

# CONNECT

Spring 2026

## News & Views from West Mercia Police Federation

### Inside:

- Ryan's story: frontline assault recovery
- Suicide awareness campaign
- Pay and PRRB update
- Branch secretary Lesley Williams retires
- Community, sport and wellbeing



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## Welcome to the Spring edition of Connect

Welcome to the Spring edition of Connect.

This edition brings together a snapshot of the issues, challenges and achievements that matter most to you, our members. It also marks a period of change, as we say a sincere thank you to Lesley Williams on her retirement after years of dedicated service to both policing and the Federation.

Across these pages, you'll find stories that reflect the realities of modern policing. We continue to push for fair pay and better support for officers, highlighting the growing pressures on the service and the importance of valuing the work you do. Just as importantly, there is a strong focus on wellbeing - particularly mental health - with powerful features that underline why better support and greater understanding are essential.

You'll also read about the risks

officers face, including the devastating impact of assaults on colleagues, as well as the long road to recovery that can follow. These stories are difficult, but they are important, and they reinforce why the Federation exists: to stand alongside you when it matters most.

Alongside this, we highlight the strength within our policing family - from fundraising and awareness efforts to opportunities that bring colleagues together through sport and shared experiences.

This magazine is about you - your work, your challenges and your achievements.

If you have a story you would like to feature in the next issue of the magazine, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you!

Contact the Federation office by emailing: [staff@wmpf.polfed.org](mailto:staff@wmpf.polfed.org)

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## Contact the Federation

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# Introducing your new interim branch secretary

After five years as a workplace representative, Stu Bott is a familiar figure to many. Now he is addressing West Mercia Police Federation members for the first time as interim branch secretary, pledging to represent them with pride in his new role.

Having stepped into the position in recent weeks, Stu says work is already underway to guide the Federation through its next chapter. Taking a break from a busy schedule, he shared his priorities for the role and reflected on his journey in policing so far.

Stu, 47, was first elected to the branch in 2021. His decision to stand was inspired by a fellow Federation representative who supported him through a misconduct case several years earlier. Keen to pass on that support, he wanted to use his experience to help others facing similar challenges.

A police officer since 1998, Stu has also been driven by a desire to give back - particularly by helping younger officers find their feet. His early career saw him move from a Special Constable in West Mercia to the regular service in West Midlands Police in 2000, before returning to West Mercia Police in 2003, where he was posted to Telford, his home town, where he has remained since.

"I'm absolutely honoured to take on this role and grateful to everyone who has supported me - it really does mean a lot," he said.

"This is my first managerial position in policing, but my experience in the Federation over the past five years has prepared me well.

"It's given me a real sense of empathy for colleagues -

something you only truly gain when supporting them through some of the toughest moments in their careers.

"It's also reinforced how important it is for officers to support one another. That's the culture I want to maintain as interim secretary."

Much of Stu's Federation work has focused on conduct, discipline and performance. He has supported officers through a wide range of cases, attended Professional Standards Department hearings, and assisted with probationary matters under Regulations 12 and 13.

This area remains a key concern for him. He has voiced strong support for a proposed 12-month limit on misconduct investigations.

"I believe a 12-month time limit is both necessary and long overdue," he continued.

"I've seen first-hand how stressful and draining these processes can be. Due process is essential, but it must also take officer wellbeing into account."

On mental health, Stu emphasised the importance of support within the Federation.

He said "I want to lead a branch where members feel comfortable contacting the support provided - where no one feels they have to face challenges alone.

"I'm also committed to continuing our push for mandatory recording of suicides and attempted suicides across policing, supporting national efforts on this issue."

A seasoned detective, Stu has built an extensive career at West Mercia Police since transferring back to his

home force. After roles in patrol and firearms in Telford, he moved into CID, where he has worked in both proactive and reactive teams. He is currently part of an organised crime unit.



His career highlights include divisional commendations for investigations into cash-in-transit robberies and other serious cases. Stu will also say meeting his wife at work was a particular high and they have been married for nearly 17 years.

