



Charity sisters meet Princess

TWO volunteers have been granted an audience with a member of the Royal Family.

Prestatyn sisters Andrea Williams and Kate Cooper, respectively treasurer and secretary of the Clwyd branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, were invited to a celebration at Aberystwyth University's arts centre with the patron of the charity, the Princess Royal.

The two former pupils of Prestatyn High School became involved with the charity after their father, Derek Vaughan Williams, was diagnosed with the condition in November 2013 at the age of 79. He died a year later.

Ann Williams, mother of Andrea and Kate, said: "Volunteering for the girls is a way of coping with their father's death. He would be very proud of them both."

The family have raised more than £15,000 since 2014 for MND through Derek's tribute fund and a variety of fundraising methods.

Andrea, 52, completed a 50-mile cycle and Neil Cooper, husband of 47-year-old Kate, ran a half-marathon in London last year. There have also been sponsored walks. The Aberystwyth event welcomed committee members from all five branches of the charity in Wales to celebrate their

commitment as well as meet Princess Anne.

Andrea said: "It was a lovely day. It was quite emotional at times when people were giving speeches about living with motor neurone disease."

"Princess Anne was lovely. She took the time to speak to everyone there and was very interested in what we had to say. I can't remember what I said to her! I was overawed and probably spoke gobbledegook!"



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■ Andrea Williams (above) and (top right) her sister, Kate Cooper, meeting the Princess Royal



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End to police school visits under fire

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A WELSH Government decision to end school visits by police has come under fire from a high school assistant head.

The All Wales Schools Liaison Core Programme – known as SchoolBeat – involves police officers calling at schools to discuss issues such as substance misuse, domestic violence, online safety and sexting, but it is due to be phased out by the Welsh Government in 2019.

Claire Turner, assistant head of Prestatyn High School, who oversees all pastoral issues, said: "SchoolBeat is a valued service that has been essential for us. It's been a mutually beneficial relationship, giving the community first-hand experience with the police team, and has been integral

to our personal and social education curriculum and teaching children about the legal side of things."

However, despite proposed cuts, the programme offers children from four to 16 years' old the opportunity for face to face interaction with police officers and lessons with vital advice and information on legal issues based around the scheme's own curriculum.

The school, which runs a scheme called Sixth Formers Protecting You and contributes to the town's ISPY anti-bullying schemes, has relied on liaising with various organisations, including SchoolBeat and the safer neighbourhood team, to raise awareness for social and community issues.

Mrs Turner added: "We're a big school at the heart of the community."

"The young people of Prestatyn High will eventually become the community of

Prestatyn – it's vital to show the positive side of law enforcement. We'll have to go back and look at how we'd bridge this gap."

Arfon Jones, the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and chair of the All Wales Policing Group, said: "Commissioners and chief constables discussed the Schoolbeat funding at our meeting this week and we are concerned at the implications of this cut."

"Personally I believe this is a short-sighted decision without assessing the impact."

"It contradicts and goes against other Welsh Government priorities like the Adverse Childhood Experiences project and compliance with the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act."

"The decision should be reversed in the interests of the health and wellbeing of children and young people."