

QUESTIONS

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RESPONSE FROM	QUESTION NUMBER	ANSWER
Colin Taylor Chair of Isles of Scilly Community Safety Partnership. St Mary's Isles of Scilly	1	There have never been any Neighbourhood Watch schemes on Scilly
	2	As there have never been any schemes here there has consequently never been a fall or rise in schemes.
	3	N/A
	4	With regards to Neighbourhood Watch the time and effort of the PCC is almost certainly better spent in the other two counties.
	5	Introducing Neighbourhood Watch Schemes on Scilly would be potentially very different to increasing numbers on the mainland. With consistently under 100 reported crimes per year (71 in 2014) I would not think the juice was worth the squeeze for what would be likely to be very low or no take-up. Adopting NHW schemes would be tantamount to admission of the fact that there is some crime on Scilly which would run counter to the very strong myth that islanders like to perpetuate in promotion of tourism to the islands, "The Land That Crime Forgot".

RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
Edward Gregory	<p>I write in response to your open letter dated, March 2015, concerning the apparent decline in the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (NHW). Until December 2013 I was a Police Volunteer (PV) at Newquay police station. I was on a team of PVs tasked with assisting the Newquay NHW Managers to expand the coverage of NHW in Newquay, and also to transfer the NHW data bases from the local NHW computer onto the Devon and Cornwall computer network. The proposed expansion and changes never took place in spite of nearly a year's efforts by a team of dedicated PVs, purely because the initiative was proposed by the local Neighbourhood Police Inspector, but not supported by the NHW managers. In reality, NHW actively opposed any change to the status quo.</p> <p>My answers to your open letter questions follow:</p> <p>I have never been a member of a NHW Scheme. I moved here just as the existing scheme ceased to operate.</p> <p>Yes, there has been a reduction of effective NHW schemes in Newquay.</p> <p>The present Newquay NHW Managers are reluctant to:</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. accept changes to their operating procedures. b. introduce modern office procedures. c. communicate regularly with their NHW members. d. motivate their NHW Scheme members. <p>I have insufficient knowledge to make a valid judgement.</p> <p>NHW Schemes are supervised and managed by volunteers, and herein lies its weakness. The NHW command structure places too much responsibility on Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA). There is no subordinating level in the chain of command to assist in monitoring the performance of each NHW Office, or to seek replacement volunteers to refill vacancies. When the Newquay Neighbourhood Policing Inspector realised that he was unable to persuade NHW to accept an expansion of coverage in Newquay, and modern management methods, he transferred the scheme to become a police-led initiative and renamed it Street Net. This is administered from the Local Policing office, by uniformed officers, on a no-cost basis, and has two-way communication between the police station and the Street Net members. The Police and Crime Commissioner needs to encourage those towns that have ineffective NHW to adopt Street Net instead.</p>
RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
<p>Will Blagdon Richmond Walk (Plymouth), NHW Coordinator</p>	<p>My name is Will Blagdon and I am the NHW Co-ordinator for the Richmond Walk area of Devonport, Plymouth. I have run this NHW for about 10 years and been asked to respond to comments about the decline of NHW in the Plymouth area. Our group is very successful and pro-active , meeting at least 4 times a year with a balance of members from both local residents and businesses. Our meetings are well managed with written agendas and minutes and have a regular, well attended number. We organise regular presentations at meetings from local organisations and have good local Police links especially with PCSOs.</p> <p>I have been to most of the Plymouth NHW AGMs in the past few years and there has been an obvious fall in support and representation. The city NHW executive appear to have been losing strategic support and funding and a measurable drop in links with local Police - there were no Police representatives at the 2014 AGM.</p> <p>The city executive (all volunteers as are the NHW's themselves) seem to have been cast adrift and this lack of co-ordination I would suggest has had a significant impact on the city NHW framework. I always believed the watches were a strategic part of the Police's community engagement and crime prevention -at a minimal cost to the force. At a time when Police budgets are</p>

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	<p>being suffocated I would suggest the NHWs are more needed than ever to support the community officers to reduce the fear of crime, promote crime prevention and report incidents. Local knowledge is vital and as we see more officers and PCSOs in particular being given larger patches, the NHWs provide important localised intelligence and links to the communities they serve.</p> <p>There seems to be little if no support for watches and less encouragement to support the Police. We all read the news about emergency service budget cuts but these watches are often small groups of residents who want to help their communities but need a decent level of support and maybe a sense of recognition. Our watch is completely self funded and can draw on the skills of those involved including professional people who can run structured meetings and have city strategic contacts in the local authority but I am sure many watches do not have these assets. Training is critical to successful watches but all forms of support appear to have been lost. Meetings are only useful if they have content and targeted outcomes. There also needs to be evidence that actions result from discussion and progress can be reported at each meeting.</p> <p>Ten years ago there were clear, tangible links to the local Police force, including help with advice on how to run meetings, and plenty of documents and support from the local crime prevention officer. NHWs now feel isolated and with no recognised place in the Policing structure. Should this be allowed to further diminish the future of NHW is at risk. The city and Police can only benefit from well supported, properly focused watches but they need help.</p>
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Geoff Carter	1	I am the co-ordinator for a local scheme in Plymouth, and was responsible in setting it up.
	2	Don't know.
	3	As question 2
	4	I have not seen any evidence in the media that this is the case. Media coverage recently has portrayed this role in a negative way - going on holiday and missing a meeting and spending a large amount of money on office improvements.
	5	I hope this role is scrapped and the police are allowed to run their forces with the support of lay people in elected committees, who can provide feedback on behalf of the general public who are the recipients of the service given. Continued financial cutbacks in the police service are a bad idea. The effects are detrimental to our society. Things will get worse.

