

Watchdog wants YOUR views on Kent's next Chief Constable

'Help us choose our next chief of police'

KENT Police Authority is calling on KOS Media readers to say what they think should be a top priority for the county's new Chief Constable, *writes Marijke Cox.*

Five candidates have been shortlisted for the position, left open by former Chief Constable Mike Fuller's move to be HM Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service last month.

The £150,000-a-year job is being filled temporarily by Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Leppard, until a decision is reached on who will take over permanently in May.

And Kent Police Authority chairwoman Ann Barnes is calling on our readers to help make that final decision.

She said: "There are five exceptional candidates shortlisted for the post of Kent's Chief Constable. But before the authority makes the appointment next month, I'd like to know what you – the council taxpayer – would like to see from your next chief of police."

"The authority is a policing watchdog, making sure you get the best possible police service and value for money."

"By finding out your priorities, the authority can set Kent Police targets and make investments in the right policing areas."

"I would really like to know, what would you put as your number one priority for the new Chief Constable? If you're passionate about policing, then this is your chance to write in to KOS Media and tell me."

Mrs Barnes also invited readers to post



ANN BARNES: 'What is your number one priority for new Chief Constable?'

their views on the authority's Facebook site. Alternatively, you can register by poll at www.kentpoliceauthority.gov.uk.

She added: "There's nothing to lose, so why not take this opportunity and have your say?"

The shortlist for the new Chief Constable is made up of five of the UK's top police officers.

They are:

- Giles York, 43, the Deputy Chief Constable of Sussex Police. He started his career in

Kent in 1990 and has served as area commander of Medway and head of Special Branch at Kent Police.

- Ian Learmonth, 52, Deputy Chief Constable of Norfolk Police. He has been a police officer since 1976 and served with two other UK police forces before joining Norfolk.

- Simon Ash, 49, is Chief Constable of Suffolk Police. He began his career at Kent Police in 1982.

- Simon Cole, 43, is Deputy Chief Constable of Hampshire Police. He joined the force in 2003 as Assistant Chief Constable having previously served with West Midlands Police since 1988.

- Alfred Hitchcock, 51, from Lancashire, is Deputy Chief Constable and head of the National College of Police Leadership and National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). He has more than 30 years' experience in policing.

Write to KOS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR, or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk with your views on the new Chief Constable.

Meanwhile, the public are already having their say on policing in Kent. An independent advisory group, made up of volunteers from around the county and funded by Kent Police Authority, has been looking into diversity issues and progress made within the force.

Mrs Barnes said: "All our communities are entitled to, and deserve, the very best policing we can provide."



'Nostalgia will not be enough at Dreamland'

DREAMLAND in Margate must feature a mixture of old and new rides and attractions to pull in the punters when it opens in 2012, according to the director of the project to bring the seaside venue back to life.

Speaking at the Thanet Local Board at Margate Media Centre, Jonathon Bryant, of the Dreamland Trust, gave an enthusiastic presentation on the park's future to a large audience.

He said the park would need to feature new rides to appeal to young people as well as rides that would appeal to those with a taste for nostalgia.

He said: "We want to bring out a sense of excitement and thrill. We see there being a very contemporary edge to Dreamland."

"It will have some nostalgia value, but that is not enough to generate footfall and we need to have a new presentation. It needs to have a modern twist. We need stimulation for all the family."

Half the 18-acre site will become a heritage theme park, but concern has been expressed that it will need to feature white-knuckle rides as well as the more genteel attractions.

Some of the rides that may appear on the site could eventually include a new big wheel, a Wild Mouse roller-coaster, River Caves boat ride and a circular Caterpillar ride.

Expectations

However, Roy Ovenden, a Thanet businessman and former mayor of Margate, said: "The eras of the 1950s and '60s are gone. Everybody's expectations are higher than Caterpillar or River Cave rides."

One older woman audience member told Mr Bryant: "The kids want to be scared to death these days."

"It looks like there'll be a lot of old rides that I'll be able to go on and I look forward to doing that, but the kids will need more. That's why they go to places like Thorpe Park."

Mr Bryant said "commercial viability" was the biggest thing on his mind and he hoped the cinema building could also be brought back into use.

He referred to the recent redevelopment of Adventure Island in Southend, which has been a big success. Mr Bryant said the Dreamland venture could be just as successful.

Visit www.dreamlandmargate.com for more information on the project.



TOP COPS: Kent Police Authority has drawn up a shortlist of five candidates – from left: Giles York; Simon Ash; Simon Cole; Alf Hitchcock; and (not pictured) Ian Learmonth

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Rotunda sex attack lead

AN INVESTIGATION into a serious sexual assault that took place 16 years ago has been reopened after a new witness came forward.

The attack was in 1994 by the old Rotunda amusement park, Folkestone, and the witness helped produce this e-fit (right). If you recognise him, call PC Andy West on 01303 289254.

Alternatively call 01622 690690 quoting FY/1990/09, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.



A COUPLE in their 70s were taken to hospital after their car plunged into a canal near Tenterden. The accident happened just after 1.15pm on March 31, when their vehicle left the B2082 and ended up submerged.

Emergency services pulled the couple from the water before they were taken to Ashford's William Harvey Hospital, suffering from shock and hypothermia.

AN UNEMPLOYED mechanic with a debilitating bowel condition was told he should get a job as a toilet cleaner by JobCentre staff. Martin Watts, from Sheerness, has Crohn's disease and says company TNG Avanta – which is contracted to run the flexible new deal programme – was insensitive to his needs.

"When they said I could work as a supermarket cleaner so I could be close to the loo to accommodate my illness, I was shell-shocked," he said. A Department of Work and Pensions official said they would contact Mr Watts to mediate and find a solution.