

NottsWatch Joint Annual Conference 2013

Last year's conference finished with the Chairman of NottsWatch introducing our new **Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping**. Paddy was the first speaker this year, having been in the post for one year and a day. In that time, he has attended 150 meetings with the public. He thanked the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (NHW) for doing a great job and referred back to a decade ago, when NHW received a lot of support from the police but noted in the past few years this has decreased. His role is to ensure that the police don't simply deal with crime, once occurred, but to invest in community and prevention. He has set up a Community Safety Partnership Fund with £500000 set aside to help communities reduce crime and protect victims. So far around 80 organisations have received a grant. Paddy invited community groups in the voluntary sector to submit bids.

Paddy went on to say that crime is the lowest that it has been for 30 years, nationally, but for the first time crime is up 1.3% in Nottinghamshire, from last year. However, our police force is the fastest improving force in the country.

Paddy finished by saying that there would be a re-shaping of our police force with stronger relationships. An announcement of these plans will be made next spring. Our joint challenge, in working together, is for our communities to be decent, safe areas to bring up our families. He invited NHW members to be true partners and help the police force with the changes to come.

Today's second speaker was **Simon Torr, Assistant Chief Constable, Nottinghamshire Police Force**. He stated the force's priorities are to:

- Cut crime and keep residents safe
- Spend their budget wisely
- Earn our trust and confidence. He agreed with Paddy that they have not always supported NHW in the past ten years but assured they are committed now.

Notts Police Force have to make a £80 million saving next year so resource is extremely difficult, but their main priorities are violent crime and burglary. He explained various campaigns – November, hate crime was targeted and robbery in December. They also invest in giving crime prevention advice to the large student population in Nottingham.

He asked NHW to be the eyes and ears for the police and to report suspicions via 101/Alerts website. Information can be given to us via Facebook, twitter and YouTube. He recommended valuables be registered at <http://www.recipero.com/immobilise> and reiterated basic crime prevention.

Q & A of the panel

Mobile phone use whilst driving, switching off of street lighting, smoking whilst driving, police alerts (the type of info given to the public), out of court disposals, inaccuracy of crime stats and anti-social drinking were discussed.

Dragons' Den Initiative – Inspector Andy Clarke

As with last year's example about the Ravensdale Estate, Mansfield, given by Inspector Neil Williams, this initiative in Ashfield was successful because of the partnering with a number of agencies in the area. This successful initiative is now in its fifth year and engages their residents of all ages, allowing them a voice in their neighbourhood.

All seven secondary schools in the area take part and 14-16 year olds are invited to suggest themes for support from a variety of agencies. This links into OFSTED as the talks become part of the National Curriculum in PSHE lessons.

This year's themes are cyber bullying and domestic violence.

Last year, David Griffin gave a presentation of the NHW groups in Bingham. This year Bob Garland, the current chairman for the scheme covering 88 streets in Bingham, gave an inspiring presentation of their scheme and also called for active research on the value of NHW and crime statistics, as original studies ceased in 1994. Given the changes in technology and demographics of today's society, criminals are operating in a vastly different world to that of two decades ago.

Constitution of Nottinghamshire Neighbourhood Watch

The conference finished with Alan Booth, MBE, Chairman of NottsWatch, inviting all attendees to vote to accept the new constitution to formally combine the city and county as one NHW with a new committee of six members from the city and six from the county, to preside. The constitution, vital for the Community Safety Partnership Fund to share their charitable donation to the city with the county, was voted in by the majority of attendees.

