

International Roundtable Conference on Volunteering in Policing

The Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ) at the University of Northampton convened an International Roundtable Conference on Volunteering in Policing in London earlier this week (25th October), with the support of the Association of Special Constabulary Officers (ASCO) and the Volunteer Law Enforcement Officer Alliance (VLEOA). The event brought together global leaders in academia and policing to share experiences and collaborate.



The conference was formally opened and chaired by Professor Matthew Callender, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Northampton and Director of the IPSCJ. Opening addresses were also made by Nick Dale, Vice President for the Police Sector at CGI and Mark Owen MBE, National Citizens in Policing Change manager and Special Chief Officers North Wales Police.

CGI, one of the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world, supported the event and offered meeting space in their London office located in 20 Fenchurch Street (also known as the Walkie Talkie Tower). Professor Matthew Callender commented: "CGI were very supportive and offered us a wonderful space to host the event. CGI were recently named by Forbes as one of the world's best employers, recognising their corporate impact and the contributions to communities all across the world".

Dr Iain Britton, Visiting Fellow in the IPSCJ and Founding Director of the Centre for Volunteer Impact, opened with a keynote presentation on the future vision for volunteering and policing. Iain shared the considerable portfolio of research that IPSCJ has developed nationally across the UK in recent years. Dr Laura Knight, Visiting Fellow in the IPSCJ, then led a roundtable discussion on opportunities and challenges to grow volunteering in policing across national contexts.

The first main panel session was chaired by Curtis-James Marshall, Assistant Chief Officer with the Metropolitan Special Constabulary which focused on engaging communities in volunteering. First, Sgt Claire Coleman and Sgt John McKeag from the Volunteer Coordination Unit in Police Scotland shared experiences from Scotland. Second, Richard James, Director of Intensive Engagement Ltd., discussed Reframing the Volunteering Offer in a Model of 21st Century Community Engagement. Third, Rudi

Ropital, Attaché de Sécurité Intérieure and senior police officer from the Gendarmerie, shared perspectives from France on volunteering and the reserve model in France. Fourth, Dr Matthew Yap who is Senior Lieutenant Colonel, Army Reserves



and Deputy Superintendent of Police for Singapore Volunteer Special Constabulary, outlined Singapore's national resilience policy and community policing initiatives.

"The roundtable allowed the volunteers leadership of today to learn best practices for tomorrow. I have now case studies from over 10 different volunteer forces" – Matthew Yap, Singapore Volunteer Special Constabulary

Following lunch, the second main panel session was chaired by Ann-Marie Lawson, Citizens in Policing Manager with Northamptonshire Police which focussed on growing volunteer programmes. First, Professor Ross Wolf who is Reserve Chief Deputy, Orange County (Florida) Sheriff's Office and Dr Adam Dobrin who is Reserve Deputy Sheriff, St Lucie County (Florida) in the United States of America outlined a strategic view of the variation of volunteer policing in the United States. Second, Marcel Helmer, who was manager of territorial unit Noord-Holland and is leading a national change of police volunteers across the Netherlands, outlined a national overview of volunteering in policing in the Netherlands. Third, Rebecca Prichard, Head of Volunteering in the Metropolitan Police, discussed the future of volunteering in policing in London.

"Volunteer policing is an understudied area of policing, and participation in this event provided an opportunity to examine past research and future opportunities with colleagues from around the world." – Professor Ross Wolf, Reserve Chief Deputy, Orange County, Florida.



The third panel, chaired by Dr Iain Britton, focussed on Inclusion. The first talk by Dr Ashley Freyling, Superintendent for South Devon in Devon and Cornwall Special Constabulary, discussed researching women in the Special Constabulary. The second presentation from Paul Griffiths OBE, National Officer with the Police Superintendents Association of England and Wales, discussed valuing difference in policing. Navdeep Chouhan, Special

Inspector in West Midlands Police and Founding Director of the Centre for Volunteer Impact, led the second roundtable discussion on how to better work together and how to improve the evidence base.

"I was humbled to be part of (likely) the greatest gathering of academics and practitioners in the field of volunteer policing. This meeting will be the benchmark for years to come, a very high bar was set. I learned so much and hope my contributions were valuable to others" – Dr Adam Dobrin, Florida Atlantic University and Reserve Deputy Sheriff, St Lucie County

The fourth and final panel session was chaired by Jas Samra, Employer Supported Policing Lead for the Metropolitan Police. First, Dr Kimihiro Hino, Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo and adviser for the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and the Fukuoka Prefectural Police, discussed community safety volunteering in Japan. Second, Dr Cheah Phaik Kin, Associate Professor at the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lance Corporal in the Police Volunteer Reserve Officer in the Royal Malaysia Police, presented international models of volunteer policing. Third, Dr Melissa Pepper, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Greenwich, discussed conceptualising the UK Police Support Volunteer.

“It is a privilege to be part of this international gathering of police officers, volunteer police practitioners and esteemed scholars who are devoted to the development and advancement of volunteer policing. This convergence of experts launches a platform of endless possibilities.” – Dr Cheah Phaik Kin, UTAR University and Royal Malaysia Police Volunteer Reserve.

The concluding Plenary Session, led by Dr Iain Britton, was focused on the future of volunteer policing. Tim Mann MBE, Partnership Lead for the Volunteer Police Cadets, discussed and outlined the impact, value and benefits of the Volunteer Police Cadets programmes in the UK. Professor Matthew Callender then formally closed the conference, with a discussion of the key themes discussed throughout the day and by outlining the next steps for partners and attendees.

“Bringing together scholars and police leaders from around the world, it is clear that we have much in common and much that we can learn from one another. The passion in the room to innovate and to re-imagine police volunteering, to work together in the future, and to share practice and ideas was huge. I am massively looking forward to the opportunities to further build this global academic and leadership network for police volunteering. Volunteering in policing around the world engages many millions of people, and it delivers a billion dollar and more contribution to policing worldwide, yet it is commonly overlooked. I hope this event is a turning point in that.” – Dr Iain Britton



“The International Roundtable brought together many of the global leaders from across the work to share their experiences, perspectives and plans for the future. There were lots of passionate and thoughtful discussions throughout the day, with many connections being made with partners from across the world. I am proud of the IPSCJ’s role in advancing knowledge within this field, supporting police forces around the world and leading collaboration and partnerships to improve the value of and impact from volunteers in policing.” – Professor Matthew Callender

Guests of the conference were offered access by CGI to the Sky Garden for wonderful views across London – a wonderful treat to end a very special day.

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