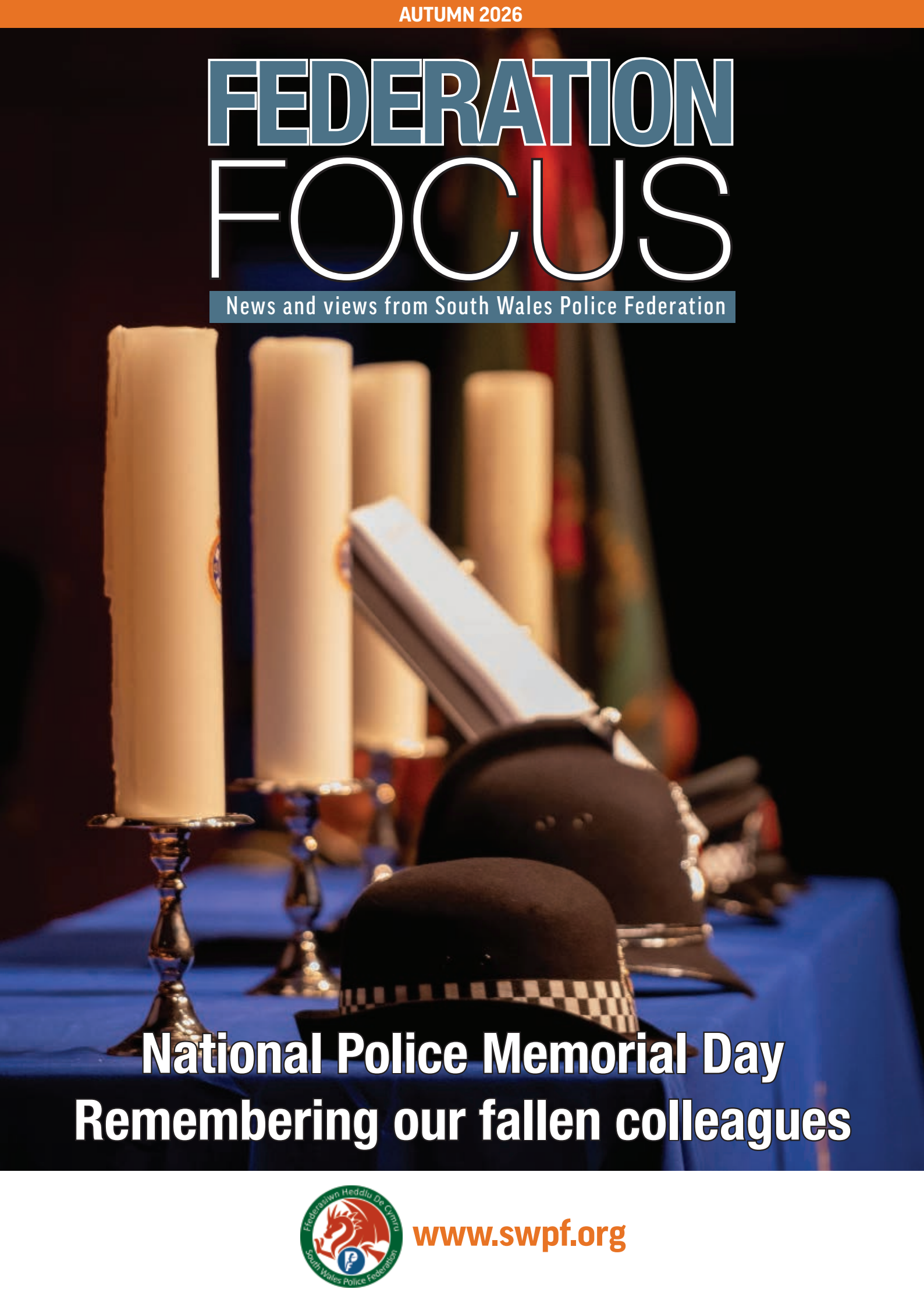


FEDERATION FOCUS

News and views from South Wales Police Federation



National Police Memorial Day
Remembering our fallen colleagues



www.swpf.org



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FULL-TIME OFFICIALS



Phil Walker, chair



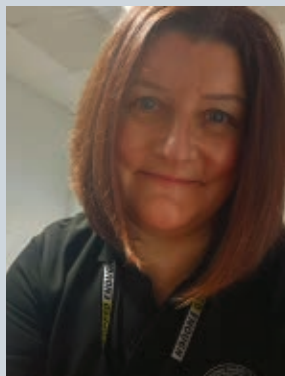
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Kay Bennett, office manager



Danny Ahearn, case advisor



James Morris, full-time rep



Dave Rich, full-time rep (Cardiff and the Vale BCU)

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



By Phil Walker, chair of South Wales Police Federation

Welcome to the latest edition of the South Wales Police Federation magazine.

As you will see from the pages that follow, this issue provides a powerful reminder of the breadth of modern policing and, perhaps most importantly, of the people behind the uniform.

There is a great deal to be proud of across South Wales Police. From our regular officers working on response, investigations and safeguarding, to our Special Constables giving thousands of hours of their own time to support communities, people continue to go above and beyond in the service of others.

That commitment is sometimes overlooked, particularly when policing is

reduced to headlines and statistics. We have seen recently how easily a single figure can be used to suggest that officers are somehow reluctant to confront offenders or have moved away from frontline policing. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Policing today is complex. Arresting someone is one part of the job, but so too is protecting vulnerable people, supporting victims, gathering evidence, managing offenders, dealing with people in crisis and preparing cases for court. Officers make difficult decisions in challenging circumstances, knowing those decisions may later be scrutinised through complaints, investigations or misconduct processes.

Our members deserve recognition for the professionalism they demonstrate every day. They are not hiding. They are policing.

This edition also gives us a chance to reflect on the ultimate sacrifice made by officers across the country. National Police Memorial Day is a vitally important occasion in the policing calendar, providing an opportunity to remember every officer who has died in the line of duty and, crucially, the families and colleagues they left behind.

The service in Belfast was a poignant reminder that the police family stretches across the whole of the United Kingdom. We remember those we have lost, including colleagues from South Wales, while standing alongside families whose grief continues long after the day of loss. You can read more about this on Pages 6 and 7.

That sense of family runs through many of the stories in this magazine. We hear from Ellen and Richie Sellek on Pages 10 and 11, about their shared lives in policing, the careers they built and the experiences

that shaped them. On Page 25, we also meet PC Nathaniel Harries, who is following in the footsteps of his father, Steve, while developing his own career and identity within the Force.

Elsewhere, we see the extraordinary resilience and determination of our members. DC Judith McNamara's return to competitive taekwondo, including through some incredibly difficult personal circumstances, is a remarkable example of perseverance - find out more on Page 21. Our Special Constables have demonstrated what can be achieved when people are empowered to make a difference (Page 9), while the Federation's support for our members extends beyond the workplace through initiatives such as our football ticket scheme. Find out how you can get your hands on a pair of football tickets by turning to Page 28.

And, importantly, we continue to recognise that looking after our people must remain at the heart of everything we do.

The stories around baby-loss support (Page 16) and our OK9 wellbeing dogs (Pages 18 and 19) demonstrate the importance of creating environments where officers and staff can talk, seek help and feel supported. Policing can be an incredibly demanding profession, and there should never be any shame in saying that you need help.

That is something the Federation will continue to champion.

Finally, I want to thank every member who continues to give their best, often in difficult circumstances, to protect the public and support their colleagues. Your dedication matters, and it should never be taken for granted.

I hope you enjoy this edition, and that the stories within it remind you of what a remarkable group of people we have across our policing family.





