



Scottish Police Federation East Area Committee

Minutes of the First Quarterly Meeting of the East Area Committee of the Scottish Police Federation held on Wednesday 1 March 2023 within the Houston House Hotel, Uphall Livingston, EH54 6JS

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Vice-Chair, Ricky Wood, in the absence of the Chair, welcomed all those in attendance to this, the first meeting of the East Area Committee for 2023 giving a special welcome to Lee Dickson who was attending his first EAC Quarterly Meeting and to the Chair of the SPF's West Area Committee, Iain, Gray.

A warm welcome was also afforded to the newly elected SPF National Chair, David Threadgold, the Vice-Chair congratulated him on behalf of the East Area Committee upon his recent appointment.

The Vice-Chair went on to inform the Committee that since the last meeting two representatives had resigned their posts. Ross Drummond having been successful in promotion to Inspector had, as a result, tendered his resignation as a "J" Division Sergeants representative and Allan Lapsley, who had resigned his position as a "C" Division Constables representative, the Vice-Chair thanked both for their contributions as representatives on the Committee.

The Vice-Chair reminded the attendees of simple housekeeping and invited all in attendance to contribute to the meeting while reminding them that **all** points or issues **must** be directed through him.

Standing Orders were adopted and the meeting was declared open.

2. ATTENDANCE

Inspector Liam Harman	C – Forth Valley
Inspector Martin Vickerman	C – Forth Valley
Inspector Mark Wilson	C – Forth Valley
Sergeant Billy McFarland	C – Forth Valley
Sergeant Christopher Scott	C – Forth Valley
Sergeant Anne Begley	C – Forth Valley
Constable Lyn Redwood	C – Forth Valley
Constable Gavin Grant	C – Forth Valley

Inspector Mark Sherman	E – Division
Inspector Neill Whiteside	E – Division
Inspector Norman Towler	E – Division
Sergeant Lee Dickson	E – Division
Sergeant Heather MacIntyre	E – Division
Sergeant Christopher Richardson	E – Division
Constable Stevie Neilson	E – Division
Constable Euan Sinclair	E – Division
Constable David Davison	E – Division

Inspector David Hughes	J – The Lothian's & Scottish Borders
Sergeant Michael Harte	J – The Lothian's & Scottish Borders
Constable Gareth Watt	J – The Lothian's & Scottish Borders
Constable Darren Gallagher	J – The Lothian's & Scottish Borders
Constable Eric Dickson	J – The Lothian's & Scottish Borders

Inspector Craig Stephen	P – Fife
Sergeant Craig Menzies	P – Fife
Sergeant Graeme Mathers	P – Fife
Constable Anthony Clark	P – Fife
Constable Ben Pacholek	P – Fife
Constable Norman Kinloch	P – Fife

Graham Ross	Secretary
Ricky Wood	Vice-Chair
Davie Reid	Deputy Secretary

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Turley (Chair), Blair Rennie, Craig Moran, James Gowling, James McLaren, Pat Devaney, Willie Rennie & Michael Williamson.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the preceding meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2022 had previously been disseminated to the Committee via TEAMS. The minutes were agreed and thereafter recorded as a true reflection of the meeting. (Proposed by Stevie Neilson and seconded by Darren Gallagher).

5. INPUT – DAVID THREADGOLD, NATIONAL CHAIR SPF

The new Chair of the SPF formerly introduced himself and engaged in an open discussion with the Committee detailing his hopes and aspirations for the SPF in what are unprecedented and challenging times due to the impacts on staffing reductions, cost of living and a host of other difficulties facing our members. He reminded the reps that rarely before have they had such a crucial role to play in protecting colleagues across the country. As well as pay and conditions, the Chair reflected that the greatest challenges in the coming years would invariably be finances, resources and welfare.

6. SEPARATE RANK COMMITTEES

The Committee split for separates to discuss matters specific to their rank.

Inspectors reported to the Committee that the issues causing greatest concern were expectations, workloads and training with examples provided demonstrating deficiencies in all those areas.

Sergeants reported that workloads, recruitment, falling officer numbers, expectations to perform more roles within the community with less and training were some of the larger items causing pain to their rank. Again, examples of these were detailed.