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RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
<p>Gerry Moore Community Safety and Anti- Social Behaviour Co-ordinator For East Devon</p>	<p>For some time I have been concerned re the coordination of NHW. When I was the Crime Reduction Sergeant for East Devon from 1999 to 2004 we had a group of volunteers who used to come into the Police Station at Exmouth, liaise with the Police Crime Prevention Officer and local officers, make phone contact with the coordinators of areas where there were crime issues. They would be given sanitised data about the problems which they would pass onto their watch members. The volunteers would also try to increase the number of watches by going to events with local Police NBM's or PCSOs.</p> <p>At about the same time my colleague Julia Ryder was employed by the Police as the Watch Development Officer and her specific role was contact with the various watch schemes to keep them updated as well as trying to increase them. She left her post to take up her current one and the post was not continued.</p> <p>Now I'm afraid this coordination does not exist for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the severe cuts Neighbourhood Teams have been reduced and those that are left haven't got the time to service NHW. I also believe that because of these pressures senior officers expect NHW to stand on its own two feet. Coordinators however quite rightly expect contact with the Police because that is why they became coordinators. • Community Messages from the Police are good but not as good as face to face or phone contact. <p>My overall impression is that there are thousands of very supportive members of the public out there who are willing to get involved but would like to see the Police more involved. I do however appreciate why it's not happening but I'm trying to answer the original question.</p>
RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
<p>Julia Ryder Community Safety & Emergency</p>	<p>I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the open letter that was recently circulated regarding the perceived decline of NHW Schemes. I have experience of both working with police to promote NHW and also as a NHW Coordinator in my neighbourhood.</p> <p>From 2003 to 2005 I was employed by Devon & Cornwall Police as a Watch Development Officer. My role was to support existing</p>

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<p>Planning Officer</p>	<p>NHW Schemes and to promote and establish new NHWs, and all other types of watch groups in the Exeter, Mid and East Devon areas. There was a similar role that covered North Devon and Torridge Districts too. During this time there was great interest from the police in supporting watch groups and encouragement given to ensure all coordinators were signed up to the Police Community Messaging Service. Police officers and PCSOs would help to establish groups and would attend meetings when requested. I facilitated volunteers to enter police stations to help with the NHW recruitment and to help keep records of local NHW Schemes. Whilst keen these volunteers, and indeed the Coordinators within the communities, needed continued support and input from the police service in order to keep their interest, and to provide them with direction. It was quite a task to get them to take any independent action and they were much happier to be invited to attend organised conferences and presentations, rather than arrange anything for themselves.</p> <p>When I left in 2005 my post was not filled, nor the post in North Devon when that post holder left a few months later. It was around this time that the police lost the local coordination of NHW groups within police patches. As there was no one person to go to for information about starter packs, insurance etc, the police and PCSOs became more confused about how to start a watch. Paperwork and the NHW message became sketchy. A consistent approach and message was gradually eroded away by lack of time and investment.</p> <p>I know now that in East Devon and Exeter the volunteers in the police stations stopped attending several years ago, and we have recently now sadly lost our last volunteer for Cullompton Police Station.</p> <p>Numbers of NHW have most definitely declined in Exeter, East & Mid Devon. In my current role as Community Safety Officer I am very aware of the decline and patchy support that is offered to the remaining NHW Coordinators left in place. They will rarely hear from their local police or PCSO although probably continue to receive Community Messages (but it is unclear in reality how many messages are passed onto watch members). I resigned as a Coordinator for my street several years ago as there was general apathy from the residents and I didn't get much input from the local officers – however I do appreciate that I live in a very low crime area.</p> <p>My professional opinion is that whilst NHW has its place, the very nature of volunteers it attracts are quite 'needy' and mainly reliant on some kind of central coordination and information point.</p> <p>In my current job role I have taken on Emergency Planning and I have to consider how we can improve community resilience to much wider community issues than just crime. I am therefore working to establish emergency response volunteers and I am promoting Neighbourhood Health Watch which covers a much wider remit of community support</p>
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	<p>than just crime and disorder. It is about general good neighbourliness and looking out for each other. This too is supported by the police, but also other agencies and it really does encourage the community to stand on it's own feet, rather than be reliant on someone advising them what to do. We now have four such schemes in Mid Devon which are working very well with little input from agencies.</p> <p>In summary I would definitely confirm that numbers of NHW groups have dropped but this could be down to the elderly coordinators where no younger replacements have been sought or found. That can be down to apathy due to low crime areas.</p> <p>Can I be so brave as to suggest that it might be that NHW has had its day? Perhaps let's focus on another form of community support to improve local resilience at many levels that may just happen to include reduction of crime and disorder if that's what the community wants/needs.</p> <p>This may not answer your questions as you intended but I think it important that you consider the wider picture.</p>
<p>RESPONSE FROM</p>	<p>ANSWER</p>
<p>Zena Davis. Former Vice-Chair, Restormel District Neighbourhood Watch Forum.</p>	<p>I have been forwarded the Open Letter from the Chair of Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel by my friend and former Chairman of the Restormel District Neighbourhood Watch Forum. I was very involved with Neighbourhood Watch both as a co-ordinator and as the vice-chair of the district Forum for several years and also as a police volunteer, in answer to your questions copied below, yes, there has been a continual decline in viable local schemes and general involvement in NHW because of its failure to fit in to today's world of technology and instant communication, with police stretched to the limit police officers cannot spend time in NHW local meetings and trends are generally moving away from the more formal meetings to more timely forms of communicating information. Whilst Community involvement in encouraged in local policing the existing mechanisms of liaison with Neighbourhood groups need to be radically changed. An excellent model of improving greater involvement and communication between police and the community can be seen in the Street Net initiative led by a Police Inspector in Newquay. For your information I include herewith some of the content of my resignation letter from the Forum which dissolved in April 2014 and it encompasses many of the key points that I felt were damaging NHW. Clearly it is a specific example but you can filter out the more general points expressed in the letter. I no longer am actively involved in Neighbourhood Watch, I still act as a local co-ordinator but there is such little local communication from police in St Austell or NHW that it is of little use to myself or neighbours. I receive information from Our Watch alerts, Community messaging but unless NHW reinvents itself in a form that is fit for purpose in 2015 the Police cannot progress its involvement with the community. I do not wish to attend the panel</p>

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meetings but you are free to take any sections of my letter to use as evidence of my experience of NHW failings.

