

# PloddingOn

The magazine of  
Derbyshire Police  
Federation  
May 2012



*Police officers representing police officers*

LONDON  
MARCH  
SPECIAL



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# You can't expect the same for less

By Mark Pickard, Chairman of Derbyshire Police Federation



**On Thursday 10 May 2012, during the PFEW March in London, I saw 35,000, nearly a quarter of the entire number of police officers in England and Wales come together as one to send a loud and clear message to the Government and the public that the 20 per cent cuts will make a difference to the service they now get.**

We informed everyone watching that this Government is currently on a path of destroying the greatest and most renowned police service in the world. It's about the erosion of the service to the public rather than what affects us personally as police officers. It's about trying to match the expectations of the public compared to the current reality and at the same time making them aware of how these cuts are going to affect them. You can't expect the same for less.

I ask the doubters one question. "Why would 35,000 officers give up their own time to travel hundreds of miles to London if this was just about personal loss?"

The personal loss, in general, has already started and will continue unchanged apart from the pensions issue which has not yet been decided.

The answer to my own question is that the officers present care about their own police service and the service we give day in and day out to the public. The public have not been consulted about what they require of the police service and the

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Government's current proposals will simply be imposed on them.

The Government is scared to consult members of the public as it knows the answer it will get - we want to see more officers in our communities, not less. One banner summed it up for me and it read:

POLICING BY CONSENT ESTABLISHED 1829  
DISMANTLED WITHOUT CONSENT 2012

I fear for the future of policing and the constant we have all understood: the role of the constable. If these changes come into force, particularly in relation to redundancy, then policing without fear or favour is in jeopardy as is the independence of policing.

The 16,000 black caps signified the number of officers the public will lose from their police service over the coming years.

The British police service showed a public face of which we should all be very proud. We remain the finest police service in the world.

I cannot begin to express the pride and sense of achievement among our officers heading home last night.

As we have said: "People should not be afraid of government, government should be afraid of the people."

# Police minister defends cuts

**If the Government was listening to what officers were trying to tell them, police minister Nick Herbert was not letting on.**

In a series of interviews with the media, he argued that other parts of the public sector were also facing a two-year pay freeze and changes to pensions as the Government tried to tackle its inherited budget deficit.

He also maintained that the cuts were not affecting the front-line and disputed figures obtained under a Freedom of Information request that revealed 5,000 officers had already been lost from the front-line. He repeated his mantra that it was not about numbers but about how they were deployed.

While the police minister did his best to spin the party line, Federation leaders were quick to launch a counter attack in the media.

National chairman Paul McKeever, vice chairman Simon Reed and the Constables' Central Committee chair Julie Nesbit all strongly argued the case for officers in a range of media interviews while rank and file officers also spoke to reporters along the route.

# Public sector strike on day of march

**Hundreds of thousands of public sector workers – including civil servants, NHS staff such as paramedics, border force employees and lecturers – staged a 24-hour strike in protest at the Government's pension proposals on the day of the Federation march.**

The irony was not lost on police officers who feel they are under constant attack from the Government and yet do not have the right to strike.

And there was a wry smile from many marchers when they heard that prison service staff in England, Wales and Scotland had also walked out, given that police officers are usually drafted in to cover any strike by prison officers.

# More than 35,000 join Federation march



**Banned from striking, frustrated by Winsor and feeling betrayed by Government attacks on pensions, pay and conditions, more than 35,000 off-duty police officers gave up a rest day to march through the streets of London to show their strength of feeling against 20 per cent cuts to police budgets.**

One strong message emerged: cut our numbers and communities will suffer.

"When you cut policing by up to 20 per cent the only thing you get more of is, not more policing, you get more disorder, you get more crime and you get more anti-social behaviour and that's why we are here today to say to the public we don't want to see that," said Paul McKeever, chairman of the Police Federation, adding that forces were not being told which parts of the job they should not be doing now they had fewer resources.

Profound changes being made to the service, including privatisation, were going unnoticed by the public, he said, but were putting the finest police service in the world at risk.

On the eve of the march, the chairman issued a statement saying: "The march is the only way that police officers can demonstrate their anger. We have been inundated with messages of support from our colleagues who cannot attend due to their work commitments. The officers marching are doing so in their own time, that's how strongly they feel.

"The reality of the cuts to policing is really beginning to bite; numbers are beginning to fall rapidly. In the past year alone, we have lost over 5,200 police

officers from the front-line and we are witnessing the privatisation of core policing roles as chief officers struggle to cope with budget restraints. The Government needs to be realistic about the outcome of severe cuts to policing; we cannot afford to compromise on public safety."

To get the point across, 16,000 of the officers taking part in the march wore black, baseball style caps to represent the 16,000 officers that will be lost over four years.

Gathering at Millbank from around 9.30am, the officers – some of whom were accompanied by their partners and children - carried placards showing various messages: "Police officers say enough is enough", "Police for public not for profit", "Police sale to the lowest bidder", "Cutting police by 20 per cent is criminal", and "Utterly betrayed".

While the placards, caps and slogan-carrying t-shirts made the march much like any other protest, the marchers were peaceful, orderly and caused the on-duty Met officers no cause for concern – to such an extent that two groups of around 20 of those lined up near the Cenotaph clapped many of their colleagues past in a show of support.

Setting off at around 12.15pm, a little later than planned, after a rousing speech from the national chairman, officers walked past the Home Office, the Houses of Parliament and back to Waterloo Place – with the last group completing the route by around 2.30pm.

