

Her majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Robert Voss CBE

# Finding just what an excellent job the police do to keep us all safe

I have been fortunate to recently spend two days with the police in Hertfordshire as well as a third day with the "Mini Police".

On day one I spent some time in the huge and very impressive Force Communication Room (FCR) at Welwyn HQ. The volume and variety of both 999 and 101 calls coming in from all over Hertfordshire is overwhelming and the manner and speed with which the calls are taken, assessed, handled and dispatched by the highly experienced team is most impressive.

After sitting in on a briefing it was out on patrol in the cars. Much as I enjoyed speeding down the A1 at well over 100 mph - blue light flashing and siren sounding-I soon realised what a vital yet difficult job the "boys and girls in blue" do 365 days a year. They face danger and intimidation every day yet need to be approachable and aware of individual situations all the time. In one evening I realised that they have no idea what will face them whenever they start their shift.

The manner in which they patiently yet firmly handled a number of tricky situations on my one night "on duty" made me appreciate the difficult yet rewarding job these men and women do.

My second day was again in the FCR but this time with the Mental



Health Triage Team listening to incoming calls and then out to an incident of a young man threatening to commit suicide.

The compassion and care shown by the team-especially the mental health nurse assigned to the police-managed to defuse the situation and have the young man helped with future counselling. This part of policing is vital as I was told that up to 25% of incidents



involve people with potential mental health issues whose cases can bypass the judicial system and be dealt with by the Mental Health Trusts-saving time, money and a lot of anguish.

Finally a day with the Mini Police-primary school children who have spent several weeks learning about the police and "helping" with their duties. It was a pleasure to see them all receive their awards at Welwyn HQ-and more importantly meet the police dogs...!

Despite some obvious challenges-I can now begin to appreciate what a wonderful job the police do to protect the people of Hertfordshire.