Letter content (individual names have been removed):

There are four main categories of failings that have led me to believe the Forum can no longer adequately provide the aims and objectives set out in its Constitution. Communication, Guidance, Support & Direction.

When supporting the Chair, the Forum was a cohesive group working within the framework of our Constitution with both NHW area Offices and the respective Office Managers contributing reports, information, data and goodwill. John led the proceedings, delegating duties to Office Managers and liaised closely with DaCCWA to promote and progress the Neighbourhood Watch across our region.

When the successor took over as Chair his passion for moving things forward, embracing new technologies, modernising methods of progress and introducing accountability within NHW ruffled feathers. Others, myself included, relished the opportunity to make NHW more suited to our electronic communications and busy lives. But, what I initially believed to be "ruffled feathers" turned out over the months to be deep seated and embittered views creating an environment which, on occasions, actively obstructed the progress of NHW which led to my disillusionment and my perception of the failings within the Forum.

Communication:

Failures in communication between members of the Forum Committee – Office managers would ignore or delete e-mails or requests from the Chairman because they had been told in March 2013 by DaCCWA that the Offices were "Nothing to do with the Forum" added together with a general unwillingness to assist, fuelled by personal agendas, led to many difficulties in the working relationship between the Chair and the Office Managers. Members of Newquay Office Volunteers held personal grievances against each other, refusing to work with each other which resulted in squabbles, ill feeling and resignations - surely we are all on the SAME side? 2) Failures in communication between DaCCWA and the Forum – Julie was asked repeatedly by Rob for clarification over the situation with the Office Managers and their mantra of "The Offices are nothing to do with the Forum", DaCCWA as an Organisation, or Julie as an individual have consistently failed to formally advise the Forum committee as to why the Office Managers were told that Forum's Constitution was invalidated without DaCCWA notifying the Chairman of the Forum. DaCCWA failed to explain why the Offices are no longer an integral part of the Forum, the ramifications of that decision are core to the fracture in the Forum and finally for my own part, I published a quarterly newsletter on behalf of the Forum for many

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years, I was told that DaCCWA wished for it to be a more "Corporate" document to include Police & County information, I duly provided specimen templates, and sent it to DaCCWA for approval, that was May 2013. 11 months later I still didn't even have the courtesy of a reply but note that some offices are using a scaled down version of the template, it is just one of many examples of a lack of communication creating frustration. Failures in communication between the Forum and the membership caused many difficulties. Without the involvement of the Offices, who are the link to all of the Members, the Forum cannot directly make contact with the Membership and as such cannot be "The Voice of the Community" in NHW matters. It was, in my view, a catastrophe to cut the ties between the Forum and the Offices, the only direct communication that any Forum members (with the exception of those members volunteering in the Office) have received from general members of the public are a number of complaints about the Offices which the Chairman resolved or were passed on to the relevant personnel. Surely, if this Forum is supposed to be the conduit to facilitate communication of ideas between the public and the offices, it has failed.

Guidance:

There has been absolutely no guidance from anyone at DaCCWA as to the correct procedures for running the Forum. The longstanding RDNHWF Constitution that had been the framework for the running of the Forum was invalidated. Nothing was provided to replace that framework. The Forum was left with only unconfirmed snippets of information from the Office Managers, including the fundamentally important statement that DaCCWA's own Constitution was under review and we should await that Constitution before we can decide upon the future of the RDNHWF. The Forum was not, and to date, has not, been provided with either an original or updated version of any Constitution and, as such, the last twelve months of trying to maintain a formal structure to the Forum was impossible. An example of a lack of guidance can be cited from a very recent e-mail from the Treasurer of DaCCWA. The e-mail forwarded to members of the Forum was in the form of a very curt reminder that all Forum assets belonged to DaCCWA as the Supervising Authority, it seemed to have an undercurrent bordering on the suggestion of potential mismanagement of the Forum's accounts which is wholly inaccurate, perhaps that information would have been better placed and more politely structured in the provision of a Guidance Documents for Treasurers of Forums outlining the controls of individual Forum bank accounts on behalf of NHW etc. because I am a signatory on the bank account and as far as I am aware RDNHWF always had the accounts independently audited every year for the AGM and neither the Treasurer or myself were ever in receipt of any documented advice or guidance from the supervising authority to support that role.

