

PCC Alan Hardwick considering volunteer horse patrols in Lincolnshire

Horse owners in Lincolnshire could be asked to volunteer for mounted police patrols in rural parts of the county.

Police and Crime Commissioner Alan Hardwick said he is looking at the idea of having a "presence of authority" assisting the force.

Mr Hardwick said volunteers would probably need to have the same powers as a PCSO.

But John Hassall, from the Lincolnshire Police Federation, said he would have "grave concerns" about the idea.

'Unpredictable beasts'

Mr Hardwick said similar patrols were already in place elsewhere, with volunteers being given livery for the horses and several barrels of hay as an incentive.

He added: "Lots of people in the county have horses and want to do something for their communities."

But said "they would need to have some powers, otherwise it's just people on horses looking around".

However, Mr Hassall said: "I think the amount of training that police officers undertake - with very unpredictable beasts - horses themselves - means it would be entirely unsuitable."

But he added that he would welcome a move for volunteers to act as "the eyes and ears of the community".

Ryan Rouse, from Bransby Home of Rest for Horses - based near Lincoln - said the idea raised concerns over safety.

He said: "Someone that's put in a position where they are caught doing something they possibly shouldn't be - you don't know how they might react.

"The last thing I want to do is put myself and my horse in a position of danger."

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