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Old Colwyn East Residents Association

A Police Authority public consultation meeting on the 22nd January in Old Colwyn was apparently designed to seek an answer to an apparent conundrum where according to the police sources reported crime is going down and sanctioned detections are going up but conversely the so called Fear of Crime is very high. **Old Colwyn East Residents submitted a letter for consideration READ it at ...**

<http://www.oldcolwyneast.co.uk/page100aa.html>

The Police Authority Monitoring/Policy officer, **Rhian Rees Roberts** posed the some questions as a means of measuring public views. Hand-held network devices were issued to the **25 persons present** who were asked questions and given a number of options with each question, respondents clicked the option reflecting his or her view and they were collated by a computer on the network.

The value of any reply to Questions one and Question two part a. and b. is apparently very questionable as those questions asked for guesswork from those taking part. The questions were based on force figures over the last three months which were unknown to the meeting.

Questions three and four were fairer questions to measure public perception. The point of these comments is that there have been five other meetings and the results given by those taking part will be collated to arrive at some conclusions. Any conclusions drawn from questions 1 and 2 part a. and b. will apparently be flawed in for the reasons mentioned above.

Part one of the presentation ~ Perception

Question 1.

How likely do you think you according to the figures of the Force and the British Crime Survey in the three months leading up to Christmas, of becoming a victim of crime in North Wales?

- a 3%
- b 13%
- c 27%
- d 40%

People then had to pick at random a percentage based on unknown crime figures and vote by pressing the buttons

A person asked "*why does it not go over 40%?*"

The monitoring officer replied "*Well those were the figures that we thought were realistic, we formed the view that these were a realistic selection, I will make a note if some feel they have a more..... If anyone does not agree with any of the selections I will note that*"

Four believed 3%

Six believed 13%

Two believed 27%

And interestingly she said eight believed 40%

Mrs Roberts asked those who had not answered what they thought of their chances and one person said "*we don't know the crime figures so how can we say*".

She then explained that "What the question was meant to go after was, how do you feel? Do you think you have a very high likelihood of becoming a victim of crime?"

A person queried the relationship of the questions to the figures spoken of which we did not know about and she replied " The answer according to the force Crime figures is

3%, We as an authority can elicit from that that people think that they have a 40% chance or more of being a victim of crime" .

Mrs Roberts then passed on to the next question which was similar and a person replied that it was all too complex we need a simpler survey.

Question 2

Over the last three months how likely were you in Conwy County of being the victim of the following crimes?

Part a Burglary, these were the choices, did you have a high likelihood of becoming a victim of burglary? The force tells us that one of these is correct.

- a 0.05%
- b 0.5%
- c 1.3%
- d 7%

A person asked what if as in my case you have been burgled four times over the last two years?

Mrs Roberts replied that it was **an interesting point** and that the questioner may have been a victim over the last two years but not in the last three months and that the Authority has found that the people that have never been the victim of crime often fear crime just as much as those who have been victims on several occasions and passed on to the answer phase, promising a further discussion on that point later.

80% of persons had answered;

A person queried whether burglary in a shed was included and the reply was yes.

Four believed 0.05%

Six thought 0.5%

Four thought 1.3%

Eight thought 7%.

Mrs Roberts added that according to the crime mapping system, which the force has recently adopted, the answer was 0.05%.

Part b what likelihood did you have of becoming a victim of Violence over the last three months

Options

- 0.05%
- 0.14%
- 1.9%
- 12%

Mrs Roberts revealed that according to force figures the answer was b. 0.14%

The answers given from the meeting were

Two thought 0.05%

Five thought 0.14%

Seven thought 1.9%

Interestingly she said, eight thought they had a 12% chance of becoming a victim of violence in Conwy.

Question 3

How concerned are you about becoming a victim of crime in North Wales, let us say in Conwy County?

- Very Worried, it affects your every day life, can't sleep you are disturbed by it
- Worried but not very worried, in the back of the mind but does not dictate your life.

A person interjected that she should allow persons to make their own perceptions of what the meanings were. **Councillor Rees** interrupted to ask the questioner to allow Mrs Roberts to continue.

- Not worried at all.

Views given

Eight are very worried

Eight are worried but not very worried

Seven are not worried at all.

Question 4

Now that the majority have stated that they are worried to some extent about crime; what crimes are you most afraid of in your area?

Options

a. Burglary

b. Car Crime

c. Violent crime

d. Antisocial behaviour

It had previously been said that people in other meetings were equally afraid of a number of crimes. If people did not wish to answer by pressing, Mrs Roberts would make a note of their answers.

Of the 25 persons present,

11 thought they feared all crime equally or the first three options

1 thought Burglary

2 thought car crime

4 thought violent crime

7 thought antisocial behaviour.

Part two of the Presentation ~ Reality

Mrs Roberts said that according to the **British Crime Survey 2007 to 2008**, North Wales was one of the safest places to live in the whole of the UK, however the public perception of crime in the area is often different and North Wales Police Authority are keen to ascertain why this is the case.

Statistics show that there was 15% less crime recorded in North Wales in 2007 to 2008 than in 2006 to 2007. This was the biggest decrease in England and Wales.

The detection rate in North Wales went up from 21% in 2002 to 2003 to 40% in 2007 to 2008 and in 2007 to 2008; North Wales had the second highest sanctioned detection rate in England and Wales.

Mrs Roberts continued to say that despite the performance figures illustrated by the British Crime survey and local recorded figures, National records demonstrate that “**fear of crime**” and **antisocial behaviour** is higher in North Wales than in the other most similar forces in England and Wales.

Mrs Roberts asked “*Why are people of North Wales afraid of crime. Do you agree with the British Crime Survey; are you afraid of crime and if so to what extent and why? Also what can the Authority do to tackle the fear of crime and increase public confidence? North Wales Police Authority is keen to hear your views*”.

Mrs Roberts then asked two more questions by show of hands to elicit information and views about the Criminal Justice system.

Question 1 ~ How confident are you that the Criminal Justice system, that is, from arrest, to giving a fixed penalty notice, to taking them to court, how they are dealt with in gaol, Probation and prosecution, as a whole is effective in North Wales?

- Very confident? Nobody answered in this category
- Fairly confident? Eight answered in this category
- Not very confident? No number was announced in this category.

Question 2 ~ How confident are you that the Criminal Justice system as a whole is fair as opposed to effective? Various options for views, fair to public, fair to victims or the offender, including sentencing.

- a. Very confident. No number was announced
- b. Fairly confident No number was announced
- c. Not very confident about 80% indicated in this category.

A Councillor and JP was present and said of the persons who had raised their hands as not confident, were they not confident in the Courts, or the police as opposed to the Courts? In his view there must be a differential he said.

Someone added "*Or the CPS?*" The speaker was concerned by the views expressed that **overwhelmingly there was support for the category not very confident.**

The PPP comments **This association has a link on our website and we monitor their site because they epitomise sense and reason and good citizenship. Many of our members have reported back on their experiences from these meetings with similar comments and results. We have commented on our overall view of the meetings which was far from positive. Whatever the misguided purpose of the Police Authority **their campaign has confirmed that the perception the Force and Authority have is out of touch with the reality of the majority of their customers.** If the force were a commercial enterprise such as M&S the result would be disastrous and the business would fail. In fact M&S' perception of what their customers wanted was recently seriously wrong and the company had to change many, of the leadership, their products and culture! These changes are long overdue and just happen to be imminent as current contracts come to an end!**

The Police Authority, particularly the new members, have an onerous responsibility to ensure these changes are implemented