

## Thousands taken off of the road under new police powers

More than two thousand uninsured and unlicensed vehicles have been taken off of the road by police over the last six months.

Thanks to new powers, the Roads Policing Unit has seized the vehicles, as part of its efforts to make roads across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safer for everyone.

Under the Serious and Organised Crime Act new powers were inserted into the Road Traffic Act 1988, giving officers the power to seize vehicles from people with no insurance, no licence, or who are failing to comply with the conditions of their license.

It's estimated that one in twenty motorists drive without insurance, placing a financial burden on honest

people – an extra £30 on average is placed on people's insurance premiums as a result of uninsured motorists.

Inspector Peter Hughes, from the Roads Policing Unit said: "These new powers enable us to keep people across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safer on our roads. People with no insurance or no licence, often have un-roadworthy vehicles, and are more likely to be involved in collisions.

"People who flout the law like this are often also involved in other criminal activity. By taking these vehicles off the road our officers are helping to tackle criminality across the two counties, making our communities safer.

"Law-abiding members of the public have nothing to fear from these new powers. They should feel safer knowing that we are actively denying criminals



the use of the road, making it harder for them to move around the county."

Once vehicles are seized, owners must produce a valid insurance certificate, or licence, whichever is appropriate, within 14 days. If this doesn't happen the vehicles are scrapped.

As well as having their vehicle seized, the offender will also face prosecution, receiving a fine and points on their license. They will also be charged with the storage cost of the vehicle.

## Traffic Cops turn TV stars

Hampshire's Roads Policing Unit has become the latest star of reality TV – featuring on primetime national television in the BBC's latest series of "Traffic Cops". The Roads Policing Unit was approached by the BBC last August following a series of high profile articles in the national press about its robust stance on drink driving, the RPU's unprecedented step in creating the country's first ever Impaired Driver Unit, and the huge success seen across the two counties in reducing fatal collisions by almost half in 2004 – more than any other force in the country.

More than five million people tuned into watch the first episode, which aired at the beginning of May – and the force received a deluge of supportive emails the following day by members of the public, and from other forces.

Covering a wide range of issues the programs focus on areas such as section 165 (a new power which enables officers to seize cars with no insurance, or that are being driven without a licence), the Impaired Driver Unit, which was created to tackle the

growing menace of drug driving, and the depth of investigation which is required when dealing with a fatal road crash.

The BBC had originally intended to film half the series with Hampshire, and half with Cheshire Constabulary – which had featured in the previous series of "Traffic Cops". But after seeing how the RPU in Hampshire operated, and learning that Hampshire's RPU was one of only five in the country to earn an HMIC Excellent grading, the BBC decided to solely feature Hampshire in the program.

Filming took place over an eight week period, and the film crew soon saw that Hampshire's RPU was different to other forces they had previously filmed with. Rather than using general patrols, Hampshire's RPU uses an intelligence led approach to policing. This ensures resources are always placed according to where problems are, therefore enabling officers to tackle specific issues.

This new style roads policing, which has been operating for a number of years now, focuses specifically on

casualty reduction through high profile, specific operations to tackle problems like drink and drug driving; tackling criminality through the use of ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) technology; partnership campaign work, such as educating young drivers about the need to drive appropriately and within their means; and motorcycle initiatives – all of which are specific problem areas highlighted through intelligence.

The series consists of seven programs, which will run from May until the end of June. Although many officers were nervous about taking part, their efforts have shown the high standards of work being done by Hampshire Constabulary's Roads Policing Unit.

**The Roads Policing Unit and the Community Reassurance Team at Totton can be contacted on 0845 045 45 45.**

**To report anti-social behaviour in your area call the new single non-emergency number 101.**



# Driving Force



## Information for you in this newsletter

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Superintendent Mark Bradford

"Every officer and staff member within the roads policing unit is dedicated to making all roads across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safer in delivering a highly specialised level of service to the public.

This newsletter has been designed to emphasise the varied and skilled work of the RPU, and to give an insight into the unique intelligence led way we work."

*Superintendent Mark Bradford*

## Community Reassurance Team

For just over a year now the Roads Policing Unit of Hampshire Constabulary has been home to the Community Reassurance Team (CRT) – a group of officers put together to do exactly that – get out into the community and reinforce public confidence.