Looking ahead, Stu is focused on strengthening the Federation by empowering its representatives.

He said: "It's been a period of change, but we're working hard to ensure every rep has the tools and support they need. Everyone brings different strengths, and it's about making the most of that.

"I'm committed to learning, sharing knowledge, and making sure our reps are in the best position to support members - because they deserve to be represented properly.

"I'm proud of my career so far, and this role is a real privilege. I'm ready to give it everything I've got and help build a strong future for the Federation."

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# Branch secretary Lesley Williams retires

Celebrating 25 years of service

Branch secretary Lesley Williams has now marked her final day with West Mercia Police, beginning a well-earned retirement.

Having joined the Force in 1999, Detective Inspector Lesley took on the position of full-time Federation representative in 2020. She has since worked tirelessly to support and represent members, specifically as the branch's conduct and post-incident procedure lead.

Although Lesley had hoped for a 'quiet exit', fellow Federation representative Pete Nightingale was keen to recognise her contribution and dedication.

"On behalf of the West Mercia

Federation Branch, I would like to personally thank Lesley Williams for her many years of dedicated service," said Pete.

"Having previously worked within PSD, Lesley's knowledge and experience proved invaluable to our members. She brought insight, professionalism, and a balanced perspective to often complex and challenging matters, and I know she will be greatly missed.

"Lesley built strong working relationships with our legal advisors and was respected for providing fair, pragmatic and realistic advice. The role of a full-time Federation representative is demanding, often carrying significant responsibility and heavy

workloads, and Lesley fulfilled it with commitment and integrity.

"I wish her every success for the future and hope she is able to relax and enjoy a long, happy and healthy retirement."



## Ever thought about becoming a workplace representative? Join us today

Behind every Police Federation stands a vital support network that ensures their voice is heard - a team of workplace representatives.

At West Mercia Police Federation, we currently have two workplace representative roles available.

**Role overview:** As a workplace representative, you will raise concerns, share insights, and help shape policies that impact colleagues' working conditions, welfare, and safety.

This is not a full-time position, it would accompany your day job.

**Location:** We are looking for one in the north of the Force (Telford area) and one in the south (Worcestershire area).

### Key responsibilities:

- Represent colleagues in discussions, negotiations, and decision-making forums
- Advocate for officers' rights, welfare, and professional development
- Contribute to policies that drive positive change within the policing community
- Collaborate with fellow representatives across the Force to address common challenges

### Benefits of the role:

- Make a real difference in the working lives of your colleagues
- Develop leadership, communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills
- Join a supportive network of like-minded officers
- Gain experience in shaping force-wide policies and initiatives

### Who should apply:

- Committed and passionate officers in West Mercia
- Excellent communicators who can effectively represent colleagues
- Leaders who thrive in a collaborative environment and are willing to step up

**Next steps:** Both of these posts will be elected by the membership. If you are interested, please register your interest by getting in touch with West Mercia Police Federation or email interim branch secretary Stu Bott on: [stuart.bott@wmpf.polfed.org](mailto:stuart.bott@wmpf.polfed.org)

Take this opportunity to stand up for your colleagues, influence change, and strengthen policing in West Mercia. Be part of a team that ensures every officer's voice is heard.

# Government urged to act as police pay pressures mount



Interim branch secretary Stu Bott has called on the Government to deliver meaningful change on police pay, warning that continued inaction risks further damaging morale and retention across policing.

Speaking on behalf of West Mercia Police Federation, Stu backed the national submission from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), which sets out the case for a minimum seven per cent annual pay award over the next three years.

The submission highlights the growing gap between the demands placed on officers and the pay they receive, with years of below-inflation settlements contributing to a real-terms reduction in earnings of more than 20 per cent.

It also raises serious concerns about the long-term impact on officer wellbeing, operational effectiveness, and the ability to retain experienced staff.

The PFEW's submission follows: The Government's remit letter to the PRRB, which states that recommendations must reflect affordability within existing funding settlements.

