

SPECIAL IMPACT



THE VOICE OF THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

SPECIAL EDITION - COVID-19 | JULY 2020



**FOCUS ON THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY
CONTRIBUTION THROUGHOUT COVID-19**

WELCOME TO THE SPECIAL IMPACT COVID-19 SPECIAL EDITION

A TOTAL OF 1,343,802 HOURS
CONTRIBUTED BY THE
SPECIAL CONSTABULARY
NATIONALLY SINCE LOCKDOWN

THE SPECIAL
CONSTABULARY IS A
VERY UNIQUE AND EXTRA
SPECIAL GROUP OF
PEOPLE, WHO LIKE THEIR
REGULAR COUNTERPARTS,
STEP FORWARD TO BE
COUNTED AND MAKE A
REAL DIFFERENCE ON THE
LIVES OF THE COMMUNITIES
WHERE THEY LIVE.
SPECIAL CHIEF OFFICER
MARC KASTNER
DEVON & CORNWALL POLICE

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK AND
RECOGNISE THE SPECIAL
CONSTABULARY WHO HAVE
CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME
TO SUPPORT POLICING IN AN
EXCEPTIONALLY CHALLENGING
PERIOD
ACC ANDREW SLATTERY
CUMBRIA POLICE
NPCC REGIONAL CIP LEAD FOR
THE NORTH WEST & NPCC LEAD
FOR EMPLOYER SUPPORTED
POLICING

I WANT TO EXPRESS MY
GRATITUDE FOR THE
DEDICATION AND PUBLIC-
SPIRITED ACTIONS OF EACH
AND EVERY ONE OF YOU -
THANK YOU - AND PLEASE TAKE
CARE OF YOURSELVES, YOUR
FAMILIES AND EACH OTHER.
CHIEF CONSTABLE LISA
WINWARD
NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE
NPCC NATIONAL LEAD FOR
CITIZENS IN POLICING

THE SPECIAL
CONSTABULARY SUPPORT
AT THIS CRITICAL TIME HAS
BEEN OVERWHELMING AND I
WOULD LIKE TO PERSONALLY
THANK EACH AND EVERY
ONE OF YOU.
DCC RICHARD DEBICKI,
NORTH WALES POLICE &
NPCC LEAD FOR THE SC
NATIONAL STRATEGY

Front Page:
South Wales Special Constabulary



We had so many articles submitted for the summer edition, which I thank everyone for, that we have decided to produce a Special Covid-19 Edition to

compliment the Summer 2020 Edition.

I know I speak on behalf of many people in policing, and I am sure the public too, when I say that, as usual, in times of national crisis, the Special Constabulary have stepped up to support policing and their communities selflessly, showing astounding commitment and dedication.

The following articles show just a small sample of how our Special Constables are contributing to policing during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Tina Shelton

Editor



CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY COVID-19 CONTRIBUTION

The Cheshire Special Constabulary have dedicated over 15,000 hours and made 70 arrests to protect communities across the county during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

There are two operations which the Special Constabulary have been leading on – Operation Business and Operation Braille.

Operation Business has seen Special Constables conducting proactive patrols around schools and business premises across each Local Policing Unit area, where they have been working to deter, disrupt and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Since Friday 17 April, a total of 968 business premises have been visited and more than 3,750 leaflets have been dropped. The Operation, led by Special Inspector Lewy Lewtas who, while continuing to work from home for Lloyds Bank, has been working with regular and Special Constabulary colleagues to co-ordinate resources that deter criminals from targeting schools and businesses across the county.

Operation Braille has seen the Special Constabulary's Roads and Crime Unit target drivers under the influence of drink and/or drugs and criminals who are using Cheshire's roads to transport drugs.

The key focus of the Operation saw Special Constable's stop and engage with drivers during the lockdown. Leading the Operation, Special Inspector Simon Dixon said: "Working as a team of officers dedicated to the Roads and Crime Unit this

has been a great opportunity to show how we can, as Special Constables, work to support specialist teams, on key but very specific targeted criminality."

The Operation, led on the ground by Special Constable (SC) Leon Boland, has seen 333 vehicles stopped, one arrest for possession with intent to supply, three arrests for drink/drug driving, three vehicles seized for no insurance and nine Traffic Offence Reports issued.

Chief Inspector Gareth Wrigley of Cheshire Constabulary's Road and Crime Unit said: "I am extremely proud of the Roads and Crime Unit Specials for the management and planning of Operation Braille, this is a tasking that came to me and required servicing. Special Inspector Simon Dixon grabbed the mantle and working with SC Leon Boland planned our policing response. The Operation was an excellent example collaborative working between Local Policing Unit's and the Roads and Crime Unit. We have seen more than 580 hours worked on Operation Braille by our dedicated and professional Special Constables.

"The results of the Operation speak for themselves. The most important thing for me is that the public were very supportive of this Operation and the feedback we have received has been outstanding."



Cheshire's Special Constabulary Chief Officer Celvyn Jones said: "I am immensely proud of every member of the Cheshire team who have committed hours during this

challenging period. Operation Business and Braille have been a great success. It has seen fantastic leadership and ownership from the Specials Team in terms of planning, organising and providing a visible presence to our business and education community. The impact of the Operations speak for themselves in terms of the numbers but more importantly the team have played a key role in providing that visible, reassuring presence that the public expect.

"Whilst this article is about Cheshire Special Constabulary, I do want to take this opportunity to recognise Special Constabulary colleagues from around the UK who have put themselves in harm's way to keep our public safe. Thank you also to their families for the support they provide. The Special Constabulary as a whole have provided vital support to our regular colleagues and communities.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the skills, leadership and support the Specials provide are a key ingredient to policing in the UK."

SOUTH WALES SPECIAL CONSTABULARY CONTRIBUTION



South Wales Police decided it was even more important that National Volunteers' Week was celebrated this year given the current Covid-19 Pandemic. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the valued support of Volunteers throughout the year, and to say thank you for the ongoing volunteering which has increased since the Pandemic began.

