall."

Following the meeting, [Mr Vara told the Hunts Post](#) that he and Mr Djanogly, along with other Cambridgeshire MPs, would raise

the issue of the south east allowance with the Home Secretary James Cleverly.

Mr Vara said: "It simply isn't right that while officers in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire receive this allowance, their colleagues in Cambridgeshire are excluded from it, despite the very close collaboration between the forces."

Liz said that she also discussed the need for a fairer national police funding formula with the MPs.

"We spoke to them about the fact that we're a really poorly funded force," she added.

"We're one of the lowest funded forces per head of population in the country and it doesn't reflect the cost of living in Cambridgeshire.

"It's more expensive to live in Cambridge than Oxford, which is covered by Thames Valley and they get South East Allowance."

# PROUD MEMBER DEDICATES AWARD TO THE REST OF HIS TEAM

A Cambridgeshire Police Federation member who was named Officer of the Year has dedicated his award to the rest of his team.

PC Guy Cunningham said that he was 'honoured' to win the award at Cambridgeshire Police's annual awards ceremony.

But he admitted he felt like he had 'imposter syndrome', and that there were other officers deserving of it as well.

"I was shocked and surprised to win," he said. "I'm really proud, and it's a real honour to receive the award."

"I do have a little bit of imposter syndrome. So many other people have done so many amazing things in the Force, so I do wonder why I deserve this over them."

Guy said he still doesn't know who nominated him for the award.

"Somebody has nominated me, which I'm really thankful for," he said. "I'm really humbled by it and honoured."

"When they read out the nominees at the awards, I was fairly nervous at that point, and you're concentrating on the names up there and what the others have done."

"When they read out my name, I was in shock. It was a surprise. You just concentrate on getting up there without tripping over!"

Guy's citation read: "While consistently demonstrating his commitment and passion for neighbourhood policing, Guy has an ability to build a rapport with anyone – helping to build trust and public confidence."

"Guy works in Peterborough, one of the county's most deprived and challenging areas, and always makes tough decisions or puts himself in situations many would avoid, to do the best for his community."

Guy, who is based at Thorpe Wood Police Station in Peterborough East, praised the team around him for their support.

"It's not just myself, it's a team effort," he said. "I feel like I've been allowed to go after bad people, and while I may have got my name on a couple of arrests, it's 100 per cent team effort."

"I've got a really good sergeant, Sarah Philips, who won the Commitment to Leadership Award."

"She's fantastic and gives us that freedom to police effectively. She takes a lot on her shoulders and gives us that



PC Guy Cunningham (left) receives his Police Officer of the Year award at the annual Cambridgeshire Police awards with Chief Constable Nick Dean.

management support.

"Our inspectors, Lyndsay Mylchreest and Sam Tucker, have been really good in offering us the time and protection to go after bad people and protect the most vulnerable of people."

"We have to justify why we're focussing our attention on specific priorities, and they've allowed us to go out, protect the most vulnerable and lock up bad people."

"The performance of the team is a reflection of the leadership, and we have a really good team that allows us to get those results."

"I've won the award but I feel it's a team award," he said.

## DEDICATED COP CLINCHES TWO FORCE AWARDS AT ANNUAL CEREMONY

PC Justin Bielawski says he was stunned to collect two gongs at the Force's annual awards.

He praised the work of colleagues across Cambridgeshire Police after being named Unsung Hero and the Chief Constable's Grand Prix Employee of the Year.

Justin, who works in the Wisbech neighbourhood policing team, said there were many colleagues across the Force who were equally deserving of an award.

"It took me by surprise," he said, "There are people all over the organisation, including on my own team, who are working equally as hard that don't always get the recognition."

"As a Force, we've got better in recognising people's efforts, which is great, but there are a lot of other people who are doing great work and are as equally as deserving."

"I'm very thankful for whoever nominated me."

Justin said that when his name was read out for his awards, his focus was on getting to the stage in one piece.

"I sat there in the event when they were reading the stuff out and I hoped they didn't come my way because I'd have to walk

through everybody and I don't like being the centre of attention," said Federation member Justin.

"I couldn't even hear what was being read out because my brain went into a tunnel vision to make sure I got onto the stage without falling over."