The CRT was created in response to growing concerns from local residents, on issues such as speeding motorists and nuisances on the roads. These are the issues in the past that have occasionally suffered delayed responses because of roads policing issues that need to take priority, like the numerous collisions that happen on our roads every day. Such a situation is obviously not acceptable, and so this is the purpose of the CRT. They provide a face to face and targeted response, focussed on making the New Forest and Southampton more comfortable and safer places to live.

The Roads Policing Unit receives many calls and letters from people about problems in their area, and the CRT is dedicated in tackling these issues. As a result there are more officers out and about on the streets, providing a visible deterrent to those creating the problems and reassuring others that they are safe.

Contact is made as often as possible between the officer and the person concerned whilst dealing with an incident or

complaint to ensure the results are satisfactory and any further developments are dealt with as quickly as possible. The feedback so far has been fantastic, both from the public and RPU management. Many letters of thanks have been received, and it seems that the 'personal touch' is much appreciated.

As well as working in the community, the CRT officers also provide a valuable resource for various units around the force. When extra officers are required, the CRT is available to provide support. For example, earlier this year an operation against drug users and dealers in Southampton took place, and two officers from the Totton CRT unit were involved, and when road death investigations are opened, the CRT can be called upon for much needed assistance in the early stages.

The success has been so great that in fact similar teams have been set up to give the same service across the county, based at Cosham and Farnborough stations, continuing the constabulary's dedication to maintain safer communities.

If you would like to get in touch with your local CRT, please call on

**0845 045 45 45**

## Impaired Driver Unit secures twice as many arrests in first year of action

Twice as many drug drivers were taken off of Hampshire's roads last year, compared to 2004, thanks to a dedicated unit which has been put in place to tackle the problem.

176 people were arrested for drug driving in 2005, compared to 91 in 2004, following the creation of the Impaired Driver Unit (IDU), a specialist team which aims to tackle the growing trend.

Drug driving is becoming an increasing problem nationwide, and the RPU took the unprecedented step of creating a dedicated unit in its efforts to stamp out the practice, and drive home the message that putting other people's lives in danger by driving whilst under the influence of drugs will not be tolerated.

Modelled on similar units in the United States, the Impaired Driver Unit trains and provides expert advice to over 200 roads policing officers in how to detect the signs and symptoms that someone has taken drugs.

Field Impairment Tests (FIT tests) are relatively new, and before the Roads Policing Unit took the unprecedented step in creating the IDU very few

## Hampshire succeeds in reducing road deaths

From 2003 to 2004, the Roads Policing Unit has achieved the figures below:

- Fatal crashes in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight saw a 43% drop between 2003 and 2004.
- Total number of fatalities and serious injuries caused by road accidents has fallen from 1178 people to 988.
- Motorcycle fatalities fell from 33 in 2003 to 10 in 2004 – a reduction of almost 70%.
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight are the only Police force in the country to see such a drop in road deaths.

members of the constabulary were trained to detect drug drivers.

But in the year that the Impaired Driver Unit has been in existence there has been a three-fold increase in the number of tests being conducted, and the amount of arrests for drug driving has doubled. This means that almost one in four drivers tested had taken drugs before getting behind the wheel.

Superintendent Mark Bradford said: "This is a staggering increase, and one that indicates that the Roads Policing Unit was right to create a dedicated specialist unit to tackle the problem. The increase doesn't mean that we have a big drug drive problem in Hampshire – what it shows is that previously we haven't been able to provide our officers with the training and knowledge to detect the problem.

"By creating the Impaired Driver Unit we

have been able to give our officers the ability to detect people driving whilst under the influence of drugs.

Since its launch a year ago Hampshire's Impaired Driver Unit has gained national recognition, and is now involved in trialling new portable evidential breath testing equipment, which could be used by police in the future to make it as easy to test for drug driving as it is to test for drink driving.



## New Forest drivers are targeted in 'Stay Under 40' project

Drivers across the New Forest are being given a hard hitting lesson on the risks of driving dangerously on forest roads.

Every year animals are killed in the New Forest because people don't take enough care when driving in the area. Not only do the animals suffer, but drivers put themselves at risk of serious or even fatal injury if they are involved in a crash with a forest animal.

Officers from Hampshire Constabulary's Roads Policing Unit regularly work with local beat officers, to highlight the issue and educate drivers of the need to slow down.

