



**DORSET
POLICE**

Joining the Special Constabulary Information pack





DORSET POLICE

OUR VISION

***A safe county
for everyone***

OUR PURPOSE

***Tough on crime
Keeping people safe
Putting victims first***

OUR PRIORITIES



Relentless pursuit of criminality



Exceptional local policing



Innovating, transforming and improving



Putting victims first



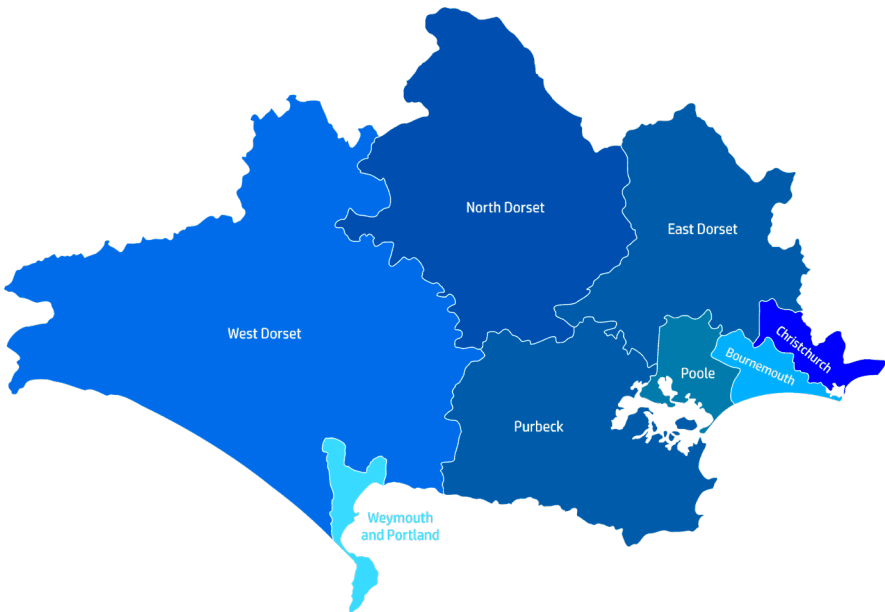
Ethical and inclusive



Enabling people to deliver excellence

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Introduction from Chief Officer Ryan Howell



Thank you for taking time to explore this exciting opportunity. You're reading this because being part of Dorset's Special Constabulary excites you. It should.

We're at the precipice of a period of growth and development within the Special Constabulary, and we are looking for fantastic people to join us here in Dorset as volunteer police officers. We need your commitment, perspectives and your diversity of thought to help make Dorset a safe county for everyone.

I'm looking for individuals who can bring their skills and experiences from outside of policing into Dorset. Whether it be in a neighbourhood role, working on response or in a specialist role – I want our special constables to feel valued and to go home at the end of the shift knowing the difference they've made.

Our Force has a strong family feel and you will be joining a team of dedicated officers, staff and volunteers, who all play an important part in delivering policing in our communities.

If you'd like to discuss the role or find out more, please visit our website or reach out to the Citizens in Policing Resourcing Team by email: dp-citizensinpolicingrecruitment@dorset.pnn.police.uk



The history of the Special Constabulary

The Special Constabulary is a force of trained volunteers who work with and support their local police. ‘Specials’ come from all walks of life and they all volunteer a minimum of four hours a week with their local police force, forming a vital link between the regular (full-time) police and the local community.

The Special Constabulary can be traced back to at least the 9th century when members of the public were invested with “special powers” to give unpaid assistance in enforcing the law and keeping the peace.

The Act of 1673

In 1673, Charles II passed an act that laid down that any citizen may be sworn in as a police officer on a temporary basis to deal with threats of great disorder. These special constables continued earlier notions that every individual had a responsibility to see that law and order were maintained. If a citizen was summonsed before the magistrates to be sworn in as a special constable and refused to take the oath or perform duty, he was liable to a heavy fine of £5. This Act was in force for hundreds of years and used to call up Specials on many occasions.

The 1831 Act

The Act included many provisions, including a new power allowing local authorities to appoint special constables for the purpose of preserving the peace should they consider existing police numbers inadequate for doing so.

Specials were granted all “powers, authorities, advantages and immunities” as any serving full-time constable. They were also given the power to act in adjoining counties in extraordinary circumstances.

The Act also stated that specials were to be issued with any articles or weapons the authorities considered necessary to execute their duty.