Indications from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) that it would support a 3.5 per cent pay award only if fully funded, reducing to 2.5 per cent if not.

Stu said: "Officers in West Mercia are proud of the job they do, but pride alone does not pay the bills. For too long, police pay has failed to keep pace with both inflation and the increasing complexity of the role.

"What we are seeing now is the cumulative effect of that - experienced officers questioning whether they can afford to stay, and newer recruits facing real financial pressure early in their careers.

"This is not just about fairness, it's about sustainability. If we do not properly value policing, we will struggle to maintain the workforce our communities rely on."

Stu said the Government must now move beyond supportive rhetoric and take decisive action.

"We have heard ministers say they support policing, including comments from the Policing Minister Sarah Jones, but support has to be demonstrated in real terms. Pay is a fundamental part of that.

"Officers are being asked to do more, take on greater risks, and manage increasingly complex situations - all while their pay continues to fall behind. That imbalance cannot continue."

He also echoed concerns raised nationally that limiting pay decisions to existing funding settlements could have serious

consequences.

He continued: "If affordability within current budgets is allowed to dictate outcomes, then we are effectively accepting a continued decline in policing. That is not in the interests of officers or the public.

"Investment in policing should be seen for what it is - an investment in public safety."

The PFEW submission also calls for wider reform of police pay structures, including the introduction of a 'P Factor' to recognise the unique demands, risks and restrictions of the role.

Evidence presented alongside the submission points to mounting pressures within the service, including a workforce with less experience overall, rising mental health-related absences, and consistently high levels of assaults on officers.

Stu ended: "Our members are resilient and committed, but they are not immune to the pressures they face. Pay is not the only issue, but it is a significant one - and one the Government has the power to address.

***"If we want a strong, effective police service in the future, we need to start making the right decisions now."***

# The frontline without any filters': Fed member helps roll out virtual ride-alongs

A workplace representative has shared his delight after becoming one of the first West Mercia Police officers to take part in the Force's brand-new virtual ride-along scheme.

Launched in March, the scheme is set to give the public unprecedented access to frontline policing through body-worn video footage streamed in real time.

It has been designed to offer audiences an even deeper insight into the work of officers out in the Force's communities – by letting the public experience frontline policing remotely, rather than physically joining officers in a patrol car.

The initiative comes after the introduction of in-person ride-alongs last year, which, although they have been successful, come with limitations to what members of the public can attend.

PC Ryan Davies was among those approached to assist with the project's roll-out, as he agreed to wear a dedicated body camera during a shift on neighbourhood duties in Wellington town centre.

The camera captured his every action while media outlets, including the BBC, Hits Radio, the Shropshire Star and Telford Live were invited to tune in and watch.

Speaking after having all eyes on him, Ryan said: "It was certainly a different experience from my usual, but one I very much enjoyed. One of my managers, Inspector Matt Sanders, was involved in the creation of the scheme, and he asked if I would be a part of it.

"I was more than happy to say yes, and I think the shift itself went well. I was a bit conscious of the camera and the livestream, but I was still able to remain fully focused on

the jobs I had at hand and be my normal self at work.

"The footage was well received by the media, as far as I'm aware, so hopefully that will encourage take-up of the scheme and people out there can see what really happens on the frontline - without any filters."

Ryan went on to discuss some of his hopes for virtual ride-alongs, such as a better public understanding of the police stemming from the added authenticity provided by live body-worn footage.

"I'm a neighbourhood officer across Telford, which is where I've lived for most of my life. Because it's not the biggest place, it has that 'everyone knows everyone' feel, and I'm able to communicate with people accordingly on shift," he continued.

"That's the side of policing I love – real conversations and real moments, which aren't polished or scripted. If this new project can show the frontline in that light, then I think it will help the public appreciate the people we are, the job we do and how we interact with our communities.

"Plus, I think these ride-alongs will help answer some questions around what our time gets taken up with on shift and why we can't be at certain jobs straight away. We are under so much demand from multiagency work, for instance, and sometimes we simply cannot be in two places at once.