Marking this important week was achieved mainly online with South Wales Police Chief Constable Matt Jukes, Police and Crime Commissioner and The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Lead for Volunteering Alun Michael and Chief Officer of the Special Constabulary Dale Cartwright joining

forces to thank all volunteers via letter, video and remote dial up.

As a part of National Volunteers' Week, Special Constable Lauren Ashcroft represented the Special Constabulary, and was interviewed to tell her own story, about why she wanted to become a Special Constable, and why she enjoys it so much.

Lauren Ashcroft started as a Special Constable on November 11 last year and attended her passing out ceremony on 12th March 2020, and it has been non-stop since then.

The organisation Lauren works for manages safeguarding software and like so many organisations, has had to temporarily close during lockdown. With the organisations' blessing, Lauren decided to offer more of her time to South Wales Police Special Constabulary and has been working full time hours. During Covid-19 Lauren has supported officers on response, who attend emergency 999 calls and respond to Covid breaches, helping to ensure people stay safe and abide by government guidance.

When asked why she wanted to join the Force as a Special Constable in particular Lauren said: "It has always been my dream to be a regular Police Officer. I am passionate about helping people and giving something back to my local community, and know I want to help make a difference, and keep people safe. I have three children and had the oldest when I was very young so it hasn't been the right time, but now they are all older, I feel it is the right time, and what better way to get an insight into policing than to join as a volunteer, as a Special Constable. My bosses were so supportive of my



signing up, not only as some are ex-police officers, but also because they know how much I want to join the Force. Since then, it has been like a roller coaster, it's been so busy, but I have loved it, I feel it has helped confirm that I am on the right track, and that it is something I should have been doing all along."

"IT'S A SCARY TIME FOR EVERYONE CONCERNED, AND BEING ON THE FRONT LINE IS A SCARY DECISION TO MAKE, AND I DIDN'T DO IT ALONE, I SPOKE ABOUT IT FOR SOME TIME WITH MY FAMILY FIRST BEFORE OFFERING MY FULL TIME SUPPORT TO THE FORCE, BUT THEY AGREED AS THEY KNOW HOW MUCH I WANT TO DO IT. THEY SAID THEY CAN SEE HOW HAPPY I AM COMING BACK HOME EVERY DAY."

Since 1st April and going full time, Lauren has in her words "Hit the floor running", and has contributed 140 hours a month, she said: "Working on response I found I was mainly responding to calls relating to Mental Health and Domestic Violence, but at least I

knew I could leave that call knowing that the person in need had access to the right support services."



Her work mainly focussed on lockdown breaches, she says things have calmed down now but recalls the initial stages of lockdown when she had to help break up street and house parties, when social distancing was not being respected. Thinking of the safety of her family, and of the families of those she had to engage with, the invisible virus was her main concern, she said: "We are all in the same boat, we don't want to be the people to break up anyone's fun, but we are doing it for a reason, and essentially, it is to save lives."

In her own time and in more typical times, Lauren likes to spend time with her family, whether it's in the house, in the garden or walking and swimming. Lauren was due to celebrate her 30th birthday in May and had such plans, but they were naturally cancelled, and so she intends to celebrate in her words 'big time' for the next two years, when this is all over.



undertaking Coronavirus patrols, reassuring the public and helping engage and educate our local community.”

Ian LeSueur, still working full time as a police dispatcher, as well as giving duty as a Special Constable, said: “We take pride in the fact that even though we are volunteers, we continue to feel a real part of the Williton/Minehead Constabulary family and treated as equals.”

He and colleagues regularly deploy to incidents including community patrols, neighbour disputes, concern for welfare, harassment and drink or drug driving.

Special Sergeant Simon Bale MBE said: “We have helped in ensuring the lockdown has been successful whilst also dealing with ongoing crime and anti-social behaviour issues. The team of Special Constables here have also made numerous arrests in the last few weeks. We are part of the local community and are all proud to serve all those who live here.”

Williton Patrol Sergeant Tim Newman said: “Since the start of the Coronavirus lockdown our Special Constables’ already significant contribution of time has redoubled and they have all been volunteering long hours to support colleagues. This support has helped to make residents feel more secure as well as deter and detect crime – their efforts are greatly appreciated by all.”

David Farrell, Chief Officer of Avon and Somerset Special Constabulary says: “Special Constables have always risen to the challenge, given of their very best and supported their local communities. The current Pandemic is no different – we are seeing our Specials giving of their time freely, in increased numbers and with many additional hours. They do so out of a sense of pride and commitment to duty; to each and every one of them I want to express a heartfelt “Thank You” for all that you do. It’s really appreciated.”



AVON AND SOMERSET

are really grateful to their Special Constables who have been putting in extra hours to help out during the current Coronavirus situation.

During April their Special Constables gave 7,636 hours of their time. That’s equivalent to 48 extra police officers! This exceptional contribution is an increase of 95% compared with April 2019.

Avon and Somerset Assistant Chief Constable Stephen Cullen says: “The national Coronavirus emergency has highlighted the importance of volunteering and caring for the wider community. We always value the contribution of our Special Constabulary but over the last six weeks, volunteers in our Specials Team have responded in speculator style to help bolster our policing response. Volunteers have always played an important role in policing, but never has there been a more important time for the police and the public to work alongside each other, reaffirming our legitimacy and the fundamental principle that we police by consent. The individual and collective commitment and sacrifice over recent weeks has been extraordinary. I would like to say thank you on behalf of everyone across Avon and Somerset.”

A team of seven Special Constables volunteer from Williton Police Station, and contributed 662 hours between them in one month – the equivalent of four extra full time officers.

Team member Paul Andrews has been putting himself on the front line while unable to carry on working as self-employed driving instructor during the Coronavirus crisis.

