

FEDERATION FOCUS

News and views from South Wales Police Federation



**Blue Heart Ball raises
£24,000 for charity!**



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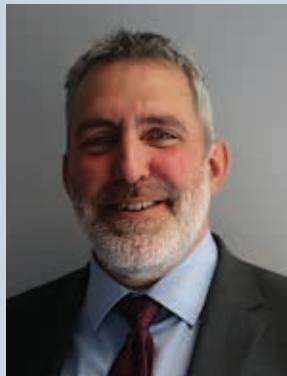
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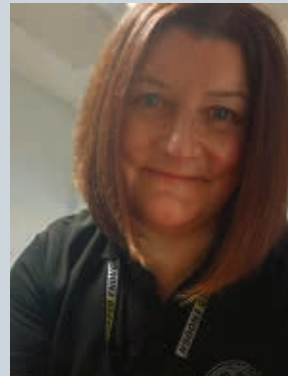
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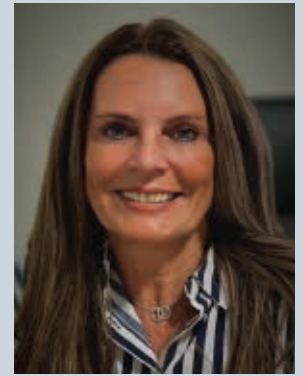
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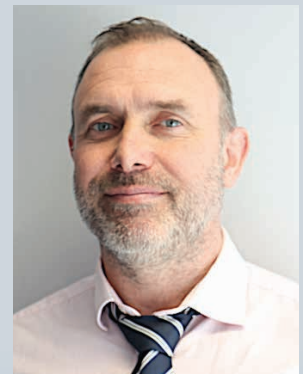
Kay Bennett, office manager



Danny Ahearn, case advisor



James Morris, full-time rep



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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



By Phil Walker, chair of South Wales Police Federation

Wow! What a busy few months it has been.

Before I begin, I want to take this opportunity to thank every member of South Wales Police Federation for the professionalism, resilience and commitment you continue to demonstrate each day. The challenges facing our officers remain significant, yet your dedication to serving our communities never wavers.

The courage and professionalism of police officers from across England and Wales were rightly recognised at this year's national Police Bravery Awards. It was a privilege to represent the South Wales Police Federation at the ceremony alongside our branch secretary, Mike George, and our outstanding nominees, Sergeant Pete Williams and PCs Matt Reynolds and Gareth Green.

Pete, Matt and Gareth, you should be immensely proud of your actions. You embody the very best of British policing, and it was a pleasure to see your bravery recognised on the national stage. I hope

you enjoyed your well-deserved time in London. You can read more about this year's national Police Bravery Award nomination on Pages 4 and 5.

Of course, I can't continue without shining a light on our inaugural Blue Heart Ball. What began as an idea around 18 months ago became a truly memorable evening, bringing together members of the policing family, partner organisations and supporters for a fantastic cause. I am incredibly proud to say that the event raised more than £24,000 for three exceptional Welsh charities - [Prostate Cymru](#), [Morgan's Army](#) and [2Wish](#).

The Blue Heart Ball demonstrated the strength of our policing family and what can be achieved when people come together with a shared purpose. Seeing more than 170 guests enjoying the evening, hearing from our charity partners about the impact the funds will have, and witnessing the generosity shown through the auctions, raffle and other fundraising activities was genuinely inspiring. I would like to thank everyone who attended, donated, volunteered or sponsored the event, with particular thanks to our headline sponsor, the South Wales Police Federation Group Insurance Trust.

A special mention to all those who helped make the evening such a success. This includes the team of Federation representatives, the South Wales Police Halberdiers, the South Wales Police Choir and the Force's Oscar Kilo wellbeing dogs.

To our sponsors, everyone who supported the event, and Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan for attending and helping to drive the live auction, thank you. We are incredibly grateful for your generosity and continued support, which played a significant role in making the evening a tremendous success.

I have no doubt the Blue Heart Ball will become a fixture in our Federation calendar for years to come. Read more about this year's event from Page 6.

Officer wellbeing also remains one of our highest priorities. The physical and

"THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMANDS OF POLICING CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO CAMPAIGN FOR IMPROVED WELFARE PROVISION, GREATER ACCESS TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND A CULTURE WHERE COLLEAGUES FEEL ABLE TO SEEK HELP WITHOUT STIGMA."

psychological demands of policing cannot be underestimated, and we will continue to campaign for improved welfare provision, greater access to occupational health support and a culture where colleagues feel able to seek help without stigma.

Your views matter, and I would encourage every member to take the time to complete this year's Pay and Morale Survey. Organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), the survey provides invaluable insight into the challenges officers are facing, from pay and workload to wellbeing and morale, and the findings play a vital role in shaping the Police Federation's campaigns and influencing decision-makers. The more members who take part, the stronger our collective voice will be. Please help us shape the future of policing by sharing your experiences and ensuring your views are heard.