"For me, shining a light on that reality for officers would definitely be welcome."

The 36-year-old also shared his belief that it will 'only be a matter of time' until the Force's original method of ride-along is overtaken

in popularity by its virtual alternative.

He argued that while the in-person option may feel more immediately exciting, gaining vision to a fuller picture of policing will eventually prove more worthwhile to attendees.

"A lot of the feedback we've had suggests the public are expecting a level of access that the in-person scheme simply can't grant them. I suspect many think they are getting an episode of Police Interceptors, but that just isn't the case.



"Of course, we prioritise threat and harm risk in our work, but we don't want to increase that risk by exposing an audience to it as well."

Rounding off, Ryan, who has recently become a Federation workplace representative, looked to the future of the virtual ride-along project as he encouraged branch members to get involved.

"The plan is to roll out the camera across my division, and I think there are lots of departments it could work well in, like response, firearms, the dog unit and many more," he added.

"Wearing the camera on shift might not be for everyone, but if you do fancy it, I would recommend asking your supervisor about taking part – it's a great initiative which can essentially act as another piece of PPE and ensure the amazing work you do doesn't go unnoticed."



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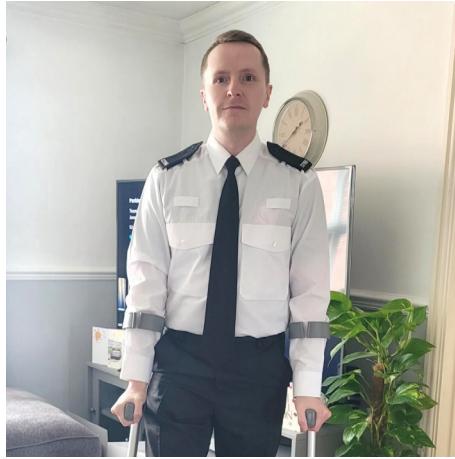
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# 'I thought I was going to die' says officer who was brutally assaulted



**A** West Mercia Police officer who was viciously attacked while on duty in Hereford has spoken about the ordeal that left him with severe physical injuries and long-term mental health issues.

PC Ryan Davis, a response officer in the city, described the brutal assault that took place on Good Friday 2024, as 'the day that my life changed forever'.

Ryan, who was 32 at the time, was working as part of a plainclothes operation aimed at protecting women and girls when he and colleagues intervened in a fight.

A member of the public was being assaulted by father and son Richard and Alex Quinn, who were later found guilty of that offence in September 2024. Two officers were also injured by Richard Quinn's wife, Carolynn Quinn, who was convicted of two counts of assault of an emergency worker.

As Ryan and his colleagues tried to protect the public, the father and son launched a vicious attack on him. The assault left Ryan with a dislocated and broken ankle, a broken lower leg, multiple facial fractures, and damage to his eye.

"Even when I was physically disabled on the ground, they continued to punch, kick, stamp on, and strangle me while my colleagues were being attacked," he recalled.

"I thought I was going to die."

The attack left PC Davis facing months of trauma during physical and mental rehabilitation, including multiple surgeries. He has since struggled with PTSD and chronic pain.

"This horrific attack changed who I am. I have struggled ever since. Their actions put me through so much physical and mental pain. I'm a completely different person now, compared to the one I was before it happened.

***"And all I was trying to do was protect members of the public and prevent harm."***

Ryan has since returned to policing, but in a desk-based role while continuing to recover.

"Being on a desk when I'm such a community-focused person has been mentally draining. I want

to be out helping people again, doing it to the best of my ability," said Ryan, who has had to learn to walk again and has undergone two separate surgeries on his leg, years apart.

"I'm desperate to get back out on the front line again. To be honest, I don't know if I have a future in policing if that's not possible."

On Friday 20 February, Richard Quinn, 49, and Alex Quinn, 20, both of Bridge Street, Hereford, were sentenced at Worcester Crown Court for assault causing grievous bodily harm to Ryan and for the assault of a member of the public.

Richard Quinn, was sentenced to four years and three months. Alex Quinn, was sentenced to three years and ten months at a young offenders' institute.