Justin's citation said he was 'instrumental in the success of the Wisbech neighbourhood policing team'.

It read: "His professionalism, diligence and can-do approach to problem-solving really sets him apart from others."

"Justin leads by example, setting the benchmark for the team to follow and has the highest outcomes in terms of engagement and targeted activity."

"His ability to develop and maintain key relationships in the community has contributed significantly to making Wisbech a safer place to live, work and visit."

Justin said the awards related to the partnership building and working on Operation Luscombe, which aims to tackle street-level anti-social behaviour in Wisbech.

"The partnership agencies we work – mental health, the homeless charities, the councils, drug and alcohol support people and social care – it all works really well



PC Justin Bielawski (left) and Cambridgeshire Police Chief Constable Nick Dean.

because of the people we've got here."

"That's benefited me to get this award because everybody else has done their bit as well. We're really lucky here that it works well."

Justin joined Cambridgeshire Police as a Special Constable based in Wisbech in November 2002 before becoming a full-time officer in March 2004.

He transferred to the Met in mid-2009 – 'just because I wanted to try something different' – and returned to Cambridgeshire at the end of 2013.

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE GIVEN MENOPAUSE-FRIENDLY ACCREDITATION

**T**he chair of Cambridgeshire Women's Network has revealed how 'delighted' she is that the Force has been awarded the Menopause-Friendly Accreditation (MFA).

The accreditation, which was awarded to Cambridgeshire Constabulary earlier this year alongside Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, as part of their tri-force collaboration, has only been given to five police forces nationally and highlights their ongoing commitment to promoting awareness, understanding and supporting of the menopause.

Chief Inspector Kate Firman, who is also part of the National Menopause Action Group says that she hopes the accreditation will not only attract women to policing roles but encourage staff retention.

"When I experienced menopause, my mum and sister were very open about speaking about the impact it has but I know now everyone has that kind of support network around them," said Kate, who has been in the Force for 27 years.

**“ I HOPE THAT NOT ONLY WILL THIS ATTRACT NEW OFFICERS TO THE JOB BUT ALSO ENSURE WE RETAIN STAFF TOO. I'VE HEARD FAR TOO OFTEN THAT WOMEN ARE LEAVING THEIR ROLES DUE TO THE MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS THEY ARE EXPERIENCING - AND THIS ISN'T RIGHT. ”**

"For me, going through the menopause meant night sweats, insomnia, forgetfulness and anxiety - it really impacted my job. I am extremely proud that we have attained this accreditation, it's fantastic - I'm delighted.

"It reflects the work we have been doing to raise menopause awareness and support colleagues through the menopause in Cambridgeshire.

"I hope that having this accreditation will make life easier for all those experiencing menopause."

To achieve accreditation, employers must demonstrate six key areas, including culture, policies and practices, training, engagement, facilities and evaluation.

Kate explained that volunteers from across the Force have trained as 'menopause champions' to provide compassionate,



Chief Inspector Kate Firman.

confidential advice to those who need it.

"The accreditation also means we can display the 'menopause-friendly' logo across our literature, website, social media channels and email signatures, which I hope will demonstrate our commitment to supporting those who are experiencing menopause," said Kate, who is a member of Cambridgeshire Police Federation.

"I hope that not only will this attract new officers to the job but also ensure we retain staff too. I've heard far too often that women are leaving their roles due to the menopausal symptoms they are experiencing - and this isn't right."

Kate said that the accreditation gets reviewed every two years and confirms that

the Force will continue to develop and improve the support available to those experiencing menopause.

She continued: "We've recently introduced a menopause journal, which gives people who are experiencing the menopause a place to record how they are feeling that day as well as their symptoms.

"It's important that the work doesn't stop just because we have received this accreditation. It's about ongoing and growing support for those experiencing menopause, those with loved ones experiencing menopause and also line managers who need to be made more aware of potential symptoms and how they could impact team members."



Library photo showing the mental health joint response car.



# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY: JOINT RESPONSE CAR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**A** mental health response scheme in Cambridgeshire is blazing a trail in providing people in crisis with the right help and support.

