

WHPC Meeting 5th April 2022

Agenda No 22/099

IPCC Seminar Report to West Hill Parish Council (WHPC) for information

**Independent Police and Crime Commissioner seminar for Councillor Advocates -
Shire Hall, Bodmin on Tuesday 22nd March 2022**

As the WHPC Councillor Advocate, Cllr Della CANNINGS QPM attended the seminar. There were approximately 24 attendees from some 167 Councillor Advocates across Devon and Cornwall.

Although billed as a seminar, the event consisted of two main speakers with very crowded PowerPoint slides.

The Independent Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, welcomed attendees and opened the event. The theme of the day being about drugs, and the suggestion that local Councillors become more engaged in holding local authorities and public services etc to account through Scrutiny Committees.

Alison Hernandez stated that all the Police Forces of the South West peninsula were working together to create a ring of steel to reduce the availability of drugs in our communities and to bring offender to justice (Operation Scorpion). She said that it 'feels like we live in a lawless society', 'that cannabis was not being targeted' and she was 'sick of seeing children exploited'. She welcomed the publication from Government in December 2021, 'From harm to hope' - a ten year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery. A cynic may ask 'what's new' and it seems very little. It sets out the importance of interagency cooperation, need to pool resources and for positive action/leadership - good intent but without adequately resourcing from all including data sharing - social services, health, police, voluntary agencies, courts and prisons etc, little will improve.

Alison Hernandez asked that Councillors advise people to provide information on suspected drug activity via CRIMESTOPPERS (Tel No: 0800 555111). This has the advantage of being confidential ensuring the anonymity of the caller, however, does not enable the police to gain further intelligence from the caller. There was a sense that her suggestion would reduce demand on the Police non-emergency number (101).

There was a presentation from Paul Netherton, retired Deputy Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall. He spoke on the scourge of drugs, why they should not be legalised, highlighted the roles of various agencies and spoke on organised crime gangs, cuckooing and county lines.

A second presentation from Jez Bayes, from Cornwall County Council Community Safety. He spoke on the various schemes operated by the Council to support those addicted to drugs, he was strong on including alcohol abuse. He made clear that the Council was not using Council Tax monies but funding for a wide variety of sources,

The feedback provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner highlighted that seminars are about discussions, and such wasn't given space. It would have been good to hear of the issues other Councillors were facing and any initiatives they were undertaking.

The Commissioner intends holding further 'seminars' on her other three priorities - Violence, Antisocial Behaviour and Road Safety. Her plan for 2021/25 is available on her website and I have a hard glossy copy should any Councillor wish to see it.

Attendance involved 140 miles round trip and 5 hours, with the seminar and travelling. A major commitment for little return to be honest. At least, good pasties we're provided!

For Councillors to note.

Cllr Della M CANNINGS QPM