Commenting on the verdict, Ryan said: "While I am pleased that an element of justice has been handed out, I have already spent the past 21 months recovering from this cowardly and brutal attack - and there is still more recovery ahead. Nobody should go to work and experience anything like this.

"Closure from an incident - will we ever get it? Even now, I still have

nightmares, and the chronic pain is a daily reminder."

Ryan credited the support of West Mercia Police, the Police Federation, and multiple charities for helping him rebuild his life.

He added: "It's been a mammoth care package -charities, organisations, colleagues, welfare officers - they've all helped me."

Activities such as physiotherapy in swimming pools, rehabilitation retreats, and fundraising for police charities like the Blue Lamp Foundation and Thin Blue Line UK have been vital to his recovery.

"Meeting officers who have gone through similar experiences strengthened my outlook and resilience. Opening up about your struggles is how you cope," he said.

"I've been fortunate in the support shown to me, and I'd ask any officer who is suffering, struggling with an injury or who has been assaulted, to reach out.

"Whether via your supervisor, the Federation, Occupational Health, Group Insurance, or to check any of your own insurances or enquire through the incredible police charities that are out there. Because without that support, I wouldn't be where I am now."

Chief Superintendent Edd Williams said: "Police officers demonstrate exceptional courage every day, prioritising public safety over their own.

"It is deeply concerning that individuals like the Quinns carried out such a cowardly and brutal attack on PC Davis. Assaults on our officers will never be tolerated, and offenders will be held fully accountable."

Chief Constable Richard Cooper added: "An attack on a police officer or any emergency service worker is an attack on society.

Injured colleagues need time away from work, affecting our capacity to serve the public.

"West Mercia Police has supported PC Davis throughout his ordeal, and I hope this sentencing serves as a reminder that assaults on officers will never be tolerated."

Lesley Williams, who was the secretary of West Mercia Police Federation at the time of the Quinns' sentencing, said that the attack on Ryan painted a stark picture of the daily risks officers face.

Lesley expressed her growing concern that sentences handed down to those who attack them are failing to reflect the severity of these crimes.

She said: "West Mercia Police Federation supported Ryan throughout this horrifying incident, and our thoughts continue to be with him and his family.

"The Quinns carried out a brutal and cowardly attack on Ryan, who suffered severe injuries for doing his job and protecting the public.

"Ryan demonstrated extraordinary courage at the time of the attack, and continues to show it through his ongoing recovery.

"This case is a stark reminder of the risks our officers face and the unacceptable violence directed at them."

The Federation continues to call for judges and magistrates to deliver the toughest possible sentences for those who assault police officers.

"Attacks such as this on Ryan can't be dismissed as being part of the job," Lesley said, ending: "We don't feel that the sentence handed down reflects the brutality of the attack and its long-lasting physical

and psychological impact.

"We will continue to call for the toughest possible sentences for those who attack our members."

Those concerns are echoed in the latest Police Covenant annual report, which sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring that members of the police workforce 'suffer no detriment' as a result of their role.

## 115 police officers and staff attacked every single day

But the report's findings have also underscored the scale of the challenge facing officers.

Figures within the report show that approximately 115 police officers and staff across England and Wales are attacked every single day.

Describing the situation as unprecedented, Lesley warned that the level of violence should be treated as a national emergency.

Officers are regularly going home injured, both physically and psychologically, and there are fears that continued exposure to violence is 'becoming normalised'.

There is also growing concern that the tone set by public discourse and the criminal justice system influences how seriously these offences are viewed.

Lesley ended: "This is not just about statistics, policy or funding - it is about individuals who risk their safety to protect the public and the lasting consequences when they are attacked.

"The message is clear: violence against officers should never be accepted, excused or minimised, and those responsible must face consequences that reflect the true gravity of their actions."

# Sister of officer backs calls for mandatory recording of suicides

The sister of West Mercia officer Dane Roleston-Lowe has welcomed a national campaign for the mandatory recording of police suicides and attempted suicides.

