

Roy Percival

**COMMUNITY WARDENS
& UTILISATION OF
PARKS CONSTABLES**



INTRODUCTION

- I have been a Sheffield Resident my Entire Life.
- I'm 31 Years Old.
- I've Lived in Chapeltown with my Wife for 7 Years.
- I am currently a Police Officer with the British Transport Police with 13 years service.
- I'm Enthusiastic about Public Safety and Local Issues Impacting our Community.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I have identified a need in a professional uniformed service conducting high visibility patrols within our Parish to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.
- I will present established working models currently utilised across the country including examples where local authorities have appointed their own constables in law to carry out a high-visibility patrol function.
- This is achievable utilising current legislation and accessing grants available to local authorities including Parish Councils.



OVERVIEW

- Sheffield is one of the Greenest Cities in Europe and is the Greenest within England.
- Crime and the fear of crime alongside anti-social behaviour remains to be a serious concern amongst our communities within the UK including Sheffield.
- Policing priorities amongst County Police forces has seen a shift from historical method of beat policing to a more response based model in which priorities are directed largely by the central government.
- Communities by in large wish to see more beat policing with 'bobbies' on the beat to act as both a reassuring presence and deter incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Criminal Offending within Ecclesfield Parish Council Parks and Open spaces have been specifically recorded and includes the following offences between 2015 & 2017:-
 - **Rape of Female 16 Years or Older (1)**
 - **Sexual Activity Involving a Child Under 13 (2)**
 - **Sexual Assault on Female 13 Years or Older (3)**
 - **Sexual Exposure/Voyeurism (2)**
 - **Racially Aggravated Offence (2)**
 - **Assault with Intent to Cause Serious Harm (1)**
 - **Assault (12)**
 - **Harassment (2)**
 - **Possession of Offensive Weapon (1)**
 - **Burglary (1)**
 - **Theft (7)**
 - **Criminal Damage (4)**
 - **Public Order Including Threats of Violence (7)**
- Alongside criminal offences other matters impacting the park include acts of Fly-tipping and the Unlawful use of Off-Road vehicles on Common Land (e.g. Dirt Bikes, 4x4 Vehicles, Quad Bikes etc.)



PROPOSAL

- I believe there is a need for a bespoke, uniformed service to carry out patrols in an effort to prevent and deter crime, disorder & anti-social behaviour.
- Such a service that is directly managed & accountable to the Parish Council that can respond to parishioners concerns and direct officers when and where needed.
- Officers would work hand in hand with the local police and other external agencies in support of public safety and policing priorities.
- Assist in the search of missing children and vulnerable adults.
- Officers would engage actively with 'friends of groups', neighbourhood watch committees and other community activities in support of public safety & crime prevention.
- Officers should have the ability to:-
 - **Undertake Lawful Ejection from public parks**
 - **Issue of written warnings**
 - **Issue of fines (Fixed Penalty Notices)**
 - **Enforcement of Park & Open Space Byelaw Legislation**
 - **Support police & other bodies in the prosecution of offenders by producing professional witness statements.**
 - **Support Police & Parish Council with the issue of Criminal Behaviour Orders and Community Protection Notices.**
 - **Take action against damage, graffiti, fly-tipping and Anti-Social off-road vehicle use.**
- Officers should also be trained in First Aid including the use of community defibrillators.



COMMUNITY WARDENS

- Under various statutes local authorities including Parish Councils can employ wardens to undertake both enforcement and proactive functions, these include:-
 - **Prevention of unlawful off-road vehicle use (Vehicles Used on Common Land)**
 - **Graffiti & Flyposting (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**
 - **Littering & Fly-Tipping (Environmental Protection Act 1990.)**
 - **Enforcement of Public Space Protection Orders (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)**
 - **Issuing of Community Protection Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)**
 - **Dog Control Orders & Dog Fouling (Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005)**
- Local Authorities including Parish Councils have a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to reasonably prevent crime and disorder within its area including Anti-social behaviour.

S.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

"Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can prevent, a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti - social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment) and, b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area."





CITY CENTRE AMBASSADORS

- Sheffield City Council currently employs a number of Ambassadors who undertake high visible patrol of the City Centre Spaces and assist with event management including the Snooker Championships at the Crucible, Sheffield Half Marathon and Tour De Yorkshire.
- They are a public facing body who assist residents, visitors and businesses by providing directions, sign posting services and answering any questions people may have when in the city centre.
- They are first aid and defibrillator trained, respond to accidents and incidents in the city providing assistance when needed.
- Largely a public reassurance role and have little enforcement powers allocated to them, their primary focus is to be a visible deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Can assist in the prosecution of offenders by providing evidential statements to police, their evidence has also been able to assist in obtaining criminal behaviour orders (CBO's) against persistent offenders.





LOCAL AUTHORITY PARK CONSTABLES

- Across Britain there are various 'Bodies of Constables' that function outside of the regular police model, these include:
 - **Ports Police**
 - **Cathedral Minster Police**
 - **Tunnels Police**
- Available to Local Authorities are pieces of legislation which have been underused but can be applied allowing for the appointment of Parks Constables.

***Section 77 Public Health Amendment Act 1907
(Extended by Section 52 Public Health Act 1961)***

Power to appoint officers: "The local authority may appoint officers for securing the observance of this Part of this Act, and of the regulations and byelaws made thereunder, and may procure such officers to be sworn in as constables for that purpose, but any such officer shall not act as a constable unless in uniform or provided with a warrant."

