

Lots to do in Houghton Regis

A Community Activities Day on Houghton Regis Green played host to approximately 500 people all keen to see what sort of activities are available in the area.

The event, organised by Bedfordshire Police and members of the South Beds Community Safety Partnership, was billed as a 'free shop window' for local groups.

Over 40 different groups and organisations turned out to take part, including sports clubs involved in everything from football and martial arts to archery, motorcycling and bowls. They were joined by the Territorial Army, Rainbows, Guides, Scouts, WI and Royal British Legion.

Other attractions included a half pipe skate ramp, the MKM Rocketman, Suzuki International GB Quad Racing Team, a Renault racing car, a racing motorcycle, the Arriva fun bus and Chiltern Radio's Black Thunder.

Sgt Colin Eldred, of the Houghton Regis Safer Neighbourhood Team, said: "It was a great success and we were all delighted with the level of interest in the event. We're now looking forward to next year's event but we'll ask for better weather next time!"



Activities Day Poster

Making a Difference in Dunstable

For Dunstable off-licence manager Jo Gaiger the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing has brought some real benefits to her neighbourhood. "There's been a massive improvement in police presence – they even do bicycle patrols," she says. "The police are more aware of what's going on and where. They're getting to know more people and businesses in the area."

Jo first became involved in Neighbourhood Policing when her local PCSOs Denise Fitzjohn and Abi Single called into her shop and introduced themselves. Since then, she's also met Neighbourhood Police Officers Paul Ayling and Jon Forman. Jo helps the team raise their profile in the area by displaying the Safer Neighbourhood Team poster in her shop window.

"Denise and Abi will stop and talk with people in the street and by visiting homes and businesses they're making connections in the area."

"We see less crime in the area now," she says. "I even had one person come into my shop and apologise for stealing from me – they're really cleaning up the streets!"

NEVIS GETS RESULTS

Operation Nevis, the on-going operation against anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the Goldington area of Bedford, was launched after persistent problems in the area.

Extra patrols have been put in place with dedicated officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Team in the area nightly, often with evidence-gathering cameras and a brief to make sure parents know their children have been seen causing problems.

As a result of the operation, alcohol has been seized from under-age drinkers, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have been agreed with some of the worst offenders, arrests have been made and the number of incidents the police are called to has dropped dramatically.

Detections in the area have also increased thanks to digital tape review.



INTERVIEW WITH MERVYN HOW, NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COORDINATOR FOR PUTNOE

"In Putnoe Neighbourhood Watch we work with the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) and in particular with our Neighbourhood Police Officer, Glyn Milbourne, and Police Community Support Officer Rowland Gilbey (PCSO). The aim of this team is to provide a locally tailored service, tackling our priorities of reducing anti-social behaviour and increased visible policing.

As the Area Coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch, I work closely with Glyn and Rowland and the street coordinators. These contacts are a mixture of face to face, email, letters and phone calls."

The work of the SNT in Putnoe has seen joint activity by the police and the community to improve the local environment and quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Mervyn continues "Last year this activity included distributing, via our Neighbourhood Watch street coordinators, details of the 'No Cold Calling Zones' scheme and a questionnaire from the SNT. The results of the questionnaire were presented at a meeting of the street

SAFETY FORUMS PROVE SUCCESSFUL

Partnership work in Mid Beds has seen positive results in areas where Community Safety Forums have been established between police, fire, the district council and housing associations.

Residents are encouraged to come along and air their views, work in "problem solving groups" if necessary, and then meet again in three monthly intervals to hear about results and successes.

So welcome have these been that new Forums are now scheduled to be held in Sandy and Flitwick.

On Wednesday Sept 24th at 7.30pm at the newly built pavilion in Sunderland Road, Sandy residents, including young people from a local youth group, are getting together to discuss ideas and solutions.

The first Forum for Flitwick is scheduled for January 2009 - in the meantime interested groups and existing community safety and neighbourhood groups are being invited to attend a preliminary stakeholders' meeting in November.