Work during the wars

At the beginning of the Great War, 1914 to 1918, the Special Constabulary was ordered into a body similar to the present day one: a voluntary, part-time organisation that paid only their expenses. During World War One, their primary function was to prevent German infiltrators from interfering with the nation's water supply.

The Second World War between 1939 and 1945 saw around 130,000 special constables acting as the wartime police reserve, supplemented by retired police officers recalled to duty to assist. While many became full-time 'regular' police officers, others contributed duty hours whenever possible while carrying on with their full-time responsibilities.

1949

In 1949, in a major move after hundreds of years of inequality, women were allowed to join the Special Constabulary.

The Police Act of 1964

The Police Act of 1964 established the Special Constabulary in its present form and gave Chief Constables the power to appoint and manage Specials.



About Dorset Police

Dorset Police covers approximately 1,024 square miles of land and a similar body of water off the coastline. Despite being classed as 93.7 per cent rural, the county includes an airport as well as seaports that serve internal and international freight and passenger travel.

Annually we provide a policing coverage for around 800,000 residents, which increases during term time with students from the universities and colleges. A further 11 million people visit Dorset each year for short breaks or holidays.

There's a lot of history to Dorset and we are no different. We were formed in 1855 and on 1 October 1967 merged with Bournemouth Police to form Dorset and Bournemouth Constabulary. On 1 April 1974 we took over some areas, mainly Christchurch and its surrounding areas, from Hampshire Constabulary and acquired our present name.

We are one of the highest performing police services in the United Kingdom, and as a member of Dorset Police you will feel a strong sense of pride in working to protect the communities we serve. Our staff are our most valuable asset and we currently employ over 2,500 people.

Our 73 special constables are fully warranted and professionally trained volunteers, who found the time to give 25,117 hours in 2024, and our fantastic volunteers gave 7,924 hours in 2024 in a variety of roles.

Our police family is made up of:

- **1,407 police officers**
- **1,343 police staff**
- **49 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)**
- **73 special constables**
- **135 volunteers, (excluding Community Speed Watch volunteers)**
- **1,292 Community Speed Watch volunteers**