Inspector Karl Secker spoke to Cambridgeshire Police Federation about the work of the county's award-winning mental health joint response car to mark this year's World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

The scheme sees expert mental health staff attend call-outs alongside police officers to ensure people are getting the care they need.

Karl said: "It's designed to reduce demand on police and mental health colleagues and to prevent S136s (emergency police powers to take people from a public place to a place of safety) by getting people the right care at the right time.

"The vehicle has a mental health nurse with blue light drivers, and they go to jobs that are concerned with mental health or

where the mental health nurse believes they can be of some assistance.

"It might be missing persons, domestic violence where there's a history of mental health issues, or sometimes providing advice to custody."

It is funded by NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, part of the Integrated Care System, and has been running since 2021.

The scheme won the regional Excellence in Mental Health Care category in this year's Parliamentary Awards and was nominated for the national award.

Karl said the service is seen as best practice.

"It's been trialled in different ways across the country," he said, "Because we have mental health nurses integrated into our teams and we have mental health nurses in our control room as well to help us with sharing information, ours has been cited as best practice."

And he says as well as ensuring people in crisis get the right care from the right people, it's also making savings for the police service and the NHS.

"We've seen S136s, the police's legal power to take people with a mental health issue to a place of safety for immediate care and attention, come down from an average of around 60 to 70 a month to 30 to 40.

"It's a massive saving for the NHS and police. The savings for the NHS have gone into the hundreds of thousands of pounds, and several thousand hours of police officers' time has been saved."

Karl continues: "We're very pleased with it. The main thing is getting the person the right care, attention, and care plan they need initially.

"Police officers are not trained in mental health so sometimes we can come across things in a different way. There might be a fear of our uniform and they might think we're going to arrest them.

"The mental health nurse isn't in police kit and can talk to them, give them the right care and attention they need and divert them to the right avenue of care."

**“IT'S A MASSIVE SAVING FOR THE NHS AND POLICE. THE SAVINGS FOR THE NHS HAVE GONE INTO THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POUNDS, AND SEVERAL THOUSAND HOURS OF POLICE OFFICERS' TIME HAS BEEN SAVED.”**



# OFFICER HONoured TO REPRESENT FORCE AT DOWNING STREET RECEPTION

**A** Cambridgeshire Police Federation member has spoken about her experience of representing the Force at reception to mark the end of the Government's recruitment programme.

Grace Bremner who was one of Cambridgeshire's first police constable degree apprentices said she was honoured to attend the event hosted by then Home Secretary Suella Braverman at 10 Downing Street.

She was joined at the reception by Assistant Chief Constable Vicki Evans and Darryl Preston, Cambridgeshire's Police and Crime Commissioner.

Grace said: "It was an honour to represent the Force and go to 10 Downing Street and be part of it. I didn't realise how big it was inside because you only see it

from the outside.

"We spoke to other student officers and chief constables. It was interesting to hear about their experiences, and some had been on the same pathway as me.

"Some of them had just finished their third year, so it was interesting to see how they'd found it and gave us ideas for what we can do in our Force.

"We met with the Home Secretary, who talked about policing and the recruitment programme. It was a great experience and a really positive event to go to."

Grace joined Cambridgeshire Police in October 2021, four months after completing her A Levels.

"I have a few family members who are in the police force, which gave me an insight into what policing was like," she said.



*At No 10 are (left to right) PC Grace Bremner, Assistant Chief Constable Vicki Evans and Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston.*

**“ EVERY DAY AS A POLICE OFFICER IS DIFFERENT. SOME DAYS CAN BE FRUSTRATING AND DIFFICULT AND THEN THERE ARE THE DAYS WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE ACHIEVED SOMETHING AND DONE SOMETHING REALLY POSITIVE FOR SOMEONE. ”**

"I've always been the type of person who wanted to help people, and in a way that you're not doing the same thing all the time.

"Every day as a police officer is different. Some days can be frustrating and difficult and then there are the days when you feel like you've achieved something and done something really positive for someone."

## FAMILY AFFAIR FOR FORCE'S FRONTLINE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER DUO

Work is a family affair for PC Charlie Brett and her mum, Special Constable Jackie Kelly, who both serve with the Force.