For more information on the November event - or any of the Biggleswade, Ampthill, Sandy & Beeston and Flitwick Forums contact:

Leona Ellis, Community Safety Forum Co-ordinator
Mid Beds District Council
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Willing and Enabled

THREE people were arrested, and thousands of pounds in cash and suspected stolen property seized, after a joint operation between police forces in South Bedfordshire.

Twenty five officers from Bedfordshire's Specialist and Economic Crime Unit, backed by search teams from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, executed warrants on two properties in Billington.

A £10,000 caravan and a £12,000 people carrier were seized and around £36,000, believed to be the proceeds of crime, confiscated.

Two men and a woman were arrested on suspicion of theft and money laundering and one of the men was arrested for absconding from prison four years ago.

The initiative, called Operation Enable, was spearheaded by the Eastern Region Intelligence Unit, which is a collaboration between the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk forces.

Bedfordshire's DI Mark Lay, who led the operation, said: "We are delighted with the results, which are yet another example of excellent teamwork between forces."

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This type of survey work helps the Putnoe Safer Neighbourhood Team to determine the neighbourhood's top priorities, which the police and partners work on in the coming months.

THE LOCAL POLICING SUMMARY

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It is a statutory publication.

This document was produced as a wrap-around cover on Bedfordshire on Sunday, 14th September 2008

Local Policing Summary, September 2008

www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Policing in Bedfordshire - It's getting BETTER



ANDY STREET - Divisional Commander, County Division

In 2007/08, crime across County Division fell by 10% on the previous year reflecting our drive to improve policing in the County.

We remain committed to improving the service we give to local communities. This year we will be particularly focussed on reducing and detecting crimes such as burglary and strengthening our relationships with communities and partners to make the county a safer place to live. In particular we will be looking to build closer links with communities, through our Safer Neighbourhood Teams, to better understand and resolve local concerns and issues.

Underlying all of this is our commitment to improving the service we provide to the people of the county – PUTTING YOU AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There was a 25% reduction in criminal damage in Biggleswade following the introduction of Mid-Bedsafe.
- Every neighbourhood, including the rural areas, now has its own Safer Neighbourhood Team to address local priorities set by the local community.
- One of our operations to address serious drug crime resulted in ten people being sentenced to more than 40 years in prison.
- Bedfordshire Police have continued to crack down on under age drinking with record seizures of alcohol from young people.

Pride in Parkside

A partnership initiative aimed at making the Parkside area of Houghton Regis an even better place to live and work has been hailed a success having achieved reductions in burglary and an increase in public satisfaction.

In October 2007 South Beds Community Safety Partnership launched 'Pride in Parkside' to help tackle issues residents said needed attention. Since then:

- Young people have received a wide variety of safety information and taken part in activities such as street dance and Brazilian football.
- Bicycles have been security marked and a new club launched for mini-motorcycle enthusiasts.
- Home-owners have been given SmartWater property marking kits and smoke alarms have been installed by Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service.
- People have been arrested for offences ranging from disqualified driving to carrying a blade and investigative work continues.



Activities: Brazilian football

In response to complaints from residents, an anti-speeding initiative caught 65 motorists. Thirty vehicles were seized after being driven with no insurance or driving licence and scores of off-road nuisance bikers were caught.

In addition, residents teamed up with firefighters to tidy up the area, while the RSPCA followed up calls about potentially dangerous dogs.

Partnership Chair, Jane Moakes, said: "This project shows just how local authorities and the community can work together to get results. We've had some great feedback from people living on Parkside who are pleased to see the issues they raised with us being dealt with. Learning from this positive experience we can now make a real effort to apply similar activities to other areas within South Bedfordshire."

The policing priorities for County Division have been agreed following consultation with local people.

They are:

- Burglary
- Criminal Damage
- Roads Policing
- Domestic Abuse
- Increased Visibility

Reducing Demand in Town Centres

There has been a reduction in the demand for local officers in Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable Town Centres after a total of 11 people have been banned from going there. This increases the availability of police officers in the whole area to deal with and resolve local issues.

