

Results of the Co-ordinator Questionnaire - 2016

Overview of Respondents and Responses

Out of a possible 317 questionnaires we've only had 24 completed (8%) which is very disappointing, especially as the questionnaires were targeted at a specific and important part of our structure.

Of those returned, 71% were from rural areas and 29% town areas.

92% were aged 60 plus with 8% aged 30-60 and nobody under 30. *This is not really a surprise because we are already aware that we are struggling to attract the younger generations.*

96% have access to or use their own vehicles for transport to meetings.

Evenings were considered the best time for meetings (54%), followed by afternoons (29%) and mornings (17%).

70% of responders attended our meetings.

After attending, 50% thought the events to be worthwhile, with 29% thinking otherwise. Surprisingly 21% made no comment on this point.

With a large proportion of our co-ordinators not responding to the questionnaire and only half of those who do attend meetings thinking them to be worthwhile, it makes you think that they are not interested in the type of meetings that we have been providing to date. Unfortunately, with such a large number having not responded we don't know what, if anything, they want us to provide.

Q4. Would you like a different format to the meetings and if so, what?

*A majority of the members responding seem to like the current format which we are using for the meetings, with a speaker followed by an Open Forum Q & A session. A small number of suggestions for change are set out below. **The member responses are listed in random order.***

- Keep the same format
- Discuss local worries such as parking on pavements and lorries not stopping at mini-roundabouts.
- A different chairman.
- No problem with the format but are meetings necessary?
- I would like the forum to be able to speak their minds, not be led by what the Chair and Vice-Chair have already decided. Topics should be discussed at meetings, not between people before the meeting. I always feel that if someone else brings up something at a meeting, they are not interested.
- More actual sharing of experiences.
- Appoint a chairperson from the locality where the meeting is being held.
- More informal. Not always a police speaker but other community organisations – education, social workers etc.

- More info on crime prevention.
- Open to try something different.

Q5. What topics would you like to see covered?

A large proportion of the suggestions relate to crime prevention matters and safety. One theme that crops up regularly is that members don't seem to know how to contact the Police, which is an area for concern.

- Anything to do with Policing, NHW etc.
- Police training from start to finish.
- Driving in various conditions, i.e. extreme rain, ice, snow.
- Subjects as wide as possible.
- Everything that is important to crime prevention for Bideford.
- How to get in touch with the Police and other community problems.
- Less talking /pontificating by the chairman.
- Only changes in policing practice and details of crimes and scams in the immediate area.
- Thoughts on how we can improve and get the best out of our Watches.
- Ask local people what the topics should be and book an appropriate speaker.
- General community issues i.e. traffic issues, pedestrian safety, refuse, dogs etc.
- More info on crime prevention and less statistics.
- Anything relevant about NHW and crime prevention.
- Police work in rural areas. Speed in villages.
- None Particularly.

Q6. If you do not attend meetings is there a reason?

A wide range of reasons have been put forward for none attendance. Not liking to be travelling at night, especially in the dark, is a common theme and probably reflects the age range of the majority of our members which is only going to get worse with time. This does seem to be somewhat at odds with the preference for meetings to be held in the evenings.

- I am getting older and usually get my information from someone who attends.
- I will not drive distances at night at my age, especially on a dark night.
- I am a private tutor and the majority of my appointments are in the evenings.
- New to area as a CO but will be attending future meetings.
- Evening meetings finish too late and it's not safe to be out then.
- Wednesdays clash with my other commitments.
- I don't drive in the dark any more.
- I joined to keep an eye out locally. I don't need or have time to go to meetings.
- Travelling when it is dark.

- Our meetings clash with other committees that I am involved with.
- Apathy.
- Boredom.
- Usually too far away and am not keen on going to unfamiliar places at night.
- When it is too far to travel.
- They are extremely boring, are a waste of time and appear to be for the chairman's benefit.
- I can only attend Bideford meetings because I rely on public transport.

Q7. What would encourage you to attend meetings?

There don't appear to be any specific fixes listed which would result better overall attendances.

- A well lit parking area.
- Nearer to the East of the Region
- To be more localized and earlier in the day.
- A different chairman
- Earlier meetings – mornings or afternoons.
- One annual meeting or a maximum of one every six months.
- Less central meeting venues.
- The knowledge that we would be able to make up our minds, not led by other's ideas.
- Afternoon meetings which are not too far away.
- If they were closer to my home.
- If members would stop acting as 'wannabe' police officers, it would help a lot.

Q8. What else can be done to get more people to attend?

