

**COMMUNITY-POLICE  
CONSULTATIVE GROUP  
For LAMBETH**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**11 JANUARY 2005**

**LAMBETH ACCORD  
336 BRIXTON ROAD SW9**

**PRESENT: GROUP OFFICERS** Paul Andell, Wesley Stephenson **Vice-Chairpersons**; Rev. Ivelaw Bowman **RHC Chairperson**; Jim Toohill **Hon. Comptroller** **AFFILIATED MEMBERS** Nick Abengowe **Herne Hill Forum**; Doye Akinlade **Brixton Society**; Wally Channon, Peggy Tyler **Clapham Town N'hood Watch**; Gary Dando **CressBrock Neighbourhood Watch** David Hart, Ros Munday **Clapham Community Partnership**; Arulini Velmurugu **Lambeth Towers & Lambeth Road Residents Assoc.**; Paul Reynolds **Herne Hill Society**; George Tuson **Streatham Common Southside N'hood Watch Assoc.**; Abdul Sultan Virani **Lambeth Pensioners Forum**; Hector Watson **West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association** **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS** Lena James; Richard Moore; Ann Savage, Fernando Senior; **PERMANENT MEMBERS** Joanna Woodd **Victim Support Lambeth**; Most Rev'd Dr Bancroft McCarthy **HM Prison Brixton (Board of Visitors)**; John Roberts **MPA SECTOR WORKING GROUPS** John Wainwright **Clapham**; **LAMBETH COUNCIL** Cllr. Robert S. McConnell; Cllr. Bernard Gentry; Cllr. Angie Meader; Cllr. Lydia Serwaa **METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE** DAC Stephen Roberts; Commander Phillip Gormley; Brgh. Cmdr. Richard Quinn; Ch. Supt. Martin Bridger, Supt. Rick Algar (Streatham); Supt. Stewart Low (Kennington) Supt. David Zinzan (Brixton); Det. Supt. Phil Kay; Det. Ch. Insp. John Corrigan; Det. Insp. Dean Haydon; PC Jack Wilson; Supt. Andy Tarrant (Community Partnership) **SECRETARIAT** Ben McKendrick

Members of the public and press were also present

**Apologies:** Pauline Bower, David Corderoy, Sheila Draper, Neil Flanigan, Rachel Heywood, Lee Jasper, Bushy Kelly, Lloyd Leon, Cllr. Peter O'Connell, John Podmore, Cllr. Darren Sanders, Jonathan Toy, Andrew Viner, Jane Warwick.

**Introduction**

Paul Andell welcomed Mrs Ivy Inn of the Police Consultative Group, Linstead Jamaica, Nick Hardwick and Mehmuda Mian Pritchard of the Independent Police Complaints Authority (IPCC), DAC Stephen Roberts and Commander Gormley of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to the meeting.

**Change in Representation:** British Transport Police - Ch. Insp. Kevin Shanahan for Ch. Insp. Randolph Otter

**Lambeth Police Report**

1. Borough Commander Quinn introduced Ch. Supt. Martin Bridger, who was to take over from him as of Monday, 17 January 2005, and his staff officer, Det. Insp. Dean Haydon. Mr Quinn said that he was leaving Lambeth earlier than expected to join a police team to investigate charity fraud, potential child abduction by paedophile gangs, and child abuse following the tsunami disaster in South East Asia.

2. Mr Quinn related that some police officers on holiday in South East Asia had been caught up in the tsunami disaster, particularly one officer, PC Steve McQueen, who had been seriously injured. Mr Quinn expressed his hopes for the officer to get better.

3. Brgh. Cmdr. Richard Quinn tabled a month by month, year on year statistical report of crime in Lambeth, about which he gave a PowerPoint presentation.

4. Following the tragic murder of David Morley, Mr Quinn reported that Sgt. Sandy and PC Andy Hewlitt had managed to obtain £150,000 from the Children First Strategic Partnership to go towards an education programme. The programme would be delivered to all Lambeth primary and secondary schools' governors and teachers regarding their responsibilities to pupils e.g. bullied children and raising awareness among young people about individuals' sexuality.