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POLICE OFFICERS AREN'T HIDING BEHIND DESKS – THEY'RE POLICING

South Wales Police Federation chair Phil Walker has hit back at claims that police officers are hiding behind desks and avoiding the confrontational side of policing, describing the criticism as a fundamental misunderstanding of modern policing.

His comments come after a national newspaper claimed that two in five police officers failed to make a single arrest last year, using the figures to question whether too many officers have moved away from frontline policing.

Phil said he was particularly angered by comments from former Metropolitan Police Detective Peter Bleksley, who suggested officers had become desk-bound and were seeking the comfort of office-based roles rather than making arrests.

"Peter Bleksley has been out of policing for a long time," said Phil, adding: "He is a long-retired former Met detective, but he seems to think he speaks for policing today."

"He doesn't."

"This argument must be challenged for what it is. You cannot take the policing of decades ago and simply impose it on the policing we have today."

Phil said officers had not suddenly become reluctant to arrest people.

"Police officers do as they are told, when they are told. That hasn't changed. Policing has always been that way, and will always be that way – it's the nature of the job," he continued.

"If an officer is deployed to deal with an incident and the circumstances mean that an arrest is necessary and lawful, they will make that arrest. The idea that thousands of officers are somehow hiding from confrontation or deliberately avoiding doing

their jobs is simply not the reality."

He said the wider political and policy environment in which officers now operate also needed to be recognised.

He added: "Policing doesn't exist in a vacuum. Government policy, legislation, operational policy and politics all influence the way officers police."

"And officers are accountable for their decisions in a way that they perhaps weren't to the same extent in the past."

"There is scrutiny. There is oversight. There are complaints. There are misconduct processes. There are investigations into decisions officers make."

"That matters when you're talking about the type of policing that some commentators seem to want."

Phil said the suggestion that officers should simply be getting out onto the streets and 'nick people by the van load' ignored the reality of modern policing and the consequences officers can face when things go wrong.

"We live in a complaint culture and, whether people like it or not, a culture of scrutiny," Phil said.

"Officers are being hung out to dry. They can find themselves subject to complaints, investigations and disciplinary proceedings for decisions they have made in incredibly difficult and fast-moving circumstances."

"So when somebody sits outside policing – which, by the way, Peter Bleksley is now – and says, 'just get out there and arrest people', they need to understand what they are actually asking officers to do – and what can happen to those officers afterwards."

Phil said this was not an argument against proactive policing or arresting offenders.

Of course we want criminals arrested. Of course we want people brought before the courts. Of course we want visible, proactive policing," he said, adding: "But arresting somebody is one part of policing. It isn't the definition of policing."

"Officers investigate crimes. They protect victims. They safeguard vulnerable people. They deal with missing people. They gather evidence. They prepare cases for court. They manage offenders. They work with partner agencies. They deal with increasingly complex crimes."

"All of that is policing."

Phil believes a headline-friendly statistic has distorted the debate.

"This is a clickbait article," he said, adding that officers he represents deserve more credit.

"Police officers are still going out every day and doing an incredibly difficult job."

"They are making decisions that can have consequences for people's lives, including their own."

"They are dealing with violence, vulnerable victims, people in crisis and offenders who can be unpredictable and dangerous."

"And they are doing that while knowing that their actions will be scrutinised afterwards."

"Don't confuse caution, professionalism and accountability with officers being afraid to do their jobs."

Phil's message to commentators who believe policing should simply return to the way it was decades ago is straightforward.

"Come and spend some time with us," he said, adding: "Come and see what officers actually deal with. Come and sit in a control room. Come and see what happens on response. Come and see what investigators deal with. Come and see the safeguarding work."

"Then tell me that these officers are hiding."

"OFFICERS INVESTIGATE CRIMES. THEY PROTECT VICTIMS. THEY SAFEGUARD VULNERABLE PEOPLE. THEY DEAL WITH MISSING PEOPLE. THEY GATHER EVIDENCE. THEY PREPARE CASES FOR COURT. THEY MANAGE OFFENDERS. THEY WORK WITH PARTNER AGENCIES. THEY DEAL WITH INCREASINGLY COMPLEX CRIMES."

BRANCH CHAIR REFLECTS ON 'VITALLY IMPORTANT' NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY

The 23rd National Police Memorial Day (NPMD) was held over the weekend as South Wales Police Federation chair Phil Walker praised the service for its touching tribute to officers who have died in the line of duty.

Belfast was the host city for this year's NPMD, which took place at Waterfront Hall on Sunday 27 September.

The event brought together thousands of guests including senior police leaders, religious leaders, politicians and the families of fallen officers, as well as Federation officials such as returning attendee Phil.

Ahead of the service, he discussed what it meant for him to be at another edition of one of the policing calendar's most significant dates.

"Again, it's a very proud moment for me as chair of South Wales Police Federation and as a South Wales Police officer, to be representing all of the officers and staff in the wider police family who we've tragically lost over the years," Phil said.

"I think today really means a lot, especially with everything that's going on in policing and with the recent loss in Cleveland of two very important parts of our policing family in PC Matthew Blades and PC Tom Clough.

"A day like today really hits home what their loved ones have lost. Their losses are huge individually, but also collectively for everyone connected to policing. Sadly, the



Phil Walker.

pain is still fresh for many, but it is an honour to be here remembering them and other fallen colleagues."

Phil went on to underline how essential it is that events like NPMD continue to be observed on such a wide scale throughout the profession.

"I think that is vitally important – I don't think a single officer or member of the police family who's no longer with us should ever be forgotten. For us, we strive as a Federation branch to remember those

in South Wales who we've lost over the years," he added.

"Having so many people come together on a day like today ensures every force and every area of the country is covered, so even those who died a long time ago are being remembered for the incredible people they were.

"That's what National Police Memorial Day is designed for: to remember every single person who has taken the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of public safety."

The 2026 NPMD service was poignantly delivered, with eight officers who had died on duty during the previous 12 months remembered during the commemorations.

They were:

Police Constable Matthew Blades,

Cleveland Police, aged 37

Police Constable Tom Clough, Cleveland

Police, aged 38

Police Constable Alice Slominska,

Bedfordshire Police, aged 19

Police Constable Jess Turnbull,

Northumbria Police, aged 19

Police Constable Mark Chester, Ministry of Defence Police, aged 35

Police Constable Mathew Parker, Essex Police, aged 43

Police Constable Bradley Corke, Kent Police, aged 27

Police Constable Faizaan Najeel, Northamptonshire Police, aged 24.



Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography

The congregation paid their respects to fallen officers.



Commemorations were opened with a processional march featuring flag bearers from forces across England and Wales, followed by music from the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

National Police Chaplain the Reverend Matt Hopley opened the service before Dame Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle DBE DStJ, Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, welcomed the congregation.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and Lady Ruth Hamilton, Patron of the RUC GC Widows' Association, then gave moving readings in the next part of the service.

Music was provided by the Police Service of Northern Ireland Male Voice Choir and Police Service of Northern Ireland Ladies Choir.

Police hats representing England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were carried to the front of the hall and laid beside candles, before relatives representing each nation lit a candle.

The Northern Ireland candle was lit by Jackie Gorman, mother of Police Constable Kevin Declan Gorman, who died aged 24 on 23 November 2008 alongside three colleagues while responding to a call for assistance.

The Welsh candle was lit by Dorothy Ellis, mother of Gwent Police Constable Adrian Bryn Ellis, who died aged 29 on 27 September 1989 after being killed in a motorcycle accident while travelling to report for duty.



Petals fell in honour of colleagues no longer with us.