Ryan Nicholas, furloughed from his engineering day job, said: “I decided I wanted to help the local community so have been parading for duty and

CLEVELAND POLICE



Like many key workers, no matter how tired she is at the end of a 12-hour shift, Special Constable Laura Radigan must now complete a new routine before bed.

At the doorway to the house she shares in the Yarm area with her parents, two sisters and her niece and nephew, she

carefully gets changed, puts her uniform in a bag and straight in the wash and wipes down everything she’s touched.

It’s all part of policing during a Pandemic and the 30-year-old, who was furloughed from her day job as a receptionist, has now been giving more of her time than ever to help policing during Covid-19.

During April Laura racked up 70 hours service, double the 35 she usually volunteers alongside her full-time job.

Laura, who has been a Special Constable for five years, says she had to have a ‘serious chat’ with her family about her decision to keep volunteering.

She said: “As I live with my extended family it was something we had to talk about and everyone had to be happy that I’d had things in place, like getting changed at the door, so that I wasn’t putting them at risk by bringing anything home.

“For me though this is something I really wanted to do. I can’t do my paid job and I can see that we’re needed and that we are an extra resource to keep that frontline going. I know it sounds corny but it makes me happy that I’m helping.

“The jobs that I feel most proud of are the ones where you can see you’ve done something for a victim. Last week someone said thank you after I’d dealt with something and that does make you swell with pride.”

Laura is used to busy 12-hour shifts in Middlesbrough and says she loves the variety of the role although it’s the unexpected that can mean her supportive family sometimes worry.

She said: “My mum always says the same thing to me, ‘stay safe, be careful.’ And that’s what we’re all trying to do now.”



Special Constable Andrew Holliday has volunteered more than 87 hours to policing in April, alongside continuing to go to work in an essential role.

Andrew combines his job as a Control Room Operative for Darlington Borough Council with 12-hour shifts volunteering alongside Response

Officers in Middlesbrough.

An average month will see him volunteering more than 50 hours but during the Pandemic that has increased.

Andrew said: “It’s a new challenge, policing during lockdown, during a Pandemic that we’ll look back on in years to come. Yes, we all recognise we are putting ourselves at risk to some extent but I’m part of a uniformed service, that’s what we do, we police through thick and thin, whatever the challenge.”

The 33-year-old from Thornaby, who joined as a Special Constable in 2009, is passionate about public service.

“I’ve done different jobs that all link to each other, including teaching and I think it’s about the fact that I like to see the positive contribution in what I’m doing.”

During his decade-long service Andrew knows he has made a difference and on one particular occasion that was clear.

“The incident I’m most proud of is when we went into a house after a report of a disturbance and as soon as we arrived I saw a guy walk towards another person with a bottle raised above their head. I was able to intervene and stop what would have been a very serious assault and we made an arrest. I think on occasions like that, when you can see what might have happened - if you hadn’t been there at the right time - you do feel proud.”

In 2019 Andrew gave 888 hours to the Special Constabulary and his commitment continues.



Devon & Cornwall Police

June 1 to 7 saw National Volunteer Week celebrate that army of big-hearted people who give up their own time – and it was rounded off with National Specials Weekend, which took place on June 6 and 7. It is a moment to recognise that there are some extraordinary people in the community who chose to join frontline Police Officers, for no pay, but purely because they believe they can help make a positive difference to their communities.

Ami Gasson, who operates as a Special Constable out of Crownhill Police Station in Plymouth said she effectively acted as a full time officer during March and April, joining B-Section response officers.

The 31-year-old, who works for Openreach, said that during the earlier period not much changed regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic and policing was very much about just getting on with the job in hand.



Special Constable Ami Gasson
with a police drugs dog

She said: “Early March, there was no PPE being used at that point. I think in one week I was in and out of about 13 houses. I arrested someone, searched someone for drugs – you can’t get much closer than that. Some points I was comforting children while the searches were being done.

“I’ve been on the beat for two years, since I completed my training.

“When I joined I was at EE call centre and they used to give us three days a year to volunteer at local charities as team-building, so I’d volunteered at Dartmoor Zoo, St Luke’s Hospice and the Breakthrough Trust where they help children who don’t fit into mainstream school.

“I really enjoyed the volunteering aspect and I wanted to do something in my own time. I had two friends going through the application process at the time for the Special Constabulary and it was not something I had ever thought of before and I’d had no interaction with police my entire life, apart from giving a statement to something I witnessed.”

Ami said she applied three years ago and one day in July got invited to a fast-track interview process which included a fitness test and a swim test, followed by an interview board and was accepted the very same day – still with wet hair!

Along with lots of reading to learn about police there was the obligatory practical training in Exeter, but due to snow instead of training every other weekend they were called in for each and every weekend.

She said: “I pretty much spent the entirety of April working Monday to Friday and then train all weekend. I don’t think I had a day off for 27 days in a row! It was hard, but when I passed out in the May, it was so worth it. It was fantastic to go through all that - and then you were out on the street because there’s only so much you can learn in the classroom.

“You can’t replicate scenarios of what you’re going to come across – you don’t know what you’re going to get until you get there. And what you hear on the radio isn’t necessarily what you get when you arrive. Every day is different.”

Like a lot of Special Constables, Ami is able to bring her own set of skills to the fore. Working in sales and customer services may not seem like a superpower – until you realise that the role means dealing with confused, angry or exasperated customers on an hourly basis, resolving their problems and ensuring they are happy – or at least

not negative – of the service.

“That’s what I like about Devon and Cornwall Police’s style. The things that Specials can bring are the outside knowledge as well. A few weeks back we had a case of someone at another person’s front door saying their ex-partner was stealing money from the joint account. The officers were dealing with it the best way possible, but there was something the person said about the account being closed...”

From her own experience working with bank accounts and customer transactions, Ami was able to inform the alleged victim that it was very likely the transfer to an account that didn’t exist meant it was “still in the ether”.