- London Councils have utilised this statute and mirroring legislation for decades to attest Constables in the pursuit of maintaining order, good conduct and the enforcement of Open Space & Park legislation
- Examples of current services utilising 'Local Authority' attested Parks Constables include:
 - **Wandsworth Parks & Events Police**
 - **Hammersmith & Fulham Parks Police**
 - **Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Parks Police**
 - **Havering Parks Police**
 - **Hampstead Heath Constabulary**
- Parks Constables are employees of their local authorities and not that of the Metropolitan Police service or the Mayor of London, the constables fall under the direct remit and control of the Borough Council.



EXAMPLES OF LOCAL AUTHORITY PARK CONSTABLES



**Wandsworth Parks
& Events Police**



**Royal Borough of Kensington
& Chelsea Parks Police**



Havering Parks Police



**Hampstead Heath
Constabulary**



BENEFITS OF PARK CONSTABLES

- Attested Parks Constables have sworn an oath to a Magistrate and have numerous benefits over other forms of wardens, these include:-
 - **The ability to enforce Byelaw & Open Space Legislation**
 - **Various protections in law afforded to Constables from both assault & obstruction whilst carrying out their duties.**
 - **Ability to make arrests if a suspect refuses name & address details for byelaw or open space offence (Code G Necessity Test & Section 24 Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984.)**
- As seen with other forms of wardens, appointed Parks Constables are more able to carry out their duties without relying on the compliance of a suspect or support from regular police.
- A Parks Constable would act as a professional witness for offences seen outside of Open Spaces/Parks and where necessary intervene more readily utilising any person arrest powers for serious offences.
- Their evidence can also be used to tackle persistent offenders building up evidence towards Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO's)
- Local Authority Constables can also be designated to use council warden powers.
- Local Authority Constables can be designated as Civil Emergency Responders to aid Tier 1 Emergency Services in times of crisis or major incident.
 - **Flooding/Natural Disaster**
 - **Major Fire**
 - **Civil Unrest**
 - **Mass Casualty Event**
 - **Disease/Pandemic Response (COVID-19 Social Distancing Measures.)**



COMPLIMENTARY APPROACH

- Local Authority Park Constables are not a replacement for the local Police and are in place to primarily prevent crime & disorder, provide public reassurance and intervene in incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Within London a joint working approach that compliments both the Metropolitan Police and Parks Police organisations is in place. Memorandums of understanding agreed by both the Police Commanders and Council Leaders formalising duties, protocols and responsibilities including an established intelligence sharing agreement:
 - **All Criminal Offences within Public Parks Remain the Responsibility of Local Police**
 - **Parks Policing Powers are limited to Open Spaces & Parks Controlled by the Council**
 - **Parks Constables are not authorised to operate 'stop and search.'**
 - **Council maintains responsibility for the enforcement of byelaw offences or offences relating to council matters such as littering, fly-tipping etc.**
 - **Arrested persons are handed over to the Local Police for them to process with any necessary investigatory assistance provided by Parks Constable.**
 - **Police will share any intelligence and information in accordance with the protocol signed by the Chief Executive and the Senior Police Officer in compliance with S.115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**
 - **Joint operations by the Police and Parks Constables will always operate under the control of the Local Police.**





EQUIPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- A Team would require a secure office for uniform and equipment alongside the storage of information.
- Access to Secure Council Email Account.
- Access to a liveried vehicle to attend patrol areas.
- Uniforms should be unique to the role clearly differentiating themselves from South Yorkshire Police or other Law Enforcement Bodies.
- Vehicles should be liveried to be visible to the public but clearly differentiating themselves from South Yorkshire Police or other Law Enforcement Bodies.
- Given the high visible nature and attested powers in the law to issue fines and carry out enforcement PPE should be considered to minimise injury including stab resistant vests, handcuffs and if appointed extendable batons.
- Yearly Police approved refresher training courses would be undertaken by officers in the use of open hand defence training alongside the use of handcuffs and if issued use of police baton.



COSTS & FUNDING

Costs

- Parks Constables are not paid in-line with regular Police Officers, their wage is comparable to that of other warden roles working for Local Authorities. Other similar 'specialised' constable positions across the UK are also not paid the same as regular police, examples include:-
 - **York Minster Police - £22,250**
 - **Mersey Tunnel Police – £23,000**
- Wandsworth Parks & Events Police provided cost of uniform and equipment for each officer amounted to **£1,777**
- Recruitment should be aimed at retired police officers or those with prior policing experience (Special Constables & PCSO's) courses currently undertaken by North Yorkshire Police.
- Service could also utilise 'Reserve Constables' and volunteers to assist with back office functions.

Funding

- Alongside a Parish Councils public safety/community budget there are various grants in existence that can be utilised to apply for funding in order to assist in start-up costs, examples include:
 - **Police & Crime Commissioners have access to funds to help reduce violent crime within their communities and assist in set up costs of community warden schemes.**
 - **National Lottery Community Fund**
 - **Local Business Support & Sponsorship**
- Additional means of funding any future scheme could be the utilisation of a 'Tri-Parish Council' partnership between Ecclesfield, Stocksbridge & Bradfield Town & Parish local authorities to spread costs.



CONCLUSION

- Crime and the fear of crime remains to be an issue nationally, a highly visible patrol service would assist in both deterring crime & anti-social behaviour whilst also supporting local policing efforts.
- Parks Constables could serve their community professionally with both appointed powers of a constable and designated powers of a local authority warden.
- A joint working approach with local police would ensure a professional relationship with both intelligence sharing and complimentary approach to solving community issues.
- Such a role would establish confidence and trust within the community providing a visible, uniformed and actual deterrent to crime & disorder
- Costs for Parks Constables including Salary & Infrastructure remains similar to that of local authority wardens yet is more cost effective.



RESEARCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Thank you for your
time.**

ANY QUESTIONS?