

VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

ISSUE 1





Welcome to our first publication of *Volunteering Matters*, which has been created to share news and good practice about our wider police volunteering programmes and to be a communication tool not only for volunteers but also for the members of staff that manage and support our volunteers without whom, in my opinion, our volunteer programmes would not get the support and recognition

that they deserve. It is also important to raise the profile and acknowledge the fantastic work that our volunteers do across the North West.

I think the key for those of us involved in volunteer management is to ensure that our volunteer programmes are not only flexible, but also have the buy-in from our ACPO teams and relevant stakeholders. The subject of buy-in was discussed recently at the North West PSV practitioners meeting and I hope that the article on page three will enable some more thinking around this area for our volunteer managers and stakeholders alike.

There are now around three million neighbourhood watch members across the UK and numbers have reached 9000 nationally in terms of Police Support Volunteers, and both roles help police forces deliver a better service to our communities. In the North West we will be working towards creating more innovative roles for volunteers and building on what has already been achieved. It is important that the police service encourage communities to be empowered and to get citizens more involved with policing their communities.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed articles, without their support *Volunteering Matters* would not be here! Please keep sending in the stories and photographs so that the future of the magazine is guaranteed. I am relying on you all to fill the future pages of VM – and I look forward to hearing about your productive initiatives.

Tina Shelton
North West Regional Co-ordinator



Following the success of *Special Impact*, it is great to see a publication dedicated to our wider police volunteers and I hope you enjoy this first edition of *Volunteering Matters*. It is pleasing to see the great initiatives our volunteers get involved in across the North West.

The police service is in a great position to encourage local volunteers because of our commitment to neighbourhood policing. This is absolutely not about policing on the cheap at a time of budget cuts. We are driven to strengthen engagement with local people and promote active citizenship. We can't all just be passive customers of public services; surely we all need to play our part in active citizenship and this can be achieved through volunteering.

Chief Officers would like to see the role of police volunteers broadened. We are giving more power and ownership to the community in terms of policing, for example in restorative justice, use of social media, our regular neighbourhood meetings and the growth we have seen in the number of volunteer special constables.

I believe that the police service could market the role of volunteers better than it does, and *Volunteering Matters* goes some way to improving communication in this area therefore I would ask that you continue to support its longevity by contributing examples of your excellent work going forward.

Peter Fahy
Chief constable, GMP
ACPO Regional Lead for Special Constabulary
& Police Support Volunteers

Lancashire Volunteer Highly Commended at National Award Ceremony

Elizabeth (Liz) Holden was awarded Highly Commended (a posthumous award) at the Special Constable & Police Support Volunteer Awards 2011 at a ceremony held at Church House Conference Centre in Westminster where Home Office Minister Damian Green made the presentations.

Liz provided wide-ranging support as a PSV within Lancashire Constabulary and prior to her sad passing earlier this year; she had completed over 2,200 hours in support of operational policing. She was also a highly proactive Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, provided valuable support to Neighbourhood Policing Teams at PACT meetings and would regularly ring back vulnerable members of the community to gather information and provide public reassurance. Additionally, Liz played a central role in planning, and securing funding for, events for the benefit of elderly and vulnerable members of the community. Margaret Dunn and Helen Dixon accepted the award on Liz's behalf.



Front cover: - Tameside PSV Janet Gould with Stockport PC & GMP Town Crier at the recent I love Manchester event

Cheshire introduces Junior Road Safety & Watch Officers Scheme

Cheshire Constabulary is expanding its involvement with schools by engaging with young people to communicate messages to schools about staying safe.

Working in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire Police is collaborating Junior Watch with the Road Safety Officers scheme.

The Junior Road Safety Scheme has been running very successfully in Cheshire West for approximately 30 years. Each school has two year 6 pupils that are nominated as Junior Road Safety and Watch Officers.

The role of the Junior Officers is to communicate the monthly messages as advised by the collaborative partnership, run competitions and display the information around the school regarding everything to do with community safety, personal safety as well as road safety.

The Officers are assessed at the end of the year on the scrapbook they have kept with a record of all the messages they have delivered, an award is given to whoever is deemed the best Junior Officer.