Support:

It greatly saddens me that the lack of support for embracing progress and change within NHW has virtually held the Forum to ransom, individual's bias and personal agendas overwhelmed the main purpose of our operation which was to promote NHW, it is with regret that this lack of support has proved very detrimental to the progress of NHW. Whilst all Forum members can and

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	<p>should relay their own views and opinions in a democratic way in healthy debate at the meetings without a consensus of opinion regarding the core principles and purpose of the Forum there are continued struggles between those opposed to change and those embracing change. The Forum is unable to move forward and the continual uphill struggle by the Chairman to feel supported by the Offices and DaCCWA is a situation I find very uncomfortable to watch.</p> <p>Direction: Whether the Forum continues, whether the Forum is dissolved is a matter for a democratic vote but either way the Forum needs direction. That direction should come from the overarching involvement of DaCCWA.</p> <p>All four of the reasons I believe have contributed to my resignation, the lack of communication, the lack of support, the lack of guidance and the lack of direction can all be remedied by an open and inclusive relationship with DaCCWA and partner agencies. By providing a nurturing and supportive role for the volunteers, by guidance, advice and consultation. Most of all it needs a standardised approach to the Offices and the Forums so we all understand who does what, how, when, and why things are done, I do not think that is an unreasonable target.</p> <p>I believe that it is fair to say that over the last year I have witnessed malevolence, obstruction, exclusion and complicity, not exactly my idea of the perfect set of values for Community Volunteering. So, regretfully, it is the time for me to step away from the Forum and focus on more positive volunteering opportunities.</p>
RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
<p>Julie Dowton Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association</p>	<p>Thank you for sending a copy of your recent "open letter" about Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) issues across the Devon and Cornwall force area.</p> <p>I am the Chairperson of the Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA) which is the umbrella organisation for all Watch Schemes across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. As an organisation we manage the many "Watch Offices" that operate within police stations across the force and support the development of NHW as an underlying provider of community safety, resilience and capacity.</p> <p>In essence, I and my fellow Board members do not recognise the premise inherent within your scrutiny review that NHW appears</p>

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to be a dwindling and fading resource. Indeed, we are somewhat concerned that this issue is deemed to require Police and Crime Panel focus upon what the Police and Crime Commissioner may be doing about this. Any issue or concern about NHW schemes in Plymouth should be addressed to DaCCWA and we would work with the local police commander to identify and address any concerns.

This "scrutiny" would appear to be scrutinising the wrong thing.

DaCCWA are aware that NHW within Plymouth was in need of reinvigoration. We have been very pleased at the involvement of the local police in trying to bring this about; that they have invested in a dedicated "Citizens in Policing" officer is testament to their intentions to support and develop Watches and police volunteers within the City. So far, this has been a productive relationship and DaCCWA have been involved in discussions as to how best to organise Watches and their representation within Plymouth. Such a refocusing will frequently uncover a drop in the number of co-ordinators that can be deemed "active" as records are checked when a new watch office is set up.

I have no doubt that the provision of office space, access to police systems and support and a growing list of volunteers prepared to assist will expand Plymouth's schemes again.

However, I must return to my aforementioned concern that this would appear to be a misplaced "scrutiny". NHW is an independent movement that works alongside policing and many other partners interested in community safety. The Police and Crime Commissioner supports and values the efforts of the many NHW schemes across the force area, but is not responsible for their introduction and development. This is the remit of DaCCWA.

I question the merits and motivation behind the setting up of a panel to handle this issue in what amounts to a "select committee" approach. We are working with Plymouth police to rectify many issues regarding how the City's NHW have organised themselves and been supported over the past few years and we support fully the approach being taken. I and my fellow DaCCWA Board members struggle to understand how the Police and Crime Commissioner scrutiny delivered by the Police and Crime Panel can be extended to focus upon such a tactical issue as NHW schemes in Plymouth (despite a somewhat forced attempt to transform this into a force issue).

I am pleased that there is such an apparent interest in NHW emerging, but fear it is misplaced in this context. I see on a daily basis the evidence of active NHW schemes all across the force area.

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	It is for these reasons that DaCCWA is unable to support the assertion that NHW schemes are facing "significant decline" and feels that the approach being taken here is somewhat flawed. I would encourage interested members of the Police and Crime Panel to get in touch with our Board to challenge their own perceptions.
RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
Mike Boyle NHW Administrator Totnes Police office.	<p>I am the Administrator for the NHW in the South Hams, my duties are maintaining the Data Base, assisting the local PCSO's in recruiting ne co-ordinators and distributing a quarterly Newsletter.</p> <p>Over the past year numbers have been pretty static gains being equalled by losses. Due to the reduction in manpower the local PCSO's do not now seem to have the time to promote NHW as they used to. I feel that some advertising throughout the Force might be an answer.</p>
RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
(Reply submitted by L. Robinson, BSc(Hons) Biological Sciences, dip(MATH)Open. Secretary to Plymouth NHW Forum)	<p>This Response has been written as the result of a discussion by 4 members (Geoff Isaacs, Lorraine Robinson, William Bertram and Richard Berry) of the Plymouth NHW Forum which is the Executive Committee of Plymouth NHW and is composed of seven Plymouth Coordinators.</p> <p>1. There has been a decline in the numbers of Coordinators in Plymouth as shown by the statistics.</p> <p>During a number of years before 2010, there were 650 NHW schemes in Plymouth. At this time the NHW Office at Charles Cross Police Station was manned by 1 paid person and 4 volunteer helpers. They worked for five days a week. Their job was to liaise with Coordinators, set up new Watches and provide a point of contact for Coordinators. The Office also ran the Community Messaging Service. Events were held during each year so that Coordinators also had the opportunity to meet each other in a social setting.</p> <p>This came to an end when it was decided that the paid person needed to retire.</p> <p>A new way of doing this was then put in place. An Executive committee was created composed of Coordinators whose job was</p>