“It’d been escalating for an hour and the mum and dad had turned up and it was out in the street – and this is during lockdown – and I said what they needed to do was first to call the bank, give them the details and they will find the money and if they can’t find your money then they will transfer you through to the fraud team, meaning it would be a civil issue, not a police issue.

“When I got back into the [police] car the other officer said ‘I had no idea that could even happen’. It just de-escalated the situation within about five minutes. I wouldn’t have had that knowledge if I didn’t have my job.

“There have been a few scenarios where I have been able to de-escalate a situation just through my own personal knowledge.

“I work for Openreach now and one of the big things we’re discussing and learning about within the company is the 5G conspiracy and our poor engineers are not even working on 5G, they’re on fix networks, working on cabinets and things and yet they are getting abused – a lot.

“We’ve got engineers working on six networks, fibre, copper, and they’re being attacked physically, verbally, all because of this 5G and people’s belief that it causes Coronavirus. So when we’ve had briefings I’ve been able to bring in my knowledge from my work world into the briefing room of what’s been happening in other areas of the country and how the police have been dealing with it.

“Specials bring in a broader range of knowledge and it can be quite useful.”

While she recognises that some people sign up so that they can eventually become a regular Police

Officer, Ami firmly believes she will be a “career Special”.

“I enjoy the freedom of working in the private sector,” she said, “and then I can Special as and when.”

Her own time averages out at between 25 and 30 hours a month, and last year she racked up 321 hours. In March she put in 52 hours – but in April she turned out an impressive 104 hours.

She said: “I don’t know a Special Constable who isn’t work orientated, who isn’t keen, and who goes in for a quiet shift. If I’m on to do a 9pm to 7am I don’t want there to be no work. For me, I like busy shifts; I like it back to back work. It keeps me up to date with the law and things. You want to learn the most you can.”

Fortunately, Ami’s company is “massively supportive” of her volunteering and she is granted a certain amount of paid leave a year to use for her training days.

“I do a lot of Friday evenings and weekends and I always do a full shift. I don’t like to pop in for a few hours and then leave someone single crewed.”

Ami’s experience of being a project manager at Openreach and a Special Constable has seen her story shared on the company’s external website and has seen other staff across the country contact her for advice on how to sign up to becoming a Special.

She said: “Openreach have been very supportive of people doing this if they want to and I’ve now been supporting people through the interview process all over the country.”

Openreach have been a partner in the Employer Supported Policing Scheme since 2015, and support their employees that are Special Constables with an additional 10 days paid leave a year to volunteer in policing.

openreach



GMP SPECIAL CONSTABLE CORONAHEROES



Special Constable Thomas Stanford of the Bolton District was attested as a Special Constable in July 2019. He works in the construction industry, but due to the guidance around Covid-19, has been unable to work since lockdown commenced.

Instead, Thomas has been dedicating his time to volunteer a significant amount of hours each week, and has given up over 500 hours of his time since lockdown to support GMP. Thomas said: "I always wanted to be in the Police and volunteering as a Special Constable has given a great insight into the responsibilities and demand Police Officers face on a daily basis. I feel extremely grateful my role enables me to help local communities, and support individuals who have been victims of crime. Last week I attended a burglary and we were able to return the stolen property to the rightful owners, and moments like this are great for all involved. It is always good to get a positive result, and I feel really proud I get to play a role in this. I have since applied to be a full time officer, and have been offering as much time as I can since I am unable to work at the moment to try and help with the increased demand we are facing."



Specials Constable Troy Steggles works in construction and has been furloughed since lockdown commenced. During this time, he has

given over 500 hours of his time to volunteer with GMP, working as many shifts as he is able, to help and support his local community across the Tameside District.

Troy said: "I signed up as a Special Constable with GMP as I wanted to give something back, and having lived in Tameside all my life, and now I get to offer support in my local community and help where needed. I work with a great team, and it has been really inspiring to see how everyone comes together to help each other, and ensure we can do the best for our local community. I have learnt a lot since I joined GMP, and even more so since working more or less full time hours since I have been furloughed from my job."



"I feel really valued by the team I work with and by the public. When out on patrol, we get kids waving at us and it makes me feel extremely proud to be in my uniform and know I am doing my bit to give something back."

Special Sergeant David Rudd of the Wigan District is the Head of Design and Technology at a High School in Wigan. Since the lockdown period, he has swapped classroom patrols, for Covid-19 patrols on the streets of Greater Manchester, dedicating his time to his voluntary role.

David has given over 500 hours since lockdown, and his daughter also volunteers as a Special Constable for Merseyside Police. He said: "I wanted to volunteer as a Special Constable to use my experience as a teacher and parent to help the public and also for personal development to expand my knowledge, and do something for the good of my local community."

"I have been setting my pupils work from home, so this has given me much more free time which I have been able to dedicate towards the privilege of supporting my colleagues at GMP."

"I will always be grateful for the opportunities I have already been given during my time as a volunteer. These include, passing various driving qualifications and assisting on a firearms trainer's course. I have benefitted by learning from the incredibly dedicated people I volunteer alongside. GMP has given me more opportunities than I ever anticipated, and I would say to anyone thinking of doing it, just do it, you won't regret it!"



A SPECIAL DAY TO MARK 5,800 HOURS OF LOCKDOWN SUPPORT FOR DORSET CONSTABULARY

Dorset has 126 Special Constables and they have been out in force since the beginning of Covid-19 lockdown, giving their support to regular officers and playing their part in making communities safe and secure.

Since 23rd March 2020, Dorset Special Constabulary volunteered 5,837 hours – an increase of 42% in the same period in 2019.

Some Special Constables in Dorset, who have been furloughed or made redundant from their day jobs, are volunteering over 60 hours a month to support their full-time colleagues. They have been a vital resource as the Force continues to respond to incidents and crime, while some officers and staff are self-isolating. By volunteering additional hours, these individuals are helping to keep the frontline supported and running to its normally high standards.

