

ASSOCIATION OF DORSET WATCHES

QUESTIONS FOR DORSET PCC CANDIDATES 2016

1. What financial implications for Dorset policing do you believe there might be if the UK leaves the EU?

Very little, the police funding strategy has been agreed by Government until 2020, and although there may be a slight change in direction, I do not think it will change policing finances noticeably or affect policing delivery on the front line.

Policing issues such as the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) can be negotiated outside of the EU, with little cost incurred.

It is useful to remember that the UK only requests extradition by EAW of less than 300 people a year, whilst requests for us to extradite exceed 40,000. These figures show other countries need to reach agreement with us. We will be able to re-negotiate the EAW, and whilst we do, policing does not grind to a halt. Moreover, there remain other mechanisms which can be used to assist extradition which can be made to work effectively and efficiently.

2. Who is funding your campaign and what if any other assistance are you receiving?

All of the political parties are funded by deposit provision, or donations to their campaigns locally, nationally or both. I am an Independent.

I am funded by Mark Constantine, as I was in the last election, full details are available here,

[Martyn Underhill Funding](#)

I released details of this to the media a few weeks ago.

I have no other major backers, although friends and the public have donated small amounts. All of my donations will be declared after the election.

3. How do you believe your experience and knowledge equips you for the role?

I have a lifetime of experience of those affected by crime. I am victim driven, and always have been. I pledged to establish a Victims Bureau, and we opened it in Nov 2013. I have commissioned numerous services for victims, and will continue to do so. Victims must drive the work we do, and of course, reducing the number of victims and repeat victims defines success.

A key issue for the PCC is being able to understand how the police work and, importantly, why the culture of some areas may inhibit equality and diversity. I am an ex-police officer so I know how the organisation works and understand the cultures that we need to break down. It is important also to realise that I was a police officer in two other areas. I did not know anyone in Dorset Police when I was elected as I had never worked there.

The PCC role needs to be able to bring people together around the table, to facilitate, negotiate and make things happen. I gained enormous experience of this during my police service and during the time I have spent working with several Dorset based charities.

[Martyn's charity work](#)

I have been the PCC for the last term, and I have steered the Force through huge changes in funding and demand.

I took over a debt free Force with a balanced budget and I hand back a debt free Force with a balanced budget but with increased reserves, and having paid its pension liability. I understand money and I have been prudent in my approach, reducing bureaucracy and floor space whilst retaining as many officers as possible.

I have entered into a Strategic Alliance with Devon and Cornwall Police to continue that prudence and to increase efficiency, as well as to make savings to absorb the cuts we have sustained. I want to continue that journey if you will let me.

I understand the communities that make up Dorset. I am immersed in them and I recognise that each community is different.

4. If elected, would you appoint a paid Deputy?

Yes I would. I have had a Deputy since September 2015. Colin Pipe has worked for the people of Dorset without being paid for over a year and is the only voluntary Deputy in the country. If I am re-elected, I will re-appoint Colin as my Deputy but he will be paid.

The role of PCC has grown expedientially in three years. Already I have taken over additional responsibilities for victim services and funding, as well as responsibility for Restorative Justice in Dorset. I have gone from commissioning services worth £250,000 to nearly £3m per year.

The Government are now talking about giving the PCC the additional responsibilities of:

- Police Complaints
- More powers in relation to Criminal Justice
- Control of the Youth Offending Service
- Governance of the Fire Service

I cannot foresee how one person can undertake all this work without the help and support of a capable Deputy. Otherwise it becomes a serious risk to their health. I have the benefit of being able to appoint someone who has allowed himself to be tried and tested at no cost to the people of Dorset.

Remember that in my term, one PCC tragically died in service, and two collapsed through serious illness. I need to make sure that I do not become a casualty and that if I do there is someone to take over.

If I am elected, I intend to pay Mr Pipe a salary for the next term, and I have been transparent by declaring my intentions to the electorate before they vote.

5. If elected, given the need to fulfil statutory obligations, what would be your priorities and how would you structure your office?

[See my manifesto here](#)

I have already said that I will review the functions, size and role of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner immediately, post-election, if I am re-elected.

It would be easy to say that I will reduce the size of the team if re-elected, but things are more complicated than that. Let me explain.

It is important to realise that the team has grown as my role has grown. For example I now employ people to deliver my new responsibilities of overseeing victim services and restorative justice.

It is also important to note that nearly half of the staff of the OPCC are engaged through Fixed Term Contracts for which I secured additional central Government grant funding.

Will the team size reduce? It would be foolhardy to pre-empt the outcomes of the review. However, we mustn't forget the new roles the Home Secretary has announced. This could mean an increase in staff in the OPCC especially if the office oversees police complaints. However, if the OPCC costs increase as a result of such changes it will be funded by budget transfer from the police who currently undertake this work. It should cost the taxpayer no more than now as the budget will be transferred with the staff.