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	<p>to find new ways of taking NHW forward. One Police volunteer was assigned to work in the Office dealing with the work that previously 5 people had done. Members of the Executive were however given no access to the Coordinators , they were not allowed to know who they were (as a group) or where they were located. Any communication which the Executive wanted to have with the Coordinators had to be done through the Office.</p> <p>By 2010 the official figure was that the number of NHW schemes in Plymouth had reduced to 280 and the general figure for 2015 is that there are now 220 Schemes.</p> <p>During this 5 year period no other volunteers were found to work in the Office. Due to illness of the Police Volunteer, the Office has been unmanned for over a year. The Executive put together a website www.plymouthcommunitywatch.co.uk as a means of communicating with the unknown Coordinators, passing on interesting news and information to them and advertising for New Watches. It is the case however that in the 2 years since the website was set up it has not been possible to advertise this website to the Coordinators due to IT problems in the Office and the illness of the Police Volunteer.</p> <p>The Executive has determined that the way forward for Plymouth NHW is to make it a transparent, vibrant and interesting community based Organisation where Coordinators can communicate with each other and hold social events and work actively with the PCSOs. Being a Coordinator should be a position of street and community responsibility instead of being a secretive and isolated position involved only in reporting crime in the area. It is the belief of the Executive that in order to stop the decline the whole concept of NHW needs to altered and brought up to date with the multi-cultural and ethnic diversity needs of people living in Plymouth.</p> <p>2. We have always found the PCC to be supportive of NHW in Plymouth. The problem with the decline is not because of this but because of the way that NHW is structured.</p>
<p>RESPONSE FROM</p> <p>Rita Skinner Town Clerk Launceston</p>	<p>I am responding to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s request for feedback on Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Launceston. Members of the Council have been involved in NW schemes but only one councillor is active at the moment. He is involved in reviving a scheme for Hurdon Road in Launceston. Another councillor is keen to pursue one for his area. Overall we think there has been a decline and those which exist are not active. No research has been undertaken so it is difficult to say why. Our Neighbourhood Beat Officer says that we live in a low crime area and that levels of detection are high. NW is</p>

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Town Council	very much a local scheme and it may not be the place of the PCC to involve himself in these matters. He needs to support local police officers as they support local neighbourhoods. However, unless the neighbourhood wants a watch scheme and is prepared to be involved it will fail. Communications onwards need to be straightforward, the members of a scheme need to feel secure and they need to know that the police will take action. We understand that our Neighbourhood Beat Officer, PC Stoppard, is working on a new way of delivering NW schemes and the Council will fully support him in this.
<p>RESPONSE FROM</p> <p>Superintendent Glen Mayhew Commander, South Devon LPA Chair of Torbay Community Safety Partnership</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Watch is a well-known and established national brand. Its transition to Our Watch provided a unique opportunity to shift public perception from 'curtain twitching' neighbours to proactive community participation in the 21st Century. The Our Watch website for example provides a central information resource, providing an impressive array of tools for local Watch areas to use. However it is the observation of Torbay's Community Safety Partnership that perhaps this exciting change at a national level has not necessarily filtered into a number of neighbourhoods at a local level.</p> <p>In many neighbourhoods throughout Torbay (and no doubt in other geographical areas), dated yellow Neighbourhood Watch signage can be found on lampposts and in the windows of properties. For many this can compound the perception of the previous incarnation of Neighbourhood Watch. In the Torbay area there have been a number of dedicated individuals responsible for leading a local forum. Their efforts to reduce crime and protect the vulnerable are recognised by the partnership. Torbay's Feel Safe Scheme which was created and led by Neighbourhood Watch is a testimony to these endeavours. The scheme provides vital works to improve the physical safety of properties so that victims of crime and residents (particularly vulnerable residents) can feel safer and happier in their homes.</p> <p>Observations of the Community Safety Partnership that may be helpful to inform future discussions relating to Neighbourhood Watch are:</p> <p><u>Working in partnership:</u> As a Community Safety Partnership we are currently unclear how Neighbourhood Watch forums/schemes link with the Police and Crime Commissioner's own Victim Care Unit and whether there is an opportunity to develop integration in this regard.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u> It is clear that many Neighbourhood Watch areas are working to reduce crime and disorder. It is however the view of our Community Safety Partnership that the specific objectives of individual Neighbourhood Watch areas are not always communicated. For example depending on the area, a Watch may have specific crime objectives e.g. to deter acquisitive crime;</p>

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or to support victims of burglary or a general aim to reduce fear of crime. To support partnership working it would be beneficial for clear objectives that are aligned with other local crime and disorder priorities to be publicised and monitored which would in turn impact positively on public perception. This would also aid sustainability of schemes and may also provide increased opportunities to access further funding.

Linking to Strategic Assessments:

Each Community Safety Partnership produces a Strategic Assessment which provides an evidence base on which agreed priorities can be formed. As local and peninsula assessments are central to driving efforts to reduce crime and disorder, it would be beneficial to explore if and how Neighbourhood Watch could be contributing to delivering against these priorities as part of a wider partnership.

Untapped opportunities beyond a traditional crime prevention agenda:

Neighbourhood Watch has traditionally focused on crime prevention however case studies featured on the Our Watch website demonstrate how some communities which have joined together in response to crime, have then gone on to deliver activities and initiatives to benefit other aspects of neighbourhood life such as wellbeing.

Whilst we know that within our own geographical area there are some excellent examples of Neighbourhood Watch facilitating wider benefits in the community, again this appears to be another area of inconsistency.

If Neighbourhood Watch is to be the subject of a new focus at a strategic level in Devon and Cornwall it would provide a unique opportunity to develop what is often perceived as the traditional 'community safety' watch. So many other factors influence our feeling of safety and the lives of individuals and families within communities can be complex. Residents truly know their neighbourhoods and know those individuals and families who are most at risk, whether this be through loneliness, poverty, domestic abuse, neglect, alcohol misuse, mental health issues, etc. Whilst 'watching' neighbourhoods, being alert, and reporting issues to the police is fundamentally important, simply being a 'good neighbour' takes that concept so much further. A public approach to community safety could include actions such as identifying if an elderly resident needs any support (for example contacting the local authority to request an assisted bin collection). All of this is dependent on communication and building networks within neighbourhoods that are not only alert to crime, but know what options are available to support people with other challenges if and when they need help.