Deputy Chief Officer, Andy Turtle said:

“I AM IMMENSELY PROUD TO BE A PART OF DORSET POLICE’S SPECIAL CONSTABULARY. IT IS BRILLIANT TO SEE SO MANY COLLEAGUES VOLUNTEERING MORE TIME TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMUNITIES

DURING THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC.

Chief Constable James Vaughan said:

“THE DORSET SPECIAL CONSTABULARY IS INTEGRAL TO THE DELIVERY OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITIES DORSET POLICE SERVE. WITH THE CURRENT NATIONAL CRISIS IT HIGHLIGHTS ONCE MORE THE PUBLIC-SPIRITED AND PROFESSIONAL APPROACH OF COLLEAGUES WITHIN THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY. WITHOUT THEM, WE WOULD BE A FAR LESSER ORGANISATION.”

Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner, said: “Special Constables provide an important contribution to policing and the role they play, although sadly often overlooked, has proven essential throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Their dedication has been vital over the last few weeks and we should all take a moment to thank these brave individuals who give so much.”



HERTFORDSHIRE
CONSTABULARY



HERTFORDSHIRE SPECIALS STEP UP TO BOOST POLICING RESPONSE DURING COVID-19

Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Special Constables have been going above and beyond during the Coronavirus Pandemic, clocking up nearly three times the usual hours they volunteer.

Over the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of May, they totalled 589 hours on duty. On a usual weekend, this figure would be about 200 hours. The increase is thanks not only to their enthusiasm and dedication but the great support of their employers too.

Special Inspector Dan McNeill works as a Business Development Manager at the London Metal Exchange and he has recently celebrated his seven-year anniversary of being a Special Constable. He normally volunteers around 70 hours a month but his employer has supported him with taking on more shifts. Since Covid-19, he has contributed around

110 hours of his time a month to policing.

He said: “I work on Intervention as a 999 response driver and it’s been great having the opportunity to give more support to my regular colleagues as we face this challenging time in policing.

“While ensuring that the public are adhering to social distancing, our work remains as busy as ever. One incident that particularly stands out is being called to a burglary at 6am and catching two suspects who had fled the scene, whilst also making sure to recover personal items that had been stolen. Both were arrested and so it was a very satisfying job. I feel very grateful that my employer has given me all this extra time to focus on policing.”

Special Constable Shaun Mathieson joined the Special Constabulary six months ago. For his day job, he works as a Programme Management Officer at an investment management company in the City of London. He has been given fully-paid leave of absence by his employer so that he can help the Constabulary’s efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19.

He said: “Since March, I’ve volunteered around 120 hours each month and this has included 999 response, arrest enquiries and proactive patrols. Ensuring that the public are complying with the Covid-19 legislation has been challenging at times but it’s been a great learning experience. As a relatively new officer, I can certainly say that every day is a school day! Of course, it is thanks to my employer that I have been able to dedicate so much time to policing and it’s really encouraging to know that they will support me in this role.”





MORE LIKE COVID-160,000

Met Specials rack up a staggering six-figure duty hours to help as part of the police response to the Pandemic.

Special Constables from the country's largest Force have given more than 160,000 hours of their time since March 2020 to help the Met Police respond to Coronavirus. Special Constables have volunteered alongside their regular police colleagues to enforce the lockdown rules through high visibility patrols, assisting with Response Teams and through engagement with the public to keep London safe.

The Met has seen a significant increase in the hours Special Constables are volunteering to support the police during this unprecedented time. The MSC's 1800 Special Constables doubled their hours in April compared with the same month a year ago – they

volunteered 61,779 combined hours compared with 29,645 in April 2019.

Not to be satisfied with that stellar performance, May 2020 saw a further increase in hours to an amazing 65,336 hours undertaken which was 8,528 duties in total. The average number of hours in May was over double the minimum expectation with an average of 36.1 hours per officer.

Metropolitan Special Constabulary Chief Officer John Conway, said: "Now more than ever, Special Constables are a vital and valued part of the Met family, giving up their own time in order to help police London. It's been a huge credit to every one of them to step up and give back even more to their communities during this unprecedented time."

In addition to reassurance activities the officers still ensured that criminals were brought to justice making a total of 468 arrests in April and May 2020 combined.



HUMBERSIDE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Humberside Special Constabulary stepped up during the Covid-19 situation and provided extra resources and high visibility patrols across the Force area.

Assistant Chief Constable Paul Anderson said: "Our Special Constables provided additional resilience in supporting our Neighbourhood Policing Teams, by being able to provide a high visibility policing presence in our communities, which I hope provided reassurance to our local residents during the current situation."

"The work Special Constables do should not be underestimated; they all have full or part time employment outside of policing, and choose to dedicate their free time to give back to their communities, and I want to offer my thanks for their continued support especially across the Easter Bank Holiday weekend. The commitment and dedication our Special Constables show is truly commendable, and their assistance is invaluable."

The Special Constabulary Chief Officer John Philip who along with the Special Constabulary Leadership Team co-ordinated the response said "We've been providing additional uniformed patrols since the start of this situation but stepped this up further across the Easter Bank Holiday weekend when officers worked 931 hours providing high visibility patrols in our communities. I'm incredibly proud of the commitment the team have shown putting themselves in harm's way to help protect their communities and support the Force"

When out on patrol officers paid particular attention to hospitals and other NHS premises and distributed some bespoke crime prevention literature on NHS staff vehicles. Patrols also focussed on pharmacies, retail premises and industrial premises that are now often left unoccupied for much longer periods than normal.



Officers from the Hull team
patrolling Hull Royal Infirmary



Patrolling the waterfront in Hull



When Special Constable Matt Roberts realised there a shortage of protective visors he donned his other hat and together with his colleagues at Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan they set to work.



Initially the team at the Abergele Secondary School made 100 face masks, but it soon became apparent there was a need for far more to protect critical workers from Coronavirus.