The pair regularly find themselves working together with 28-year-old Charlie saying Jackie's knowledge and experience 'often proved invaluable'.

"It's great. The team really loves her," said Charlie.

"Older members of staff have so much more life experience and the way they talk to people is very different because of the experience they have.

"And, when you are dealing with people who might be going through something that can be potentially life-changing that they've never experienced before, Mum is very good at dealing with that by drawing on her own experiences and that is so valuable."

The pair first worked together as dispatchers for Hertfordshire Police where Charlie also served as a Special Constable.

However, when the family moved to Cambridgeshire, Charlie joined the Force as a full-time PC and shortly after that Jackie decided to sign up as a Special.

"I worked in the Hertfordshire Police control room with Charlie and then I transferred over to become a detention



*Special Constable Jackie Kelly (left) and PC Charlie Brett.*

officer," said 57-year-old Jackie, who admitted she was worried her age might be a barrier to becoming a Special but was eventually persuaded by Charlie to sign up in 2019.

"Then when we moved there wasn't a position available at Cambridgeshire Police for a transfer so I got a job with the US Air Force at Alconbury and Molesworth and decided to stick with that.

"I always wanted to join the police and I kept thinking about becoming a Special but I was worried about being too old and, in the end, Charlie said 'just do it before it's too late'.

"So, I just thought I'd jump in and give it a go."

Jackie said she and Charlie always kept police work on a professional level rather than a family matter.

"We don't go out together but we invariably end up on the same jobs together which can be quite fun sometimes," she said.

"We always seem to be more like colleagues when we are working together and keep it very professional and luckily, she's never been in a situation where I've felt like I needed to step in as her mum - and she's got far bigger colleagues than me."

Jackie said she is glad she followed Charlie's advice and signed up for the Special Constabulary.

"I have absolutely no regrets. I love it," she added.

"They are very good to us. It's not like it used to be in the old days when people were a bit dismissive of Specials. Everyone is very accepting of us and I think all the officers appreciate us being there."

# FED MEMBER ON A MISSION TO RAISE AWARENESS OF DISABILITY HATE CRIME

PC Jake Weldon.



**A** Cambridgeshire PC is aiming to raise awareness of how to recognise and report disability hate crime.

Jake Weldon said disability hate crime was currently under-reported and is determined to change attitudes towards it.

He said: "Disability hate crime happens - I know it happens because I've seen it and I've been to incidents - but the numbers of what's reported are really low.

"My theory is that it's combination of people not wanting to make a fuss or to say they've been targeted because of a disability, and people who just don't want to report it full stop.

"There will be people with health conditions or disabilities who don't feel safe going out because of something that happened years ago, and they don't feel like it's taken seriously or is a crime.

"I want to say to them that we're here and we want to make this city safe for you."

Jake described his work as a 'passion area', having cared for his older brother Barry, who has cerebral palsy and autism.

He also worked for accessible holiday company Limitless Travel, where he provided support for people with disabilities and was a point of contact in a crisis.

"I like that combination of helping people and someone who was relied on in a

crisis," he explained.

"I wanted more of a long-term career and policing really appealed, and I felt I could combine these passion areas."

Now Jake is using his experience and skills to raise awareness and increase reporting of disability hate crime, to educate people about its impact, and to support victims.

"Often perpetrators don't realise the impact these incidents can have on the confidence of someone with a disability," he said.

"Victims can easily become isolated because they don't feel safe to go out."

In order to raise awareness, Jake has been engaging with a number of different groups across Cambridge such as the Deaf Association and the Stroke Association.

"It's talking to them about what a crime is," he said. "Saying that this is what common assault looks like, that you don't actually have to be assaulted and it can be as simple as the fear of violence.

"And this is what public order offences are and what makes it an aggravated public order offence when someone is using a disability as a weapon against you.

"It's about trying to make sure people with disabilities are listened to, speaking to them about their experiences, and what

they'd like to see the police doing.

"And where incidents are reported, it not only helps us to identify perpetrators but also to identify trends and resourcing."

Jake, who is a member of Cambridgeshire Police Federation, said said he would also like to increase awareness inside the Force, for example, teaching officers how to use emergency sign language.

