

## WORKING WITH THE POLICE

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010, we were visited by Sergeant Barry Reed, his colleague Bob and their dogs Molly, Zak and Divo, who came to talk to us about a career in the police force as a dog handler. Sergeant Reed explained that he joined the force as he 'wanted to make a difference' to the people who he shared a community with.

He explained that Wiltshire has one of the smallest forces in the country with only 1000 officers. Although many of the officers would like to become dog handlers, there are only 14 dog handlers in the county, so the officers often have to wait ten or more years to be successful. He went on to say that his job was the best job in the world and that it was well worth the wait!

Any British person can join the police force from the age of 18 as long as they are 'of good character', are fit and healthy and hold a driving licence.



After a period of training and becoming a PC, the officers can either work on the beat in a local community or work towards joining a branch of the police force that they are interested in. These included:

- ☆ Traffic
- ☆ Drugs
- ☆ Armed Response
- ☆ CID who investigate crimes
- ☆ Police helicopter response team



Each of these will involve a period of extra training.

To be a dog handler, Barry and Bob had to train to be a handler then train for a further thirteen weeks with each new dog they handle.

The dogs live at home with them, but not as pets as they have been trained to do a job.

Barry and Bob work with all branches of the police force as dog handlers.

They suggested that if you are interested in joining the police when you leave school, you could try to get work experience with the police or could spend time with the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) in the village.

When you are older, you could become a PCSO yourself. This is a good route into the police force. If you don't want to be a full time policeman, you could join the specials, a voluntary branch of the police force.