Sarah Collins from Cheshire West and Chester council said: "The scheme is important for trying to keep everyone safe while they're out and about. Additionally research shows that if you instil ideas into people from a young age you can mould their attitudes so in the future they'll become better drivers and motorcyclists."

Jenny Ford the community engagement manager for Cheshire Police added: "The junior watch scheme is a simple way of getting messages across to the community and to lot's of people who can pass them on to people of all ages and all groups. These messages are so simple anyone can easily understand them so they can be spread far and wide."

The young people who are the Junior Officers believe it's a good scheme because it helps to keep other pupils safe. The role is undertaken by older pupils in the school in the hope that younger ones will look up to them and take more notice of the messages.



The photographs shows the recent launch of the new initiative at Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters.

Case Study of a Volunteer

Hilary Hancox writes about her role and why she volunteers.....

My name is Hilary Hancox, and I am 48 years of age. I started working for Merseyside Police in St Helens on 8 August 2006. I work 1 – 2 days per week; depending on how much work my supervisor, Lynne Carberry has got for me to do.



I live in Ashton in Makerfield, in a residential home for brain-injured people; so, as you can guess I have had a brain injury myself,

although it was a long time ago, over 25 years ago!!!! Before this happened to me I was a R.G.N. I trained in Broad Green Hospital, Liverpool, and when I qualified I went to work down South in Tunbridge Wells, after this I went off to America on a working holiday, where I was hit over the head in New Orleans, and so therefore I ended up at Transitional Rehabilitation Unit

To stop me from getting bored, I decided to go into voluntary work, firstly I worked for Cancer Research, but I got fed up with this as all that I was doing was hanging up clothes, and the real reason why I wanted to do voluntary work was so that I could meet more people and widen my horizons. So, I decided to try to do some work for Merseyside Police and started work with Lynne. I work with her in the offices at the main St Helens Police Station. I tend to work mainly helping with Home Watch and other office duties. I do some work on the computer too.

I also keep offering to make cups of tea, but I keep getting turned down... they obviously haven't tasted my brilliant tea / coffee!!

I really enjoy the work that I do for Merseyside Police (*I still keep hoping to meet the man of my dreams, in a uniform*). I have previously won St Helens Community Volunteer of the year and been invited to a posh evening dinner at a swanky Liverpool Hotel and I recently attended an awards evening to receive a certificate and thanks for working 5 years with Merseyside Police. So if you feel as if you have got something to give to Merseyside Police then don't be afraid and give it a go!!



Each issue we will have a specialist in volunteering guest to share their views with us. This edition we welcome Susan J Ellis, President of Energize, Inc., a training, consulting, and publishing firm that specialises in volunteerism.

I'll Never Understand Why Executives Still Don't Understand

By Susan J. Ellis

I was searching for something in the archives of my Hot Topics and found myself amazed that I have written 172 of these since 1997! I've commented on many different events, initiatives, successes, failures, and puzzlements in our volunteer field. But one theme keeps recurring: lack of enthusiasm about and true support for volunteer contributions from those in charge of organizations.

I will never understand the inability of executive-level decision makers to "get" how important volunteers are to the health and success of their organizations – or how important volunteers could be if approached in a strategic and creative way.

It is inexplicable to me that the subject of volunteering is simply omitted from the board room, long-range planning, funding applications, financial accounting, and anything else perceived as critical organization management. Even worse, volunteer involvement is often handled at a level far below the top – as a sub-unit of the department willing to house it (not necessarily the most logical one).

In many ways, this is the vital windmill at which I have been tilting throughout my career. Yet the call for attention needs to be repeated again and again. Why does nothing seem to change?

POWERFUL SOUND BITES

Those readers familiar with my writing, especially "From the Top Down" will not find anything new here as I've said it all before. But I want to highlight the key points in an effort to give each of you some "sound bites" or "elevator speeches" to use in your own advocacy for our work. Unless we are united in how we articulate our vision, we cannot expect executives to come up with these points themselves. So, in the hope that these bullet points will be useful, here is the most succinct set of arguments I can make for not ignoring volunteer involvement. And then I want you to add some more of your own.