The Scottish candle was lit by Christine Fulton MBE, wife of Police Constable Lewis George Fulton, who died aged 28 on 17 June 1994 after being stabbed during a violent struggle while protecting members of the public.

The English candle was lit by Chris Prior, husband of North Yorkshire Police Constable Rosie Prior, who died aged 45 on 11 January 2025 after being struck by a lorry while assisting at the scene of a collision.

The congregation stood for The Last



Each nation placed a police hat at the front of the service.

Post as petals fell in remembrance of lives lost.

The lights were then dimmed, with members of the congregation holding flameless candles as a spotlight illuminated the Book of Remembrance, which contains the names of all officers who have died on duty. A lone piper was also illuminated as part of the ceremony.

Eight red flameless candles were placed on the altar table in tribute to the officers who had died during the previous 12 months.

The service concluded with the Act of Commitment, led by Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable Jon Boutcher QPM, followed by the Benediction and National Anthem.

The next National Police Memorial Day will be held in Wales on Sunday 26 September 2027, with the venue to be confirmed.

"I DON'T THINK A SINGLE OFFICER OR MEMBER OF THE POLICE FAMILY WHO'S NO LONGER WITH US SHOULD EVER BE FORGOTTEN. FOR US, WE STRIVE AS A FEDERATION BRANCH TO REMEMBER THOSE IN SOUTH WALES WHO WE'VE LOST OVER THE YEARS."



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SPECIALS LEAD LOOKS BACK ON 'STAGGERING' SUMMER OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR VOLUNTARY OFFICERS

It has been a summer to be proud of for South Wales Police's Special Constabulary, with volunteer officers from one region of the Force completing more than 2000 hours of duty across June,

While autumn may now be setting in, the heatwave-heavy past few months will still be fresh in the memory for many in policing – not least those who were out on the frontline keeping the public safe in the hottest weather conditions ever recorded in the UK.

And central to this effort were volunteers, such as the Special Constables of the Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot Basic Command Unit (BCU), whose tireless work once again proved invaluable in testing circumstances.

Between just 13 Specials, they dedicated a remarkable 2176 hours of their time to the Force from 1 June to 31 August – roughly equivalent to the output of four full-time regular officers.

Special Inspector Keiron Pike, recently appointed Special Constabulary lead for the BCU, told the Federation more about this incredible level of service.

"What these Specials did over the summer was nothing short of exceptional. I still find some of the figures staggering, and I couldn't be more pleased as the BCU lead," Keiron said.

"In August alone, they did over 800 hours, including two officers who did 100 hours each, and a third not too far behind on 77 – all while having a day job and family commitments on top.

"But it's not just about the numbers – it's about the quality of their work and the resilience they gave to the Force in many different situations and modes of policing.

"Earlier in the year, we sat down with Chief Superintendent Steve Jones and set out our vision for how the Specials could make the biggest impact in the coming months.

"We accepted the challenge, and the team took it above and beyond for a group of volunteers, and they deserve a lot of credit for that."

For the 13 Specials in question, making up the largest part of their impressive combined workload were neighbourhood-



Special Inspector Keiron Pike.

focused duties geared around problem-solving in busy summer hotspot locations.

At the top of their priority list was anti-social behaviour (ASB) and drug use in the likes of Swansea Marina, SA1 Waterfront and various beachfronts throughout the BCU area.

"The emphasis was on high visibility and high productivity, with each officer having the tools to maximise this as much as possible," continued Keiron, who joined the Force almost seven years ago.

"I witnessed first-hand the incredible dedication my officers have and the impact that they delivered on disrupting criminality within hotspot areas.

"The results of this for August were 172 incidents attended - including 93 high-grade emergency calls – dealt with 20 stop and searches with five positive finds and 20 ASB referrals made."

In Port Talbot, Specials accounted for 40 per cent of all ASB calls attended that month.

For Keiron, statistics like these, coupled with consistent first-on-the-scene responses to incidents including a shop burglary and the discovery of a cannabis factory, inspire confidence that volunteer officers can lead from the front.

"Summer – especially very hot ones

– can be a tricky time for Specials, because more pressure is put on policing by busier public spaces and heightened footfall, but our Special Constables demonstrated exactly what can be achieved when officers are empowered and trusted to make a difference.

"They dealt with incidents independently, took ownership of local priorities and played a leading role in tackling ASB across the BCU. Their contribution was measured not just by the hours they volunteered, but by the outcomes they delivered.

"This is the kind of mentality that attracts more people towards the Special Constabulary, so it's important it is showcased wherever possible."

On the topic of recruitment and retention, Keiron added that an encouraging summer is set to turn 'bittersweet' when eight of these Specials step down from their duties in October.

"We will lose four to regular policing and four from policing altogether, which will be a huge blow.

"We all know these are the issues we face in the Special Constabulary, but I hope it sends a message to the Force and the profession as a whole to return us to a better, more stable place.

"In the right circumstances, we can clearly achieve amazing things, but we need to be able to sustain it and gain that momentum.

"Results like this show what we are capable of, so this must be the continuous aim."

"WHAT THESE SPECIALS DID OVER THE SUMMER WAS NOTHING SHORT OF EXCEPTIONAL. I STILL FIND SOME OF THE FIGURES STAGGERING, AND I COULDN'T BE MORE PLEASED AS THE BCU LEAD."



A SHARED LIFE OF SERVICE

After securing deserved retirement commemorations as long-standing branch and Group Insurance Scheme members, Ellen and Richie Sellek spoke to the Federation to reflect on their careers and experiences as a couple in policing

Ellen

After 33 years with the Force, Ellen Sellek was keen to find a fitting way to mark the end of her policing career.

The South Wales Police Federation launched its retirement plaque at the beginning of 2026, with the commemorative gift available to officers retiring from the start of the year.

Made of authentic Welsh slate, it is something Ellen says she 'would have liked to have got' when she retired after 33 years

with the Force in mid-2025. However, as a long-serving Federation member and subscriber to the Group Insurance Scheme (GIS), Ellen was able to arrange a self-funded plaque of her own.

"When I saw the plaque, I was really impressed - I thought it looked like something you would be proud to receive to mark the end of your career," Ellen said.

"But after reaching out to the Federation, I found out I could arrange a self-funded

plaque and didn't think twice about doing so.

"After giving so much to a job for such a long time, you want to commemorate that in the nicest way possible, which I think the plaque helps to do."

Ellen joined South Wales Police in September 1992, initially as a Special Constable to get a taste of life as a police officer without the commitment of full-time hours.

But just as she had reached a point where her voluntary service to the Force felt complete, a recruitment drive for regular officers had begun, making the next step in her career a straightforward one.

"I thought I might as well carry on," she added. "Being a Special was great for me, but at the same time, I felt like I'd done everything I could in the role."

"WE WERE OBVIOUSLY PART OF THE SAME ORGANISATION, BUT OUR PATHS AS OFFICERS REMAINED DIFFERENT. SOMETIMES, IT FELT LIKE WE WERE LIVING SEPARATE LIVES, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT CAME TO SHARING CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES."

"Three years after I originally started, the recruitment window came at a good time for me, and needless to say, I never really looked back after that."

After switching to regular duties, Ellen continued to dedicate her early years in the Force to response, working in areas of west Cardiff such as Canton and Grangetown.

By the turn of the millennium, her professional progress meant she was already getting 'more than enough' out of policing - before it also gifted her the person she would eventually decide to share her life with.

"I met Rich through my best friend at work, as they were on the same shift together. It was the night before I turned 30, and we hit it off straight away.

"We were engaged within two weeks, got married the following year and had our daughter, Issy, in 2004.