Nena Hodges said she was '100 per cent' supportive of the calls from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW). She said the absence of mandatory, consistent data leaves forces unable to properly understand the scale of the issue or the factors that place officers at risk.

Nena said: "If these events are not recorded, the police service cannot accurately identify patterns, trends, or risk factors.

"Without this data, forces cannot meaningfully assess what actually contributes to these incidents or develop effective, evidence-based prevention strategies."

Nena said it was important to include attempted suicides within any recording framework. She warned that focusing solely on suicides would risk missing 'critical warning signs where intervention could still be possible'.

"Attempted suicides reveal underlying causes, workplace stressors, mental health barriers and sometimes institutional failures," she said.

"Without acknowledging and analysing those attempts, the service remains ill-equipped to recognise officers at risk or to prevent future incidents."

Dane, who had served with West Mercia Police for more than 28 years, was based at Hindlip.

Back in 2009, Dane had attempted suicide three times. In 2025, the

50-year-old died by suicide, leaving Nena and his family 'heartbroken'.

Nena said Dane was open with his supervisors and praised the support he received from West Mercia Police. But she said that not all officers feel able to show when they are struggling.

"Some people are very good at masking their pain, and no one would ever know," she said.

West Mercia Police Federation is taking a pioneering role on this issue, and has already held a meeting to establish a system for recording suicide within the workplace. Key stakeholders attended, including Federation representatives, the Force's heads of HR and Welfare, Occupational Health, and the NARPO Secretary.

Nena said: "This would all come too late for Dane but anything that can help reduce or stop police suicides has to be welcomed.

"There have been so many since Dane passed away, and knowing the absolute devastation it causes makes me feel so strongly about this.

"Mandatory recording has the potential to prevent others feeling so desperate."

Nena, meanwhile, is due to take on a skydive this weekend in memory of Dane. She is raising funds to support men's mental health initiatives and has been preparing for the event for months.

The jump was due to be held last year but was postponed because of poor weather conditions. It will take place on Saturday 25th April, timed to coincide with Dane's birthday on 26th April.

Nena is doing the jump in aid of the charity Talk Club, which aims to help men improve their mental health. So far, Nena has raised £2,700 through her [JustGiving page](#), which will remain open until she completes the skydive.

Stu Bott, interim secretary for West Mercia Police Federation said: "We are extremely grateful to Nena, for getting behind our calls to make the recording of suicides and attempted suicides in policing mandatory.



"Every case is a tragedy that sends shockwaves through families, forces, and communities - and Dane's was no exception.

"We are proud to be already working hard with West Mercia Police Force, to put essential processes and systems in place to record suicide and attempted suicide. It's vital that we do this, so we can really understand the scale of the issue and what needs to change.

"Nena's strength and determination in raising funds and awareness are incredible and stand as a powerful tribute to Dane.

"On behalf of the branch, I wish her all the best for her upcoming skydive."

# Police cricket club sets sights on 'once in a lifetime' world stage



Players and officials at a police cricket club in West Mercia are preparing for a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' to compete at the World Police and Fire Games in Australia.

Worcester Police Cricket Club has confirmed plans to take part in the games in Perth next year.

The games will be hosted by Western Australia Police and bring together serving and former law enforcement and fire service personnel from across the world. It is one of the largest multi-sport events in the world, attracting more competitors than the Commonwealth Games.

Despite featuring more than 60 sports, cricket has rarely been included in the biennial event since it was first held in 1983. But with the next games being held in Australia, the sport has been included in the schedule. And chair, retired Inspector Mark Chappell said Worcester Police Cricket Club are ready to compete against police sides from across the world.

"It's quite an achievement for a small club like ours," said Mark, who was in charge of local policing in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

"I've been laid up with a knee replacement, so while I'm rehabbing, I've been trying to get

all the organisation in place. "We started planning about six months ago, and it's really brought the club together. It's given everyone a real lift.

"The great thing is we have quite close links with Western Australia Police because we've toured there before and hosted them here, so we'll be looking to develop those and links with others."