Mr Quinn informed the Group that six young people had been arrested and charged in connection with Mr Morley's murder.

5. Mr Quinn reported the murder of Solomon Martin on 31 December. An investigation into his killing was being conducted by Trident officers. Mr Martin's murder was the tenth murder in Lambeth during 2004. During the previous calendar year there had been 17 murders in the borough.

6. To encourage people to admit to crimes they had committed, Mr Quinn said that police had issued notice to some individuals stating they would prosecute them for any offences that evidence later showed them to be responsible, and reminding them of the "three strikes and you're out" rule.

7. With regard to crack houses, Mr Quinn said that over the past three years 106 had been closed. This had largely been achieved by acting quickly when information was provided by the public.

8. Mr Quinn reminded the Group that over the past two years Lambeth police had been commended by the MPS Commissioner for its performance in reducing crime.

However, he added that the community had earned the commendations as much as his officers, who themselves had worked extremely hard.

9. Mr Quinn reported that he had not yet been able to deliver on 236 Coldharbour Lane, Loughborough Junction. However, money was available to develop the premises and plans for it would eventually be fulfilled.

10. On the other hand, Mr Quinn said development of the former Pedro Keys premises at 48 Coldharbour Lane was going well and soon police officers would operate from the premises. Designs would also allow for its use by the community while the idea was

likely to be replicated as part of the safer neighbourhoods programme throughout the borough.

**11.** With regard to the 14 year old boy who had collided with a bus on Brixton Hill in the early evening of 30 November, Supt. David Zinzan reported that the youth was still receiving treatment for serious, but not life threatening injuries. Two other youths had been charged with robbery committed prior to the accident.

**12.** In relation to a drugs operation in Tulse Hill, Supt. Zinzan said six people had been arrested. Two middle-market dealers who had been targeted had been remanded in custody and were up for committal on the 13 and 28 January. Police were also targeting premises in the area. Analysis over the past six weeks of the operation had indicated that robbery, burglary and motor vehicle crime had gone down. Supt. Zinzan said that it reinforced his belief that drugs drove up crime.

**13.** Supt. Stewart Low reported that two youths had been arrested in relation to the killing of Benjamin Doran on 16 December 2004 at Myatts Field. One youth had been charged with murder.

**14.** In response to Hector Watson, Mr Quinn said that police were constantly seeking to reduce the availability of drugs in Lambeth and make it uncomfortable for dealers, yet the problem always appeared to come back. Speaking of Landor Road, Supt. Low said the situation had improved by police effectively using powers such as anti-social behaviour orders and collective partnerships.

**15.** In response to Richard Moore, Mr Quinn said consultation about the Policing Plan for Lambeth had been carried out with the MPS centre,

the local authority and Government Office for London. The analysis done has led to setting of challenging targets; to reduce crime by 14% over the first year and 20% in three years.

**16.** Paul Andell asked if the new Borough Commander, Martin Bridger, would consider seeking the Group's help in setting targets in the future.

**17.** In response to Lena James, Mr Quinn said police were witnessing an increase in number of individuals willing to carry and use knives in Lambeth, although it was not unique to the borough. He added that it was an issue that the police pick up in the forthcoming year.

**18.** Shane Collins proposed that the Group to write a letter of support for an 18 month pilot drug scheme in Camberwell which supplied heroin users with a prescription for their addiction. Jim Toohill suggested that the Group should favour drugs policies based on evidence, which the pilot scheme appeared to be aspiring to. Therefore, he said that the Group could support the notion of a trial being carried to produce evidence and form links with the project.

**19.** Richard Moore said that to pursue such a motion would place the Group on dangerous ground and he would not support it as there would be evidence from both those for and against the pilot. Hector Watson was similarly against the motion as he felt it was contrary to the reason for the Group's existence.

**20.** Wesley Stephenson suggested that the Group should wait until after the pilot scheme had been given a chance to produce some evidence before receiving the Group's endorsement. Moreover, Paul

Andell said that the meeting was inquorate and that there were good reasons for having evidence presented properly and not at the tail end of a meeting. He added that some research would be undertaken at the Group office.