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Inconsistency of structure:

For any volunteering programme to be successful a clear structure is required. As well as making practical delivery achievable it also provides clear governance and accountability. It is the observation of the Community Safety Partnership that this structure appears inconsistent.

Reliance on individuals rather than process:

Volunteer schemes are driven by individuals and whilst their efforts must always be recognised, the success and sustainability of an entire scheme should be based on a robust structure, clear processes and effective communication. It is the observation of the Community Safety Partnership that too often it is key individuals who are responsible for 'holding' Neighbourhood Watch which whilst admirable is not sustainable. With this approach, particularly where roles and responsibilities are not defined or performance managed appropriately, there is a generic risk that activity can become more focused on the specific intentions of an individual, rather than a neighbourhood or community as a whole.

Unclear expectations of those involved:

There are many roles and responsibilities within Neighbourhood Watch including residents within a scheme, scheme co-ordinators and local forum members. We know that within Torbay and undoubtedly other areas within the country that there are schemes registered, but in reality are inactive. This could be for a number of reasons, but in essence Neighbourhood Watch should be about proactive action within the community. If we are asking people to volunteer their time as Watch Co-ordinators what exactly are we asking for? Many well known and established volunteer programmes require a minimum number of volunteer hours per month. For example how many hours are our Watch Co-ordinators giving to communicating with their neighbours? The answer may very well be many in some areas, but this is again inconsistent.

Inconsistent local and national use of branding:

Our Watch provides a national brand that where appropriate can be tailored to suit local need. As previously stated there appears to be an inconsistent use of old and new branding. For example a local Torbay Neighbourhood Watch website exists that was kindly created and managed by a volunteer, however the design of the website is reminiscent of the previous Neighbourhood Watch branding. Recently a decision has been taken to utilise the local area feature of the Our Watch website which will negate the need for an additional local website. This will provide a consistency of approach and branding.

Inconsistent monitoring and management of performance:

As previously considered, many volunteer programmes have systems in place for monitoring and managing performance. The

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	<p>Community Safety Partnership is unclear at a strategic level, how individual watch schemes/scheme areas are monitored or any issues with performance addressed.</p> <p>The partnership is unclear at the moment whether sufficient processes are in place to answer questions such as "how many volunteering hours have been provided?", "how many community events have been held in the past year?", "how does crime differentiate between watch and non-watch areas?", "what training is being delivered to support volunteers?", "what is the demographic profile of our watch co-ordinators?", "have we established effective watch areas in our highest crime areas?" etc.</p> <p>For any activity requiring a level of investment or resource it is important to ask the question "what difference is this making?"</p> <p><u>Recognition of value added:</u> Where watch areas are generating positive community safety and wellbeing outcomes it is important that they are formally recognised as such and good practice shared.</p>
<p>RESPONSE FROM</p>	<p>ANSWER</p>
<p>Robert Paterson - Co-ordinator of Lanlivery NHW</p>	<p>Q1 Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?</p> <p>Q1Answer: I am the co-ordinator of Lanlivery NHW which lies midway between Bodmin and St. Austell comprising some 28 NHW members. I have been involved in NHW schemes for approximately 10 years both here in St. Austell and in Hout Bay some eight miles outside Cape Town - South Africa.</p> <p>I have been both the Chair of Neighbourhood Watch and Chair of the Community Police Forum in Hout Bay comprising a mixed population of some 70,000 residents for a number of years prior to returning to Lanlivery approx 4 years ago. Following the retirement of the previous Chair John Adams, I was voted in as Chair of Restormel District Neighbourhood Watch Forum (RDNHWF) until it was dissolved in 2014. During that time the RDNHWF Forum was responsible for areas covered by both the Newquay and St. Austell Neighbourhood Watch Offices. As RDNHWF Chair I was also allowed to sit on the quarterly board of DaCCWA.</p> <p>When dissolved the RDNHWF was solvent, having significant funds in our bank account, which along with computers, overhead</p>

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projectors / screen etc. were duly handed over to DaCCWA. Our financial accounts were audited independently each year for the annual AGM. The RDNHWF when operating provided an excellent efficient conduit for several hundred NHW members to air complaints, grievances trade success stories / failures throughout the old Restormel area - plus it provided an ideal path for efficient, highly important and regular interaction between us the Watch Members and the Police Forces in St. Austell and Newquay.

Q2. Do you think there has been a fall in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in your area (please state which area)?

A2:

Absolutely without question. Areas I have extensive knowledge of, are areas covered by the St. Austell and Newquay Police Stations.

Q3. If your answer to Question 2 is 'Yes', why do you think that is the case?

A3:

Overview: Since 2003 the (RDNHWF) Restormel District Neighbourhood Watch Forum had been operating successfully until March 2014 when following a short meeting of members of the working Forum (many PV volunteers) a unanimous decision following a vote was taken to disband the Forum. This situation arose following the announcement by both NHW Office Managers which stated that the Forum had nothing to do with the running of the NHW Offices. The DaCCWA Chair at that time had been requested to clarify this announcement as it appeared to stem from a meeting held by "persons" attending a training session at the Bodmin Police Station. The Chair of DaCCWA however did not rescind that statement. The consensus of the inner circle of the Forum was simply "what was the point in continuing with the Forum to try and bond with hundreds of NHW members when the two PV vetted NHW Office Managers would not work with or listen to the complaints of those members via the Forum".

Long standing Forum members could not understand why this decision by DaCCWA had suddenly been implemented considering our RDNHWF Constitution had been operating and in place since its inception in 2003. The RDNHWF Constitution clearly follows the Aims & Objectives of DaCCWA.