A wide range of suggestions have been put forward for consideration.

- Have meetings in different localities.
- Keep talks short and to the point.
- Other guests. Maybe businesses, shop-keepers – who can give their thoughts about policing.
- Nothing stranger than folk. Until it affects them, God forbid if it does, then they might attend to see what can be done.
- Telling COs that we will "review their membership" if they don't attend at least 3 meetings per year.
- To have earlier meetings and shared around neighbourhoods.
- A different chairman who is more interpersonal and dynamic.
- Change times of meetings.
- Why? I thought that we needed to be here, keeping a watch. Not be at meetings.
- Less meetings and afternoons rather than evenings.

- For villages on the northern edges of the area could there not be joint meetings with North Devon?
- Putting more emphasis on our Forum co-ordinators from the area where the meeting is held; to get their members interested enough to attend the meeting and try to make them speak their mind. Let them run their own meeting e.g. use their own chairperson. They may have some new ideas.
- The chair to keep remarks short and relevant to that evenings topics – nothing about crime stats and reports as these come by email anyway!
- Demos on DNA and Smartwater etc.

Q9. Generally, is there anything else you would like to add?

There are a wide range of suggestions and comments for us to consider.

- Too much time spent sorting apologies etc. Be more “punchy”, get to the point quicker.
- I hope NHW keeps going, I was active before I was ill.
- Make sure that everyone can hear. Not everyone has good hearing.
- Just keep up the really good work you all do.
- Nothing more than to say how professional and hardworking you all are in running this service.
- Car parking problems caused by some properties having multiple vehicles and no off-road parking.
- Thanks for running things well!
- The general public lack interest and are not supportive of the system.
- Why are officers not paid to attend? Does this reflect Police priorities?
- There are too many meetings and they last too long. This puts people off attending.
- Not sure that meetings are the best way to share. More online sharing would suit me.
- Shorten the meetings to finish at 8.30 pm. Agenda could be a brief intro, speaker, Q & A, thanks and finish.
- NHW needs to redefine itself i.e. role of a coordinator, relationship with other organisations e.g. social, fire, police, councils.
- Not interested in hearing apologies. Who cares if somebody is not there? It just wastes time reading them all out.
- A different format for advising of crimes in the area. The previous system was much better.
- In my opinion one meeting per year would be quite sufficient. We do not need to sit and listen to speakers and I’m sure the police – stretched as they are, have better things to do with their time.

Conclusions

The basic outline of our meetings, with a speaker(s) followed by an open forum, seems to suit most members who do attend the meetings. We still seem to be including too much admin. for many people which needs to be addressed and hopefully this may correct the dissatisfaction that some attendees have expressed. Does the reading-out of 'apologies' serve any real purpose or can this be dispensed with? We will still need to record apologies at our AGMs because these are a formal Forum meeting. We should also keep attendance sheets at all our meetings on the basis that apart from a record of who was at the meeting the list would also be useful should we need to evacuate the building for an emergency. Re-iterating material which has already been mentioned in the weekly Crime Reports seems to be an irritation with some people and perhaps needs to be cut back.

Several comments have been made that we should involve local co-ordinators more, using them to act as chair for the meeting and getting them to raise local matters of concern for discussion. Whilst this is a noble idea, we have tried to do this for the past couple of years but have found that the local area co-ordinators (mainly) are unwilling to take this lead.

There are many comments that there are too many meetings and we need to educate our members that we are not expecting them to attend each and every one. The basic concept being that we hold one meeting in each of our geographic areas of Bideford, Holsworthy and Torrington, plus one other meeting in one of the larger villages which we move around from year to year. This is to enable all members to be able to access a meeting in their own area without too much traveling. Apart from these four meetings we also have an AGM, which is strictly a Forum meeting, with Officer elections being held every other year. In the non-election years the meetings largely mirror a normal open meeting. There is no restriction on members travelling to meetings outside their own specific areas, especially if there is a particular speaker whom they are interested in hearing. We perhaps need to an article to explain the concept of our meetings in one of our newsletters.

A couple of comments were raised concerning not being able to hear what speakers say. As we now have our own PA system which we take to meetings, this should no longer be a problem.

Overall, with so few co-ordinators having responded we still don't know what the majority are looking for in a meeting. We can fine tune our present format, taking on board the comments raised, in the hope that we can regenerate interest and increase attendances. If this fails then there seems little point in continuing to provide the meetings for such low numbers of attendees and we should perhaps investigate other ways of keeping in touch with our members.

Forum - March 2017