**21.** Mr Quinn said that pilot scheme was a Primary Care Trust project in partnership with others, such as the police, and that he could put the Group into contact with individuals with whom the Group may wish or need to speak.

**22.** In response to Paul Reynolds, Mr Quinn reported that retention of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Lambeth was good compared to other boroughs. Although mainly employed for security matters along the Thames, PCSOs were rotated throughout the borough and, following training, were expected to be given new powers.

In respect of PCSOs working in geographical areas, Mr Quinn said it was not question of forcing them to go to work in specific areas but appointing the right officer for the right place. He added that he would be quite happy to give a breakdown of roles, gender and ethnicity of Lambeth officers and bring officers working in different areas to the meeting.

**23.** Group members thanked Borough Commander Quinn for all his good work in changing the 'climate' in Lambeth during his time in office and wished him all the best for the future. Mr Quinn said that he would respond at the next Group meeting

### **Sylbert Farquharson**

**24.** Paul Andell gave an account on the events leading up to the arrest, charge and acquittal of Sylbert Farquharson in 1995, and the award he subsequently won after taking civil action

against the police. He concluded by referring to an interim statement from the IPCC, which had confirmed their satisfaction that the investigation by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) into police action against Mr Farquharson had been properly carried out.

**25.** Mehmuda Mian Pritchard (IPCC Regional Commissioner) said that the interim statement issued by the IPCC stated that the GMP investigation had been completed but that meant only *that* part of the investigation was over. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) still had to decide whether any criminal charges would be brought against officers involved in the incident.

**26.** In the meantime Ms Mian Pritchard said that she had been considering recommendations regarding disciplinary charges and at the moment she was in dialogue with the investigating officer. She also clarified that it was up to the MPS, and not within her own jurisdiction, to decide whether an officer should be suspended or not. Ms Mian Pritchard added that she awaited the CPS decision in order that she could write to Mr Farquharson and others involved in this longstanding matter, which, if it had been investigated by the IPCC, would not have taken as long as it had.

**27.** Since the independent investigation by GMP stated that PC Kevin Bridgeman had not been involved in an unlawful arrest, nine and a half years ago, with no other evidence that he did anything wrong, DAC Roberts said that he could see no prospect of the officer being convicted on a disciplinary board and given a penalty that would see him being removed from the Metropolitan Police.

**28.** On that basis, DAC Roberts said that he had decided that the officer had to be sent back to work. However, PC Bridgeman

was presently not well enough to go back to work as the whole process had been damaging to his health, and the people of Brixton would not be having PC Bridgeman on the streets for the foreseeable future.

**29.** DAC Roberts said that the real lesson learned from the incident was how a system, which allowed for nine and half years to elapse between the time of the incident and a resolution being reached, could carry on. While that itself was a disgrace, DAC Roberts said that there was no excuse for what happened to Mr Farquharson.

**30.** Nick Hardwick (IPCC Chair) said that he did not believe the same kind of situation would arise now that the IPCC was in existence and the IPCC would change three elements of the way Mr Farquharson's case was handled. First of all the IPCC would speed up the process and not allow cases to go on for such a length of time. Secondly, they would open the system up so that people had the information they needed and there was no misinformation in circulation to hinder the speed at which decisions and judgements were reached. The reports of investigating officers into incidents like Mr Farquharson's would also be disclosed to families. Thirdly, such investigations would be undertaken by the IPCC's own investigators. Mr Hardwick gave his absolute commitment that investigations would not happen again in the same way that Mr Farquharson's had occurred.

**31.** Ms Mian Pritchard emphasised that she not yet made her decision regarding recommendations for discipline and that it was not fair to say that no officer would appear before a misconduct panel.

**32.** In response to John Wainwright, Mr Hardwick said

that the IPCC would have a significant increase in resources next year and the ability to independently investigate 100 cases compared to 30 cases during the current year. In addition, the IPCC could issue statutory guidance to police forces in relation to how they carried out lower level investigations with a mechanism for appeal to the IPCC about the outcome of complaints.