On behalf of South Wales Police Federation, thank you for everything you do to keep our communities safe. I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine and take pride in the achievements, stories and successes it celebrates.

Take part in this year's Pay and Morale Survey - scan this code





FED MEMBERS REPRESENT SOUTH WALES POLICE AT 31ST NATIONAL POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS

Sergeant Pete Williams and PCs Matt Reynolds and Gareth Green proudly represented South Wales Police at this year's National Police Bravery Awards, the 31st edition of the event.

The prestigious ceremony took place in London and was hosted by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

Pete, Matt and Gareth were nominated after their exceptional actions during a terrifying domestic disturbance, where they confronted an armed and highly aggressive suspect who threatened officers with a knife before brandishing a chainsaw inside a flat.

Despite the extreme danger, the trio worked together to contain the incident, protect those at the scene and safely bring the suspect into custody.

The officers made the trip to the capital, where they were joined by loved ones and attended an exclusive reception at 10 Downing Street with Home Secretary

Shabana Mahmood ahead of the evening's ceremony.

They were part of the Region 7 category on the night, which was won by nominees from Gwent Police.

Meanwhile, officers from the Metropolitan Police were announced as the overall winners for their response to the Hainault attacks in April 2024.

PFEW national chair Tiff Lynch opened proceedings with a passionate speech congratulating nominees from across England and Wales.

She said: "Tonight, we will hear stories of individual valour - accounts of sensitivity and love in the face of the most heartbreaking vulnerability.

"Every nominee story is in the brochure on your table, and I ask that you take the time to read all of them. Because together, they paint a remarkable picture of modern policing.

"Policing asks a lot - you only have to

look into the eyes of the people waiting for you to come home after every shift to understand that. It asks you to walk towards danger when everyone else is running away, and to make split-second, life-changing decisions in unpredictable circumstances.

"It asks you to be courageous and compassionate in equal measure."

While maintaining 'this night is for celebration', Tiff also paid tribute to officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, adding: "I'd like to invite you all to stand with me for a moment to remember the police officers whose lives we have mourned in the last year."

The Home Secretary later addressed guests with a video message, thanking nominated officers for their commitment to protecting the public.

She said: "It is my privilege to serve as your Home Secretary and to represent you all in government, especially on a day like

today as we celebrate acts of heroism which would otherwise go unheralded.

"With these awards, we honour your bravery, and we think too of your colleagues on duty right now, as well as your families who share your sacrifice and the officers and staff no longer with us.

"Today is a chance to say what is too rarely said: thank you, on behalf of the whole country, for the danger you face and the lengths you go to in keeping the rest of us safe.

"I want to issue you with a firm instruction to put away your modesty and soak up the praise that is coming your way tonight."

Deputy Chief Constable Jason Davies KPM also attended the awards ceremony, joining the South Wales Police nominees and their families in recognising the bravery and professionalism of officers from across England and Wales.

Reflecting on the occasion, South Wales Police Federation chair Phil Walker said he was immensely proud to see Pete, Matt and Gareth recognised on the national stage.

Phil said: "The National Police Bravery Awards are a wonderful opportunity to recognise the extraordinary courage and professionalism our members show every day, often in the most dangerous and unpredictable circumstances.



Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood

"Pete, Matt and Gareth demonstrated exceptional bravery during an incredibly volatile incident, putting themselves in harm's way to protect others. Their actions are a credit to South Wales Police and to the service as a whole.

"While every officer attends work simply wanting to help people and return home safely at the end of their shift, it is important that occasions like these shine a light on the remarkable things they do in the line of duty. We couldn't be prouder of them."

Branch secretary Mike George said the awards were about recognising not only acts of bravery, but also the commitment shown by officers every day.

Mike said: "It has been a privilege to see

our nominees celebrated alongside colleagues from across England and Wales. Hearing the stories from every force is a reminder of the incredible work police officers carry out every single day, often without seeking recognition.

"The support shown by their families, friends and colleagues is also an important part of these awards. Behind every officer

is a network of people who share in the sacrifices policing demands, and it's fitting that they can celebrate these achievements together.

"Pete, Matt and Gareth represented South Wales Police with great humility and professionalism, and everyone at the Federation is incredibly proud of what they have achieved."

NOMINEES ENJOY EXCLUSIVE DOWNING STREET RECEPTION



Sergeant Pete Williams, PC Gareth Green and PC Matt Reynolds.

South Wales Police's nominees for this year's National Police Bravery Awards were given a memorable welcome to London after attending an exclusive reception hosted by the Home Secretary at Downing Street.

Pete, Matt and Gareth joined fellow nominees from police forces across England and Wales for the special event, which recognised the extraordinary courage and dedication of officers being honoured at this year's awards.

Ahead of the ceremony, the officers had the opportunity to meet the Home Secretary, who thanked police officers from across the country for their commitment to keeping the public safe.

For Matt, the visit was an unforgettable experience.

"It was quite surreal," he said. "You only generally see Downing Street on the news."

The reception also gave the officers the chance to meet colleagues from other forces and hear the stories behind their nominations.

