



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

The prudent way to police North Wales

This 'story' from the NWPA website

Police watchdogs have set the level people will pay to maintain an effective policing service in North Wales over the next year. Members of the North Wales Police Authority decided on a **4.5 per cent increase in the Council Tax precept**. That is lower than the **5 per cent rise** that was recommended in a report by the Police Authority's treasurer, Nigel Thomas.

The decision of the meeting held in St Asaph means there will be a **£240,000 cut to the proposed budget** but it is hoped to do everything possible to protect neighbourhood policing.

As a result, Council taxpayers living in a typical Band D property will be charged around **£18 a year more which equates to an annual payment of £187 for policing services**.

After the meeting, **Police Authority Chairman Cllr Ian Roberts** said: *"Following a measured and mature debate, we have balanced the twin responsibilities of prudent financial management and the operational integrity of the Force.*

"In recent years, North Wales Police has made great strides in terms of performance – to the point where the force is undoubtedly one of the best in England in Wales. This view has been supported by the conclusions of successive inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Every one of those inspections has praised the Force for the excellent management of its financial resources".

"At the same time, crime rates have come down dramatically while there has been a huge improvement in the detection rate. As a Police Authority, we are proud of the role we have played in making North Wales a safer place for the people who live here. We are conscious of the importance of our role as a bridge between the Force and the community and it is important that we have their input and support.

"We are aware that the tradition of policing in this country has been based on the principle of policing by consent." We believe there is no better way of seeking consent than actually going out and asking people what they think. This is why we have placed so much emphasis on consulting the people of North Wales so that our decision in setting the precept was informed by their views. We held a series of open meetings throughout the region in January when members of the public were invited to discuss the topic in detail."

"In addition, we commissioned a specialist, independent market research company to conduct a comprehensive telephone survey. In all, 1,500 people were recruited to find out what they think the Force should concentrate on as well as asking how much they thought Council Tax payers should pay for the police service. The randomly selected citizens' panel, Llais y Gogledd/Voice of North Wales represented a scientifically accurate cross-section of opinion in the region. We will also be taking into account the views of the people of North Wales in setting our priorities as part of our strategic policing plan for the region."

The PPP comments ... PPP members attended all these meetings and at many very strong criticisms of both the priorities and leadership of NWPF were forthcoming. At several meetings PA members were unresponsive and threatened cuts in frontline services as an opening gambit. Attempts were made to steam roller their recommendations through and deliberately ignore claims that NWPF had wasted considerable sums of tax payers money on 'initiatives' such as the mounted unit, the needle machine in Colwyn Bay and various internal disputes. Many PA members including Morag Webb, Gwilym I Jones JP and Rhian Meleri Smith made disparaging comments about public attitudes at the meetings which then appeared in the press indicating that they represented themselves rather than their constituents. Ian Robert's comments (and their Title for themselves and this article) are classics of political white wash and must have been dictated by Brunstrom's press officer.