"It could be something basic that's easy for an officer to remember like 'you are okay. I'm here to help'," he explained.

"An officer knowing a bit of sign language might help to reassure them.

"At the moment we have PLODs - police link officers for deaf people - who are trained in British Sign Language.

"There can only be so many of them, so as well as having a small number of people who are highly trained, we could also have light training for everyone so they feel equipped."

Jake also pointed to the Force's free Pegasus scheme for people who might struggle to report incidents to the police, especially in an emergency situation.

"I'd urge anyone with a communication need to sign-up," he said.

To sign-up or for more information, visit the [Pegasus scheme page](#).



# 2023: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## January

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom started the year with the realisation that [‘We have never known morale within the Force to be low.’](#) Liz was commenting on the results of the Federation’s latest pay and morale survey, which found a majority felt morale had decreased significantly, with 93 per cent of officers saying they did not feel respected by the Government and 69 per cent who would not recommend policing as a career. Almost all reported that their monthly outgoings had increased in the last year.



Veterans’ affairs minister [Johnny Mercer](#) [pledged his support](#) for the Federation’s Medals for Heroes campaign which seeks an award for officers killed in the line of duty, as a comfort to families. A debate in Parliament had been secured by Liberal Democrat MP Wendy Chamberlain, a former police officer.



Cambridgeshire Police Federation branch chair Liz Groom warned that ‘over-stretched officers’ would struggle to cope with the extra demands if told to [cover for striking public sector workers](#). Nearly 15,000 paramedics, medical technicians and call handling staff were striking during January. Ironically, police officers are “not allowed to go on strike however badly they feel they are being treated,” lamented Liz. “Police officers are overstretched as it is.”

## February

Shadow home secretary [Yvette Cooper](#) [unveiled her ‘neighbourhood policing guarantee’](#) with a pledge to recruit 13,000 new patrol officers. In a keynote speech, she said a Labour Government would put thousands of new police and PCSOs on the streets, “paid for with £360 million delivered from our shared procurement plan”.

Cambridgeshire Police Federation welcomed the plans so long as they will be funded centrally and not from existing budgets.



Chair Liz Groom welcomed [proposals to protect women and girls](#) from harassment, aggression and violence, said to be at epidemic levels. The Government published its Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) requiring forces to treat violence against women and girls as a national threat. Figures showed that 1.7 million women had experienced violence or harassment in the previous year.



Home Secretary Suella Braverman wrote to Cambridgeshire’s Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner outlining the plans to [reduce the amount of time officers spend on mental health cases and vulnerable people](#). Ms Braverman said she and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak wanted to see more bobbies on the beat and not dealing with non-police demands. Funding was pledged for improved mental health crisis care response including specialised ambulances.

## March

The Federation’s National Council called for a [17 per cent pay rise](#) for rank and file officers to redress reflect the decline in pay since 2000. According to a report, policing was an outlier among emergency services workers and the public sector. Comparatively, MPs’ salaries saw a four per cent rise in total over the period.

Cambridge Chief Inspector Keren Pope talked about [juggling motherhood with a career in policing](#) for International Women’s Day. “Having three children, and my oldest having severe learning difficulties, meant I was constantly juggling life as a parent and police officer,” said the 49-year-old. She also spoke about her brush with cancer and double mastectomy, as well as her recovery.



Cambridgeshire Police Federation welcomed comments from the Chief Constable of Essex who warned that more than [300 officers](#) [had sought permission to take on second jobs](#) to make ends meet, while others were quitting for better pay.

## April

Fed reps were encouraged to take part in a [CPD session on wellbeing](#). Cambridgeshire branch chair Liz Groom said the session would help them to support themselves as well as members. “We’ve been living through some turbulent times with the pandemic and now the cost of living crisis and it’s brought mental health and wellbeing into focus.”

Cambridgeshire became one of the first forces in the country to [meet its target of recruiting new officers](#) under the Police Uplift Programme. The Government campaign to recruit 20,000 officers nationally was launched in September 2019 when the Force was given a target of finding 206 extra police officers. It reached the target and now employed 1,756 officers compared to 1,526 when the uplift began.

Police minister Chris Philp promised to [end duplication in recording crime](#), ensuring that multiple offences for a single incident can in future be recorded under the principal offence.