"It's a proud time," Matt added. "I'm

interested in hearing other people's stories."

Gareth said the event was a fitting way to recognise the dedication of officers from across the country.

"We even got to meet Larry," he laughed, referring to Downing Street's famous resident cat.

"It's nice to have a day out and a reward for our hard work. The Home Secretary was saying how thankful she was to officers up and down the country. It's nice to be recognised."

For Pete, the London trip also coincides with a personal milestone, as he celebrates his 40th birthday during the awards programme.

"I'm celebrating my 40th birthday while we're here," he said, adding: "It's a pretty nice way to mark your birthday - and what a coincidence, you couldn't plan it."

The Downing Street reception marked the start of a prestigious day for the South Wales Police officers, who later attended the national Police Bravery Awards alongside colleagues from across England and Wales.

Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography

Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography



MORE THAN £24,000 RAISED BY BLUE HEART BALL

The South Wales Police Federation's inaugural Blue Heart Ball was a resounding success, raising more than **£24,000 in total for local charities.**

The event, which took place on Friday 26 June at Cardiff's Marriott Hotel, has now undoubtedly established itself as a landmark occasion in the South Wales Police Federation's calendar.

More than 170 people attended the black-tie event, including guests from across

the policing family, partner organisations, and wider supporters.

Reflecting on the evening, branch chair Phil Walker said: "About 18 months ago, we had an idea that we wanted to do something special - something that would make a real difference to some incredible charitable causes that were close to our hearts.

"More than a year later, our vision came to life - and better still, has raised

thousands of pounds for these charities.

"As a branch, we are all incredibly proud of what a fantastic evening our first Blue Heart Ball was, and we are immensely grateful to everyone who helped make the event such a success."

At the heart of the Blue Heart Ball was its clear charitable purpose, with all profits raised in support of three vital organisations: [Prostate Cymru](#), [Morgan's Army](#) and [2Wish](#).



Photos courtesy of Glenn Edwards

Each charity plays a crucial role in providing care, guidance, and support to individuals and families across Wales, and the funds raised from the evening will directly support their ongoing, life-changing work.

All charities were present at the event, including Tina Tew, CEO of Prostate Cymru, Natalie Ridler, founder of Morgan's Army and Rhian Mannings, founder of 2Wish.

Addressing the audience at the event, Tina said: Our partnership didn't start tonight - it began when the South Wales Police Federation took the initiative to prioritise the health of its workforce.

"From there, we teamed up to hold a series of PSA testing events across the Force."

She continued: "We know that getting men, especially busy police officers, to sit down and think about their health, isn't always easy, but the response was overwhelming.

"We have, in fact, since gone on to test nearly 10,000 men since the initiative was introduced."

At the end of her speech, she said: "Every single day the South Wales Police Force looks after us, it is our privilege to look after you."



The Chief Constable of South Wales Police Force, Jeremy Vaughan and the South Wales PCC Emma Wools both attended the event, along with the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) national deputy chair Brian Booth.

Guests were greeted by the South Wales Police Halberdiers, before enjoying songs from the South Wales Police Choir,

"ABOUT 18 MONTHS AGO, WE HAD AN IDEA THAT WE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL - SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO SOME INCREDIBLE CHARITABLE CAUSES THAT WERE CLOSE TO OUR HEARTS. MORE THAN A YEAR LATER, OUR VISION CAME TO LIFE - AND BETTER STILL, HAS RAISED THOUSANDS OF POUNDS FOR THESE CHARITIES."



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whose presence immediately set a tone of pride, unity, and reflection.

Following a relaxed drinks reception, guests were then treated to a carefully delivered three-course dinner.

Live music from The Pocket Quartet brought energy and vibrancy to the room, while a series of interactive fundraising features - including a surprise live auction, silent auction, raffle, and driving simulator competition - proved both highly engaging and extremely successful in raising money.

Phil added: "The success of the event was only made possible through the generous support of sponsors, most notably headline sponsor South Wales Police Group Insurance Trust, alongside a number of other contributing organisations.

"Their involvement not only enhanced the quality and delivery of the evening but also ensured that the maximum possible amount could be directed towards the chosen causes. This spirit of partnership was evident throughout and served as a cornerstone of the event's success."

"In every respect, the Blue Heart Ball has delivered on - and arguably surpassed - our ambitions.

"It has successfully combined celebration with purpose, brought together a wide and diverse community, and generated meaningful support for three exceptional charities. Most importantly, it

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has shown what can be achieved when shared values are translated into collective action."

View the full gallery of photos from the event on the South Wales Police Federation's website: www.swpf.org



The Blue Heart Ball
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POLICE FEDERATION CONDEMNS 'OVERNIGHT' CUT TO POLICE PENSION LUMP SUM

Police officers in the 1987 Police Pension Scheme are facing an immediate reduction in the lump sums they receive at retirement, following a sudden change to commutation factors introduced this week.

The change was triggered by a Treasury decision to increase the SCAPE discount rate, with revised commutation factors issued today and applied with immediate effect.