"It started with 100 now we are getting orders galore, and we have already supplied over 1500 across North Wales," said Matt, who has taught Design Craft and Technology at the school since 2014. We started using school materials, but as the demand has increased we are now relying on donations from the public to buy the materials required," he said, pointing out that they have a rota system and a production line, with teachers from various departments coming in to help.

When not in school Matt, who originates from Llanrwst, volunteers a great deal of his spare time to being a Special Constable in Bangor.

"It's all about team work," said Matt, who will be leaving the school shortly to become a full time police officer.

NORTH WALES SPECIAL HELPS PROVIDE PPE

MERSEYSIDE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY CONTRIBUTION

Merseyside Special Constabulary has been averaging 40 hours per officer per month since lockdown and have contributed 22,480 hours to date (27th July).

Sergeant John Pope from the Central Citizens in Policing Team based at Force Headquarters said: "During these unprecedented times, the Merseyside

Special Constabulary have gone above and beyond to support their communities and regular colleagues, which is appreciated by everyone."



SUSSEX SPECIAL CONSTABLE CONTRIBUTES THROUGHOUT PANDEMIC



Michael (centre) pictured with The High Sheriff and the Police & Crime Commissioner

Michael Jacobs has been a Special Constable with Sussex Police for 12 years. Michael says: "I joined because when I was 17 years old, my uncle was tragically taken from us brutally by a man, who went on to serve his time. At this point I pledged to give back and join the Police when I was able to.

The Police had provided so much support throughout the ordeal and many years after to my mother, grandparents, and cousins.

In my day job I work in energy, sustainability and carbon reduction with a member of the House of Lords and his association by delivering membership

engagement, and hosting events enabling our community to comply with regulation and ensure they deliver results for their business. Previous to that I worked for a well-known national media company travelling the world to oil, gas and energy producing locations."

Michael volunteers with Prevention Enforcement, and a Proactive Arrest Team, and since Covid-19 and being furloughed he has been able to increase his shifts, which has seen him volunteering more than 30 hours a week. Michael says: "My family, wife and children, were prepared to let me relocate if required (so stay in hotels, or with another officer) in order to give back at this challenging time; this sacrifice shows how much they value the Police, and my role."

"The response from the public during the Pandemic on the whole has been very warming, seeing the applause and thumbs up as we pass many members of the public, and getting thank you's. I even had a member of the public attempt to buy my lunch refreshments at a petrol station (politely declined, for integrity reasons) but was so appreciative."

"I can honestly say that I enjoy the role more now than the day I started."



CUMBRIA SPECIAL CONSTABULARY CONTRIBUTION

Cumbria Special Constabulary has average 44 hours per officer per month since lockdown commenced and to date have volunteered 8770 hours of policing.





THANK YOU FOR WEST MIDLANDS 'SPECIAL' SUPPORT

Since the lockdown West Midlands Police (WMP) have seen huge support from Special Constables who have volunteered over 1,600 duties across the first nine weeks of lockdown.

WMP have over 200 Special Officers who continue to support the Force during the Pandemic. Special Officers have had two 'all-out' days for both bank holidays in May. They were on hand to support Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU's), Road Policing Unit and Central Motorway Policing Group (CMPG).

Special Chief Inspector Stuart

Pearson, who led both all-out days, said: "With NPUs having reduced staffing levels at these times, plus the current Pandemic crisis and good weather, we felt our response should be focused to when our impact would be most beneficial. Our Special Officers on duty responded to over 200 logs across both bank holidays (8 May and 25 May). It's clear our deployment had a positive impact to reassure our communities and reduce the burden on Response and Force Contact. Thank you to all the Specials who volunteered their time for the bank holidays. We were able to have a police presence in some locations which may not have been possible without you."

One of those Special Constables stepping up to the plate is 19-year-old Harry Sarkar. Harry is among thousands of students whose university lectures have been put on hold due to Covid-19. He still has coursework

to complete but is determined to help as much as possible on our Response Units attending emergency incidents.

Harry said: "As Specials we're required to do 16 hours a month with the Force - but at the moment I'm now full time on response working out of Brierley Hill and doing around 130 hours a month. I've dealt with all sorts of incidents from domestic abuse to large disorders. And recently myself and a colleague pulled over a car and arrested several men linked to gang crime on suspicion of drugs supply.

"It's a difficult time; helping and protecting people is what I love doing so the more I can do the more I enjoy it. It always feels like it's my first day every day I put the uniform on - and I'm helping take some strain off my colleagues."

Specials Deputy Chief Officer Iain O'Brien, added: "As ever I'm humbled by the response of our Specials...they are putting themselves forward to protect and support the community and West Midlands Police during this emergency. As a Constabulary we have been supporting response units, traffic and motorway patrols, local policing and wider community engagement.

"Some of our Special Constables have been furloughed while their day job is put on hold; they have chosen to volunteer that time to help others in our communities. They should all rightly be proud of their commitment to policing and to public safety."



SPECIAL CONSTABLE SWAPS POLICING FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

An incredibly talented Special Constable also heads off to hospital to help tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Joshua Michie not only serves with the Northumbria Police Motor Patrol Team as a Special Constable, but he's also a trained doctor working for the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Although the 25-year-old is focusing all his attention on treating the vulnerable and keeping his patients safe during the Coronavirus crisis, he also likes to lace up his boots and help officers on the beat. He said: "This is unprecedented and I never thought I would be working through a Pandemic. It is an experience which will definitely stay with me. I enjoy being out on patrol - having the opportunity to be out in the community talking to people, engaging with them and getting them to see things from another angle.

"I will tell the public first-hand about why it is so important to follow the restrictions which are in place

- and that they are there to save lives."

And the medic isn't new to the world of policing. He spent four years with Police Scotland as a Special Constable during his studies at the University of Aberdeen before joining Northumbria Police when he moved back to the region almost two years ago. Since then, he has worked the Beat in Bedlington before moving into motor patrols.