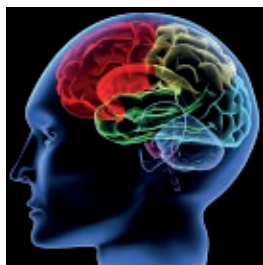
Cambridgeshire Chief Constable Nick Dean [announced his intention to stand down](#), saying: “I have had the privilege to serve in two police forces and I have done some amazing things throughout my policing career which could never be replicated in any other job.” In June, he changed his mind and was granted an extension in post by Cambridgeshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner.

## May

[An employment tribunal](#) brought against the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) by Leigh Day solicitors in relation to pensions ruled in favour of the claimants on claims including direct age discrimination and victimisation. The Federation said the judgement made for ‘very difficult reading for the organisation’. PFEW’s National Board and National Council promised to reflect on it.

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Cambridgeshire Federation branch chair Liz Groom made a plea for policing to be [‘fully attuned’ to the requirements of neurodiverse colleagues](#). Liz said some police officers won’t be aware they are neurodiverse as she called for a set of uniform standards to be introduced to support inclusivity, performance and assessment. “There’s a disparity from force to force in the provision for our neurodiverse colleagues,” she said, calling for guidelines.



Home Secretary Suella Braverman said [political correctness was hampering police](#) and that officers should concentrate on “common sense policing”. She called for more police on the streets and higher standards for officers. “It means giving the public confidence that the police are unequivocally on their side, not pandering to politically correct preoccupations,” the Home Secretary said. Liz Groom, for the Federation, described the speech as an attempt to divert attention from the main issues facing policing of funding and pay.

## June

Colleagues took part in the [annual Light the Lakes event](#) for serving and retired police officers and their families which involves scaling the Lake District’s 214 Wainwright fells to raise money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS).

“Attacks on police officers must [never be accepted as part of the job](#),” said branch chair Liz Groom, as she praised the impact of Operation Hampshire (a charter for assaulted officers). The Federation’s pay and morale survey had shown that attacks on police officers was a big issue for members, with 11 per cent being physically attacked every week. Op Hampshire had expanded to the National Police Wellbeing Service, the Police Covenant and been adopted by UNISON. It has also been backed by Chris Philp, the policing minister.

PC April Cooper, 30, welcomed the news that [gender-specific and more comfortable protective clothing](#) would now be available to forces. “The design of the body armour is a major issue. It absolutely destroys our bodies. I’ve had to see a chiropractor as a result of the damage caused,” she said. Belinda Goodwin, the Federation’s national wellbeing lead, urged forces to invest in the new body armour ‘for both the mental and physical benefit of their officers’.

## July

Two Cambridgeshire detectives were [honoured at the Police Bravery Awards](#) in London. DCs Lily Deacon and Craig Trevor dragged a woman from a burning car that had crashed into a ditch and flipped over. In a race against time, Craig and Lily managed to bend the metal frame of the car and help the woman out. As part of the annual bravery awards, they joined nominees from forces across England and Wales at a Downing Street reception hosted by Home Secretary Suella Braverman ahead of the awards ceremony.



The latest His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on police performance [criticised forces](#) for making decisions based on poor data or insufficient analysis and ‘knee jerk reactions to long-term problems’. Many don’t work proactively enough to prevent issues arising in the first place, the inspector said. Long call delays, in particular non-emergency 101 calls was also lined up for criticism.

However, Government minister Johnny Mercer said the public should [take exceptional pride in the police](#), in a spirited defence of men and women in uniform on TV’s Good Morning Britain. His comments were welcomed by Cambridgeshire Police Federation.

## August

Tributes were paid to [former Cambridgeshire officer Mick Taylor](#) who had died aged 78. Mick served for 30 years but was best known for the work he did with young people through the boxing club he set up five decades ago. One member credited Mick for ‘saving me from a life of crime’ while another said he had helped him overcome anger management issues.



A combined team of riders from Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police [took part in the 2023 Police Unity Tour cycle challenge](#). The riders, led by Caroline Scully, pedalled 115 miles to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire for a service, raising money for the Care of Police Survivors (COPS) charity. Caroline was riding in memory of Hertfordshire Police colleague PC Bruce Lister who died in January.