Another further complication (I said it wasn't cut and dried!) is the Strategic Alliance I have already mentioned. There may be opportunities to combine some of the PCC Office roles between Dorset, Devon and Cornwall which will lead to further savings.

And finally, I can only restrict the size of the team and/or reduce staffing in certain areas. As the question says, I have statutory duties in relation to governance, consultation, Custody Visitors and some areas of policing, and I must fulfil those obligations.

In summary, having now explained all of the issues, the simple answer to this question is that I will arrange to review the staffing in the light of all the above and seek to act prudently when employing staff on your behalf.



6. What achievements can electors expect to be accomplished within your first 90 days?

My manifesto is listed [here](#) –

In brief I have said that I will:

Invest resources to protect Dorset people from the emerging threats of:

- Targeting and abuse of those at risk
- Cyber crime

Continue to talk to local people and listen; to be the interface with their police.

Continue to represent and support victims.

Improve accessibility and visibility of your police.

Improve technology and efficiency.

Establish a rural crime team.

Appoint a Business Champion.

Increase the staff on the Marine Unit.

Dedicate resources to increase education and prevention in road safety.

Work with partners to keep Dorset as one of the safest places in the country.

A significant proportion of this manifesto can be set in train within 100 days of taking office, although some will take longer.

For example, the rural crime team can be achieved quite quickly, but the road safety initiatives could take up to a year to develop.

Equally, the journey in relation to protecting the vulnerable and addressing cybercrime is a constantly evolving one.

7. Do you agree with the Home Secretary that crime prevention should be at the heart of policing, and if so, a) what steps would you take to ensure Dorset Police reflect that change of emphasis and b) what are your views on her Modern Crime Prevention Strategy?

a) I don't agree it is a change in emphasis; crime prevention is core to policing and Dorset Police already undertake crime prevention in many arenas, especially in relation to threat, risk and harm. From a crime prevention point of view, as your PCC, I have funded 3 separate "early intervention schemes" in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset County in concert with the relevant Local Authorities.

I believe passionately that early intervention is key to a safe society. I use the adage that "if every 5-year-old can attend school being able to read, write and speak properly, we can change a generation". I have also worked with the Early Intervention Foundation nationally. Please see [here](#) for my work in relation to this.

The strategy encapsulates the 6 strands that policing does every day, and in that sense I welcome the chance to bring all of the strands into one place. The dilemma is will Government push more funding into this key area of societal issues?

b) Whilst I embrace the Home Secretary's initiative, I am saddened that she didn't properly consult with policing experts and PCC's before she launched the strategy. For example, Mental Health should have been included in the strategy, and it is as key as alcohol and drugs.

8. Do you believe the Police partnership with Neighbourhood, Home and other Watch Groups is beneficial to both parties, and if so, what steps would you take to encourage its growth and effectiveness?

Partnerships are essential to effective policing, especially where policing is by consent as it is in the UK. In more recent years we have seen the success of local policing, of PCSOs and of Neighbourhood Watches. I have always supported the partnership model of working and will continue to do so. In particular, I will be looking to a more joined up pan Dorset approach to Watch schemes fill in the gaps in the county.

The key bit here is that Watch schemes, including Neighbourhood Watch, must be driven from the community "up" not from the police "down". I see the police role as one of empowering communities and of facilitating change, not to set up schemes on behalf of the community.

Another key issue is the internet. If I am re-elected, I will help create “virtual” Watches, to complement, not replace, more traditional Watches.

ADW has a role to play here, if re-elected, I will work with them to upgrade and replace their website.

9. What experience, if any, do you have of working with Neighbourhood Watch?

As a young London bobby, I set up a Neighbourhood Watch way back in 1983, over 30 years ago, so my experience spans many years. I have worked with Watches ever since. In my term, I have attended many neighbourhood watch meetings and understand how they operate and the value they can add to keeping Dorset safe. It is important that we are able to find a balance between the autonomy of individual watches whilst ensuring a joined up approach.

10. Would you continue to support the Association of Dorset Watches with manpower and financial resources?

My track record on supporting the Association and Watch schemes across Dorset is well proven. I have made sure police resource is available in the police HQ to support volunteers and Watch schemes. I have also funded the inception of Dorset Alert to replace Ringmaster. In addition, I have financially supported the ADW, and the Safer Dorset Fund has helped individual Watches across the County. If re-elected, I will continue to provide resources to support a structure of Watch schemes across our beautiful county.

Thanks for reading this

Martyn

Written by Martyn Underhill, PCC Independent candidate for the PCC elections, contactable at PO Box 9084, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 9HN.

Email: keep policing independent@gmail.com

Website: www.KeepPolicingIndependent.com

Facebook: [Keep Policing Independent](https://www.facebook.com/KeepPolicingIndependent)

Twitter: [@Vote4DorsetPCC](https://twitter.com/Vote4DorsetPCC)