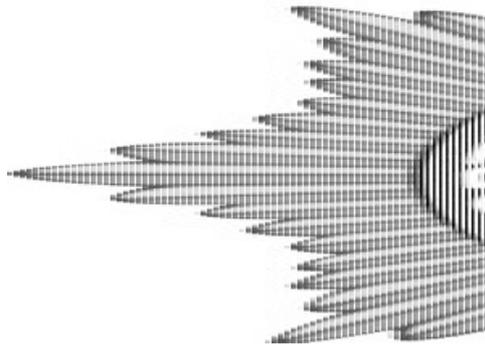


The Politics of Crime

By [Josh Boswell](#) and [Neil Johnston](#)

Tuesday 4 December 2012



The PCC elections failed to attract interest but they still have a job to do. Josh Boswell and Neil Johnston caught up with Julia Mulligan, North Yorkshire PCC, to find out how she will protect students, and if she really has a mandate.

You're two weeks in to the job. Are you already bogged down?

Yeah, well it's a big job. I think the key is to try and focus on what you need to do, and to try not to bite off too much too soon. I've filled up a notebook virtually already!

Why did you decide to run?

In my old business – not my new business, my old business – I used to do a lot of work in communities with a lot of crime, so in areas where there was a lot of high economic deprivation and I worked with a whole load of people in public sector organisations, and saw the effect that crime has on people, so you have an interest when you meet people and you hear their stories. I've been doing that sort of work since 2007, so when this came up, I thought 'well that looks really interesting'. I thought I'd have a go.

Does your party affiliation matter?

I suppose, I stood as a Conservative and I am a Conservative, but in terms of what I'm doing locally, there's actually been nothing, no... nothing from the Conservatives in central office actually. Nothing. I think the Labour Party, their PCCs all went down to London on the Monday after the election and they all met together as a group, we haven't done that.

It's a new role. I mean my approach is quite different for example to the chap in West Yorkshire. And also it's a local reform, so it is very much driven by what you need in your local communities. We've certainly had no instructions of any shape or form that this is how you should do it. The only thing that is driving what we are doing is the needs in our communities, the force that you have, and the legislation.

The government's very much seeing it as a local reform. I'll meet my fellow PCCs at a meeting tomorrow, but that's all the PCCs from across the UK, so it's not a party-political meeting. But that will be the first time that I've met all the other Conservative PCCs.

That has surprised me. I thought, because I stood for Parliament in 2010, and when you stand as a parliamentary candidate you are there to explain the national manifesto and deliver on that manifesto, whereas this is just completely different. And actually that surprised me, to be frank. All the money that I've raised has been locally raised; I've had no central funding. The deposit was raised locally.

How is your role relevant for crime involving students - bike theft, street lighting - and how will you tackle crime against students?

The lighting and housing is council, so the police have to work really closely with City of York Council to make sure that the relevant alleyways, whatever it is, are lit, and that you feel safe in those areas. And the organisation in York that does that is the Safety York partnership. But you've got your local policing teams who deliver, hopefully, what you need here on campus. So you should see your PCSOs on campus, which I think you do?

No.

They've just launched student watch, which will involve the PCSOs. But one of the things I'm doing, and this works really well in some areas already, so it's not something the police are not doing, is to make sure officers are going to places regularly where they can meet people, and where they can talk to people.

So your local neighbourhood policing teams should know what's going on, and what students are concerned and worried about. So if that's not happening I can feed that back in. But I can't tell the police officers where to go and what to do.

How are you going to deal with the problem of drugs on campus?

I think that is a really difficult thing, because what the police need is intelligence about what is going on, so that they can do something about it, and obviously that requires students coming forward and talking to the police. And so if people are concerned about that, that's the thing to do.

And if more evidence comes to light, will there be a police response?

If students are saying to police, look, we think there's a real problem with drugs on campus, can I come and talk to you about it, and you explained what was going on, and the police felt that what you were saying was of real concern to them then they would take you up on it, I'm sure. I've only got the anecdotal evidence of what people have been saying to me, but it would be something that I'd be concerned about.

It's the dealers that the police focus on, and if you've got evidence of dealing on campus then that is the thing that you need to feed back to the police, and they'll take that seriously I'm pretty sure... drug users are some of the highest reoffenders, and it's the PCC's job to try and bring down crime.

