

**MINUTES OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD BOTH REMOTELY ON TEAMS AND IN PERSON IN USK MEETING ROOM, POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 10th OCTOBER 2023 at 4:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Nicola Warren – Interim Chair, Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Steve Lewis - Animal Welfare Visitor – (SL)

Andrew Watkins – Animal Welfare Visitor (AW)

Helen Lawless – Animal Welfare Visitor (HL)

Linda Mason – Animal Welfare Visitor (LM)

David Davies - Sergeant - Roads Policing Specialist, Operations (DD)

Emma Smith – Inspector - RSPCA

Ceri Davis – Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

**The meeting commenced at 4:18 p.m.**

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Victoria Waite, Chloe Bradley-Thomas, Caroline Herbert, Kirsty Buckland, Sarah Fowler, Louise Crawford – Dogs Trust and Inspector Shane Underwood. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  **Action 4**  DD advised the meeting that no visitors had attended the open day this was due to there being limited time for the dogs to be observed.  **Action 2**  DD informed the visitors that the veterinary practice had agreed to complete the veterinary check form with no additional extra charges. DD advised the meeting that the dog handlers are aware of the veterinary check, and this would be carried out on an annual basis. |  |
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| **4.** | **Scheme Update** |  |
|  | NW informed the meeting that Caroline’s tenure had concluded. NW advised us that she had passed on thanks on behalf of the Commissioner’s office and the scheme for her continued support during her tenure and for extending it further to assist us during Covid.  NW advised the meeting there were ten members on the scheme including the RSPCA representative and the Dogs Trust representative.  NW informed us there was a visit attempted in July, but the police dogs (PD) were called to an operation and the visit was rearranged for August. A further visit took place in August, but these PDs had been seen recently so it was deemed unnecessary to carry out a full visit.  DD advised this had occurred due to a miscommunication with the dog handlers with the same handlers being on shift as when the last visit took place.  NW reiterated to the meeting the list of PDs to be visited was updated following each visit with the date the PD was seen. NW informed the meeting there were four PDs at the top of the list that were a priority to visit and that had not been seen within the year.  DD informed us there were two new PDs to be included on the list and a third potential PD. DD to advise CD of the names. CD to circulate updated list of PDs to be visited.  NW requested that the visitors continue to advise the Assistant Scheme Administrator when visiting arrangements had been confirmed. The Performance Framework spreadsheet could then be updated with the date of the scheduled visit.  DD asked visitors if they could give as much notice as possible when arranging the visits as this would assist with allocating the correct handlers to the visit.  NW advised the meeting that due to sickness and a number of dog handlers on training courses it was agreed that the visit scheduled in September would be postponed due to the remaining PDs being needed for operational duties and only one of the available PDs had not been seen within the year.  DD informed the meeting two handlers had completed the training course and were now operational and two PDs that were recovering from minor operations were now operational again.  NW informed the meeting there had been no major issues of concern raised in the animal welfare visitor report forms that had been provided to the OPCC since the last meeting.  NW advised the meeting that the Dogs Trust had circulated revised check forms. NW and DD to review and raise any issues at the next panel meeting. | **DD**  **CD**  **NW & DD** |
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| **5.** | **Operational Update from the Dog Section** |  |
|  | DD informed the meeting there had been resilience difficulties due to the number of handlers on training courses. Two additional handlers had completed their training and were now operational with two new PDs. Two instructors were attending a drugs course in another force area. Once the training course was complete it would provide resilience with a drugs, cash and firearms instructor based within force.  DD advised the visitors one handler had completed a general-purpose instructor course. Two officers had also been successful for the Dogs Legislation Officer course.  DD informed the meeting that PDs Minx and Wish would be retiring in the new year. Minx will retire and remain with the handler and a forever home will be sought for Wish.  DD informed the panel that retired PD Ozman was still with his old handler and looking for a retirement home. DD asked should anyone known to the visitors be interested in rehoming an ex-police dog, to make contact. DD confirmed the decision would be made jointly with the handler and the Sergeant following a number of checks on the suitability of a new home for retired PDs.  DD informed the visitors his PD Ned had now retired and remained with him.  DD informed the meeting new PDs were sourced from different areas, reputable breeders, or other forces. One handler has taken on a stray dog and is in the early stages of training.  DD advised the visitors that PD Charlie had undergone a minor operation and was recovering, and PD Kai had also had an operation after swallowing something and has now recovered well.  DD informed the meeting of a number of positive operational results by the PDs which included PD Vesper’s success in detaining six suspects following a burglary.  DD advised the visitors when incidents occur where the PD uses bite to detain a suspect, the officers body worn camera would be active, a bite report would be completed, and the report would be scrutinised by a supervisor and a nominated officer to ensure the operation was conducted in the appropriate manner.  DD informed the meeting the new vehicles had not arrived yet but were expected in the new year. They would consist of a van with four cages in the back and four cars. The cars would replace exiting vehicles, but the van was an additional vehicle.  DD informed the meeting a decision had been made for the new van to be solely for the use of the dog section and no longer a resilience van for transporting seized dogs. DD informed the meeting a secure provider was used to house, and transport seized dogs and was available 24 hours a day. |  |
| **6.** | **AOB** |  |
|  | CD to recirculate DD contacts details to ensure everyone has them. Preferred contact via email.  DD informed the meeting there had been some changes within the senior management team and that Inspector Underwood was now the Chief Inspector for the Roads Policing Specialist Operations (RSPO)  and Inspector Healan was now the Inspector, and he sends his apologies for not attending the meeting. | **CD** |
| **7.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **4pm, on 15th January 2024.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 4:52pm**

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| **Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MCIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent** | |
| I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.  Any such interests are recorded below.  The above decision log has my approval.  Please note: This report has been signed by the CEx on behalf of the PCC as per Part 3c, Scheme of Consent and Delegation, Paragraph 9 of the Manual of Corporate Governance. | |
| Signed | Date  09.01.2024 |

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| **Contact Officer** |  |
| Name | Nicola Warren |
| Position | Governance officer |
| Telephone | 01633 642200 |
| Email | Nicola.Warren@gwent.police.uk |
| **Background papers** |  |

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| **Actions from Meeting dated 10th October 2023** | |  |  |  |
| **Minute Number** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Update** |  |
| **4** | DD informed us there were two new PDs to be included on the list and a third potential PD. DD to advise CD of the names. CD to circulate updated list of PDs to be visited. | **DD/CD** |  |  |
| **4** | NW advised the meeting that the Dogs Trust had circulated revised check forms. NW and DD to review and raise any issues at the next panel meeting. | **DD/NW** | The vet check form was queried but this has now been agreed. | **Complete** |
| **6** | CD to recirculate DD contacts details to ensure everyone has them. Preferred contact via email. | **CD** | DD contact details circulated to all members. | **Complete** |
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