"We were obviously part of the same organisation, but our paths as officers remained different. Sometimes, it felt like we were living separate lives, particularly when it came to sharing childcare responsibilities.

"But there were plenty of benefits too. Having that person to talk to about work, away from work, was always nice. I wouldn't change anything we did."

The now-56-year-old also enjoyed time in custody and investigative work, as well as a brief return to the frontline after the birth of Issy.

She became a temporary detective in 2017, focusing on child protection in a role she described as her proudest.

And when the COVID pandemic hit, Ellen saw an opportunity to move into domestic violence - another career juncture which benefitted from good timing, seeing her through to retirement in June last year.

"My last role was as a risk assessor on a domestic violence team based in Barry. It was a good role to end on, and I look back fondly on every position I held within the Force.

"Reflecting on over three decades in policing is somewhere I never thought I'd be, but I ended up achieving everything I wanted to, and I feel I made a difference."

Richie

After seeing wife Ellen receive her retirement plaque from the Federation, Richie Sellek decided he wanted to follow suit and secure his own lasting career tribute after 27 years as a police officer.

And with no one better to understand the dedication this service requires, his partner-against-crime organised the gift for his 56th birthday in July.

Now enjoying a fresh chapter in South Wales Police as part of civilian staff, Richie says his new Force duties have not prevented him from separating the two eras and finding time to look back on everything he achieved as a committed constable.

"BEING RETIRED AS AN OFFICER, IT MEANS A LOT TO ME THAT I CAN NOW PASS ON MY KNOWLEDGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION."

"I think it's important for me to draw a line between the two, and the plaque fits into that because it signifies that part of my time in the Force is done and is there forever," he said.

"I saw how nice Ellen's slate was and I'm happy I've now got my own.

"This profession has given me a lot - I have no regrets about devoting so much of my life to it and still doing so to this day. Once it came into my consideration, I knew it was the job for me, and I was all-in straight away."

Richie's journey in policing began in April 1998, after a spark of inspiration while he worked at a magistrates' court in Barry to influence the cases he attended before they reached the justice system.

His service began on response in central Cardiff, but it wasn't long before he swapped uniform for plain-clothes work on patrols and drug warrants.

"Of course, one of the highlights of my

career was meeting my wife. Sharing the same job wasn't always easy, and there were times it felt like we were ships passing in the night," Richie continued.

"But the important thing to take out of it is that we wanted a child and we made it work. 25 years later, we're still together, and I think that's the biggest testament we could have to the strength of our relationship."

In a professional sense, Richie says his proudest moment came when he acted as a tutor constable for emerging young officers - a secondary duty which inspired his final pre-retirement role at the Police Learning Centre in Force headquarters.

From 2022 up until he bowed out in July last year, he was an initial police trainer, helping to deliver a curriculum built around the PC entry route into the Force.

"It's a responsibility I took on later in my career, but I've enjoyed it so much, it's what I have continued doing as staff. Before, I was mainly teaching, and now I'm more behind the scenes, helping to shape curriculum content.

"Being retired as an officer, it means a lot to me that I can now pass on my knowledge and experience to the next generation.

"There's a lot of it - I've also been in counterterrorism, pre-charge investigation, public order and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) roles, which have all influenced the person I am today."

Before returning to his long-time employers, Richie enjoyed an extended break from work, involving 'a lot of travelling' alongside Ellen - particularly to visit Issy, now 22, in Canada during an academic year abroad as part of her undergraduate degree.

"While I'm doing what I'm doing, Ellen is keeping busy volunteering at 'Friends for Animals' Wales - who we both foster dogs from - and contributing to the flower arrangements at Llandaff Cathedral.

"We are so proud of the life we have together, and everything we've accomplished along the way.

"That's in no small part thanks to the colleagues we've both had around us, including the Federation, so we owe plenty of people a massive thank-you."

A SPECIAL KEEPSAKE FOR THOSE RETIRING

Introduced on 1 January 2026, the South Wales Police Federation retirement plaque is the perfect keepsake to commemorate a career dedicated to policing and public service.

Designed to take pride of place in your home, each plaque is a piece of authentic Welsh slate expertly crafted in partnership with local specialists The Slate House.

The award is presented to police officers and staff who have completed a minimum of 20 years' service with South Wales Police and have been signed up to the Federation's Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) for at least five years.

Due to growing interest, plaques can also be purchased by qualifying individuals who retired before this year's launch date at a reduced cost of £80.

If you are not a member of the GIS, and would like more information on joining, you can visit the [GIS section of the Federation website](#).

And for more information on retirement plaques - whether for yourself or for someone you know of any rank, role or department who is eligible, including those interested in self-funding a plaque - you can contact the Federation office by phone or email.



FEDERATION REPS INSPIRED BY FIRST ELEVATE EVENT FOR WOMEN

South Wales Police Federation's equality lead is encouraging more women to become reps following a groundbreaking event aimed at tackling the gender gap in Fed representation.

Angie Mitchell attended the first Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) ELEVATE event alongside fellow South Wales fed rep Marie Cole.

They were joined by female reps from across England and Wales for the two-day event.

Women currently make up 36 per cent of Federation membership, and 26 per cent of Federation representatives.

ELEVATE explored why the gap exists and what can be done to remove the barriers to greater female participation.

Angie said: "It was an opportunity for women from different forces and at different stages of their careers to come together in a supportive environment.

"It was full of discussion, development and networking, with feedback to help shape the future work of the Federation.

"The aim is to bring more women into the national board and into some of the spaces that have predominantly been occupied by men for years."

A pre-event survey asked attendees what they believed were the biggest reasons more women do not become Fed reps.

Lack of confidence was the most common response followed by caring responsibilities, and workload concerns.

Other responses included limited understanding of the benefits and career opportunities available through becoming a rep and perceptions of the Federation.

These themes were explored further, with reps discussing balancing Federation work with their day jobs and caring responsibilities, accessing development opportunities and having the confidence and



Angie Mitchell.

support to put themselves forward.

Angie said an important issue was recognising that women may face different challenges at different points in their careers, and ensuring those challenges do not prevent them from playing an active role in the Federation.

She said: "It was how we can overcome those barriers to make sure you can still be part of the Federation if you want to.

"It showed that there is peer-to-peer support and somewhere you can get support from. It was a really good two days."

The programme also featured a series of development sessions and speakers, including executive coach Anna Allerton, who focused on confidence, development and progression.

Baroness Mary Boustead spoke on building confidence and navigating difficult conversations in male-dominated environments.

Acting National Secretary Mel Warnes

shared her own Federation journey, prompting conversations around confidence, career progression, balancing family and professional responsibilities, and the importance of women supporting other women to put themselves forward.

Angie said: "There was a safe space to talk about issues facing women and what people felt was holding them back.

"It was just really nice to make those connections with each other."

While South Wales has a relatively strong female presence on its branch committee, Angie said it was important to build on that representation and encourage more women to consider Federation roles, including full-time positions when vacancies arise.

"I've come away from the event feeling really enthused," she said.

"We are definitely looking for more females to consider the Federation as a career progression.

"And I personally will encourage other females into the Federation."

PFEW said the event was intended to be the beginning of a longer-term programme, with further networking, development opportunities and events planned.

The feedback gathered through the survey and over the two days will now help inform the next stages of the programme.

Hayley Aley, PFEW equality lead who led on the event, said: "This was a starter for ten. There's more to come, with networks, Teams chats and hopefully more events.

"It's about professionalising what we do and ensuring people who join us have access to support, development and opportunities to progress.

"They're here to help our members, but we also want them to grow and develop through their Federation role. And this is the start of that."