Commutation factors determine how much cash an officer receives if they choose to give up part of their annual pension at retirement. Under the new factors, officers retiring from today will receive almost 5 per cent less lump sum for the same amount of pension surrendered than an officer retiring last week. That change is expected to cost police officers thousands of pounds each.

The Police Federation says the speed and timing of the change

means some officers retiring now are being hit without warning, despite having received retirement quotations or benefit illustrations based on the previous factors only weeks earlier. That means officers may have already made financial decisions based on those figures.

The Federation has confirmed it is seeking independent advice on the scale and justification for the change, and on whether those who received recent quotations could take legal action because of financial detriment.

John Partington, Police Federation National Secretary, said "After decades of service, the 'thanks' retiring officers get is this: government quietly shaving cash off a hard-earned retirement overnight. It's a blatant case of picking the pockets of police pensioners, and we will not let it stand."



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MEET KATIE, THE BRANCH'S FIRST SPECIAL CONSTABULARY FED REP

Special Constable Katie Williams hopes the skills and experience she's developed during her professional career will help her support South Wales Police Federation members in her new role as a rep.

Katie is the first Special to become a South Wales Police Federation representative, taking on the post less than a year after joining the Force.

She brings with her 15 years of experience in financial services, where she manages teams, supports colleagues and deals with a range of workplace matters.

"The environment is very different to policing, but many of the skills are transferable," she said.

"I manage a team and work with people every day, while also navigating rules, regulations and policies.

"Although policing is physically very different, I've found that many of the thought processes and ways of working are quite similar, which surprised me.

"I have a wide range of experience, including dealing with policies, disciplinary matters and supporting colleagues, so when I heard about the Federation role it felt closely aligned with the duties I already carry out."

Katie joined the Special Constabulary in July last year and has since worked across response policing, neighbourhood policing and a range of planned operations and events.

She said she enjoys the variety and unpredictability that policing offers.

Katie said: "One of the biggest things I've learned is that no two shifts are the same.

"You never know what you're going to be dealing with, and that is something I really enjoy.

"The most rewarding part is being able to help people directly.

"I don't work directly with the public in my day job, so being able to support people in the community and know you've made a difference is incredibly rewarding."

Katie had first planned to join the Special

Special Constable Katie Williams at her passing out, alongside Dr Dale Cartwright, Chief Officer, South Wales Police Special Constabulary.



Constabulary several years ago, but her application was delayed by the pandemic and then by changes in her career.

She said: "It's always been something I've been interested in, and I eventually took the jump to apply because it felt like the right time."

When the opportunity arose to represent Specials through the Federation, Katie said it felt like a natural progression.

Having recently been appointed as a rep, Katie is now in the early stages of her induction, meeting branch colleagues and learning more about how the Federation supports its members.

She hopes to bring a fresh perspective as someone who volunteers alongside regular officers, rather than working in policing full-time.

She said: "Because I'm not employed by the police full-time, I hope people may feel

comfortable talking to me.

"I'm still part of the organisation, but I also bring an independent perspective.

"Sometimes speaking to somebody who has experience outside the organisation can help people feel more at ease."

Katie, who has a three-year-old son, described balancing family life, a full-time career, volunteering as a Special and taking on Federation responsibilities as 'a juggle'.

She said careful planning, along with the support of her employer and family, makes it possible.

She said: "Organisation is really important, along with setting healthy boundaries and knowing when to switch off.

"Work is really supportive and I receive employer-supported policing time, which I'm very grateful for."

As she settles into her new role, Katie hopes to become a trusted source of support for colleagues.

Katie said: "I'm still learning as a Special, but if I can use the experience I've gained in my career to support colleagues and make sure they know someone is there for them when they need help, then that is something I'm really happy to be able to do."

"YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE DEALING WITH, AND THAT IS SOMETHING I REALLY ENJOY. THE MOST REWARDING PART IS BEING ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE DIRECTLY."



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DETECTIVE'S CHARITY CHALLENGE ENCOURAGES BABY LOSS CONVERSATIONS

A South Wales Police detective inspector has completed a challenge to run 100km in a month for a baby loss charity despite being unable to exercise for more than a week through illness.

Richard 'Reggie' George took on the challenge for Sands, a national charity that supports families who have experienced baby loss.

Reggie, who has experienced two miscarriages, finished the challenge before the end of May, raising hundreds of pounds and prompting wider conversations along the way.

However, the challenge proved even tougher than expected after a persistent cough and sore throat left him unable to run for more than a week.

He said: "I did a couple of runs in there, they were about 2km or 3km and I was coughing and spluttering and feeling wiped out from it."

"IT'S GOOD TO BE RAISING AWARENESS. PEOPLE HAVE HAD CONVERSATIONS WITH ME FOLLOWING THE ARTICLE GOING OUT."

Towards the end of the challenge, Reggie still had 54km remaining with around six days to complete his target.

He said: "I did four 10k runs in a week, and I've never done that."

"I'm by no means an athlete. I've done half marathons before but usually I'm a 5km runner, that's my comfort distance."