Dorset Police structure



**Chief Constable
Amanda Pearson**



**Deputy Chief
Constable
Rachel Farrell**



**Assistant Chief
Constable
Mark Callaghan**



**Assistant Chief
Constable
Steve Lyne**



**Assistant
Chief Officer
Jo Mosley**



**Chief Officer
Ryan Howell**

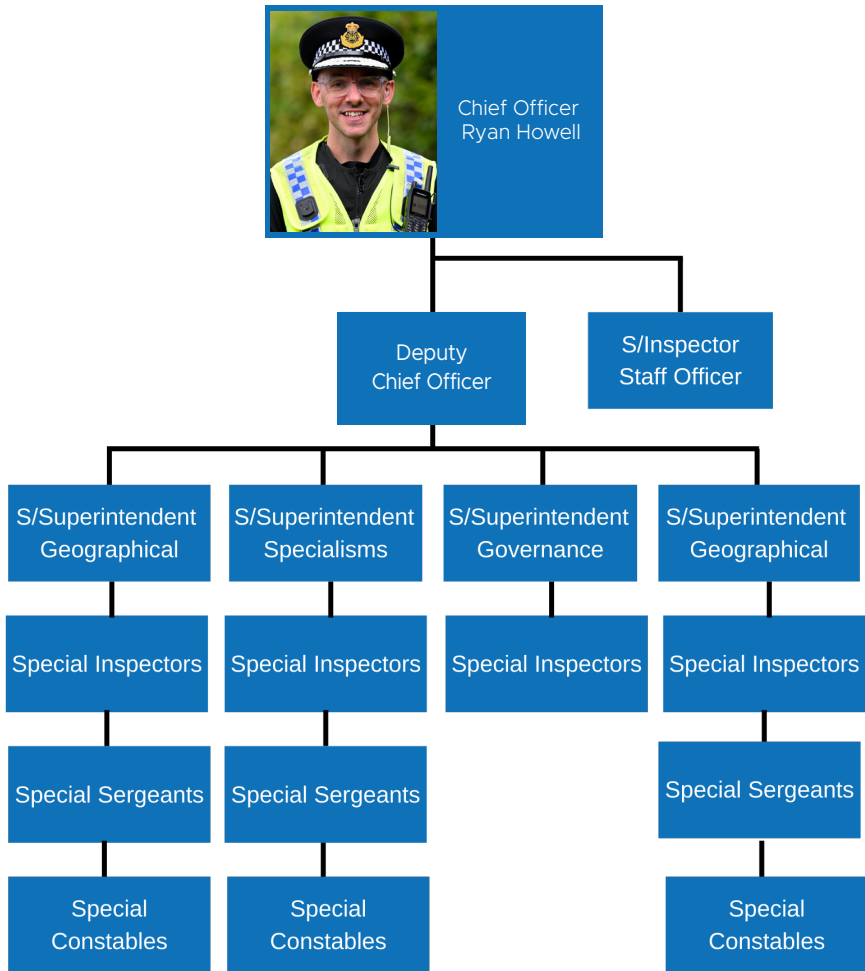


**Chief Financial
Officer
Neal Butterworth**



**Director of
Legal Services
Mike Stamp**

Special Constabulary structure



Dorset Police & Crime Plan 2021/29

MAKE EVERY PENNY COUNT

Raising awareness around issues of police funding, especially around the national funding formula.

To maximise efficiency and efficacy in policing, to ensure that the robust oversight of financial, audit and governance arrangements continue.

See Page 22 for further information

PUT VICTIMS & COMMUNITIES FIRST

To have an embedded 'victim first' philosophy and approach to ensure the best possible outcome for those who need help and support.

To work with vulnerable individuals and communities to tackle issues such as fraud, addiction, gambling and homelessness.

To provide more support for young people, and build on programmes and initiatives that address prevention, intervention and diversion.

See Page 20 for further information

FIGHT RURAL CRIME

To maintain the Rural Crime Team and ensure that they continue to work ever-more closely with the rural communities they serve.

To tackle issues that blight our countryside, like fly-tipping, wildlife crime and heritage crime as well as build on the successes of the Country Watch scheme, designed to bring rural communities together.

See Page 18 for further information





CUT CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The police will provide a robust focus to cut crime and anti-social behaviour, so people across Dorset see a clear difference and feel safer. To tackle the issues that affect the people and communities of Dorset, burglary and acquisitive crime, business crime and shoplifting in order to make our communities 'feel' safer.

See Page 12 for further information

MAKE POLICING MORE VISIBLE & CONNECTED

To ensure that there are greater levels of police visibility and connectivity across the county. To build upon the work of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and ensure that the people and communities of Dorset 'know their police'.

To maximise the use of technology to ensure officers' time is spent as productively and efficiently as possible and that people receive a good service from the police.

See Page 14 for further information

FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME & HIGH HARM

To tackle Violence Against Women and Girls from a multi-agency, partnership perspective.

To continue the tough approach on drugs and violent crime, to drive out organised crime groups and to hit hard those involved in county-lines and drug related criminality.

See Page 16 for further information



DORSET
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
DAVID SIDWICK

Being a special constable in Dorset

Special constables are volunteer police officers who have the same powers and wear the same uniform as regular police officers. Full training is provided, catered to the needs of our special constables.

Once you are fully trained, you will work alongside regular police officers, police staff and other volunteers to tackle crime and keep the communities of Dorset safe.

As a special constable, you can align yourself with different sections in the Force, including the Roads Policing Unit, response teams, neighbourhood policing teams or even the Dog Unit. Whatever section or team you are part of, there will still be lots of opportunities to get involved in different events and other operations in the county.

What training and support are provided?

Full training and support for special constables is provided. The initial training consists of 29 training days over 21 consecutive weekends, covering all relevant aspects of the role of a special constable. Training is delivered between Winfrith headquarters and Ferndown police station, plus 40 hours of self-study is required to be completed at home.

You will then take part in assessed practical sessions and end of course exam to make sure you are safe and lawful to carry out accompanied patrol with a regular police officer. All of your hard work will be rewarded at a passing out ceremony at the end of initial training.

Voluntary hours

As a special constable, you will need to be able to volunteer 16 hours a month on average every year, equating to 200 hours in total per year. Most importantly, the time you give is flexible so you can fit it around your busy lives.

If you are employed, Dorset Police has a range of companies signed up to Employee Supported Policing, allowing for extra days off for policing duties or training.

Recruitment timeline

The recruitment process for special constables can take several months. We have broken down what to expect when you apply to be a special constable.