**33.** In relation to dealing with complaints more quickly, Mr Hardwick said other agencies could affect the timescale. However, the IPCC had signed an agreement with the CPS to work towards considering cases at the same time rather than one after the other.

**34.** In respect of taking into consideration matters of public interest, Mr Hardwick said that the decision for criminal prosecution ultimately remained with the CPS. However, on disciplinary matters the power to direct the police rested with IPCC.

**35.** On the point of public interest DAC Roberts said that every case had to be looked at on its own. In this respect he identified three sets of public interest: the public interest within the code of the CPS; the level of public interest regarding discipline, as covered by the IPCC; public interest in relation to the suspension of police officers. In respect of the latter, DAC Roberts stated that the evidence could change over the course of time, which could lead to an officer's suspension being lifted or being asked to resign.

**36.** In response to Paul Andell, DAC Roberts said that he was not in favour of decisions about suspension being made locally as it could lead to inconsistency across the MPS. Mr Hardwick agreed, in principle that it was for the police to make the decision, although he believed

that the IPCC should be consulted and a clear explanation given about how its views were taken into account.

**37.** Jim Toohill said that just because the case had taken so long to resolve, it did not mean that the alleged offence could be perceived to be lesser than it once was. The Group, he continued, understood that the reason for PC Bridgeman being taken off suspension was because of the IPCC's decision having discounted any racist element in his behaviour.

**38.** Even though the case was almost ten years old, Mr Toohill said that people felt strongly about it because of the racist comments made by police as described by the judge in Mr Farquharson's civil case. If that did occur, Mr Toohill asserted the offence could not be likened to one of an officer positively identified, as having dropped litter as hypothetically described by DAC Roberts.

**39.** Further to the issue of public interest and the technical terms used to describe it, Mr Toohill pointed out that there was a huge public interest in sustaining the confidence of the public in the MPS taking the behaviour of its officers very seriously, even if they did act lawfully, as the risks of repeat actions could remain.

**40.** Mr Hardwick clarified that the IPCC had no role and had expressed no view about the suspension of PC Bridgeman, and as yet had not made any decision nor formulated any recommendations about disciplinary matters.

**41.** DAC Roberts said that if he had given the impression that he regarded the matter as trivial, then he was at fault. However, what had been alleged and what the judge in the civil case had expressed an opinion on was not revealed by the GMP investigation. It was the gravity

of the allegation which had led to the officer's suspension. Whether the racist abuse happened or not was a matter of there being evidence to demonstrate it one way or the other. The GMP investigation found no evidence to support the judge's view.

**42.** Mr Toohill said that in assessing risk, which was a matter of balancing probabilities, reasonable people would argue that the case could not have gone through a civil court with a very experienced judge making the comments he did without there being something to them. Therefore the risk of the officer repeating the allegations and risk to community confidence and cooperation, for which people had worked long and hard, had to be considered

**43.** On a point of information, John Wainwright reminded the meeting that there had been two exemplary witnesses to the event of Mr Farquharson's arrest, who provided graphic details of the language and behaviour of the police, and it was disingenuous to claim that there was no evidence of such.

**44.** DAC Roberts, however, said that he was only making his conclusion as a result of an investigation which had been deemed proper by the IPCC. And while the civil court judge may have made his decision on the balance of probabilities, a Police Misconduct Board had to have proof to criminal standard i.e. beyond reasonable doubt.

**45.** Ms Mian Pritchard reiterated that the IPCC had not yet reached finality in respect of disciplinary recommendations. Although the investigating officer had reached his own conclusion it may not necessarily be one with which the IPCC agreed. For while she had signed off the interim statement saying that she was satisfied with the investigation, the point at which

she expressed a view about the investigator's proposals had not been reached, although she hoped to have done so in the near future.

**46.** Jim Toohill said that the Group's understanding had not been that the IPCC had said the officer could be taken off suspension as result of the investigation, but rather the Group had been led to understand that some IPCC decision made about the investigation had *triggered* the move. Ms Mian Pritchard said that this was not the case.