"It was a push every day to get through it."

"Physically, it took me about 10 days to recover."

Reggie said that a spike in donations following an [article on the South Wales Police Federation website](https://www.southwalespolicefederation.org.uk/fundraising) and social media



was another motivating factor for him, with his total rising to around £340.

Reggie said that despite the physical demands of the challenge, he finds running to be good for his mental wellbeing.

He said: "I get a lot of serenity from exercise. It allows you to reset."

Reggie said one of his most 'satisfying' outcomes of the challenge had been the conversations that have followed the publication of the Federation's original article.

He said colleagues who were unaware of his family's experience of baby loss had contacted him, while others shared their own experiences of bereavement and said reading the article had encouraged them to speak openly.

Reggie said: "It's good to be raising awareness."

"People have had conversations with me following the article going out."

"Some people wouldn't have known me when it happened, other people did, and said they had no idea."

"Then other people who are currently struggling, or have struggled, said it was really helpful."

"I think that's probably the most satisfying part of it. It wasn't the goal at the outset, but the article definitely helped with that."

You can still donate to Reggie's fundraising page by visiting: <https://fundraising.sands.org.uk/fundraisers/richardgeorge>

THREE DECADES OF SERVICE, PRIDE AND LASTING MEMORIES

Two South Wales Police officers have marked the end of remarkable careers spanning more than 30 years, reflecting on the people, experiences and values that shaped their time in policing - and the recognition they received as they retired.

'POLICING HAS GIVEN ME JUST AS MUCH AS I'VE GIVEN TO IT'

After more than 30 years of dedicated service, Detective Superintendent Gareth Morgan says he is retiring from South Wales Police with a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction.

Having brought his policing career to a close this summer, Gareth is among the latest officers to receive the South Wales Police Federation Retirement Plaque, introduced earlier this year to recognise the commitment and service of long-serving Federation members.

Reflecting on his career, Gareth said he was honoured to receive the plaque, describing it as a meaningful acknowledgement of his years of service.

"Being given this plaque is something I really appreciate. It's a nice touch from the Federation not just for me, but for my family too, whose support has allowed me to remain so dedicated to my job," he said.

"It's a funny feeling to retire - a mix of different emotions - and after more than 30 years, there is a lot for me to reflect on.

"But I'm also feeling very proud of the career I've had, and very thankful to the people who have helped make it so enjoyable."

Gareth joined South Wales Police in September 1995 after growing up in Bettws, near Bridgend, where a strong sense of public service inspired him to pursue policing as a career.

"My first posting was on response covering Bridgend, meaning I was familiar with the area and the local communities, and this was a really nice way to start the job," Gareth added.

"After a few years, I was inspired by some local detectives, which resulted in me joining the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"It was a role I thoroughly enjoyed, working with great colleagues who took time to develop me and encourage me to progress my career."

Following several years as a detective

constable, Gareth was promoted to sergeant before later joining the Force's Major Crime Investigation Team via its intelligence unit. As a senior investigating officer, he led numerous homicide investigations and established a reputation for calm, professional leadership.

In 2019, Gareth was promoted to Detective Superintendent and spent the final two years of his career in the Professional Standards Department (PSD), a role he describes as one of his biggest challenges.

"I wanted one more challenge, and this last role has provided that. It's one I've taken incredibly seriously, and I've been able to use my experience to make fair and balanced decisions that hopefully go some way to improving trust and confidence in the police.

"It's also given me the chance to work closely with the Federation, who I have always appreciated as a member and have now witnessed to be an incredible source of support for officers involved in the inevitably tough environment of PSD."

After finishing work on Friday 26 June, Gareth said he plans to spend the summer with his family before considering what comes next. Although he has not made any firm decisions, he has not ruled out returning to policing in a staff role, potentially helping to train the next generation of investigators.

"It's going to take a while to adapt to retirement, but I am looking forward to it.

"There will be plenty of time to spend with my wife and kids during their six-week summer holidays, which I'm really excited about.

"Policing has given me just as much as I've given to it over the years, and I'm sure I will miss it a lot.

"My journey continuing in a different capacity can't be ruled out, but if this is it, then I'm very happy with the career I had."



Detective Superintendent Gareth Morgan presented with plaque by branch secretary Mike George.

The brand-new retirement plaque was introduced for members of the GIS and launched on 1 January 2026.

Designed to recognise the commitment of officers and staff as they bow out of policing, each plaque is a piece of authentic Welsh slate crafted in partnership with The Slate House.

The commemorative plaque is awarded to officers and staff who have completed at least 20 years' service with South Wales Police and have also been members of the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) for a minimum of five years.

However, due to increased interest, plaques can also be purchased by those who retired before this date at a reduced cost of £80.

If you are not already a member of the GIS and would like more information on joining, then [visit the GIS page on our website](#).

If you know someone - of any rank, role or department - who is eligible for a retirement slate, or you want more information on the plaque, including how to purchase one as a retired member, please contact the South Wales Police Federation office.