SOUTH WALES POLICE HALBERDIERS KEEP CENTURIES-OLD TRADITION ALIVE

A centuries-old policing tradition is being preserved in South Wales Police as its halberdiers proudly represent the Force at ceremonial occasions, remembrance services and community events.

The team was reformed in 2018 after more than 30 years and has become a familiar sight, providing guards of honour while preserving a unique part of the Force's heritage.

One of their most recent events was attending South Wales Police Federation's Blue Heart Ball in

Sergeant Dominic Edgell, one of three sergeants who coordinate the team, said: "Our main role is ceremonial.

"We meet and greet people and give a presence at the start of an event.

"IT'S A REALLY GOOD TALKING POINT AND SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR CHILDREN THAN SEEING POLICE CARS AND POLICE DOGS."

"We have supported a range of events.

"We've been at the National Police Memorial Day, we do a lot of awards and recognition ceremonies, we do quite a lot of work with the High Sheriffs, we represent the Force at remembrance services and take part in parades.

"And we do Welsh national events, such as the Wales Festival of Remembrance.

"It's a privilege to do."

The tradition of the halberdiers dates back centuries and became a unique duty in the policing of Swansea, said Dominic.

In Swansea, constables carrying halberds were originally tasked with protecting civic officials before later escorting judges to court following the formation of Swansea Borough Police in 1835.

Indeed, between 1835 and 1990 the Swansea Police halberdiers were a common sight at special and ceremonial occasions in Swansea and at Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff.

Now the halberdiers are made up of serving and retired officers and police staff, and they carry original halberds.

South Wales Police currently has 12 halberds, which are 7ft-long pole-mounted weapons with a pointed end for thrusting, an axe head for slicing and a hook for grasping the enemy.

Six of those in South Wales police are dated 1760, 1771, 1773, 1777 and 1780. The



remaining six are undated but believed to be 15th Century.

The weapons were discovered in the basement of a Swansea police station before being restored and returned to ceremonial use.

The halberdiers are a popular attraction at police open days and community events, where their distinctive appearance often captures the imagination of younger visitors.

Dominic said: "It's a really good talking point and something different for children than seeing police cars and police dogs.

"So when they see officers carrying these six or seven-foot halberds, they're fascinated.

"It gives us another way of engaging with our communities."

He added: "I particularly enjoy the recognition events.

"They celebrate the outstanding work of our colleagues, and it's lovely for their families and friends to see another side of policing.

"It helps make those occasions even more memorable."

Dominic said he had a personal reason for his interest in the halberdiers.

While researching his family tree he found the personnel record of his grandfather, Eric Gibbs, who was in the Swansea Borough Police.

And with the halberdiers' connection to Swansea, Dominic said it grabbed his interest.

He said: "It's something different. It's a really nice way of engaging with communities in a different way and I really enjoy it."



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SOUTH WALES FAMILY MEMBER REMEMBERS FALLEN OFFICER

More than two decades after the death of her brother, Joanne Woodward stood in front of hundreds of people at the National Memorial Arboretum to tell the story of the man behind the police uniform.

Joanne was speaking at this year's Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Service of Remembrance in Staffordshire, where families, colleagues and members of the wider policing community gathered on Sunday (9 August) to remember officers who have died in the line of duty.

For Joanne, the day was about much more than remembering how her brother, South Wales Police Sergeant Mark Woodward, died. It was about remembering how he lived.

Mark died in a motorcycle accident in 2002, aged 30. But as Joanne shared his story, she spoke not only of a police officer who had dedicated himself to serving his community, but of a brother, husband, father, uncle and friend whose loss continues to be felt by those who knew him.

Mark was also a committed police officer. He joined South Wales Police in September 1993 after completing his basic training and quickly established himself as a professional and enthusiastic officer.

Five years later, he joined the Criminal Investigation Department, following in the footsteps of his father and developing a reputation for determination and dedication.

In May 2002, shortly before his death, Mark was promoted to sergeant after working on a murder investigation.

He was proud of the promotion and was beginning a new chapter in his career.

Away from work, his family was also entering a new chapter.

Mark had two daughters, Hannah and Emily, and had discovered that he was going to become a father for a third time. His youngest daughter, Holly, was born after his death.

Twenty-four years on, Joanne spoke proudly of the lives all three daughters have built and said she knows their father would have been immensely proud of them.

For Joanne and her family, Mark's memory has therefore continued through milestones that he never got to see - birthdays, university, graduations, careers and all the moments that make up family life.

But Mark's legacy has also continued through his 'second family' - South Wales Police.

It was a career he had wanted from an early age, inspired in part by his father, and one he embraced with enthusiasm and



The South Wales Police Memorial Tree at the National Arboretum.

determination.

That connection with the policing family has helped Joanne and other survivors through COPS and the Police Unity Tour.

Joanne initially became involved with the COPS Service of Remembrance after accompanying her parents, who had taken part for several years.

She said she did not really know what to expect and initially thought of herself simply as the chauffeur.

But she recalled seeing the riders cycling together and witnessing the pride, appreciation and gratitude of the families of fallen officers.

There were handshakes, hugs, tears, exchanged bracelets and medals, followed by the powerful sight of the Blue Knights leading the riders towards the memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

The Police Unity Tour has since given Joanne more than a way to remember her brother. It has introduced her to other survivors who understand a loss that can be difficult for others to comprehend.

And through COPS, she has found friendship, support and a community that understands.

This year's service, attended by hundreds, marked the end of the Police Unity Tour's three-day cycling challenge, which raises money for COPS.

Riders from across England and Wales travelled from their home forces to Drayton Manor in Staffordshire before completing the final journey to the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday.

The service was opened by COPS president Gill Marshall, with readings also given by Katie Hull, daughter of Hertfordshire Police Constable Ronald Hull, and Ella Dent, stepdaughter of Metropolitan



Cyclists arrive, marking the end of the COPS ride.

Police Constable Chris Dent.

Joanne's reading was followed by the Roll of Honour, remembering officers who have died in the line of duty since last year's service:

Police Constable Marcus Bennett, of Civil Nuclear Constabulary, who died on 30 January 2025

Police Constable Francis Hawkins, of Metropolitan Police, who died on 11 February 2025

Police Constable Ian Minett, of Gloucestershire Constabulary, who died on 21 June 2025

Police Constable Faizaan Najeeb, of Northamptonshire Police, who died on 26 September 2025

Police Constable Mathew Parker, of Essex Police, who died on 19 November 2025

Police Constable Bradley Corke, of Kent Police, who died on 21 March 2026

Police Constable Mark Chester, of Ministry of Defence Police, who died on 2 May 2026

Police Constable Jess Turnbull, of Northumbria Police, who died on 10 June 2026

Police Constable Alice Slominska, of Bedfordshire Police, who died on 17 July 2026.

A minute's silence was held before wreaths were laid by representatives of policing organisations and the Police Unity Tour.

Music was performed by the West Midlands Police Brass Band and West Midlands Superintendent Sam Batey.

Chief Constable Sir John Robins QPM DL, from the COPS Chair of Trustees, closed the service. Families and guests then made their way to The Beat, an avenue of trees dedicated to individual forces and officers, to lay wreaths and single red roses.



PLANTING A LITTLE HOPE AFTER BABY LOSS

A South Wales Police staff member who has experienced the devastating loss of a baby is helping to bring colleagues together during Baby Loss Awareness Week.

Charlotte Rayner, regional engagement and liaison officer for South Wales Police, is a volunteer with the SWP Baby Loss Peer Support Group.

She has spoken of her own experience for Baby Loss Awareness Week as the

group prepares to hold a special event to support those affected by baby loss.

