

1,000 Lincolnshire Police volunteers 'will not be vigilantes'



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Recruiting up to 1,000 community-based volunteers to help Lincolnshire Police is not a charter for vigilantes, insist Lincolnshire's police and crime commissioner and the county's top cop.

Lincolnshire's crime and policing panel has approved the £400,000 a year scheme along with a 2 per cent rise in the police's share of the council tax bill, amounting to around 6p extra a week for most county households, to settle the force's £113 million budget for 2013/14.



Commissioner Alan Hardwick's Lincolnshire policing plan is approved

Asked whether the volunteer plan constituted a "charter for vigilante groups", Commissioner Alan Hardwick told a meeting of the panel on February 7: "Anyone who volunteers will be properly trained."

Chief Constable Neil Rhodes said the volunteers - who can wear the PCSO uniform, be the police's eyes and ears and have lower level powers - will be properly vetted.

"We believe that in Lincolnshire their role will be more akin to a village bobby," he said.

Commissioner Hardwick added: "I have issued an invitation to the people of Lincolnshire to volunteer for service to their communities.

"Included in that are suggestions that people might want to volunteer with us as PCSOs and also increase the numbers of the special constabulary."

Mr Hardwick's policing plan also includes maintaining 1,100 regular frontline police officers and a more visible police presence in rural areas and on the county's roads.

The rise in the police's share of the council tax, which is in addition to what the county and district councils set, equates to £190.08 a year for a band D property.

Panel chairman Councillor Ray Wootten welcomed the policing plan but said he found no new initiatives in it.

"I see the plan as a 'steady as she goes' with many ideas already suggested or implemented in the past," he said.

"This plan however does reassure me that the commissioner has not gone for headline hitting objectives and has listened to the views of the community.

"I welcome the recruitment of an extra 23 regular police officers to maintain frontline policing, keeping the people of Lincolnshire safe and secure."

Read more: <http://www.thisislincolnshire.co.uk/1-000-Lincolnshire-Police-volunteers-vigilantes/story-18081485-detail/story.html#ixzz2KJm9Z5uJ>

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