SPECIAL MEETING WITH CHIEF CONSTABLE TO MARK RETIREMENT



PC Steve Harries (centre) with Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan and son Nathaniel.

PC Steve Harries's South Wales Police career came full circle when he shared a special moment with Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan ahead of his retirement.

Known to colleagues as 'Chopper', Steve shook hands with Sir Anthony Burden, the then Chief Constable, when he joined the Force in 1996. Three decades later, he wanted to repeat that gesture before bringing his own policing journey to an end.

Accompanied by his son Nathaniel, who followed in his footsteps by joining South Wales Police, Steve was welcomed to Force Headquarters to meet the Chief Constable and reflect on his career.

Steve said: "It meant a lot to me.

"I shook the hand of the Chief Constable when I joined, and I sent an email saying I wanted to do the same when I left.

"We arranged it with his team, he agreed for my son to come with me as well, which made it even more memorable.

"The fact I could speak to a Chief Constable, who is so in touch with his organisation, and also with people as well, was special.

"It was nice to be able to sit down with him, to talk about the job, the highs and the lows, and where I'm going to go from here."

After leaving school, Steve initially worked in his family's bakery in Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen and had not planned a career in policing. However, a conversation with a friend who was a Special Constable changed his direction.

He said: "That sparked my interest and

within a couple of months of being a Special I knew I wanted to become a police officer."

After four years as a Special while continuing to work in the family business, Steve joined South Wales Police in June 1996.

Following training at Cwmbran, his first posting was Sketty Police Station, where he worked on response before moving to Swansea city centre, combining frontline policing with neighbourhood work.

During this time, Steve's passion for fitness and officer wellbeing led him to secure funding to establish a gym at the new Swansea Central station, which continues to be used by officers today.

In 2001, he moved to Gorseinon Police Station, where he helped establish the Western Off-Road Motorcycle Team. Working under Inspector Nigel Whitehouse and alongside PC Steven 'Nails' Edwards, the team tackled off-road antisocial behaviour while educating riders about safety and legality.

A career ambition was later fulfilled when Steve joined the Roads Policing Unit, serving for five years on motorcycles and in patrol vehicles.

He said: "Within two weeks of joining the job, I went to the careers officer at headquarters and spoke to the sergeant about what I had to do to get into traffic.

"I remember him saying you've only just got in the door and that I could do many things, like dogs, horses.

"But I wanted to be a traffic officer. It

took me 18 years, but eventually I got there and I absolutely loved it."

Steve also spent 25 years as part of the Public Support Unit (PSU), travelling across the country to support major operations and public order events, building friendships with colleagues across policing.

He said: "PSU has been a big part of my life."

As retirement approached, Steve experienced several memorable moments, including being the last officer to leave Sketty Police Station when it closed in September.

He said: "I'd worked there at the start of my career and was there when it was closed down.

"As we finished our last night shift, I was the last person to leave the station and turned the lights out.

"Being such a big part of my police life, it was a poignant moment."

His final shift was marked by colleagues coming together to celebrate his career, followed by a farewell message from the Force Control Room.

"That was a really touching moment," he said.

Family has remained central throughout Steve's career, and he said he was proud to see Nathaniel become a police officer in 2024.

"My son did his first PSU shift with me and then my final PSU deployment was alongside him as well," said Steve. "I'm a proud dad to see him making his own way now."

To mark his retirement, Steve received a commemorative slate through the South Wales Group Insurance Scheme (GIS), awarded to officers and staff who have completed at least 20 years' service and five years' GIS membership.

Steve said: "It was fitting to have this slate presented to me by Chief Superintendent Steve Jones, who joined around the same time as me and was the last senior supervisor that I shook hands with before walking out the door."

Retirement will not mean slowing down for Steve. A keen motorcyclist and motorcycle instructor for more than two decades, he plans to spend more time riding, supporting his children's sporting activities and enjoying time with his partner, Deborah.

He also intends to work for the ambulance service, driving patients to and from appointments.

However, there are parts of policing he knows he will miss.

"I'll miss my colleagues more than anything," he said. "Over 30 years, they become a second family. Through the highs and the lows, they're always there for you."

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TEAM SPIRIT CARRIES OFFICERS THROUGH CHARITY RUNNING CHALLENGE

A team of South Wales officers raised money and awareness for a police mental health charity when they ran the Swansea Half Marathon.

The 16-strong team of detectives, scenes of crime, neighbourhood policing and child protection officers from Neath and Swansea came together to support the Thin Blue Line.

DC Annie Rees, of Neath CID, said the runners were inspired by the reality that mental health affects so many people inside service.

She said: "We all knew someone who had struggled with their mental health, and we all know someone who is currently struggling.

"I think all of us have experienced burnout in some way during the job.

"We wanted to do something together to support officers' mental health.

"And we wanted to raise money and also raise awareness of the Thin Blue Line charity.

"We're all really close and have strong working relationships. We support each other, help each other out and we did it as a collective team."

Annie said that some colleagues were experienced endurance athletes who had previously completed Ironman and triathlon events, others had never entered a race before – and she was one of the first-time runners.