- **Volunteers are an essential part of an organization's network of supporters.** Every organization needs friends in the community – people who feel a sustained relationship with the cause and the mission, which they express in different ways over many years – even over a lifetime. These supporters move in and out of different roles at different points in their lives (sometimes doing several at once): they give money, time, and talent; they provide

access to information, valuable contacts, and in-kind goods and services; they spread your message and educate the public.

- **Volunteers are time donors with limitless potential for contributing energy and a world of skills. But that potential will not materialize without a strategic plan to attract and engage the right volunteers for each organization.**

When hiring new employees, organizations spend time and energy combing the community, expecting to find the most qualified applicants. That same community is also a treasure trove of prospective skilled volunteers. Expect to find them by also putting some effort into that search.

- **Volunteers expand the brain of an organization (as well as its heart).** A colleague in Perth, Australia expressed this thought last month after attending one of my workshops there. He realized that he had understood the "hearts and hands" gifts volunteers offer, but had not before recognized the addition of greater skills and perspectives volunteers bring to the thinking of an organization (if we welcome them to do so).

- **Even though the staff is highly educated and well trained, it cannot be assumed that they have ever been taught anything about working with volunteers.**

What's my vision of utopia? That someday curriculum explaining the role of volunteering in society, the scope of citizen participation, and the basic principles of effective volunteer management is taught widely – at all levels of education and especially within the professional training of any occupation that will, upon graduation, definitely be expected to interface with volunteers on the job (examples: nurses, teachers, social workers, clergy).

- **Poor volunteer management costs more money (and effort) than doing it right in the first place.**

Signing on anyone who steps forward to "help" in vague ways, without clear objectives and coordination, simply wastes time – for the paid staff and for the volunteers. Who can afford to waste time? Worse, it can hamper achieving what really needs to be done for your clients or the public, making the engagement of volunteers a drain on resources rather than value-added.

- **It is not self-evident that "having" volunteer's means an organization is supported by the community – and adding "more" volunteers is not necessarily a meaningful objective.**

Some volunteers are loyal to the clients or the cause, not necessarily to the

organization. Executives ought to find out what volunteers are really thinking and saying in public. And, in some cases, focusing on fewer volunteers who are truly committed (and qualified) might be better for everyone.

- **When we value something, we plan for, fund, oversee, and evaluate it. So if we do not do these things for volunteer involvement, what's the message?**

When we value something, we designate someone to be responsible for it (someone with the skills and interest to do it well). Organizations should have someone in charge of volunteer involvement, not assign it as a sideline activity for someone who really isn't interested or qualified.

- **"Volunteer" does not mean low-level (no matter what word you use).**

Board members are volunteers, as are most advisory councils, student interns, pro bono consultants, and loaned executives! They may describe themselves with different terminology, but the common denominator is that a wide range of people contribute their expertise and time without going on the organization's payroll. Surgeons volunteer vacation time to perform operations in poor countries. Never assume a "volunteer" is unskilled.

- **It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes an entire organization to support volunteers.**

Even with a highly competent director of volunteer involvement, every single staff member shares responsibility for daily interaction with volunteers, partnering to accomplish goals. And the expectation for this is set by top management. How senior administrators demonstrate their commitment to involving volunteers determines how most staff will perceive it.

- **The key to unlocking the opportunities presented by volunteers is to pay attention.**

As with any other management function, the success of volunteer involvement is directly proportional to the amount of time spent thinking about, reaching the right decisions on, monitoring, and improving it. Volunteers should be on the executive agenda for the same reason that client services, money, and employees are.

Volunteering Matters would like to thank Sue for sharing her article with us. For further information please go to Sue's website: <http://www.energizeinc.com>

Do you agree with Sue's views? Feedback to tina.shelton@gmp.pnn.police.uk would be welcomed.

Community Crime Fighter honored by High Sheriff



A crime-fighting community stalwart has been rewarded for his tireless work trying to improve the quality of life for local people. Pete Thomas, co-ordinator of Fife Street Neighbourhood Watch for almost a decade, has won the High Sheriff's Award. The 59-year-old was

recognised for the outstanding contribution he has made to the communities of Barrow and beyond.

Mr Thomas, of Fife Street, Barrow, was shocked to receive the award and said the accolade was for the team and not just him.