Constables reported that training (lack thereof and quality), lack of development opportunities, staffing, cancellation of rest days and issues with time consuming new IT systems were currently causing significant issues for the rank. Matters were discussed and experiences shared around the Committee.

7. MATTERS ARISING

(a) JOINT CENTRAL COMMITTEE (JCC) - UPDATE

Those present were updated accordingly when the Secretary provided a combined update following the meeting of the Joint Central Committee Meeting that was held in Dundee on 7th and 8th February 2023. The key points worthy of note from the JCC had been circulated via TEAMS to the Committee who acknowledged their receipt and understanding.

The Secretary invited the Committee to discuss any points contained within and then brought to the Committees attention some key updates and topics for discussion as a Committee. The areas discussed in more detail included:

SPF Chair - The election of David Threadgold as SPF Chair.

WhatsApp - The appeal to the European Court of Human Rights has been unsuccessful. A determination was made that no human rights breaches had been committed. This is clearly unpalatable to the SPF and our members however, no further action will now be pursued in respect of this. The matter had affectively been concluded and will be removed from the agenda.

Police Negotiating Board – PNB met on 25th January 2023. The Official Side are considering some aspects of the Pay Claim including, but not restricted to, unpaid leave, Inspectors hours, the shorter working week and the will for a Pay Index to be put in place to help determine future claims. Discussions also took place in respect of a Public Holiday on the Kings Coronation. Due to the retirement of Calum Steele, David Kennedy has been appointed as the Secretary of the Staff Side.

Scottish Police Budget and Finance – Discussions ensued around were the Service could save money with some of their ideas being challenged by the SPF. The EAC then had an extended period were some ideas were put forward with a view to these being discussed and possibly taken forward by the SPF to the Service.

Driver Training – Remains an issue with an impasse being met between the Service and the SPF in respect of their differing opinions on this matter. Legal advice has been sought and the position is being examined by a Kings Counsel which will determine SPF's next step.

Police Assaults – Police Officers being assaulted on duty and the apparent rise in these crimes being seen by the PF as something to negotiate with a plea with accused's was raised. This is something that has been refuted consistently by the PF. A letter regarding this will be written to the Chef Constable.

SPF Annual Awards – The awards remain open and those present were asked to spread the word to drive this event.

8. SUBJECT COMMITTEE UPDATES

There have been no meetings of the Policy, Procedure & Regulation Sub-Committee, the People & Operations Sub-Committee or the Health & Safety Sub-committee since our last EAC Quarterly Meeting.

9. AREA LEAD UPDATES (Conduct, Equality & Health & Safety)

CONDUCT - Preceding the meeting the Deputy Secretary provided a brief update on TEAMS. Topics of interest included:

CASE TYPE	NUMBER
Criminal Cases – On Duty	26 (Increase of 2)
Criminal Cases – Off Duty	24 (Increase of 5)
Conduct Cases – On Duty	4 (No Change)
Conduct Cases – Off Duty	4 (No Change)
Suspended Officers	10 (Decrease 1 Resignation)

WhatsApp Case – Appeal to the European Court of Human Rights has been heard and intimation sent to the SPF that this has been unsuccessful. Determination made that no human rights breaches have been committed. The matter has affectively been concluded and will be removed from the agenda.

The Gross Misconduct Hearing in relation to the ‘With Reasonable Cause’ drugs test scheduled for 9 January 2023 has been postponed at the request of the SPF Solicitors. Further legal argument/opinions are being sought prior to the commencement of the Hearing of which, no new date has been set.

A Placeholder Day took place at the Police Treatment Centre on 19 January. In attendance were the Conduct Leads, SPF AGS’s along with invited guests which include PIRC, CAAPD & PSD from both the Criminal and Conduct sides. It is hoped that by having these days, better working relationships are formed as we too share the frustrations at some of the current practices that are in place.

EQUALITY – On behalf of the absent Chair, the Vice-Chair provided an update in respect of matters highlighting any aspects and concerns in the absence of the Chair.