Worcester Police Cricket Club was founded as far back as 1933 – though Mark admits that 'no one can be sure of the exact date' – when it began playing in the Worcester Evening League.

The club continues to play in the Evening League, and even holds its record for a first-wicket partnership, an incredible 214 runs in just 14 eight-ball overs in 1986.

It has a proud touring history that includes a memorable visit to Western Australia in 1989, when the team lifted the Cinders Cup.

More recently, the club travelled to Barbados in November 2024, and played a series of T20 fixtures, including a standout victory over the Barbados Police under floodlights, alongside a packed programme of cultural and community activities.

To help fund the trip, the club is lining up a series of events.

They include a community six-a-side cricket day at Stourport Cricket Club on 16 August.

Bewdley Pines Golf Club will host a golf day on 16 October. And the club will also organise a sporting dinner with a guest speaker to be confirmed.

Mark, who is also an international-standard umpire having stood in men's and women's T20 games involving Spain, said: "These things don't come around very often.

"For the club, this really is once in a lifetime opportunity." He added: "It's a difficult world for policing at the moment. This is a chance to bring us all together and show the best of policing and police sport."

Mark said the club was always looking for players to get involved and encouraged male and female Federation members who wanted to play to get in touch. He said: "We're always looking for new players.

"We've attracted three or four new players who have been made aware of the club and we had a couple of ladies join us last year, which is important."

**Email retired Inspector Mark Chappell for more information about joining the club or the tour.**

## Member's incredible fundraising and awareness drive in memory of late brother



**P**C Sian Stockton has raised an astonishing £15,000 for men's health charity Movember after losing her older brother to suicide.

Sian has told how she has turned the personal tragedy of the death of her brother Stu into an awareness-raising campaign to get men talking.

She is a driving force behind West Mercia Police's Movember fundraising to raise money and awareness of men's mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.

Sian, who works in the organised crime management unit, said: "If I can help save one man, my work here is done."

Stu died on New Year's Day in 2021 aged 52. Sian said he had experienced mental health challenges, which only his closest family knew about.

Sian, a West Mercia Police Federation member, said: "Tonguey, as he was known to his friends, was a strong man, a big character, a great lad, always had your back kind of guy.

"He was into his football, went to the pub with the lads, but his

mental health was hidden from the vast majority of his friends."

His difficulties stemmed from a serious assault when he was 21.

Although those responsible were convicted, the impact stayed with him.

In 2020, a series of events compounded his struggles.

The siblings lost their mother on 3 January, Stu's relationship broke down weeks later, and then the country entered the first Covid lockdown in March. Stu worked in demolition and, with all the sites closed, had no work.

"It was just one thing after another and it all impacted him," Sian said. "We'd go for walks and I'd say I was worried about him.

"He'd tell me, that he was heartbroken, not suicidal."

Despite her concerns, Sian believed he had begun to recover. She now feels that period of calm may have been when he had decided to end his life.

The last time they spoke was Christmas Day 2020.

Sian said: "He told me he was

spending the day with a friend. There was no reason to question it."

On New Year's Eve, while out watching the sunset with her husband, she felt something was wrong and tried to call him. There was no answer.

The following day, after contacting friends who had not heard from him, she went to his home with her husband, who is also a police officer, and he found Stu inside.

"I think we both went straight into work mode," Sian said. "That's what we do."

Standing outside the property, she then experienced the situation from the other side, as police colleagues arrived at the scene.

She said: "I've been that police officer on New Year's Day who has gone to families that have lost their loved ones.

"Days like New Year's Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are so impactful.

"The first officer who turned up was the scenes of crime officer, who I know and see every day at work.

## Sian's incredible fundraising

"He looked at me, and it was awful because I could put myself in their shoes, and it's worse when you know the person.

"Then a sergeant turned up, and I knew him. My husband and I were saying we've done this and we've done that, and the sergeant just looked at us, told us we weren't on duty, that this was our personal time."

Covid restrictions meant Stu's funeral was limited, with no wake or large gathering.

