



Surrey Volunteer Police Cadet scheme steps up!

THE SURREY Volunteer Police Cadet scheme began in late 2016. It is now recognised as a significant way for diverse groups of young people aged 13 to 18 to learn about the critical role played by our police and to experience meaningful personal development, while making a real difference within their local communities. There are currently six operational units based within schools in underprivileged areas. The strategy is eventually to have one unit in each of Surrey's eleven boroughs and districts. Discussions are already under way regarding the possibility of opening a specific unit for young people with special educational needs. All units have contributed significantly in supporting my year and are much respected by civic dignitaries across the county.

The Surrey VPC force is now over 200 strong, split equally between male and female, with 19 per cent of the cadets from BAME groups and over 40 per cent included within the national VPC definition of 'vulnerable to exclusion'.

Critical to both the success and consistent standards of the scheme is the staff cohort, led by Sgt Graham Kerslake



Above: Surrey cadets form an unruly mob at training for Police Support Unit officers! Sgt Graham Kerslake, coordinator of Surrey VPC scheme (left), PCSO Paul Woodhouse, unit leader, Runnymede (right), Police Support Volunteer, Connor Tomlinson (second left), Police Support Volunteer, Alice Critchley (fifth left)

and comprising police officers, staff and special constables who all volunteer their time and experience to this worthy initiative. This team is augmented by over 20 external volunteers including three university students and five returning ex-cadets who are now aged over 18. Feedback from numerous parents and carers provides strong evidence of the inspirational impact that the VPC scheme is having in the lives of their young people.

Two significant decisions were taken in April 2018 which will cement the link between the Surrey VPC scheme and the High Sheriff. It was established that the serving High Sheriff becomes the patron of the scheme and is supported throughout their year by a formally appointed High Sheriff's Volunteer Police Cadet. It has therefore been a great privilege to be the first High Sheriff of Surrey to receive the dedicated and professional support of Volunteer Police Cadet, Nael Radha. Nael has been an active participant at a broad range of occasions during the year, such as citizenship ceremonies, the service

for the judiciary, Crown Court bravery awards and even welcoming royalty at a university degree ceremony.

The mutually supportive link between High Sheriff and Surrey Police provided by the VPC scheme is highly valued within the county. The influential activities of the units are much welcomed and the attendance of cadet representatives at formal review panels focused on issues such as use of force and hate crime is greatly appreciated by senior officers. The link also serves to celebrate the enormous impact of volunteering across Surrey, whether through the unit leaders who willingly support the young people, or the cadets themselves who all commit to volunteer at least three hours each month in supporting local causes. They undertake challenging social action projects in their communities or assist with police activities such as forming an unruly mob during essential training for Police Support Unit officers!

◆ **Jim Glover**
High Sheriff of Surrey 2018-19



Above: Bravery Awards presented at Guildford Crown Court, convened by His Honour Judge Fraser MVO, Honorary Recorder of Guildford and Resident Judge at Guildford Crown Court, with High Sheriff's cadet, Nael Radha
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