She said: "I'd never run a half marathon



before. In fact, I'd never taken part in a race in my life, so it was a real challenge for me."

Annie documented her training journey on TikTok and has built a following of around 800 people.

She said: "I'd recently had a baby, and I wanted to show people that you don't have to be a stereotypical runner to do a half marathon.

"You can do it even after having a baby, after recovering from major injuries, or experiencing a setback in your life."

On race day, the reality of the 13-mile course, which took runners on a loop from Swansea to Mumbles and back, soon became apparent.

Annie said: "At around mile four I looked across the seafront and could see Verdi's Café in Mumbles.

"It looked tiny in the distance and I remember thinking that I've got to run all the way there, and then all the way back. That's when it really hit me how far it was."

Annie said there were some difficult moments.

She said: "I definitely struggled between miles nine and 10 and it was my colleague DC Nadine Marke who really pushed me through the last miles.

"She was incredibly supportive."

All 16 team members crossed the finish line, with several achieving personal best times, raising more than £2,000 for the Thin Blue Line. Donations are still open on the team's [JustGiving page](#).

Annie said: "I actually loved it. I didn't think I would, but I really enjoyed it and really got into it."

FED MEMBER ENCOURAGES COLLEAGUES TO PRIORITISE WELLBEING

Annie has also shared her experience of attending a wellbeing retreat funded by the Thin Blue Line that left her feeling refreshed and re-energised.

Annie said the wellbeing programme was one of the reasons she wanted to raise money and awareness for the Thin Blue Line.

She said the retreat offered police officers an opportunity to step away from the demands of policing and focus on their own physical and mental wellbeing.

Annie said: "It was an incredible experience.

"Everything was covered, including my travel costs. It gave me the chance to completely switch off, reset and come home feeling genuinely refreshed."

The retreat was held in April in the heart of the Cotswolds.

The Thin Blue Line, which is dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people in policing, offers a limited number of funded places each year for serving and

retired officers and police staff.

The two night, three-day programme, provides a safe and supportive environment for participants to focus on their mental health.

It aims to give officers space to step away from the demands of policing, connect with others who understand its challenges, and develop tools to manage stress and trauma.

The programme included breathwork sessions, connecting a campfire, cold-water immersion experience, time to relax in nature, as well as a fun quiz night.

Annie said the opportunity came at the right time as she navigated the challenges of becoming a new mother and coping with a bereavement.

She said: "People there for different reasons.

"Some were still serving, some had retired, and people were at different stages of their careers.

"It reminded me that mental health

doesn't discriminate.

"Sometimes officers don't seek support until after they've retired, but it's important we normalise asking for help while we're still in the job."

Annie said she has long been a passionate advocate for wellbeing within her own team.

She said: "I've always believed wellbeing is incredibly important.

"Policing is mentally and physically demanding. My husband is also a police officer, so we both understand the pressures that come with the job.

"I always try to support colleagues and help create a positive environment because small things can make a real difference."

Now Annie is making colleagues aware of the work of the Thin Blue Line.

She said: "I wanted other officers to know there's support outside the job.

"Whether you apply yourself or for a colleague who you think would benefit, it's such a worthwhile opportunity."

FUNDING BOOST FROM GROUP INSURANCE SCHEME SUPPORTS SPORTS TEAMS' INTERNATIONAL AMBITIONS

South Wales Police Federation's Group Insurance Scheme is helping serving and retired members represent the Force at the World Police and Fire Games

A group of serving and retired officers will represent South Wales Police at basketball in Australia in 2027 after receiving financial support for their trip.

The team has received a £3,000 donation from the Federation Group Insurance Scheme.

It will help nine players travel to Perth for the 2027 World Police and Fire Games, where they will compete in the over-40s and over-50s three on three basketball competitions.

The squad, made up primarily of serving and retired South Wales Police officers, has been fundraising since the start of the year to cover the costs involved in travelling to Australia.

Detective Constable Elliott Thomas, the club treasurer, said the support from the Federation Group Insurance Scheme had made a huge difference.

He said: "The £3,000 from the Federation has helped us massively.

"We started fundraising in January when we decided we were definitely going to go.

"It's difficult to raise money and to get sponsorship in the current climate, so this funding has really helped us.

"It's topped the coffers up and made things a little bit more comfortable."

The South Wales Police basketball section was founded in the late 1970s.

Elliott, 54, is now in his 30th year with the team, which competes in the Police Sport UK National Championships.

The section recently returned from this year's competition in Coventry, where retired Dyfed Powys Detective Chief Inspector Martin Tavener celebrated an astonishing 44th consecutive appearance at the event.

Elliott said: "We're quite an experienced group. Most are in their 50s and 60s now, although we've had some younger members join in recent years."

The squad includes six South Wales Police players, a Thames Valley Police



officer and retired officers from, Gwent Police and Dyfed Powys.

At PSUK events, officers and staff can play for another force if theirs is not competing, Elliott said.