Was the turnout at the elections disappointing for you?

I think it was disappointing for all Police and Crime Commissioners, I mean of course I would have liked to have seen a higher turnout.

I think part of the problem is that the government was saying they're replacing the policing authorities, and nobody's heard of the police authorities. They're these invisible bodies and they're not accountable. But that doesn't mean anything to anybody because they haven't heard of them. So what you've got to do is demonstrate to people what a difference it will make in their communities. And I would hope that by the end of my term people will see that I've been very focused on what people need and want from their policing force. And actually the police are very up for that.

One of the main reasons behind this whole reform was to release local policing from the direction of the home office. So those shackles of the Home Office have been relieved to a certain extent.

Are you concerned about releasing those "shackles" when the force has recently come under

scrutiny, been criticised by the Inspectorate of the Constabulary, and has been described in Parliament as “that particularly dubious constabulary”?

I suspect that that might have been a lord. A particular lord. Is it Lord Maginnis? Well, there you go then.

But there have been problems with the North Yorkshire police. The word ‘corruption’ has been banded around.

There have been problems with North Yorkshire police, particularly with the senior officers. Ninety-nine per cent of the police officers in North Yorkshire are hardworking, honest individuals full of integrity. But there has been a problem with some of the senior officers, and actually one of the reasons why I wanted to stand was to make sure there was a clean break with the old police authority, which in my view did not fulfil its scrutiny role sufficiently. I think those chief officers got away with some things that are completely unacceptable.

But I think that to tar the police force in North Yorkshire as dubious is really misleading, and that quote, I would not agree with.

Those are quite major changes you are talking about. In terms of the vote share, you won by 58 per cent, but that is only eight per cent of the population. Do you think you have the mandate for it?

Well the police authority has had no votes, and that’s a step better than where we were before... and as I said before, I think the key thing is to make sure that I fulfill my role, and that we engage with people properly. In North Yorkshire I can tell you there’s a strong will to change things and to think differently.

So you disagree with Ruth Potter who was running against you, when she said “I think from the voting it’s obvious that people do not want a Police and Crime Commissioner”?

Well I would say back to Ruth Potter, why did she stand if she was so against it in the first instance? I think Ruth Potter was put there by the Labour party to stand, her whole campaign was very political, mine was deliberately not political. And I am now acting under oath to act impartially on behalf of everybody, so if Ruth has got a particular policing issue she wants to talk to me about I am more than happy to talk with her.

What are the key actions you will take on behalf of students?

I would like to make sure that you have that relationship and contact with the police that you need. If there are any particular key issues that you think need tackling, like the drugs, then I can feed that back into the police locally and see if they can take action on that. But also to make sure that the partnership working around those broader support areas that you talked about so for example the housing and the lighting, is working for you.

And also, if there are any issues or problems that you want to raise, then you can come to me and I can try to feed that back into the police on your behalf. So a voice for students if you like, in the police.



2 comments

Shaun

5 Dec '12 at 10:24 am

A great informative interview ... but where is the PCC’s name?

[▲ Report](#)

Gwyn Jones

9 Dec '12 at 5:18 pm

There is a petition to get rid of the PCCs at:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/41806>

[▲ Report](#)

Most Read

Discussed

1. [What is the difference between tax evasion and tax avoidance?](#)
2. [Penalty for submitting work up to an hour late halved](#)
3. [Study reveals spending habits of students](#)
4. [Academic censorship at Reading University](#)
5. [Massive power cut hits homes and train station](#)
6. [YUSU to hold referendum on policy of supporting second EU referendum](#)

Write for Nouse News

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in News

[Penalty for submitting work up to an hour late halved](#)

[Massive power cut hits homes and train station](#)

[YUSU to hold referendum on policy of supporting second EU referendum](#)

[A Viking Theatre for York](#)

[Annual Student Housing survey to close soon](#)

[Volunteering Week](#)

[About Nouse](#)
[Who's Nouse](#)
[Website Credits](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Archives](#)
[Student Discounts](#)
[Print Editions](#)
[Mini-Sites](#)
[Nouse on Twitter](#)
[Nouse on Facebook](#)
[Nouse on Google+](#)

© 1964-2018 Nouse

Policies |

