

On track with TranSearch

Suffolk Constabulary's Records Management has been revolutionised with the introduction of the web based filing system – Transearch.

Initially implemented in 2005, in collaboration with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Constabularies the Transearch system has been developed to meet the needs of Suffolk Constabulary and now provides a bespoke comprehensive filing; tracking and audit trail for all correspondence, crime files (active and closed) and property.

Other constabularies have taken an interest in adopting the Transearch system since its implementation in Suffolk.

Mark Williams, Records Manager has had a key role in the implementation of the system and says that Transearch is having a significant impact on the management of files and correspondence: "We have responsibility for all correspondence and tracking of on and off site records management for files and property. We discussed what our requirements were with the owners of Transearch (UK Software) and they created a bespoke system for our needs."

Suffolk Constabulary is one of a handful of forces around the country who use deep store facilities, to store closed files in a secure environment.

Deep in the Cheshire countryside, 135 meters underground lies a network of 100 miles of roadways which make up the Winsford Rock

Salt Mine where the Constabulary's files and material are stored until they are destroyed.

The storage facilities provide a safe, protected environment with tracking devices to locate files instantly.

"If we ever need to retrieve a document, the files, which are sealed and barcoded can easily be located and returned to us within a matter of days." Said Mark. "Equally, prior to going into deep store, if an Officer needs to retrieve a document from a file stored locally we are able to easily identify where the file is, 'scan back' the document, and e mail it to the officer within 72 hours (and often sooner), alternatively if a whole file needs to be sent, we are able to track it, every step of the way."

In HMIC Policing Pledge re-inspection carried out recently, it was noted that the Transearch handling register had been introduced to replace manual paper systems and could track deadlines for response to dissatisfaction; an area previously highlighted as requiring development.

"As soon as any correspondence comes into the force, whether at a station or at Headquarters, the document is scanned and logged onto the system, details are then noted who the correspondence has been forwarded to." Said Mark. "The system firstly, allows us to keep an electronic copy of all correspondence and also a clear audit trail."

Another feature of the Transearch

system is the ability to record property, such as, other than found, lost or found items and drugs. The 'Property Live System' is currently being piloted in Lowestoft. Officers and staff at Lowestoft have been very positive and have contributed to improving the system. The electronic system has the added benefit that searches for property will be able to be carried out at any location around the force, not just where the item is located. This initiative is a "Three Counties Collaboration" project and the system is also being piloted in Kings Lynn, Thetford and Huntingdon. It is envisaged that Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire will start to roll out the system across all Forces in October this year.

Andy Cutting, Business Manager, chairs the Three Counties Property Project he said: "I believe this element of the system will decrease officer time in recording property, provide an improved accountability for seized items, improve officer ability to carry out enquiries and will considerably reduce the cost in stationery, as the books currently in use are quite costly."

"The Transearch system allows us to be more efficient and effective, improves tracking process and accountability and ensures we are compliant with MoPI (the Management of Police Information) legislation." Concluded Mark.

Training has taken place across the force in the use of Transearch and a help desk is available for any concerns or queries extn 3989.



Retiring: PCSO Mike Skippen

Mike retires after 24 years

PCSO Mike Skippen from Lowestoft Central SNT has retired after serving as a traffic warden and more recently a PCSO in the town for 24 years.

Mike joined Suffolk Police in July 1986 after successfully applying for the job of traffic warden. He secured the role of senior traffic warden in November 1992, which he continued with until March 2006 when all traffic warden posts in Suffolk became PCSO posts.

Retirement for Mike means more time for gardening, DIY and possibly volunteer work, as well as more opportunities to see his four grandsons and a new grandchild expected in the autumn, and spending more time with his wife.

He is also a keen Lowestoft Town football fan and retirement means he will be able to watch the games without worrying about those causing problems with parking outside the ground.

Mike says he'll miss the team atmosphere of the office: "I'd like to thank my traffic warden colleagues - Nigel, Eric and Norman who are still PCSOs - and Colin and Keith - who have provided support when I needed it - and everyone who I've worked with over the years. I will miss the banter of the office and the good natured atmosphere."