**47.** DAC Roberts referred to the Morris Inquiry Report, to which the MPS had given evidence and, with the support of the IPCC, had stated that the current police regulations on suspension were a nonsense and did not work. In respect of PC Bridgeman, under current regulations, DAC Roberts said that he could only go by the evidence placed in front of him on whether the officer had committed an offence. So far, he had seen nothing to convince him of that.

**48.** However, DAC Roberts added that he would do everything he could to ensure that any racist, violent officers were sacked from the MPS, and police were doing everything they could to speed up the process. For example, they insisted that some officers resigned instead of waiting for a disciplinary hearing. Out of the last 17 people that such a proposition had been put to, 13 had resigned within a month.

#### **Derek Bennett**

**49.** Paul Andell gave an account of events surrounding the shooting of Derek Bennett by armed police in July 2001 and the subsequent inquest that had delivered a verdict of lawful killing.

Paul Andell expressed his sympathy to the family and friends of Derek Bennett, who may be feeling that they had not reached a point of closure and who were believed to be seeking a judicial review on the inquest verdict.

**50.** Mr Hardwick stated that mental health was one of the main factors of the Derek Bennett incident, and that it was striking to consider the proportion of people with mental health problems who came into contact with the police. In the past year, the number of deaths in police custody had risen with about a half of the number being persons with mental health problems.

**51.** Mr Hardwick said that hard questions needed to be asked of mental health services and that it was a lot to ask of the police to deal with people with acute mental health problems, especially if the professionals could not link up. Mr Hardwick added that the Bennett case needed to be seen in the context of much wider issues and that he would relay the points to government ministers.

**52.** Commander Phillip Gormley, head of SO19 [armed police] spoke of 'effective upstream interventions'. In other words, the weeks or months before it ever reached the point at which an armed police officer had to make a decision of taking a human life, particularly as an officer's general motivation was in saving lives. And since the inquest, but not contingent on it, Cmdr Gormley said that the MPS had established a working group chaired by DAC Brian Paddick to look at the broad range of mental health issues and how to intervene appropriately.

**53.** Last year, Cmdr. Gormley reported that SO19 had put together a series of seminars for commanders who took charge of

such incidents, e.g. on awareness training and how to best confront persons suffering from schizophrenia. Furthermore, work had been undertaken to discover how to best to join up agencies and share intelligence in order that, having established an identity, some knowledge and history about an individual could be obtained from a single point of contact.

**54.** On less lethal options, Cmdr. Gormley said that they could be useful, but when a person confronted police with what was believed to be a firearm, and presented a threat to the police and public, weapons such as the Taser were not an appropriate option. The Taser, for example, could only be used in certain environments and only afforded one shot with a limited range of 15 feet. A miss could prove to be dangerous to all concerned. Similarly, a baton gun had its limitations in terms of environment, range and accuracy.

**55.** In terms of shoot to stop, Cmdr. Gormley said that firearms officers were trained to shoot to neutralise the threat presented to them. The only way to do that in extreme circumstances, the very high threshold of which was immediate threat to life, was to deploy lethal force. The best target for such force was the main body mass, which was effectively the person's torso containing the central nervous system. That was the only way to incapacitate a person, whereas attempting to wound an armed person could increase the threat and uncertainty of the situation. The alternative was the Taser, which, as explained, had limited capabilities.

**56.** Cmdr. Gormley stated that SO19 officers had responded to 15,000 firearms incidents during the last year and fortunately incidents in which a life was lost was extremely rare.

**57.** Rev. Ivelaw Bowman said that having had many opportunities to see police firearms training he had found it to be very rigorous and thorough, and to a very high standard.

**58.** In response to Cllr. Angie Meader question concerning national plans for police officers to receive mental health awareness training, Cmdr. Gormley said that firearms officers did receive awareness training as part of their overall instruction. Also, in order to reduce the chances of any similar incidents to that of Derek Bennett, which affected many people including the police, he said the police should take up Cllr. Meader's offer to work with police on mental health issues.