A forget-me-not planting event takes place from 10am to 2pm at South Wales Police headquarters on Tuesday 13 October.

It will give those affected by baby loss an opportunity to plant a forget-me-not, remember a baby and spend time with others who understand what they may be going through.

Charlotte said that becoming involved

with the support group was a natural step after attending a baby loss event at police headquarters last year.

"I've been through it," she said. "There was an event last October that they put on at headquarters. It was all day and it was very emotional, but very connected."

The event brought together people with experience of baby loss, including SANDS supporters, and gave those attending the opportunity to hear personal stories and

talk about their experiences.

She said: "It just made me think, well, if my story can help one person, then great."

As a volunteer, Charlotte provides a listening ear to colleagues who have experienced the loss of a baby, offering informal support and signposting where appropriate.

She currently supports colleagues who have been referred to her, maintaining regular contact and checking in every few weeks.

She said: "It's that impartial person that's not their line manager, not a family member or a friend.

"It's someone that's gone through the training and has also been through the experience so that they don't feel alone."

"I WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS AROUND ME AND SOME AMAZING COLLEAGUES WHO HAD BOUGHT ME FLOWERS AND WERE ALL SO LOVELY."

Charlotte's own experience happened in 2018. Charlotte and her husband Nick already had a four-year-old daughter Chloe and were delighted when she became pregnant.

Initially, everything appeared to be progressing normally but around seven or eight weeks into the pregnancy, she began experiencing cramping and bleeding.

She attended A&E and was told that there was old and fresh blood, which meant the medics could not determine what was happening, but that she was potentially having a miscarriage.

At the early pregnancy unit at Princess of Wales Hospital, a heartbeat was still identified.

A few days later, however, Charlotte suffered a significant bleed and lost the baby at home.

She was alone as her husband, a South Wales Police officer, was at work.

"I even took pictures as I thought it would be the only connection I had left with this unborn child," she said.

"I guess that's why some people do potentially strange things when dealing with grief."

Charlotte was referred back to the early pregnancy unit for another scan.

She recalled: "I appreciate the people working there are doing their job but the news that there was a heartbeat and now there wasn't, it was given to me in a standard way, like someone would tell you you'd just dropped your keys on the floor.



Baby Loss Awareness Week

"Empathy was lacking.

"It was also noticeable that the early pregnancy unit is right next door to the maternity unit so you are amongst mothers and new babies."

Perhaps one of the most difficult moments came when she and her husband had to share the news with their four-year-old daughter.

"It's something I will never forget," said Charlotte. "Trying to explain to her that the baby had gone to heaven was crushing.

"She cried and stated 'I don't want the baby to be dead'. We just held each other for a few minutes and cried together.

"I spent a week crying in bed during the day then trying to stay strong for our daughter after school."

Her husband continued working on response because he felt he could not take time away from an already demanding workload.

Charlotte took three weeks off before returning to work.

"The hospital gave me a leaflet on miscarriage and I am sure that was the last I heard from them or the doctors," she said.

"I was very fortunate to have family and friends around me and some amazing colleagues who had bought me flowers and were all so lovely.

"My line managers were supportive and I believe if I needed more time off I probably could have, but you do feel that there is a stigma around being on sick leave and the urgency to get back in.

"I was already seeing a Force counsellor but I didn't receive anything from HR or my union in regards to the loss."

Her husband received support from his sergeant, but Charlotte said there was little formal follow-up from the Force.

The experience left her questioning herself.

"You feel a sense of failure when you

lose a child. What did I do wrong? Could I have prevented the miscarriage? Why me?"

"You can fall into a really dark place where you just can't see a way out.

"But with the right support and people around you, it's absolutely possible to become a stronger version of yourself and move forward."

Charlotte became pregnant again and, because of her previous loss, contacted her doctor early to ask for additional care and monitoring.

Charlotte said the pregnancy was difficult because of sickness and a pelvic issue, and it was filled with anxiety.

However, it resulted in the birth of a happy and healthy child, Phoebe, who Charlotte calls her 'rainbow baby'.

But she said even that brought complicated emotions.

She said: "You feel guilty because you are so happy and blessed that you had another chance with the next child.

"It took until a counsellor advised me seven years later to maybe write a letter to the baby we lost, explaining the love we had for that baby, even in the short time I was pregnant with them.

"You question what sex they might have been, what they would have grown up to be. But then are conflicted with your feelings of love for the child that was born afterwards, as you may not have had them had your previous baby survived."

Now Charlotte, who is a Blue Light Champion and wellbeing lead in her department, is using her experience to support others.

This includes at the forget-me-not planting event, which she will attend with her yellow Labrador and OK9 wellbeing dog, Riley.

"Sometimes it helps people talk because they're distracted playing with the dog," she said. "Hopefully we can help others."

"I APPRECIATE THE PEOPLE WORKING THERE ARE DOING THEIR JOB BUT THE NEWS THAT THERE WAS A HEARTBEAT AND NOW THERE WASN'T, IT WAS GIVEN TO ME IN A STANDARD WAY, LIKE SOMEONE WOULD TELL YOU YOU'D JUST DROPPED YOUR KEYS ON THE FLOOR. EMPATHY WAS LACKING."

WELLBEING DOGS PROGRAMME SUPPORTING OFFICERS AND STAFF

From lifting morale to helping colleagues through trauma, South Wales Police's OK9 wellbeing dogs are making a real difference to the welfare of officers and staff across the force.

South Wales Police's OK9 wellbeing dogs are playing an increasingly important role in supporting officers and staff.

Relaunched in October 2025, the OK9 programme has grown into a force-wide network of more than 30 trained handlers and their dogs, helping colleagues open up about their experiences and access the support they need.

Federation representative, Inspector Rob Blunt, of the Force dog section who leads the scheme, said: "The dogs help to create relaxed environments where colleagues feel more comfortable talking about stress, trauma and their wellbeing.

"Their handlers are just as important.

"Our handlers are trained to facilitate conversations and signpost colleagues to the right support if they need it.

"It's much more than a bring your dog to work scheme. It's a structured wellbeing programme designed to help people when they need it.

"It's often difficult for people to admit they're struggling. A dog changes the atmosphere.

"People relax, conversations start naturally, and that's where our handlers can really make a difference."

Oscar Kilo, the national police wellbeing service, oversees the OK9 programme.

It says that when a dog is introduced to the workplace, 'the atmosphere immediately changes and people want to interact with the dog'.

"During this time together, they share oxytocin, a hormone that engenders affection, trust, and a sense of security.

"It helps naturally lower cortisol levels and in doing so reduces feelings of stress and anxiety.

"These interactive sessions provide light relief from the rigours of the job, and the dogs help get people talking and create expressions of genuine feeling just by being friendly and non-judgemental.

"Wellbeing dog handlers are also mental health first aiders or trained peer supporters who are ideally placed to listen, enable difficult conversations and provide signposting to support if required."

In South Wales Police, volunteer handlers, who are police officers and staff, receive specialist wellbeing training before their dogs undergo assessments to ensure they have the right temperament.



Federation representative Rob Blunt and his two dogs, Dotty and Bella.

Sessions can be tailored to meet different needs, from team visits in police stations and offices to supporting officers following traumatic incidents or during demanding training courses.

The programme has also supported response teams, student officers and specialist departments dealing with particularly challenging investigations.

Rob, who is also a Federation rep, said the programme will increasingly be used to follow up traumatic incidents.

He said: "When officers have attended a particularly difficult incident, such as a fatal road traffic collision, the dogs can help create an environment where people feel more comfortable talking during debriefs.