Tim Rogers, pursuits and driver training lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales, [wrote to chief constables](#) after discovering instances where police driver training has not been delivered by an accredited trainer, contrary to the provisions of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. “It is critically important that police officers do not drive if they are not licensed under this legislation. There is no movement on this whatsoever. As the chief officer of your force, you are responsible,” Tim wrote.

## September

A fundraiser was launched to [support the family of Sergeant Graham Saville](#), a response officer in Nottinghamshire Police, who died after being hit by a train as he attempted to save a distressed man in the tracks. A JustGiving page had already raised more than £100,000. Cambridgeshire branch chair Liz Groom said: “It’s a sad time for all of the policing family and our thoughts in Cambridgeshire remain with the family, friends and colleagues of Graham.”

News that the Home Office was planning to spend [£75 million on the latest model Axon Taser 10](#) was welcomed by Cambridgeshire Police Federation. Chair Liz Groom said every officer who wants to carry Taser should be allowed to do so. “We know from experience that Taser is a vital piece of equipment that can help protect police officers and members of the public. Its very presence is often enough of a deterrent,” said Liz.





The National Police Memorial Day (NPM) took place in September, with Liz standing shoulder-to-shoulder with colleagues, religious leaders and loved ones to remember fallen officers.

Cambridgeshire Police Force's Assistant Chief Constable Vicki Evans also attended the service. "It's a day to come together to honour and remember our colleagues who made the ultimate sacrifice," said Liz, adding: "We will remember them."



## October

The Federation's annual national conference [got underway in Manchester](#), with members joining virtually to keep down the costs. The agenda included a hard-hitting discussion shaped around leading in policing, a conversation about misogyny and a deep dive into mutual aid deployments. Deputy national chair Tiff Lynch said it had been an 'absolutely manic' year for policing, with the service in the headlines – and firing line – daily. Steve Hartshorn, the national chair, noted that the service had received the largest single rise (seven per cent) but still well below what is required to make up for years of pay freezes.

Cambridgeshire branch chair Liz Groom took part in a conference session on police wellbeing, [lamenting the loss of the police canteen](#) as a place to unwind and have conversations that are vital for good mental health. "These days they're simply not afforded the time to even debrief or talk to each other," she said. Paul Williams, the national Federation's joint wellbeing lead, urged the Home Secretary Suella Braverman to invest in health and wellbeing, pointing out that 344 officers had taken their own lives between 2001 and 2020.

Ms Braverman threw her support behind the Federation's Medals for Heroes campaign in her keynote address as Home Secretary, but [stopped short on signing off on the policy](#), causing much disappointment. The campaign seeks to award a posthumous medal to emergency workers killed on duty. "It is always deeply sobering – and moving – to hear the roll call of officers who have fallen in the line of duty in the past year," the Home Secretary said, hinting that an announcement could come soon.

On [World Menopause Day](#) the Federation urged officers to take part in a survey to help improve understanding to how the condition impacts on police work and to shape the support that can be provided.



The Federation announced that it will ballot its membership to see if it should seek industrial rights.

## November

Assaults on police officers should carry on [automatic prison sentence](#), Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom said. She was speaking after figures shared with the BBC showed there had been 38,079 assaults on officers in England over a year – a six per cent rise. In Cambridgeshire alone there were more than 500 assaults.

Nick Conn, chief executive of Help4Addiction, talked about his experience of [being a serving police officer with an addiction](#) at a men's health webinar organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales. The event aimed to 'change attitudes towards health'. Other speakers included the police service's chief medical officer John Harrison and Oswin Croft from the charity Movember, who discussed why men's health is important all year round.



Cambridgeshire Police Federation secretary Scott Houghton says it was a proud moment for him to represent members by [laying a wreath at the Force's Remembrance Service](#). It was led by the Reverend Lynda Taylor, the Force chaplain, with words from the Chief Constable Nick Dean. Scott said: "I'm extremely proud to serve King – and the Queen before him – and country. I feel immensely proud when I'm laying that wreath and representing the Police Federation and our members."

