

The editorial for this newsletter is primarily to formally announce a new LRALC project with Leicestershire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Rupert Matthews. The project will cover both Leicestershire and Rutland.

As an organisation created by parishes for parishes, LRALC is always on the look-out for projects and services it can introduce that address matters which are of importance to its member councils. It is often said in jest, though with an element of truth, that there are 3 issues which are always near the top of the list of issues that vex local councils, namely planning, crime, and dog mess. Clearly, the police have a role to play in at least one of these issues, and from my experience here at LRALC during the last 12 years, policing matters are of virtually unanimous interest to our members. In addition, the law places a statutory duty on parish and town councils to consider the impact of all their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area, under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

With this in mind, LRALC approached Rupert Matthews, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, with a view to initiating a project between the police, LRALC, and local councils in our area. Rupert is also a parish councillor, and was very receptive to our approach, and following further discussion, we are now able to announce a partnership project which is open to all local councils in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Our new “Police Liaison Representative” (PLR) scheme is NOT intended to duplicate existing schemes and avenues for police liaison, rather to put in place a framework that formalises an area where there is currently a mish-mash of approaches, most of which are informal. The PLR scheme is intended to create a formal two-way communication route between the force and local councils on strategic policing issues, with a view to improving awareness of strategic policing issues within local councils, and of strategic crime matters effecting local councils within the force. It is not intended just to be a talking shop, but to produce beneficial outcomes that address the issues raised wherever possible.

Some key points about the project:

- This is a scheme aimed at your council as a local authority and corporate body that has a statutory role to play in relation to crime and disorder. It is not about individual very local parish policing issues, raised by the public, or you as councillors or clerks (e.g., anti-social behaviour in a specific part of a specific parish). There are already structures and processes in place to raise such issues, e.g., Home | Police.uk (www.police.uk), and we know many of you choose to raise such issues with the police on behalf of your parishioners. This scheme is about you as a council raising matters of concern to your council.
- There will be an annual PLR Conference where all PLRs from local councils will be invited to attend an event at police HQ in Enderby (venue tbc) with an agenda that reflects both parish and police priorities. We aim to hold the first event in early autumn, and it will act as a launch event for the project. We'd therefore suggest that all councils add this item to their next council agenda in order to decide who to appoint as PLR.
- There will be a new periodic PLR newsletter sent to all parishes throughout the year, and occasional urgent emails about specific strategic issues.
- The scheme will ask all 197 parish and town councils in Leicestershire and Rutland to formally appoint someone to the PLR role for their council. This can be a councillor, or a clerk. However, as it 3 may take some time for all councils to do this, for the sake of ensuring comms are received from the

outset of the project, we will default to treating the clerk as the PLR until such a time as you instruct us otherwise (details of how to do this will follow in the next few weeks). This will not place any duties on the clerk other than acting in their normal single point of contact role.

- Comms will be carefully managed and will not result in daily updated pinging into the PLR's email inbox. To emphasise, these will solely deal with strategic policing issues, and not daily operational issues.

As much as we'd like to claim this project came solely from LRALC, our colleagues in Northamptonshire already have a similar scheme in place, which has proved very successful, and we are confident that this project will be beneficial to all organisations involved in it, particularly our parishes. Examples of strategic issues successfully dealt with through the scheme on Northants are a new Roads Policing Team in Northamptonshire, funding for Neighbourhood Police Teams so to increase the number of officers working at community level, and the kind of crime stats which parishes find useful and that the police can provide.

At this stage, the above is simply to announce the project, and you do not need to do anything other than add the PIR scheme to your next council agenda. A stand-alone email will follow in the next couple of weeks which will provide more detail and allow you to start the process of registering the PLR for your parish. Finally, a separate issue which has risen its head a few times recently is around councillor decision making.