"That conversation allows us to identify anyone who may need additional support before problems become more serious."

Rob added: "From a Fed perspective, it's a massively stressful job, so anything that promotes the wellbeing of our staff is welcomed.

"At the moment, a lot of the visits are to improve general morale and to make people feel better, which is absolutely great.

"But I am keen to be more involved when our people have suffered trauma,

because that's where the risk is for me.

"That's where you get people going off sick because they haven't opened up or they haven't felt supported.

"It's good from a Fed perspective, and it's good from the management perspective because it keeps staff in work and invested in work."

He said: "The dogs are fantastic at breaking down barriers.

"Children or adults who might never have spoken to a police officer before will often come over to say hello to the dog, and that opens up positive conversations."

Rob said he is proud of the programme, which has been nominated for an Oscar Kilo Award.

He said: "I love it. The handlers are incredibly passionate, the dogs are wonderful, and you can see the positive difference they're making.

"The programme is about making sure our people feel supported and valued.

"Policing can be incredibly demanding, and if we can help someone through a difficult period, encourage them to seek support, or simply make them feel that little bit better, then the programme is doing what it was designed to do."

South Wales Police Federation members can enquire about the OK9 dogs via the wellbeing dogs page on Bob.

'GOOD BOY' OSCAR HELPING COLLEAGUES THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

Sprocker spaniel Oscar is among the South Wales Police OK9 Wellbeing and Trauma Support Dogs putting their best paw forward to support officer and staff welfare.

The seven-year-old joined the OK9 programme in November and helps Force employees deal with traumatic and stressful circumstances.

His owner Joanna Collings said Oscar has always had the qualities needed to be a wellbeing dog.

She said: "Oscar is just a good dog.

"He's very intuitive. He seems to know when to approach people.

"He's not one of those dogs that's constantly chasing a ball or doing tricks.



Oscar the OK9 Wellbeing Dog.

"He just seems to find the right people at the right time. He'll let anybody stroke him, and he absolutely loves being told he's a good boy."

Jo said that it is incredibly rewarding being an OK9 handler and seeing the effect Oscar has on people.

She said: "I tend to let Oscar lead because people want to see the dog. They're not really interested in me, which is absolutely fine.

"It'll depend on what sort of setting we go into.

"We've been to a few where people are quite happy to chat. They want to know all about the dog, they want to pet him.

"The first session I did, the lady that we were supporting, she didn't even want to speak to me. She just wanted to stroke the dog.

"So it depends on what kind of environment we're going into, what the person is looking to get from that session."

Jo decided to become an OK9 handler after Oscar helped her through her own health challenges.

When an advert appeared on the force intranet recruiting new OK9 Welfare Dogs, her colleagues immediately encouraged her to apply.

Jo, who is PA to the chief constable, said: "Everyone in the office said, 'Jo, this is perfect for you and Oscar'.

"I've been through my own health struggles, and I saw how Oscar had supported me and the impact that he had had on me during that time, and I knew that he could provide that to other people."

Jo has completed training with the Dog's Trust covering dog welfare and peer support, while Oscar underwent a detailed assessment to ensure he was suited to the role.

"I was quite nervous because some of the other wellbeing dogs were full of energy and run around at 100mph," she said.

"Oscar is not that kind of dog. He goes in, will chill out, lay down.

"But they explained they needed all different dogs with different personalities because they'll all be supporting people in different environments."

The responsibility also extends to the handler, with Jo ensuring Oscar is only taken into environments where he will be comfortable and able to work effectively.

Jo said that volunteering with Oscar is incredibly fulfilling.

She said: "I find it very rewarding.

"Policing can involve traumatic, stressful and demanding situations, and it's a privilege to be able to go into those environments with Oscar and hopefully make somebody's day just a little bit better."

Oscar has represented the OK9 team at a number of force events, including the recent Blue Heart Ball, where he greeted guests wearing his tuxedo.

Jo said: "People wanted photographs with him and were asking all about the wellbeing dogs and how they could book a visit.

"I think he was a hit with people."

Jo hopes that appearances like at the Blue Heart Ball will help raise awareness of the service.



Oscar and Joanna.

"A lot of people don't know about the service, so attending events and speaking to people will hopefully raise the profile," she said.

'IT MADE OUR WEEK': THE DIFFERENCE OK9 DOGS ARE MAKING

The impact of the OK9 wellbeing dogs is clear from the feedback they receive from officers, staff and others they visit. From providing a welcome break during a stressful working day to helping children learn about safety around dogs, their visits are making a positive difference:

"It really brightened up a grey day in HQ for us and was a fabulous break from thinking about court applications and challenging cases."

"It was very welcome by the staff and such a light relief considering the stressful jobs that they are doing."

"The dogs are definitely a big hit, and hopefully we will see you at future events."

"I would definitely recommend booking a pooch to attend your workplace for wellbeing. It made our week. Betty was well received, and we paraded her around like the princess she is."

"OSCAR IS JUST A GOOD DOG. HE'S VERY INTUITIVE. HE SEEMS TO KNOW WHEN TO APPROACH PEOPLE."

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GIS FUNDING TO MAKE 2027 COMPETITIONS POSSIBLE FOR TAEKWONDO CHAMPION

After making a whirlwind comeback in recent years to the sport she has practised since childhood, DC Judith McNamara is going for world and continental taekwondo glory once again in 2027 – backed by South Wales Police Federation's Group Insurance Scheme (GIS).

While she may have been part of the Force for 22 years, Judith's dedication to taekwondo dates back even further, having first trained in the martial art at the age of five.

This early discovery has shaped her identity, given her constant achievements to aim for, and helped her through some of the most testing moments of her life.

"I started off doing gymnastics, but I soon turned to taekwondo and straight away, I just knew it was for me. By 11, I was a black belt – one of the youngest in the UK to achieve this – and I had a good mix of talent and enjoyment for it," Judith said.

"As I got older, I trained more infrequently as other things got in the way, but when I was 26, I opened a school in Llanishen.

"And although I don't run the school anymore, I still train there, which keeps me in good stead for my next targets after a crazy last few years."

In the latest chapter of this sporting journey, Judith will compete in the senior veteran category at both the European Taekwondo Championships, to be held in Latvia next April, and the World Taekwondo Championships, set for China or Kazakhstan in October next year.

Following previous entries in 2024 and 2025, her returns to both tournaments have been sponsored by the GIS.

"Latvia is far away enough, but China or Kazakhstan is on another level, so this funding will go towards my travel," added Judith, who works in intelligence and organised crime.

"Without it, I don't know whether these destinations would be possible for me, so I am extremely grateful."

For Judith, successful appearances at the highest level of taekwondo for her age group



have become the norm since the sport began an incredible revival in 2022.

Similar to when she was younger, she had been in and out of consistent practice – this time mainly due to the pressures of working in the Force – until she rediscovered her passion for competing after bumping into an old instructor.

This familiar face reminded the now-47-year-old of her natural combat ability, and before long, she was back in competition and being crowned Welsh veteran champion, with her sights set on victory at an even wider scale.

But one year into this resurgence, her momentum was stalled when she received a major health diagnosis.

"I was told I had breast cancer, which came as a huge surprise even after I was aware of what I was confident was a harmless lump.

"Of course, in many ways, this turned my world upside down, but I was always determined to continue taekwondo, especially after working so hard to get back into it and to where I'd got to.

"More than anything, though, it was to

keep me sane in such an uncertain time, and to have something else to focus on other than what I was going through.

"Because I kept going, I kept going from strength to strength, and I won another Welsh Championship, and then English and London Opens. Up next was the UK Open, and I managed to win that too."