Operations highlighting the dangers of speeding in the New Forest are often carried out in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, New Forest Commoners and New Forest Verderers.

In these operations check points are set up at locations where there has been a high animal death rate, and people exceeding the 40mph speed limit are offered either a fixed penalty notice and points on their licence, or a talk with the police and a local forest person, or a commoner, who had experienced the loss of an animal.

Drivers stopped are made aware of

the dangers of being involved in a collision with an animal, and the effects of a loss of an animal on the owner.

Hampshire's Roads Policing Unit is committed to keeping roads safe and will continue educational operations such as this, and hope that this approach will have a greater impact on drivers and raise their awareness of the dangers of speeding.



## Tackling impaired drivers in the New Forest

The western Roads Policing Unit is continuing its hard work towards maintaining safer roads and communities in the New Forest, through a number of targeted operations.

Following intelligence which has highlighted a disproportionate number of crashes involving drink or drug driving in the area, officers are spending time focussing on drivers who carry out these anti social and

dangerous practices.

One such operation led to five arrests, which is another step closer in eliminating the risks for other road users, and the passengers of these drivers.

The stop checks are also focussed on other safety



issues, such as not wearing seatbelts, mobile phone use and speeding, and officers aim to educate drivers in the process. Many simply do not realise the potential harm they could cause.

These kinds of operations are a continued activity for officers across the county, to publicise the robust stance the RPU take against all driving offences, and to raise awareness about the dangers improper driving can pose.

## Hampshire Police and County Council receive Road Safety Award

Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire County Council have been awarded the prestigious Prince Michael of Kent Road Safety commendation for their combined efforts in dramatically reducing motorcycle fatalities on the county's roads.



In 2004 motorcycle fatalities fell substantially, with ten people dying compared to 33 in 2003 and 22 in 2002. The decrease follows the startling rise in 2003, which was mirrored across the country. Since then the partners have worked closely with other public sector agencies and motorcycle related businesses to reduce this unacceptable death toll.

Focussing on known motorcycle casualty routes across Hampshire, high visibility police and ambulance patrols were put in place at weekends along priority routes including the A339, A272 and the A32 (centring around the West Meon area), in an attempt to encourage people to take more care when using the roads.

Substantial engineering work and gateway signing was also undertaken by the County Council along the same routes to try and reduce the risk of collision.

The presentation took place at the constabulary's Southern Support and Training Headquarters at Netley, and was received by Chief Constable Paul Kernaghan, and Councillor Jonathan Glen. Also in attendance were Superintendent Mark Bradford, Inspector Peter Hughes and PC Michael Gear, all from the Roads Policing Unit, as well as members of the Council's Road Safety Team.

John Plowman, from the Prince Michael of Kent Awards, presented the commendation certificate and said: "The scheme's purpose is to recognise innovative, well researched, self sustaining and replicable schemes. I am delighted that following careful scrutiny of a large number of schemes across the UK, Hampshire has been judged worthy of a commendation."

Officers from the Roads Policing Unit took part in a joint operation with other forces across the South East, co-ordinating their efforts on specified Sundays throughout the summer in an attempt to reduce the number of people being killed or seriously injured on roads across the region.

Significant work has also been delivered as part of the partners' Bikesafe initiative, Edge44. Here the joint police and County Council scheme aims to reduce the number of motorcycle-related casualties by teaching skills and offering advice that could help motorcyclists stay safer on the roads.

Prince Michael of Kent Road Safety Awards and Commendations are presented throughout the year to individuals, companies or organisations in recognition of their outstanding contribution to improving road safety. Inspector Peter Hughes, lead partnership officer for the RPU said: "We are delighted to have our partnership work recognised in this manner. Too many people are killed or seriously injured on our roads and we are committed to reducing these figures further.

"Our partnership approach with the County Council appears to be working – to see a 70 percent decrease in the number of motorcycle fatalities between 2003 and 2004 is a remarkable achievement. We will continue to work with the County Council and our other partner agencies to build on this success."

The County Council's Executive Member for Environment (North), Cllr Jonathan Glen, added:

"I'm very pleased that our partnership work with Hampshire Constabulary has been recognised nationally through this prestigious commendation. However, the greatest reward has been to see motorcycle casualty numbers falling.

"Recent tragedies on Hampshire's roads only serve to emphasise how very important such work is, and strengthens the County Council's resolve to continue to make our roads safer for everyone."