He added: "I had a period of time where I was self-isolating, and the Force was so supportive of me with my supervisors staying in touch wishing me well. It's been great to see the Force taking part in the weekly applause for NHS workers. I've been really taken aback at just how much support is out there for the emergency services at this time. This really is a joint effort!

"I think most people would assume that policing and medicine are totally different but they do have overlaps. I find my police training in communication is really useful if patients are being challenging or argumentative and it makes it easier for me to diffuse situations. And my medical training is really useful especially if I'm dealing with medical emergencies when on patrol.

"While there are similarities, the two roles come with different stresses and pressures. I find both really rewarding and I definitely want to keep up being a Special and always look forward to being out there policing."





Special Inspector Andrew Blocksage is a 45-year-old dad based in Torquay. He admits to normally volunteering between “80 and 100 hours a month” thanks to an “incredibly supportive wife”. However, during lockdown he decided to make use of his extra time - and during just May alone carried out 189 hours.

His passion for service goes back some ways and he reveals he spent five years in the Parachute Regiment but after moving on he admitted that like many other Special Constables he has spoken to, he “felt there was something missing” and “needed a bit more of a purpose”.

“For me,” he says of being a Special Constable, “it’s a massive passion in my life. Trying to keep everyone safe is a real passion. Some of the jobs you go to where you come away feeling that you made a positive difference, especially on some of the more emotive ones, like domestic incidents with kids. That’s what makes it really worthwhile.”

Andrew initially joined as a Special with Devon and Cornwall Police in 2017, but had initially started with

the Metropolitan Special Constabulary back in 2014 as he lived near London.

He said: “I love it down here. It’s an absolutely brilliant place to live and work.”

Andrew said the policing style in Devon and Cornwall was understandably different from that in the Met-land. While the Met’s work was “very intense” there were more resources, highlighted in how there were around 32,000 Police Officers in London to Devon and Cornwall’s 3,800.

“Both are really demanding and you can’t really compare the two. You have to behave differently down here. In London, if there’s an issue you can throw resources at it which are nearby. Down here, if you get into trouble, you may have to wait longer for resources and because of distances – so you have to have a more communicative approach, a de-escalation approach. You employ different tactics. Here there’s more of a focus on the ability to talk to people.”

Andrew expresses how the sense of satisfaction at doing the job well, of safeguarding the vulnerable and at risk, getting them help and support, are a big part of what made “some of the best shifts”.

In recent weeks Andrew has been working from home – but his work still takes him “all over the country”. However, he is keen to stress that his company has been “very, very supportive” of his keenness to join the frontline during the Coronavirus crisis.

He said: “I’ve pretty much been working full time with a response team. With travelling taken out of my normal job, that accounts for quite a lot and so I’ve had a lot more time.”

Andrew said being a Special Constable is a passion for him and his goal is to encourage others to get involved. He said: “I would love that to happen – to get more people interested in doing it.

“Every day is different and that is the attraction. That, for me, is a big part of it. You don’t know what the next job is going to be. Even when you’re dealing with the same people the circumstances can be different – one day they are the suspect, the next day they could be the victim. It’s so variable and so interesting and that’s what keeps me coming back.”



Over in Liskeard, Steve McLean, who hails from Saltash, regularly steps away from his day job as manager of a Specsavers in Bodmin and puts on the uniform.

He joined the Specials in 2018, but what made him do it?

The 34-year-old said: “Well, I’ve always loved volunteering – but I guess I also like chasing the bad guys and cleaning up the community. I know

that the Force is stretched and they don’t have the resources they’d want and I wanted to give something back that was useful. As a child I wanted to be a Police Officer, but as I got older I guess it fell away from me. I got older, I got married, I had children, I worked.”

“Then, I was coaching a football team and I saw an advert for the Special Constabulary and I thought ‘you know what? Now’s a good time’ so I did it.”

Steve admits he usually does “on average” around 35 to 45 hours a month, but since the start of lockdown he reckons he’s done “probably double, maybe more, as much as 130 hours”.

Steve, who has worked for Specsavers for 10 years, said during lockdown he has been “running alongside a section in Liskeard doing earlies, lates and nights.”

One of the most heartening and encouraging elements of being a Special Constable is the appreciation that the regulars show is unbelievable. “They’re really grateful when you turn up, they’re really grateful even if it’s just for a couple of hours. I think if I’m going in, I feel I want to put in a full shift and I will be there and double crew for a full shift.”

Steve said there was a great sense of satisfaction from being a Special, of “knowing that I’ve helped someone: “The fact that I’ve gone there and been able to give them support, for example, if it’s a domestic incident then it’s being able to safeguard someone and their children.”

He admits his wife will sometimes ask him about a shift and sometimes it’s gone well, and, occasionally, sometimes it hasn’t gone so well. However, each shift is different and there’s always more to learn and more to do, and more people to help.

Being a Special Constable, said Steve, means being part of something bigger. “There is a really big camaraderie there”, he reveals. “It is like a family – but a completely different family. You get a lot from it and it is very rewarding, regardless of whether you’re paid for it or not. It’s very rewarding.”

LANCASHIRE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

It has been a particularly challenging time for communities and for all emergency services, and the way Lancashire's Special Constables have responded has been incredible. Many Specials have been able to provide much needed support to the neighbourhood policing teams with their operational tasking and public engagement, especially in town centres and public places such as parks and promenades. Response teams have been bolstered by the extra duties Special Constables have worked and this ensured the Constabulary kept on top of the high levels of Covid-19 related calls, especially concerning public gatherings and anti-social behaviour.

Officers have also supported traffic operations organised to emphasise the Government stay at home advice. They have assisted the County's humanitarian support by sorting and loading initial emergency food supplies, distributing vast quantities of Easter eggs, helping supply 3 million surgical gloves and visits to over 140 care homes across Lancashire.

Lancashire has been lucky enough to have six Special Constables who have been able to support the Constabulary full time during this period and some of these officers have shared their experiences.



