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Police quiz ex-SF man on officer's murder

By Diana Rusk

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A FORMER Sinn Fein councillor is one of two men being quizzed by police about the murder of Constable

Stephen Carroll.

Police were last night granted more time to question Brendan McConville and a 17-year-old boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, about Monday night's fatal shooting in Craigavon, Co Armagh.

The pair, who are being held at Antrim Serious Crime Suite, can now be questioned for a further five days.

Brendan McConville (37), from the Lurgan area of Co Armagh, sat on Craigavon Borough Council for one term from 1993 to 1997 but has since left the party.

Last year he was given a suspended sentence when he appeared in court on ammunition charges.

It is understood that police have arrested him before in relation to dissident republican activity in the area.

Last May McConville walked free from court after admitting possessing ammunition in suspicious circumstances.

During the case in Craigavon Court police said they found a number of component parts of a firearm and six rounds of live ammunition at a house he was staying at in September 2007.

A judge sentenced him to two suspended prison terms for the offences after McConville said he found the items in a plastic bag and had taken them for novelty value.

He was sentenced to nine months in prison, suspended for three years, and fined £300.

Court papers had given his address as Glenholme Park in Lurgan but it is understood he was arrested on Tuesday at an address in the Taghnevan area of the town around 600 yards from the murder scene.

Shortly afterwards a 17-year-old youth was arrested in dramatic scenes captured by television cameras in the Ardowen estate next to where Constable Carroll (48) was shot dead.

Yesterday police were granted an extra five days to continue to question the pair, who can now be held until Tuesday evening.

Details of his arrest came as the Constable Carroll's widow made an emotional appeal for an end to the recent violence.

Kate Carroll said her only wish was that her husband had not died in vain.

"I hope these people just realise that we only get one chance at life – that a piece of land is a piece of land and at the end of the day, my husband is just going to get six foot by six foot."

Requiem Mass for Constable Carroll will be celebrated at St Ther-ese Church in the couple's home town of Banbridge today with interment at St Patrick's Cemetery in Dromore afterwards.

Yesterday the remains of the two young soldiers who were killed on Saturday – Mark Quinsey (23) and Cengiz Azimkar (21) – were formally handed over to family representatives after a memorial service at Massereene barracks in Antrim.

Their funerals are expected to take place in England next week.

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