As mentioned, via monthly meetings held alternately at Newquay and St. Austell Police St. Austell which were routinely attended by Inspectors and Force personnel from either Police Station this allowed / enabled regular healthy interactive debates resulting in priority projects being discussed and speedily implemented. Monthly minutes were taken, distributed to Forum and Force representatives for onward timely distribution to relevant parties. New membership schemes were routinely prioritised and the

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necessary financial requests to promote new NHW schemes were implemented and approved by RDNHWF if required. e.g. Hire of venues if necessary.

Basically we had a 'win win' situation to promote NHW, coupled with a number of experienced Forum members on hand to assist as and when necessary. A professional quarterly NHW newsletter was prepared and compiled by Zena Davis the Assistant Chair of RDNHWF containing comments / articles from the Police on crime patterns or crime prevention aspects. Zena's quarterly newsletters were so successful that her template was chosen to be used for the Police Desktop when the move to Police computers was completed.

Via annual RDNHWF AGM's, both Police Inspectors from Newquay and St. Austell were given the opportunity of talking to the numerous co-ordinators / NHW members (even the Police Commissioner Tony Hogg) attended one AGM and all entered into lively Questions & Answers with the Community members.

Following the demise of the Forum, everything stopped. NO meetings no discussions. This continuing lack of information provided adequate breeding grounds for apathy. No info - no response = Lack of interest prevailed. Result NHW membership drops off. When recently was the Newquay NHW office manned? Was the local Inspector advised the NHW would not be open due to sickness, vacation of possibly NHW training? If not why not.

Questions the Panel should ask.

- How many NHW members within the old Restormel Forum area know both NHW offices now have an official police e mail address?
- When was the last public meeting held by the respective NHW Office Managers?
- Ask to see the minutes of such meetings.
- This enables the sharing of success or failure within the Communities.
- How many computer literate volunteers actually work are in the various NHW Offices?

4. Do you think the PCC is doing enough to encourage and enable greater involvement by citizens and communities to support policing, reducing antisocial behaviour and to help reduce crime and, in particular, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?

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The PCC is aware of the following:-

E.g. Community hubs are supposed to receive daily crime alerts.

The PCC has to satisfy himself that those NHW offices actually receive them.

Depending on the specific crime pertaining to which area this will determine which hub receives the INTEL.

E mail has to be used primarily to distribute information.

Wherever possible only co-ordinators who have access to e mail should be used to distribute alerts. It is up to the respective co-ordinator to distribute the daily crime alerts to his or her members. Only in special circumstances if a co-ordinator has no email capability then as a last resort, telephone calls should be used to distribute relevant information. It is imperative that Logs are kept of who handled the information and "what is / has been" actually distributed by the respective hubs. It then befalls the NHW co-ordinator to distribute the relevant info to his or her local NHW membership.

Volunteers in Community hubs, we hear, are supposed to have been trained in the sanitising and dissemination of information. (This latter sentence is the most important).

As we have seen in recent months, especially when investigations are underway going back several years if not a couple of decades to unearth true facts relating to a specific situation, then it is vital that all those "persons" undergoing such training have their names and volunteer numbers duly recorded stating that they have in fact understood what is required of them. They then should sign OFF against the fact they have received adequate training.

Currently the only real communication link between the Force and the 1.7 million residents of the Peninsula is basically down to the Community hubs via those PV trained volunteers to distribute the vital NHW information. Data protection is a key element these days and with the heightened security in our country it has to be very carefully monitored who has access to membership information distribution lists.

I am extremely glad to hear that the Neighbourhood Alert system is in place, as that is the key element to ensuring timely distribution of vital safety and security information to the rural communities. What Neighbourhood Alert has done nationally is great to hear, however, as long as it is in place in Cornwall sooner rather than later is the issue.

We hear from various sources the importance of training and support for volunteers, and I am delighted to hear that the monitoring of the training and support falls within the remit of the Strategic Delivery Board.

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As mentioned it is vital that all levels of training are recorded and signed off by the relevant responsible HR person responsible for all PV NHW volunteers and that each recipient of such training is able to sign OFF that they understand the various procedures and have physically received adequate training. As we know only too well, when something goes amiss and the proverbial balloon goes up - that is not the time to unearth inadequate training or a lack of controlled supervision or to hear the lame excuse "that lessons have been learnt".

Someone has to be held responsible. Accountability at all levels has to be recorded and those recorded sheets have to be regularly maintained and kept safe. Having personally brought up this subject of accountability and responsibility at my last DaCCWA meeting you could have heard a pin drop.

Finally the way things are going in the world especially in the UK, coupled with impending cuts to all Councils and no doubt Police Force manpower and financial budgets, your task is left to rely on the civilian army to help ensure criminal activity is kept under control. We read and hear about the increased threat from I S and people trafficking etc. therefore total control and order therefore has to be laid down and implemented soonest. Through the PCC's Office and the Strategic Delivery Board you must ensure that whilst volunteering is important, those volunteers must realise the importance of the role they play. In my opinion 'curtain-twitchers' are out - technology is in. NHW I feel also has to up its game and ensure the message from the Force is actually getting out.

Bear in mind

- The Police PV all NHW volunteers.
- Most NHW offices are now physically in Police Station.
- NHW offices use Police Computers and Printers.
- NHW computer literate persons are "supposed" to be trained and checked that they are up to the task by the responsible PV HR person.
- The police I T Team must monitor the traffic on all NHW computers.
- Regular remote computer checks must be made on each NHW office to ensure information from the Force is being distributed to NHW members.
- Practically ever facet of NHW is now under the control of the Police.
- If NHW is fading, is that possibly due to poor Police / NHW communication?
- Not everyone wishes to visit a NHW office especially when it is located within a Police Station.