SC CONNOR

"My employer is very supportive and has allowed me to volunteer full time with the Specials. In this period, my duties have been focused around

the Neighbourhood team, conducting tasking and reassurance patrols whilst also attending to emergency jobs. I have conducted reassurance patrols around the main parks and ensuring that everyone was adhering to the Government guidelines, dispersing any groups that were not and set up a road checkpoint speaking to drivers ensuring they were going out for essential drives only.

Some of the other things I have assisted with are:

- Part of the Entry team on a drugs raid
- Attended two different RTC's where in both cases a cyclist had been knocked off their bike. Attended scene guards protecting vital evidence in relation to crimes such as stabbings and serious assaults
- Arrested a male on suspicion of Section 18 Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH)
- Concern for safety in which neighbours hadn't seen an elderly female for over 24 hours and on gaining entry to her house we had found she had fallen out of bed during the night and was unable to get up. We waited with the female until ambulance had arrived and taken her to hospital
- Attended a street where walkers reported a smell which they believed was a dead body. On attending and searching through a wooded area, I found the source which was the carcass of a deer which looked to have recently been hit by a car
- Whilst patrolling in a local park I found a 10 year old female who was wandering around on her own and after conducting checks she was safely re-united with her family
- Given warnings to multiple drivers/vehicles that were all driving in an anti-social manner; also seizing an off-road bike and a quad bike
- First on scene after being flagged down to a male who had jumped from a multi storey car park. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, the male was pronounced dead by paramedics. I ensured a cordon was set around the car park ensuring nobody could gain entry and took statements from witnesses.

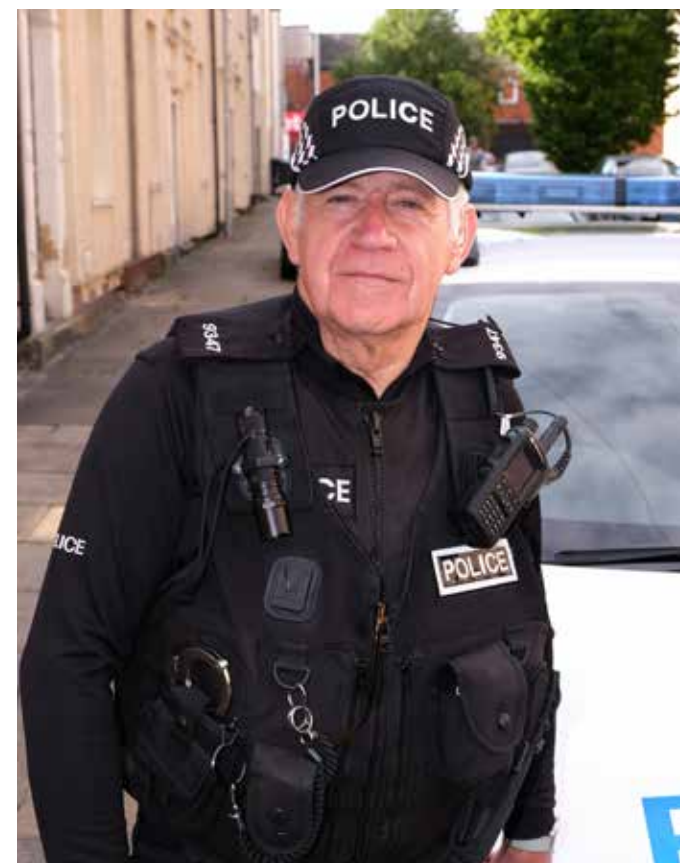
After conducting nearly 12 Weeks so far full time it has only increased my desire further to join the police full time and given me a greater insight into the day-to-day lives of regular police officers".



SC ROB

"Having responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was very lucky to have an employer that allowed me to answer the call and become a full time officer. I'm currently in week 11 of being full time and this week has me in the "tasking" call-sign and engaging with the city's well-known and repeat offenders. I've also assisted in planning and carrying out targeted arrests. Finally, recently I have planned and delivered the Team 1 IR briefings to a full team of regular officers.

Team 1 have welcomed me as one of their own and it's been an amazing experience to work with them".



SC PHIL

"At the end of March I found myself being seconded from my day role within Lancashire Constabulary to becoming a full time Special Constable, attached to one of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Working their shift patterns took a little while to settle into, but soon became the norm and I was welcomed and accepted on board as a team member very quickly, which was reassuring. I've worked alongside fellow Special Officers and CBM's throughout the last few weeks and as a team we've gone through the early stages of the pandemic attending many a 'gathering' and offering words of advice. I've seen and dealt with an increasing amount of ASB with a lot coming from teenagers who find being away from friends not an easy situation to handle, so a friendly but firm approach was needed.

Concerns for safety issues have featured strongly, with our team going out and checking on many vulnerable individuals, plus we've seen an increase in mental ill health cases. I've attended several scenes for various reasons with one plus side being it gives us the opportunity to engage with the local community, which for the best part is positive and there's many a budding youngster out there who want to become a Police officer.

Sadly I've attended a couple of tragic deaths by suicide, but also helped a young woman come down to safety from a bridge. Neighbourhood Policing certainly covers a wide spectrum of policing giving you the opportunity to engage with the people you are there to serve and I've had many positive comments passed on how good it is to see police out and about on the streets.

For the last few weeks I've walked, run, cycled and driven, been, cold, hot and had a couple of blisters, been shouted at, abused, but mostly thanked for keeping the community safe. I have one memory of a particular Thursday evening driving through a housing estate with a fellow Special at eight o'clock and being cheered and clapped, I found myself waving back in a manner The Queen would be proud of. When my time comes to return to my day job, I know what I've learned as a full time Special Constable will only help and enhance my understanding of what it is to be police in today's world".

This is a tremendous effort and Lancashire Constabulary wants to thank all their Special Constables for their contribution and continued hard work at these times.