This winning streak, remarkable enough on its own without the backdrop of a cancer battle, then continued with gold at the European Championships and bronze at the World Championships, where Judith's progression was curtailed by a broken ankle.

Now in remission from her diagnosis – and happy in the knowledge from a consultant that regular exercise means her cancer is 30 per cent less likely to return – the experienced detective is ready to give these two biggest stages her best shot once more.

"I owe so much to this sport – it's not the first time it has helped me through a difficult moment, when I think about being assaulted once on duty and using my skills to avoid being seriously injured, or perhaps worse.

"Now, I want to complete my taekwondo career by becoming world champion.

"It won't be easy, but I am nothing if not resilient and determined, and I am very fortunate to have so much support from so many different people. I very much include the Federation in that, so I hope I can do everyone proud over the next 12 months or so."

"I OWE SO MUCH TO THIS SPORT – IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME IT HAS HELPED ME THROUGH A DIFFICULT MOMENT, WHEN I THINK ABOUT BEING ASSAULTED ONCE ON DUTY AND USING MY SKILLS TO AVOID BEING SERIOUSLY INJURED, OR PERHAPS WORSE."



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MEET THE SOUTH WALES POLICE OFFICER FOLLOWING IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

PC Nathaniel (Nat) Harries is following in the footsteps of his retired father PC Steve 'Chopper' Harries.

Steve retired earlier this year after a 30-year career with South Wales Police.

But the baton has been passed to 25-year-old Nat, who joined South Wales Police around two-and-a-half years ago and is now building his own career in the Force.

And colleagues have already conferred his dad's nickname upon him.

Nat said that joining the police was a decision influenced by his dad and his upbringing, but one he ultimately made for himself.

He had worked in other jobs before joining the Force, including in the hospitality sector, but was always fascinated by policing.

Growing up with a police officer father meant he was familiar with the job, as well as hearing the occasional story from his dad.

"I've always known my father to be a police officer, so obviously he'd tell me a few stories here and there," said Nat.

"It was always interesting to me. I've always wanted to do the right thing and it's always inspired me.

"It's something that's always been within me."

Nat did not tell his father that he had applied to join South Wales Police. Instead, he waited until he had been accepted before breaking the news.

His father's initial reaction was perhaps not quite what he expected.

Nat recalled: "He was shocked and asked what I was doing.

"But he was also very proud of me and happy that I'd got in and was doing something that was following in his footsteps."

Steve has continued to support his son in his career, offering advice when needed while allowing Nat to establish himself in his own right.

Nat works in response policing, which gave him opportunities to work alongside Steve before his retirement.

The pair were even deployed together on PSU duties.

"My first PSU deployment was him driving and me being part of the serial,"



Nat Harries (right) with his dad, retired PC Steve Harries.

said Nat.

"The sergeant said he'd never had two family members on one serial.

"If it was a high-risk job, then I wouldn't be on his van in case a worst case scenario happened."

But they still shared some memorable experiences, including Nat's first mutual-aid deployment to Scotland for a week to police a visit by US President Donald Trump.

Nat said: "I've never been the type of person to rely on my dad but he was ex-traffic, and if I've got a traffic matter and they've asked me for this file, I might ask him if I was doing things correctly.

"It's handy to have a bit of guidance from someone with a bit more experience."

While he is still relatively early in his career, Nat already has goals including

joining roads policing, following another path in his father's career. But he is no rush.

He said: "I want to do five years on response before going anywhere because you deal with everything on response and build up that experience dealing with all types of incidents.

"I'm only two-and-a-half years in, and I'm still learning now.

"I've said I want to do five years on response before going anywhere else. Then I'll consider the different avenues, but all in good time.

"But the roads policing unit is something I aspire to do in the future"

Nat said he was enjoying the variety and challenges of frontline policing

He said: "We all have good days and bad days, but I wouldn't change this for the world.

"You're constantly learning and constantly thinking of new things. The brilliant team members I currently have have helped a lot.

"No call is the same. You don't know what you're going to next and that is really exciting and interesting."

"I WANT TO DO FIVE YEARS ON RESPONSE BEFORE GOING ANYWHERE BECAUSE YOU DEAL WITH EVERYTHING ON RESPONSE AND BUILD UP THAT EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH ALL TYPES OF INCIDENTS."



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What is the GIS?

South Wales Police Federation members can join the GIS for a monthly subscription fee of £35.50 (from 1 March 2026), with the option to extend this cover to a spouse for an additional £13.50 per month.

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2025/26 SNAPSHOT

April 25 - March 26

GROUP INSURANCE SCHEME

A snapshot of support for members and their families

£317,470.75

Was paid directly to South Wales members and beneficiaries.

Supported

1,412

Members &
Families

4,504

Members
March 26

Over the reporting period, £317,470.76 was paid directly to South Wales members and beneficiaries.

The scheme supported 1,412 members and families through services including Travel, Motor Breakdown, Home Emergency, GP24, Mobile Phone, Health Assured, and Legal Expenses.

Where The Scheme Helped

3

Life Claims



17

Sickness Benefit Claims

14

Hospital Benefit Claims

253

Travel Claims



3

Dental Benefit Claims



61

Legal Expenses Claims

36

Treatment Centre Benefit

713

Motor Breakdown Callouts

22

Unsocial Hours Benefit

96

Home Emergency Callouts

19

Court Compensation



112

Mobile Phone Claims



110

GP24 Cases



79

Health Assured Cases



FREE FOOTBALL FOR FEDERATION MEMBERS: NEW SEASON, NEW MATCHES FOR CARDIFF AND SWANSEA

Fancy a night at the football on us? South Wales Police Federation members can once again enjoy live Championship football for free, thanks to the branch's complimentary local ticket scheme.

With the 2026/27 season now underway, two tickets for Cardiff City and two tickets for Swansea City home league fixtures throughout the season are up for grabs - giving our members the chance to enjoy some top-class football with a guest, completely free of charge.

The initiative is all about giving something back to our members for their tireless commitment to policing and the communities they serve.

It can also provide a much-needed boost for officers who may be experiencing welfare difficulties at work or simply finding it hard to switch off from the pressures of the job. Priority will be given to members who could particularly benefit from a night away from work and the opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves.

If no one is forthcoming for a particular fixture, the opportunity will then be opened up to all interested members through a random draw.

You can register your interest in as many

fixtures as you like across both Cardiff City and Swansea City, with the Federation aiming to give as many different members as possible the chance to enjoy a match.

If you're successful in a draw, you'll receive two non-transferable tickets - one for you and one for a guest of your choice.

The only catch? You need to be able to attend the match yourself. If you can't make a fixture, please decline the opportunity so another member can take it.

Branch chair Phil Waker said: "Once again, we are proud to offer our brilliant members the chance to catch a game at either Cardiff or Swansea, in an initiative we have now run for the last few years.

"For so much of the time, our members are the ones working hard to keep the public safe while others enjoy events and their downtime. This ticket scheme represents a chance for them to take a break and unwind, which is essential for both physical and mental wellbeing.

"Where we can, we will always help our members to do this, especially when some can find it difficult to switch off from work. We're really looking forward to seeing many of you enjoying the matches throughout the season ahead."

Both Cardiff City Stadium and Swansea.

com Stadium are hosting EFL Championship football this season - and there are plenty of fixtures to choose from.

Head to the [Member Services section](#) of the Federation website to see the full fixture lists and register your interest in individual matches.

Please register only for fixtures you know you can attend.

And remember, if you're struggling with welfare issues and think a night of live football could provide a welcome lift, please contact the Federation by phone or at swpf@polfed.org. We're here to support you.



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