

Chief Constable fortnightly update to the Police and Crime Commissioner - 9 May 2025 [#434855348]

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Dear Police and Crime Commissioner, Philip Wilkinson,

This week marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day - a significant moment in our shared history when, on 8 May 1945, the guns fell silent and the Second World War came to an end in Europe.

This milestone offered us all the opportunity to pause and reflect on the immense sacrifices made by a generation in the name of freedom, peace and hope for a better future.

VE Day reminds us not only of those who served, but also of the resilience of communities at home – families who endured loss, hardship and uncertainty with extraordinary courage. As members of the policing family, we carry forward that same spirit of service and unity.

Across the county, our Neighbourhood Policing Teams took part in local commemorations to mark the occasion and positively engage with our communities. As part of the UK's VE 80 campaign, over a thousand beacons and lights of peace were lit across the country and I was honoured to attend the lighting of the beacon in Malmesbury.



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Fostering ever-closer relationships with our communities is central to my commitment to Keeping Wiltshire Safe.

Part of this is around ensuring our communities are fully appraised of key operational activity which has taken place in their neighbourhoods.

Over the last week, there have been several significant matters which I would like to update our communities on.

Last Saturday, a highly public arrest was made in Swindon town centre as part of a targeted, pre-planned operation relating to a Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) investigation. Across the country, a total of five Iranian nationals were arrested on suspicion of preparation of a terrorist act. As part of the investigation, addresses in Swindon were searched and cordons were put in place to protect the integrity of ongoing enquiries.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the officers and staff who have continued to support our communities through regular, high visibility patrols in Broadgreen and the town centre. These areas will likely have an ongoing police presence as the CTP investigation progresses and I would like to thank the local residents for their patience and understanding while this continues.

Investigation updates will be shared on the new section of the Metropolitan Police website, which you can view [here](#).

Our communities living close to Salisbury will also have seen a significant policing presence last Saturday following the tragic murder of Darren Hughes in Longhenge.

Specialist officers are continuing to support Darren's family through this immensely difficult time and all our thoughts are with them.

Following swift enquiries, Alfie Miller, 21, of Willow Drive in Durrington, was arrested at the scene, charged with murder the following day and appeared in court on May 6. He is next due at Winchester Crown Court on July 22.

Whilst there was no risk to the wider public relating to this incident, it has understandably caused significant distress and concern to the local community. The heightened police presence which remained in the area throughout the week has now subsided and I would like to thank residents for their co-operation with officers during the early stages of the investigation. Their flexibility and understanding enabled officers to preserve key evidence and undertake searches of the area

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The conduct of police officers has been subject to national debate this week after the Government announced new rules relating to the dismissal of officers found guilty of gross misconduct.

Under the new rules, which will come into force from May 28, a presumption of dismissal will be created for proven gross misconduct, which means there will be a clear expectation that officers will be sacked unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Government's announcement can be found [here](#).

In the last two weeks, two Wiltshire Police officers have been dismissed for gross misconduct:

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On April 28, PC Gabriella Gilchrist was dismissed from the organisation after an independent panel found that her actions breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour for police officers in respect of Orders and Instructions, Honesty and Integrity, and Discreditable Conduct. You can read the full outcome of the hearing [here](#).

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On April 29, Detective Sergeant Gareth Snoad was dismissed after being convicted of being drunk and disorderly in a public place following an incident in Liverpool. You can read our full statement on this hearing [here](#).

Our communities can find out more about our misconduct processes, see upcoming hearings and read misconduct hearing outcomes on [this section](#) of our website.

In addition to these hearings, a former Wiltshire Police officer, Callum Denley, was sentenced on May 2 after pleading guilty to five charges relating to indecent images. He was given a 10-month custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, given a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for 18 months and will be placed on the Sex Offenders Register for 10 years.

Denley resigned from the organisation after his arrest, having been immediately suspended as soon as we became aware of his offending.

I am sure our communities share my concern relating to all three of these cases. Wiltshire Police will continue to robustly tackle any officer, staff member or volunteer who does not behave with the highest possible standards, and we will continue to provide updates to our communities where we have held people to account.



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In stark contrast, I wanted to end my letter to you this fortnight by sharing two positive updates which highlight the very best of our organisation.

Firstly, I wanted to share the incredible news that the Wiltshire Police ICT team recently won a global award for their harnessing of robotics to improve our data quality processes. Our Robotics Team won the Rising Star award in the SS&C Blue Prism Customer Excellence Awards held in New York – beating competition from around the world.

This award illustrates our commitment to harnessing the very latest robotics technology to help us improve the quality of our data. This, in turn, helps provide us with a much clearer understanding of how people use our services and how our officers and staff are using our systems to best benefit victims.

It is also improving our communications with the public when they contact us – for example, the use of robotics to send text messages when someone abandons a 101 call.

Well done to all those recognised in these global awards.

Finally, last Friday, 13 of our Police Cadets and four Cadet leaders took part in the ‘Doorway SleepOut’ event in Chippenham to help raise money and awareness of the challenges faced by people who are affected by homelessness.

Our Cadets slept outside in sleeping bags and have so far raised £1,300 for the Doorway charity. I would like to congratulate all those who participated in this important fundraising event. You can find out more about Doorway [here](#).

Kindest regards,



Catherine Roper

Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police



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