

7 February 2013 Last updated at 12:38

## Warwickshire PCC Ron Ball promises 100 more specials

**The Warwickshire police and crime commissioner has pledged to create at least 100 more special constables.**

Ron Ball said he wanted there to be 410 people employed in the unpaid role by 2017, which would be the "largest number" in the force's history.

There are currently 250 special constables with plans already in place for an additional 60 posts.

But academic and former policeman George Ellison has raised concerns about "policing on the cheap".

Mr Ball said: "The difficulty with full-time officers is they're expensive - just 20 more would cost us at least £1m a year - and once you've hired them you have committed yourself to that expenditure effectively forever.

"We are struggling with tight budgets.... one of the very creative things that Warwickshire has done is had this alliance with West Mercia [Police] and between us we're managing to make some fairly substantial savings by doing thing once and not twice."

### 'Frightening'

Mr Ball said he aimed to get the best policing for the country, "given the budget" he has, and that there needed to be a "sensible mix of full-time officers, PCSOs [police community support officers] and specials" to do this.

He said: "Specials don't get paid, they are volunteer police officers, but nevertheless they are there, they are providing eyes and ears, they are making arrests, they are doing all of the things that you and I would want police officers to be doing."

However, George Ellison, a former police officer who is head of law at Coventry University College, is concerned about "policing on the cheap"

He said: "Specials do have the same powers of police officers and the frightening thing within that is that you're going to give somebody who's had two, maybe three weeks of training, the power to take your liberty away, because probably one of the most strongest powers police officers have is that they can arrest people."

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SAT 16 FEB

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