

An Introduction to Your Police Team

I am PC 3569 Dick Rowlands, the Neighbourhood Beat Manager for the rural area of Torrington. This area covers the Shebbear and Buckland Parishes. The purpose of this article is to introduce myself and the team that cover the policing of your area.

So what is a neighbourhood beat manager (NBM)?

Neighbourhood beat managers are police officers that are linked closely to their community. They are responsible for patrolling the local area and for working in partnership with the community and other agencies to ensure community safety and crime reduction. Neighbourhood beat managers are focused on solving the problems in the local area and cannot be abstracted to duties elsewhere.

So who is PC Rowlands?

I have served in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary for over twenty-one years now in a range of roles. I commenced my service working in the city centre of Plymouth in the late 1980's. Once I had completed my probationary period I asked to be posted to North Devon as this was an area that I knew and was a place I wanted to work and live.

I was subsequently stationed at Bideford as a Response Officer for about seven years during which time I completed attachments to both the Crime / Drugs Squad and CID.

In 1996 I changed roles and became the Neighbourhood Beat Manager for Bideford's Town Centre. I was very committed to this role and worked hard to reduce criminal behaviour in the area and develop close ties with the business community helping to introduce shop radios and CCTV.

2002 saw another change of direction for me as the Partnership and multi-agency work I was involved in had steered me towards Crime Reduction. Consequently I became the Torridge Crime Prevention Officer and in 2005 this responsibility was extended to cover all of Northern Devon.

In early 2007 this role became civilianised and I was given the opportunity to select a posting. I asked to come to Torrington as a Response Officer so that I could get back into the core Policing role.

Having completed a year as a response officer at Torrington and familiarised myself with the area, the Rural Neighbourhood Beat Managers post became vacant. I applied for this and as a result took on this role in March of 2008.

I now intend to use the skills and experience that I have gained through my career to identify strategies, partner agencies and mechanisms that can be used to focus on the issues and concerns of the community and thereby find solutions to problems.

So who else Polices our villages?

I am not the only person policing to your area. There are dedicated teams of Police Constables and Sergeants at Torrington, Holsworthy and Bideford. Torrington has responsibility for your area but if we are stretched the other stations gladly cover. In addition to this the CID department based at Bideford deals with many of the crime investigations needed to solve specific offences. Finally we are all backed up by teams of officers working in specific key roles such as Domestic Violence, Intelligence, Prolific Offenders, Crime Prevention, Traffic Policing etc etc.

Locally there are two Police Community Support Officers based at Torrington that have specific responsibility for the rural parishes around Torrington. These are Melissa Baker and Sandra Brown. Though they both cover the whole area Melissa concentrates on your area so you will probably see her more often.

So what is a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)?

Police community support officers, or PCSOs, are uniformed members of the police family and play a critical role within neighbourhood policing. They complement the work of police officers by focusing predominantly on lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. They are an important resource in the crack down on the types of anti-social behaviour and nuisance that can blight communities and affect the quality of life in a neighbourhood.

The primary role of the PCSOs is to provide an accessible and reassuring presence to the communities they serve. They undertake high-visibility patrols, assist with localised investigations, resolve problems in partnership with local agencies, deal with anti-social behaviour and other quality of life issues.

So who is Melissa Baker?

Hello, my name is Melissa Baker and I am the Police Community Support Officer covering rural west Torrington and started in January 2007. I have lived in Torrington all my life and know the area very well and this has helped me in my job immensely.

As a PCSO I contribute to the policing of neighbourhoods through high visibility patrols aiming to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, through the gathering of community intelligence, and community safety work. I achieve this through being accessible and familiar to communities, interaction with individuals, schools, community groups, businesses and partner agencies.

I hope this gives you a little insight into the resources and people that are employed in keeping your community safe by tackling crime and anti social behaviour.
Cheers, Dick Rowlands.