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Over the recent months prior to having my PV status removed I wrote and e mailed numerous persons in both National and Force Partnership groups. At my PV disciplinary hearing I was severely reprimanded for writing far to many letters / emails. I totally agree that I did write to numerous persons within NHW National and Police persons in an attempt to find answers however they were sent as Chair of RDNHWF not as a PV volunteer. When that happens I assume I must have a hit a serious weak spot or vulnerable nerve end.

However on the positive side with major input from Inspector Meredith in Newquay has overcome all our concerns via StreetNet. His Police personnel via StreetNet enables 24/7 distribution of vital and relevant information. No need for third party Neighbourhood Watch volunteers who might come into the office two days a week.

Having viewed Merediths project and success I personally think that the days of NHW are numbered. Communication direct from the Police to StreetNet members means efficient - distribution of vital information plus enables equally efficient feedback. You will then ask what is cost for budget purposes?
Answer NONE. I use the term Cost Neutral.

Communication to the public StreetNet members has proved to be successful and conversely allows direct contact from StreetNet members BACK to the Police and not via Neighbourhood Watch Offices / Third Parties. That is the way to go.

I am sure you already have other letters from other concerned members of the public pointing out a variety of problems which should have been solved by DaCCWA. (The governing body of all NHW Schemes within D & C).

Should similar reasons to those outlined by several Restormel NHW Forum members be uncovered by you and your panel when discussing the topic, at least you have proof that ample time to address "problems" was certainly brought to the attention of those in Authority controlling NHW in Cornwall. Might I add that at each of the DaCCWA quarterly meetings, members from the Force represented by the Liaison Officer and normally the HR person from Middlemoor in charge of PV volunteers were normally in attendance so all parties were aware that problems existed.

If the panel find the reason(s) for a decline in NHW Schemes is similar (to those reasons provided to DaCCWA months ago) by virtue of resignation letters then is begs the basic question – Why was remedial action not taken?

Perhaps a lack of accountability for monitoring what NHW Offices actually passed onto NHW Schemes (which had been supplied by the Police) is the reason for a decline in NHW schemes. If that is the case then is it no wonder volunteers have simple packed it

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	<p>in?.</p> <p>To clarify one final point:- I have already written to the Commissioners Team on several occasions and discussed with him at one of his surgeries highlighting where I think accountability and monitoring of NHW offices can and should be done on a regular basis purely to ensure the necessary back up and support for the Force Beat Officers is actually being processed by those PV'd NHW Office volunteers. In other words if Intel from the Force is being passed to NHW offices BUT NOT BEING distributed to NHW members within the rural and town communities, then a complete breakdown in communications has occurred right from the start.</p> <p>As previously mentioned "remote access" between NHW offices via the Force computer network can easily be accomplished and should be done on a regular basis. This ensures adequate cover for any area where as a result of sickness, vacation or perhaps a training course has prevented that NHW OFFICE from opening. This "remote ability" provides the means to action a topic which was sent to the "closed NHW office" but because the closed office can be monitored by the Neighbouring NHW office, it gives confidence to the Scheme or member who submitted the query or question that a swift answer is forthcoming.</p> <p>Without that basic buddy, buddy system in operation it can be days or weeks before a reply occurs. Result Decline in NHW Schemes.</p>
<p>RESPONSE FROM</p>	<p>ANSWER</p>
<p>Cllr Derris Watson</p>	<p>At the CN Panel meeting last week I asked which of the parishes present had a NW group. Results were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dobwalls and Trewidland has/had one but received no help from police • St Keyne has one and is now receiving emails from the Torpoint centre • Downderry one was set up here but it failed (possibly due to personality issues).

QUESTIONS

1. Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?
2. Do you think there has been a fall in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in your area (please state which area)?
3. If your answer to Question 2 is 'Yes', why do you think that is the case and what impact do you think this has had?
4. Do you think the PCC is doing enough to encourage and enable greater involvement by citizens and communities to support policing, reducing antisocial behaviour and to help reduce crime and, in particular, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?
5. If your answer to question 2 is "No", what do you think the Police and Crime Commissioner should be doing to encourage greater involvement in schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch?

RESPONSE FROM	ANSWER
<p>Yvonne Atkinson, Independent Member of Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Panel (representing Devon)</p>	<p>I thought you might find this idea interesting as an opportunity to revitalise NH watch.</p> <p>Residents in south Liverpool are taking advantage of a new scheme which will help them to protect their belongings, and deter burglars at the same time.</p> <p>South Liverpool Homes (SLH) has joined up with Merseyside Police to offer the free scheme, called Immobilise, to all SLH tenants. Launched at the housing association's monthly walkabout on Wednesday 6th May, staff chatted to tenants to make them aware of the scheme which aims to encourage people to register all their belongings on a national database. The landlord is making it as easy as possible for tenants to take part in the scheme by registering their belongings for them if they are unable to access the internet. This can include anything of value from mobile phone, tablets and game consoles to TV's, bikes and watches.</p> <p>SLH tenant Mrs Mooney is the first SLH tenant to take advantage of the scheme, "I thought this was a great idea so I jumped at the chance to register. It took about 15 minutes to do and now I have peace of mind that if any of my belongings do get stolen, there's a good chance I'll get them back."</p> <p>Sharon Marsh, SLH's Community Safety Manager said, "We are able to offer this service by working in partnership with Merseyside Police who will assist us with registering as many tenants as we can. Tenants can also register their belongings themselves by logging onto the Immobilise database where they will be given a secure login. Once registered, we ask tenants to tell us so that we can give people stickers to put in their windows which we hope will deter potential burglars."</p> <p>SLH and Merseyside Police launched the scheme following consultation with residents in Speke. Once 25% of residents on a street sign-up, they will be issued with free street signs that advertise that the area takes part in the Immobilise scheme.</p>