- After you have completed your application form, you will be invited to complete two online assessments, known as the National Sift. You will take part in two exercises, Situational Judgement Test (SJT) and Behavioural Styles Questionnaire (BSQ), which are designed to assess your potential to perform in your role as a special constable.
- You will then be invited to a formal interview. The interview is expected to last approximately 40 minutes and will be face-to-face at Dorset Police Headquarters in Winfrith. On the day of your interview, you will also be asked to provide a biometric vetting sample (fingerprints and DNA swab), complete the police job related fitness test (JRFT). As a special constable, you may find yourself in a variety of physically challenging situations and we need to ensure you have the strength and stamina to deal effectively with these situations, as well as be able to safeguard yourself and others. Your identification documents will also be verified.



- If successful at interview, you will be issued a conditional offer of appointment for one of our training intake dates. It is at this stage that you pre-requisite checks will commence.
- You will be required to meet with our Occupational Health Unit face-to-face at Dorset Police Headquarters in Winfrith, where they will check things such as BMI, eyesight, colour vision, lung function and hearing. You will also be required to complete a medical history questionnaire which needs to be verified by your GP and an eyesight form which needs to be verified by an optician. You will be spoken to about receiving a Hepatitis-B injection during your training, if you have not already had one. On this day the Resourcing Team will also complete a drugs test.
- There will also be background security checks (vetting) on you and your partner's immediate family, including parents and children, as well as your financial status. These checks are carried out because special constables have access to privileged information, which may make them vulnerable to corruption.



- The Resourcing Team will seek references from employers, education or other volunteering opportunities covering a period of five years. Your permission will be sought ahead of requesting your current employment reference..
- Upon passing the pre-requisites, you will be issued a formal offer to begin your training, as well as your force collar number.

After your training

You're ready to become a special constable and become a valuable member of our policing family!

You will get your full uniform provided, which is the same as a regular police officer. This includes boots, body armour, handcuffs, baton, vest, utility jacket, amongst other clothing and equipment.



Meet our special constables

Paul

“I became a special constable because honestly, I was tired of hearing people say there weren’t enough officers on the streets — and I felt the same. So, I thought, why not do something about it? I saw an ad on Facebook, and I just clicked on the link. I had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

“Since joining, I’ve realised just how varied and rewarding the role is. No two shifts are ever the same — you meet people from all walks of life, and every day brings something new. Whether it’s dealing with emergencies, or connecting with the community, you’re right there making a difference.

“What really surprised me was that special constables are given the same powers and equipment as regular officers — including a laptop and phone. You’re fully equipped and trusted to do the job. I split most of my shifts between response policing (999 calls and emergencies) and neighbourhood policing, which focuses more on longer-term community issues. In the summer, we also police at events like carnivals, fireworks displays and other big gatherings — there’s a real buzz to it.

“Over the past year, I’ve worked alongside some brilliant people who all share the same goal: protecting the communities we serve. The media can be quite negative about policing, but that’s never been my experience. What I’ve seen is professionalism, compassion and real teamwork.

“Being a special constable is exciting, emotional, and incredibly fulfilling. The skills you learn stay with you for life — and the difference you make is real.”



Emma

Emma joined the Special Constabulary in 2020 having always wanted to join the police and decided that joining the Special Constabulary meant she could stay in a day job that she enjoyed and have the flexibility of policing around family life and work.

Emma said: “I work for HMRC as a senior tax specialist and I’m used to dealing with people in often challenging situations. I realised that many of the skills were transferable between the roles and that the skills of each role would enhance the other.



“I have worked response shifts, events and neighbourhood policing and embraced opportunities for development within my role.

“I have represented the Force on an action learning set for female leaders which has given me confidence and allowed me to share my skills and experience with partner agencies.”

Emma is convinced the skills she is developing in the Special Constabulary are helping her in her day job.

“I have recently been promoted at HMRC and have no doubt that the confidence and competences I have gathered through my police work have helped me achieve this.

“I love being in the Special Constabulary because I find myself in unique and challenging situations. I’ve gained so many skills and dealing with these situations gives me self-belief and a sense of purpose. I’ve proved to myself what I am capable of and I wish I had known that there is so much flexibility to add something so rewarding to life... and done it a lot sooner!”



If you would like to find out more about becoming a special constable and how to apply, please visit:
<https://recruitment.dorset.police.uk/dp-sc>
or scan the QR code.