CASE TYPE	NUMBER
Performance (UP)	2
Equality (EQ)	0
Grievance (GR)	6
Ill Health (IH)	54
Ill Health Retirement (IHR)	14

Probationers – Due to changes to the pensions, it was envisaged that there would be an increased pressure on probationers. This unfortunately, appears to have come to fruition with the significant resource vacancies which focused on response policing, placing greater pressures on probationers. A lack of experienced officers to tutor, there could be a link to the service level of tutors and probationers experiencing issues. The local Reps were asked to remain aware of this and report back any probationer or tutor issues. Support continues to be provided to probationers on action plans relating to exam failures.

Grievance – Members continue to be subjected to potential discrimination primarily due to managers trying to overcome resource issues and failing to recognise the needs of the individual. These continue to be managed through the grievance process, with some cases being referred for legal consideration due to their circumstances. There appears to be a continued lack of training and understanding around equality issues.

Ill-Health Retirement – Movement has commenced within the IHR process. There are now 5 Senior Medical Practitioners (SMP) who are successfully processing the backlog that was caused by the retirement of the last SMP and COVID. The SMP's also process Injury on Duty (IOD) claims once an officer has retired. Any officer that has entered the IHR process must be made aware that it is not a guarantee that they will receive retirement.

Ill-Health – We continue to support 28 officers who are long term absent. In terms of critical illness and support around pay, it is important to emphasise the need to comply with timescales specified in the policy.

HEALTH & SAFETY – The Vice-Chair distributed an update to the Committee via TEAMS pre-meeting highlighting the undernoted significant issues for them to consider including:

Assaults on officers – these remain high with it being reported that younger officers with less than 5 years' service tend to be those who are assaulted more which may be due to them forming the majority of response teams. Officers being bitten is on the increase and OST have been asked to push awareness to reduce opportunistic bites along with the use of the Spit and Bite Guards making it much harder for a subject to bite an officer.

Training has evidently been affected by operation Unicorn with 56% of staff back within one year of recertification, leaving 44% out of card! Whilst OST are putting on sufficient courses, staff are not being released due to OBL's and this issue has been raised at numerous meetings however it is, we have been informed, being addressed.

Body Armour – The vast majority of officers should have now had their out of date armour replaced with all AFO's given their new armour. Concerns have been raised about the new armour by Edinburgh officers and, as a result, a

review was held which concluded at the end of January. The results of the review are awaited!

First Aid – Naloxone is being driven through with mandatory training and carry however, it is the individual officers decision whether to use. This is politically driven as drug deaths in Scotland continue to rise. The SPF stance on Naloxone has not changed and is against officers being made to carry this. The Service are aware that it is their responsibility to indemnify officers and that the SPF will be there in a supporting role only.

Legionnaires Disease – The college re-opened in early January 2023 however, it has been determined that numerous other parts of the police estate have similar issues in the water system. This was a problem waiting to happen as nothing had been done to resolve the concerns which had been raised previously.

10. DIVISIONAL UPDATES – “C”, “E”, “J” & “P”

“C” Division - No update received

“E” Division - No update received

“J” Division - No update received

“P” Division – Ben Pacholek advised that he was waiting for a response to a number of questions from this Chief Superintendent that required clarification. They are looking to have a timetable put in place for local divisional reps to hold 2 - 3 meetings across the division.

The Vice-Chair once again reiterated the importance of the divisional meetings with local Chief Superintendents and Superintendents. He asked those present to diary in timetables to ensure that these meetings were not overlooked or missed. Going on to say that it is always the same Reps within the divisions who facilitate the meetings and that it should be done on a rotating basis.

11. NEW BUSINESS

The Vice-Chair once again reminded those present that the East Area Committee would be hosting the travelling JCC which will take place on 20/21 June 2023 at the Inchyra Hotel, Falkirk. Among those invited will be local Councillors. It will be a great opportunity to discuss local policing issues and to provide a valuable insight into policing challenges faced by officers within the community they serve. The Area Reps were encouraged to attend the JCC, witness what took place and to seize the opportunity to speak with and influence local councillors.

12. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS (AOCB)

None received.

13. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

None received.

14. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Vice-Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting and the Secretary asked for a show of appreciation for the orderly running of the meeting.

The next EAC Quarterly Meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 June 2023 within the McDonald House Hotel, Uphall, EH52 6JS.

Graham Ross
Secretary

Ricky Wood
Vice-Chair