

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

## North Wales Police face cuts without tax hike

Jan 12 2008 by Daily Post

A RISE of anything less than 5% in the North Wales Police precept this coming year would mean further job losses, officers claimed at a public meeting yesterday. But the message received from the residents who turned up to **the meeting in Bodelwyddan** was that if **inflation was no more than 3%, the precept should be no higher than this.**

The police precept is a part of the council tax and any inflation-busting hike would have to be met directly by council taxpayers. Among **the most vociferous opponents of a 5% precept rise were two former police officers, Bob Francis of Bodelwyddan and Bill Cowie of St Asaph.** Both told the meeting that, despite the high costs and record number of officers now in the Force, the standard of service had fallen. Barbara Rust of St Asaph said the rise should be limited because of the high percentage of elderly people in the division, most of whom were on fixed incomes. The only speaker in favour of the 5% rise was **Ruthin councillor Emrys Wynne** who said that anything less would mean a reduction in services. *“We keep saying we want a better service but we’re not going to get it if the precept goes up only 3%,”* he said.

Chief Supt Williams defended the decision to raise the cost of **policing Colwyn Bay’s annual Promenade Day on May Day.** **The policing bill has gone up from £2,000 to £3,600 (80%)** and the organising committee is considering cancelling the event, reducing the number of police **or hiring private security.** The Chief Supt said that as it was held on a bank holiday officers received double pay adding: *“The true cost is far greater than we are charging them. Every stand there is there to make money and so it is right that they should be expected to pay.”* Officers and members of the police authority are holding a series of public meetings this month to seek residents’ views on funding the North Wales force. **Chief Superintendent Michele Williams, Divisional Commander for Central Division,** said that 98% of her **£19m budget** was spent on staffing and the cuts she would be required to make even to accommodate a 5% rise equated to six officers. At the only other meeting so far, in Beaumaris, the response was much the same as at Bodelwyddan. Force treasurer Nigel Thomas said a 5% increase would mean Band D council tax payers forking out an extra £8.99, taking the monthly total to £187.05. A 3% rise would add £3.54 to the average bill. But even that, he explained, would mean the authority having to slice £3.8m off its capital programme. Last year about **100 (support) jobs** were lost and Mr Thomas said that those cuts had **“taken the spare capacity”.**

**The PPP comments ....** The public reaction at these meetings is more about our lack of confidence in North Wales Police, particularly **the LEADERSHIP,** to give us what we need and what we want. The hierarchy including CS Williams are **arrogantly dismissive** of public opinion and their responsibilities. The waste of our money on countless gimmicks, witch hunts, IPCC and internal Standards inquiries continues and amounts to £millions including **£500k for media services and horses.** The budget quoted for **Western division was £14 million,** the **Total for income for the force is about £140million** from all sources allowing say **£18 million for Eastern division this leaves £89million for what? This situation is condoned by the inept POLICE AUTHORITY.** People should realise that the real cost of policing is more than twice the police precept at **over £450 per average household.**