



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

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Costs criticism for ex-police chief Richard Brunstrom

Ex-North Wales Police chief Richard Brunstrom has been criticised over costs incurred under his leadership.

It came as North Wales Police Authority (NWPA) backed a decision to scrap the mounted unit at a cost of £132,000. The mounted unit will cost £132,000 to scrap, mainly in rent paid to the National Trust at Erddig.

Chris Drew, a NWPA member, said it was estimated around £1m was spent on the section since it was set up in 2007. *(inline with PPP estimates 4years ago)*

The BBC has been unable to contact Mr Brunstrom for a response, but he has said the use of mounted officers was a visible and popular means of policing.

At the police authority meeting in St Asaph, Mr Drew said: *"Even though strong character and charisma does produce good performance and drive, there is a definite cost associated with hiring someone strong enough to lead us all by the nose."*

He said scrapping the mounted unit meant paying more than £100,000 - mainly in rent - to save about £1m over the next three years.

Mr Drew said it was reasonable to guess that about £1m had already been spent on the section.

Its work included providing support to neighbourhood and community policing teams, providing **"high-visibility reassurance patrols"**, and public engagement.

"It was an effervescent energetic chief constable who drove this mounted unit through for reasons which even now we do not really fully understand," said Mr Drew.

"Was it for a bet? Was it because of someone's love of horses? Was it because someone else had a mounted unit?"

"This was at the time a business plan with a lot of numbers and statements of less tangible benefits that would accrue, but did it really add up? Half of the authority thought not at the time, but that didn't count."

Deputy chief constable Ian Shannon had said the unit was made up of a highly professional team but the force could simply not afford it.

Mr Drew also criticised Mr Brunstrom for having spent £500,000 - which he said would never be seen again - on the Dangerpoint project for young people.

He also said £400,000 was spent on what he called the **"wilful persecution"** of a former authority policy officer, **Peter Bolton**. The case against Mr Bolton, who was accused of leaking a confidential document, collapsed at court and he was cleared.

Several members of the police authority supported Mr Drew at the meeting.

Councillor Peter Rogers said some of the figures were unbelievable, describing the situation as a "fiasco". As a farmer, he wondered how the cost of bedding for the horses in the Wrexham-based mounted unit could be twice that of feeding them.

Operational decisions

The police authority supported the decision by the force's executive board to scrap the unit.

New chief constable Mark Polin promised members that he would be making operational decisions, but that any significant projects would first be run past the authority.

The PPP comments ... we investigated, analysed and reported on all these failures and costly pet projects over the last 7 years. We met with and wrote to all our political representatives, police authority members, councilors etc to no avail. Several of our core group applied for membership of the NWPA but by various discriminatory practices they were not even short listed or interviewed. Our website still includes articles on all these issues which can be accessed but entering the following key words into our ... News Article search facility 'really' 'needle' 'mounted'. Cont ...

ACC Ian Shannon was fully supportive of the unit at the decision time in his usual supine manner under Brunstrom and his promotion from ACC to DCC was the end result! The unit is a joke in Police terms as they are unable to carry out even the normal crowd control duties of the Merseyside forces they were derived from. In reality a group of female horse fanciers are paid police salaries to practice their hobby at our expense. The stable rental agreement should be reviewed and the NT, a public supported charity should seriously consider their position at this time of financial restraint.

In conclusion we commend Chris Drew on his **publicly** outspoken honesty (**better late than never!**) and we are pleased to say goodbye to **SOME** of those who condoned, supinely supported, and generously rewarded the previous regime and its excesses. Namely Kelvin Dent, Ian Roberts, Moragg Webb and Clive Wolfendale. A clean sweep would have been nice and the New Chairman Alun Lewis does not impress us. Lewis joined North Wales Police Authority seven years ago and has been its Vice Chair for the past two years. So he has been witness to all these failings and is promoted to Chairman. In his maiden proclamation

www.nwalespa.org/Content/Resources/Chair.of.the.Authority.English.doc

he is flattering about Brunstrom AND claims OUR fear of crime, **ALL 46,000 of them last year**, is MISGUIDED. This latter statement shows ignorance and arrogance and should be withdrawn equally publicly. We understand that Lewis is chairman for only a year when a more suitable candidate must be found.

Because Brunstrom's time was so destructive and wasteful we have removed all articles relating to his Police career in NW and elsewhere from our **public** archives and look forward to a future with an enlightened force and an active and honest Police Authority.