

POLICE NOTEBOOK

HELLO THERE. The new 'beat' areas have now been decided. Ascott, Shipton, Milton and Lyneham will have as their ABO (Area Beat Officer) PC Ray Hamilton, currently responsible for the Minster Lovell and Leafield areas. PC Mike Bennett, of Burford and Fulbrook will add Fifield, Bruern, Idbury, Foscot and Bould to his list. The decision to change the Beats was taken following crime figures which showed that The Wychwoods could not maintain its own dedicated Beat Officer as crime is so low.

When PC Bob Salmon left, I took over a reduced area, as he took with him other villages – this was to accord with the Crime and Disorder Act, which seeks to tie up policing areas with parish boundaries. Thames Valley Police has to rely on statistics to maximise available resources. These figures showed our area relatively crime-free and thus it could not be justified to maintain the allocated resource (me!).

Regrettably, I cannot take all the credit for the apparent absence of (detectable) crime! However, the resulting re-allocation should mean that the surviving Beat Officers have an equal amount of crime to sort out! Photographs of my two successors are not yet available, as there is still some re-touching to do! They will doubtless be keeping you all in touch, either through this worthy publication, or local newspapers. They *do* know how lucky they are to be looking after you! Looking at things on the plus side, you are getting two policemen for the price of one – this will have its advantages should a significant problem crop up in which case they intend to work together.

With the festive season fast approaching, a reminder of the dangers of drinking and driving. There is nothing clever in being a potential killer in a car.

Last Christmas Eve, my Sergeant and I were on patrol when we met a vehicle travelling towards us with no lights. After a while it came to a halt, and I arrested the driver for providing a positive breath test. He was three times over the limit. Having left the pub, he saw his car and thought it worth taking a chance driving home, though he was only a few minutes' walk away. He was banned for 30 months.

If you are caught over the limit, you will be dealt with. I have absolutely no worries about dealing with "drink/drivers" – they deserve all they get for the potential misery they may cause. We are not out to spoil your fun, we just ask that you think of the consequences of your actions should you drink and drive – **DON'T!!!!**

One bit of good news is that Mrs Lucy Bull, of Ascott, has made it through the rigorous selection procedure to become a Special Constable – if you wish to follow in her footsteps, please contact us here at Carterton, where you can find out how to join.

Finally, I have enjoyed immensely the privilege of being your Community Policeman for all too short a period. I have been touched by your efforts to keep me here, and I feel I have made many friends (and the odd enemy – which means I must have been doing something right!).

There can't be many places that truly earn the title "Community", but The Wychwoods is surely one of them.

PC Dave Rich.