**59.** Shane Collins said that people who left the Maudsley Hospital should have a community care assessment to help them back into society, which did not appear to be happening at the moment, particularly with regard to available housing. Mr Collins asked if the Head of Lambeth housing could be invited to a meeting to explain what was going on.

**60.** In agreement with Mr Collins, Rev Bowman also referred to a successful mental health arrest referral scheme in Camden and asked what councillors and politicians were doing to alleviate the mental health problems in Lambeth.

**61.** Mr Collins also asked if imitation firearms were still available in Lambeth shops, to which Cmdr. Gormley responded by saying their availability and sales needed to be stopped. He added that he was allied to framing of credible, forcible legislation in this respect and that the MPS Commissioner and Association of Chief Police Officers had made submissions on this point. The message to

those carrying imitation firearms was that they put themselves at risk because police could not tell the difference.

**62.** In view of the number of imitation firearms in circulation and the ease of obtaining them, Wesley Stephenson questioned the possibility of many officers finding themselves suspended as result of having to deal with perceived life threatening situations. He urged that the Government should outlaw their sale.

**63.** A member of the public from West Norwood told the Group that young people in the community were being threatened to join gangs and that the community was suffering as result of gun crime. He and other members of the community proposed working with the Group to address the situation. Paul Andell proposed that they contact the Group office.

**64.** Mike Frankin spoke of the need of the community to galvanise itself into action and make a concerted effort on different fronts to combat gun crime through activities such protests against imitation gun and a firearms amnesty, which attracted support from the floor.

**65.** Cllr. Bernard Gentry said that many mental health problems stemmed from the lack of governmental resources on the ground over many years and that the secrecy which seemed to exist in health and local authorities departments hindered joined up working that was necessary.

**66.** Cmdr. Gormley said that it was important to dynamically share information and intelligence in order to make the right decisions, which were largely to do with resources and where they were placed.

**67.** Paul Andell proposed that the Group invite Stuart Bell, Chief Executive of the Maudsley Hospital to a Group meeting as well as a MPS representative when they had finished their review of mental health policy, and the IPCC. Richard Moore added that invitations should be extended also to Lambeth Housing and Social Services, Primary Care Trust and Tessa Jowell MP.

**68.** Jim Toohill said that the Group had been remiss in not being persistent enough in getting its Mental Health Working Group off the ground. However, he added that the Group needed to redouble its efforts, not least since it seemed that ordinary people, who had clear concerns, found it hard to even gain an understanding of how the whole system works. Cllr. Meader offered to contribute and asked to be kept informed.

**69.** The Group agreed to bring a multi-agency panel together for a future Group meeting to discuss the community's concerns about mental health issues.

**70.** In response to Wesley Stephenson, Ms Mian Pritchard said that the IPCC was cognisant of, and acknowledged the hard work carried out by the Group during the Derek Bennett investigation. She added that since its conception the IPCC to into consideration whether investigations would require community involvement.

**71.** Ms Mian Pritchard stated that once the Bennett family had resolved the issue of judicial review, recommendations regarding disciplinary matters and wider issues such as imitation firearms would be addressed. Also, she said that she had already made contact with the Home Office to express her concern about the case and already made progress in

discussions about vulnerable people coming into contact with the police.

**72.** Paul Andell thanked the guests for their attendance and all those who had taken part in the discussion.

## **Group business**

### **73. Information from Group Officers and Members**

A briefing paper from Group Officers for December, a copy of Lambeth Talk, and matters arising with outcomes for the Group Meetings on 5 October and 2 November 2004 had been circulated with the January agenda.

**74.** Co-option of nominees Peter Clapton, Shane Collins and Gill Keneally was deferred till the meeting of 1 February 2005

**75. Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from the meeting 7 October 2004 (action sheet provided)**

**76. Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from the meeting 2 November 2004 (action sheet provided)**

**77. Minutes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from the Group Meeting on 7 December 2004** were deferred to the meeting of 1 February 2005.

### **78. Any other business**

John Roberts (MPA) chose not to raise his item other business (naming of c3i center) given the lateness of the hour.

### **79. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Tuesday, 1 February 2005**

**West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association, 161-167 Clapham Manor St. SW4**

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