"I think his friends really struggled with that," she said. "There wasn't that chance to come together."

Sian decided to donate the funeral collections to Movember to try to help men and to prevent similar tragedies.

"The second I contacted them, it felt like being wrapped in a warm hug," she said. "It became like a second family with a whole shed load of Mo Bros and Mo Sistas."

That support prompted her to do more.

In September 2021, she helped to organise an open-air memorial concert at Cookley Social Club in her brother's memory – despite being unable to attend in person herself after testing positive for Covid.

Sian dialled in via video messaging and recalls the moving moment one man spoke openly about his own struggles for the first time.

She said: "He was one of Stu's close friends and he decided he was going to absolutely pour his heart out about stuff, which he'd never done before.

"The amount of feedback we got from men, that it made it okay, that you could speak to people, and that it made them go to the doctors and seek help for themselves, was incredible. That's when I realised how powerful it could be."

Since then, Sian has organised a series of fundraising events, including gin tasting nights, quizzes and themed social gatherings, raising more than £15,000.

She says her approach deliberately mixes humour with serious messaging.

"Last Movember I wore a moustache every time I went out," she said.

"The Movember before I went to Barbados and wore one the entire journey."

"Someone asks why, and that opens the conversation and gets people talking to you."

Sian has also used her platform to encourage men to check their physical health.

***"We need men to feel comfortable getting checked," she said. "Whether that's testicular cancer, prostate cancer, or just going to the doctor when something's not right."***

Her work was recognised nationally in 2023 when she won a Movember award for Havin' Fun, Doin' Good

"I didn't expect it at all," she said.

"I dedicated it to my brother and all emergency services, the police, fire service, paramedics and the NHS, coast guard, the RNLI, because what we deal with isn't normal".

Sian also spoke openly about her own mental health following her brother's death.

After returning to work, she experienced what she describes as a delayed response to trauma. "I had this funny bobbling going on inside me," she explained.

"I didn't know what it was and

ignored it.

"It was my brain saying I shouldn't be there, because I was going into work and reading about the accidents and baby deaths and people losing their life to suicide. It kept on going, filling my pot up, until one morning I was at work and I just started to cry and couldn't stop crying."

Sian started trauma therapy, which also brought back memories from earlier in her career.

"It gave me an insight into my own mental health, and the ability to say that I've been there," she said.

"It made me realise how much we carry, and that it's okay to say you're not okay."

Despite approaching retirement in the summer, Sian has no plans to stop fundraising. Future events include a themed shanty and rum evening at Wolverley Memorial Hall in October and her annual New Year's Day quiz.

She credits her fundraising success to the support of colleagues, friends, and family. "I couldn't do it without them," she said. "They're there every time I ask."

A key focus of her campaigning will always be awareness raising

**For more information about future events, contact Sian by emailing [allaboutthetache@gmail.com](mailto:allaboutthetache@gmail.com)**

and encouraging men to open up. She said: "Please talk. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Check in on your mates. If they say they're fine, ask them again. Fine is an easy word to throw out there, and I'll say I really don't like that word and try to get the conversation going. You can use it as a key to open the door."

"If we all do that, it's a conversation that really might make a difference to someone."



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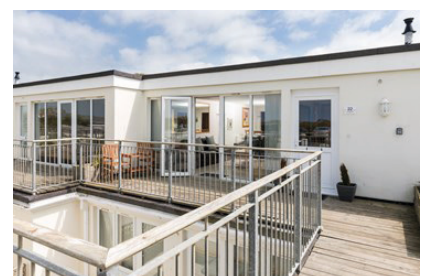
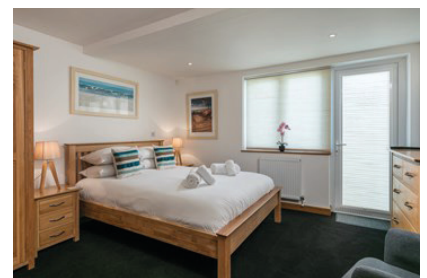
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