The annual Cambridgeshire Force Award ceremony took place, with several Federation members clinching awards. Among them was [PC Guy Cunningham](#), who was named Officer of the Year, and [PC Justin Bielawski](#), who was given the Unsung Hero Award as well as the Chief Constable's Grand Prix Employee of the Year Award.

## December

In December Federation branch chair Liz Groom [met with local MPs](#) to highlight her concerns, specifically around funding. Liz argued that it was unfair for officers in Cambridgeshire to be paid differently to those in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire for 'essentially doing the same job'.

As well as local MPs, Liz was joined at the meeting by Chief Constable Nick Dean and Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston. Liz said: "It's especially unfair for the 149 officers we've got working in collaboration with colleagues from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in our armed policing unit, our roads policing unit, on major crimes. We're the only force that collaborates with two other forces in receipt of the South East Allowance that doesn't receive it. It's a massive fairness issue."

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE COP AND FURRY SIDEKICK ON MISSION TO BOOST WELLBEING

**A** former Cambridgeshire PC who credits his dog for helping him combat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is now launching his own company to support others.

Following his retirement from the Force in October, Paul Roe - along with his four-legged sidekick Holly - now travels up and down the country providing wellbeing support to others.

Of course, helping others is nothing new for this duo - in fact, Holly was the first handler-owned pooch to officially be given an OK9 badge as part of the Oscar Kilo wellbeing and trauma support dogs project. More recently, the pair were named among ambassadors for Flint House rehabilitation centre.

"If somebody had said to me 10 years ago that I'd be working with a fluffy dog and talking to people about their mental health, I wouldn't have believed them," said 49-year-old Paul, who set up his business '[Blue Paw](#)' in January, in preparation for his retirement.

"I think what makes Blue Paw different is I've been there, I've been diagnosed with PTSD, I know what these people are going through. I like to think my own experiences help others."

Paul unknowingly lived with PTSD for years. In 1998 he was nearly stabbed while working the New Year shift and, despite subsequently finding it difficult to celebrate New Year, he never realised PTSD was the root cause.

His wellbeing was then further impacted after he was called to four serious train collisions in succession in a short space of time.

For years he masked how he was feeling - that was until he dislocated his ankle. His mental health changed dramatically and having been dragged to the doctor by his wife, Paul was diagnosed with PTSD.

"With the support from my wife, family and Holly, I managed to come through some of my darkest days living with PTSD. It was strange, after I was diagnosed Holly seemed to instantly pick up on how I was feeling," recalled Paul, who has owned the eight-year-old Labrador since she was 12 weeks old.

"She would sit at my feet or with her head on my knee. We developed this unbreakable bond."

Three years ago, Holly underwent training to become an official wellbeing dog, which led to the duo visiting officers and



staff, as well as victims, to provide essential mental health support.

"I am so passionate about using dogs to help others," explained Paul, who is currently undergoing further mental health training so he and Holly can provide the best service possible.

"Why? Because it works. It really does. Having a dog around to pat, stroke, get on the floor and play with, or take for a walk, that gets people talking, that helps people to open up."

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, Holly and I were asked to help out at a local hospital. We visited the A & E there and when we saw a nurse, she burst into tears."

"She started talking about her mental health and we got talking about how the pandemic had impacted her. I saw that nurse a few months later and she told me that if me and Holly hadn't visited them that day, things would have been different."

"She told me that talking to us had saved her life. We were there, in the right place, at the right time. I hear so many

similar stories to that. And that is why Holly and I do what we do."

Blue Paw has already been inundated with requests, with Paul and Holly working with the British Transport Police and Flint House, as well as other forces and private companies across the country.

"It's nice dipping my toe outside of the policing world as I take on this new adventure while still supporting colleagues within the policing environment when they need me to," added Paul, who also remains an Oscar Kilo dog handler following his retirement.

"I'd love this to take off and have Blue Paw dogs in each region. But, for now, we're taking each day as it comes, as I look forward to beginning my next adventure with Holly."

Blue Paw is raising money for Flint House - a charity that provides physical rehabilitation and mental health support to both serving and retired police officers - via the sale of pin badges. You can buy a pin badge by [visiting Blue Paw's website](#).