The High Sheriff's Award was presented by High Sheriff of Cumbria, Iona Frost-Pennington, at the annual general meeting of Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch on Saturday October 8.

Chief Constable Craig Mackey also gave a speech about policing and some of the challenges and successes over the last 12 months. He recognised the significant part neighbourhood watches and community groups play in crime prevention and detection.

The Fife Street Neighbourhood Watch group celebrates its 10-year anniversary next year and Mr Thomas put its success down to all the wonderful people who live there.

He has also developed the Bringing Communities Together group, which brings a number of neighbourhood watch and community groups together across the Barrow and Ulverston area.

Speaking about the award, Mr Thomas said: "I thought it was just a normal AGM so I was just really relaxed.

"Then the award was announced and I was gobsmacked. I was just totally speechless.

"It is an honour but I don't do it for that. It might be my name on it but it is a team awards.

"I get so much help off the police, fire service and so many others.

"I can't thank everyone enough for all they do."

Rebecca Rawlings, community safety officer for Barrow Borough Council, said: "I am really pleased that Pete has been recognised in this way. He is a real advocate for the people of Barrow.

"No-one cares more about our town and he works hard every day to improve the quality of life for all of us who live here.

"Pete is not one for the limelight and is adamant that it is a team effort.

"While it is true to say that many people are involved, Pete is certainly an integral part of what goes on and we couldn't manage without him."

The photograph shows Pete receiving the High Sheriffs Shield from the High Sheriff Mrs Iona Frost-Pennington DL and the Chief Constable Craig Mackey.

STREET WATCH LAUNCHES IN BRINNINGTON

Brinnington residents have formed their own Street Watch scheme with the support of their local neighbourhood policing team.

Street Watch members will patrol Brinnington wearing high visibility jackets to provide a presence in the community, reporting back to police about antisocial issues such as nuisance behaviour, graffiti and underage drinking. The volunteers will walk around the area a minimum of two hours a month.

Inspector Jonathan Kelly, from the Stockport North Neighbourhood Policing Team, said: "This is not about volunteers confronting people and putting themselves in danger as they will phone police officers if an immediate police presence is required. The scheme is about bringing people together, having a presence on the streets and identifying issues that they want police to resolve. It is the community working in partnership with the police and we look forward to celebrating some successes with the community in the very near future."

Councillor Helen Foster-Grime, Stockport Council's Executive Member for Communities, said: "Street Watch is a very positive scheme which gives Brinnington residents the opportunity to work together in partnership with the Council and Police to identify issues which need resolving. This scheme will help bring the whole community together and make Brinnington an even safer place to live, visit and work in."

Street Watch was initially set up by Chief Inspector Philip Kedge in East Hampshire three years ago. He went on patrol with Brinnington Street Watch members to share his experiences.

Street Watch member David Kirman said: "The police are limited in how much time they can spend on the streets in our specific area so this is about us, the public, working in partnership with the police to find the issues we want them to tackle."



LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY Community Road Watch Scheme



The Community Road Watch initiative in Lancashire has trained 47 members of the public who are Community Volunteers, to work in partnership with the police at approved sites to provide a highly visible deterrent to unlawful and anti-social driving, with the aim to directly address road safety concerns, reduce road casualties, and enables intelligence on the level and extent of driving offences to be assessed and recorded in respect of each location. The scheme is designated as an educational activity and not as police enforcement

The offences the Community Road Watch team focus upon are:

- Drivers exceeding the speed limit
- Drivers using mobile phones
- Drivers and passengers failing to wear seat belts and/or child restraints

The Community Road Watch team monitors and records these offences at the designated locations, and when an offence is observed the details are documented and then processed by the team. A letter is sent to the registered owner advising them that their offending action has been observed and informing them that if, a second offence is recorded then a police visit, or possibly prosecution, will follow.

To ensure that the Community Road Watch volunteers who are involved with the scheme remain safe and can work effectively, a full health and safety risk assessment for speed enforcement and speed compliance tactics will have been conducted.



WEB RESOURCES:

<http://www.npia.police.uk/en/9814.htm>
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>
<http://volunteering.org.uk/>

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/big-society>
<http://www.ivr.org.uk/Volunteering+stats>
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyq4201011>