The basketball competition will take place over four days at Scarborough, north of Perth, with temporary courts set up alongside the beach.

Elliott said: "It sounds like a pretty special venue.

"The courts are being set up right on the beachfront with sea views. I don't think we'll be complaining about that."

Elliott said that for the South Wales Police team, the trip will mark another chapter in a long history of international competition.

Previous World Police and Fire Games appearances have taken them to Melbourne, Adelaide, New York, Vancouver, Barcelona and Los Angeles.

The team has built lasting friendships with players from around the world.

"We've made friends everywhere we've gone," Elliott said.

"We've stayed in touch with people from New York, Australia and around the UK through British Police basketball.

"It's a lovely sport. Basketball is a bit of a minority sport and the community is really friendly. Everyone gets on and that's one of the things we look forward to most."

Elliott said that for some members of the squad, Perth could be their final World Police and Fire Games appearance.

"This will probably be our swansong," he said. "We've got to that age now, where a lot of the guys are treating it as the last one before they hang up their boots,

"So it will be quite poignant but we're really looking forward to it."

"THE COURTS ARE BEING SET UP RIGHT ON THE BEACHFRONT WITH SEA VIEWS. I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE COMPLAINING ABOUT THAT."

South Wales Police men's rugby team has received a significant financial boost as it prepares to compete at the World Police and Fire Games.



A £10,000 donation from the South Wales Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme will go directly towards the cost of the team's trip to Perth, helping to make the opportunity more accessible for players.

Director of rugby, former PC Gareth 'Bish' Bishop, welcomed the contribution and highlighted the impact it will have on the squad.

He said: "We're extremely grateful to the Group Insurance Scheme for their support. It's an incredibly generous donation and will make a real difference to the players."

"Support like this helps ease the financial burden and allows more of the team to take part in what is a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

The World Police and Fire Games, held every two years, is one of the largest multi-sport events globally outside of the Olympics, bringing together around 8,000 competitors from more than 80 countries, including police officers, firefighters and other emergency service personnel.

Gareth, who has been involved with the team for nearly three decades, said the tournament offers far more than just rugby.

He said: "Tours like this are about more than the game. They're about building friendships, sharing experiences, and learning from colleagues across the world."

"The connections you make last a lifetime, and those experiences can also benefit officers in their day-to-day roles back home."

The overall cost of the tour is expected to be around £120,000, with further fundraising planned throughout the year- including a proposed golf day - to ensure all players have the chance to take part.

A £10,000 donation from the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme will help South Wales Police football teams build on recent international success when they travel to Australia in 2027.

The GIS funding will help cover travel costs for the first team and veterans squads
DC Mike Hill, one of the tour coaches and committee member, said: "We are incredibly grateful to the South Wales Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme for their generosity and support."

"This donation will make a real difference to our players."

Retired Chief Inspector Derrick Price is a long-standing club stalwart, who has attended every games involving South Wales Police.

He said the experience goes beyond sport.

"The reception the squad have had at the events was breathtaking," he said. "The team attends the opening ceremony in full police uniform and are warmly received by the large crowds in attendance, and it helps to put our country on the map."

Mike added: "We meet colleagues from across the world, many of whom have faced challenging and sometimes dangerous situations in their roles."

"There is a shared understanding and mutual respect that goes beyond competition. It's a chance to connect, learn from each other, and recognise the dedication that comes with serving in the emergency services."

The South Wales Police team first competed at the games in Melbourne in 1995.

First-team striker Luke Howells, who helped secure a bronze medal at the 2025 Games in Birmingham, Alabama, described the tournament as

unforgettable.

He said: "We were proud to come away with a bronze medal."

"While there was a sense that we had the potential to go even further, it's still something I look back on with great pride."

"The level of competition was high, and every team there brought commitment, professionalism, and passion to the fore."

"It's always an honour to represent South Wales Police on an international



stage, and to showcase the values we stand for."

"Events like this also remind us how important it is to feel valued. The work carried out by police officers and emergency services can sometimes go unnoticed, but occasions like the World Police and Fire Games highlight the commitment, resilience, and teamwork that define our profession."

On the domestic front, the teams take part in their respective Police Sport UK (PSUK) cups, the Emergency Services Football League and the Welsh Championships.

Mike said: "We are constantly looking at fundraising events and any sponsorship opportunities to keep driving the thriving section forward."

"And if any Federation members want to be part of the football club, then please contact us."

The South Wales Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme provides comprehensive protection tailored specifically to the needs and risks faced by police officers, police staff, and their families.

Available to Federation members for a monthly subscription, the scheme offers a wide range of benefits including life insurance, personal accident cover, assault cover, sick pay insurance, legal expenses insurance, travel insurance, motor breakdown cover, healthcare benefits, and access to mental and emotional counselling support.

New officers can opt into the scheme free of charge during their first 52 weeks of service.

Federation members can apply to join by completing a form online or through the Federation office.

Payments are typically made via salary or pension deduction.

To find out more about the benefits or to apply, [visit the Group Insurance Scheme section of the South Wales Police Federation website.](#)

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