

Cookstown District Policing Partnership
Council Offices
Burn Road
COOKSTOWN
BT80 8DT

Tel: 028 8676 2205
Text Phone: 028 8676 5827
Email: districtpolicing@cookstown.gov.uk



Press Release

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Police Seek Applications for Local Vehicle Recovery Operators

Following a road traffic collision on the main road between Moneymore and Cookstown on Thursday 25 November 2004, which resulted in damaged vehicles being left un-recovered for up to four hours, local police have given the District Policing Partnership a commitment to review their policy and seek to enlist a local vehicle recovery operator.

Speaking on the recent road traffic collision Chairman of Cookstown District Policing Partnership, Cllr Trevor Wilson said, "I was inundated with a series of calls and complaints from local road users and business people about the length of time it took police to have the road cleared of incapacitated vehicles from the scene".

He continued, "after making some initial inquiries about their removal and writing to local police on the matter I was disappointed to learn that the PSNI had entered into a new vehicle recovery scheme which only allowed the local District Command Unit and police officers attending the road traffic collision to use an operator officially appointed under the new scheme".

The nearest recovery operators are now based in Ballymena and Craigavon. The new vehicle recovery scheme came into effect on 1 October 2004 and relates to all 26 District Command Units within the PSNI.

Referring to the new scheme the local Police Commander, Superintendent Ivan Johnston said, “the PSNI sought the appointment of a local vehicle recovery agent from the greater Mid Ulster area onto the scheme earlier this year but no applications were received.

He continued, “as a result a Managing Agent was appointed in June of this year with overall responsibility for recovering damaged vehicles involved in road traffic collisions meaning the police can only call on ‘authorised’ vehicle recovery operators if they are asked to do so on behalf of a motorist.

Supt Johnston said, “the delay in having the road cleared on the 25 November 2004 arose because no local vehicle recovery operator applied to come onto the scheme resulting in a recovery service having to come from Ballymena.

He concluded by saying, “a similar situation should not be allowed to develop in the future”.

After making representation Cllr Wilson has been told that Cookstown police are now prepared to use the services of a local operator for a limited period of time, until such times as a vehicle recovery agent is appointed from the Mid-Ulster area onto the new scheme, now operated centrally by the PSNI.

Welcoming the Superintendent’s stand on the issue the Chairman of the DPP concluded by calling on all local vehicle recovery operators to consider applying to become an ‘authorised’ agent under the new scheme so that local road traffic collisions can be dealt with more efficiently in the future.

Ends.

For further information contact:

Cllr Wilson, DPP Chairman – 07974 179497
Supt. Ivan Johnston, District Commander – 028 8676 6000
Philip Moffett, DPP Manager – 07977 249515