Working in partnership with South Beds District Council, the banning orders were obtained as a result of a range of problems caused by these people including anti-social behaviour, drunkenness and theft.

The local community is reassured to know that should such problems occur, action will be taken. This sends a stern message that this sort of behaviour will not be tolerated.



Pride in Parkside



Police Authority Takes Action



The focus on improving performance has seen the Police Authority increase the resilience of the Chief Officer team with the appointment of a second Assistant Chief Constable to lead the Protective Services Directorate. Bedfordshire had been one of only seven forces to operate with just one Assistant Chief Constable.

We also decided to increase the budget to provide the Chief Constable with the resources to improve performance, a move which will see our officer numbers rise to 1274 by March 2009.

In addition, having led the way on collaboration with the joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit, we are devoting more efforts to explore future collaboration agreements with other forces in areas such as legal services, professional standards, scientific support, firearms and dog sections. Collaboration in these areas would bring further financial and practical efficiencies.

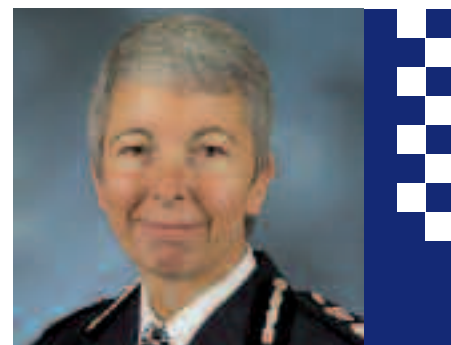
PETER F CONNIFF -
Chair Bedfordshire Police Authority

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

Over the last year we have made improvements to a number of services that Bedfordshire Police provides to the public. Our aim is to build on these achievements and continue to make steady progress that can be sustained over time, as we focus on serving communities and making them safe from crime.

Last year, overall crime in Bedfordshire fell by 10% and our Safer Neighbourhood Teams started to make a real impact with the support of communities and other partners. However, we are not complacent and we continue to work hard to improve the service we give to you. Thanks to increased funding this year, we are able to recruit a further 24 police officers taking the total number to the highest level in the history of Bedfordshire. We are also adding to our police staff numbers to support police officers in operational delivery.

I am confident about our progress and future. It was always going to take time to turn our performance around but we are moving in the right direction and together we can make Bedfordshire an even safer place to live.



GILLIAN PARKER QPM-
Chief Constable

NO MORE KNIVES

Bedfordshire Police is launching a new campaign to educate youngsters about the dangers of carrying knives by going into schools and promoting a 'No More Knives' website.

www.nomoreknives.com

includes a series of films made by young people for young people and is designed to dispel the cultural myths surrounding knives and get the message across about the damage they can cause. The site will be live from September 17, 2008.

In addition, police officers and PCSOs from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be going into every middle, upper and high school in Bedfordshire from October 1 to further sell the message that carrying a knife is more likely to harm rather than protect you from crime. The presentations are being done in partnership with the Youth Offending Service.

GROUNDBREAKING MAJOR CRIME UNIT

"A groundbreaking initiative" is how Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) recently described the joint Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit.

Since its creation in November 2007 the joint unit – the first of its kind in the country – has achieved a 100% detection rate for offences of murder, as well as supporting work which has led to significant reductions in violent crime.

On these pages you will see how the police are tackling your priorities and dealing with issues where you live. Please let us know what you think by writing, emailing or logging on to our website.

Fresh Faces at Police Authority

In October the Police Authority welcomes three new independent members: Kathy Johnson, Rev. Lloyd Denny and Tony Brown.



Kathy Johnson spent 20 years in the Health Service, and is currently a lay member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.



Rev. Lloyd Denny is a Christian Minister Housing Consultant.



Tony Brown is an independent Finance and Governance Consultant.



DRUGS ACTION - BIG SUCCESS!

Bedfordshire Police put a serious dent in the drugs world with a week long operation under the banner of 'National Tackling Drugs Week'.

Drugs were seized, factories closed down and people arrested.

In this week alone a large number of drugs were seized:

- 3,468 cannabis plants with an estimated street value of £650,000
- 1.85kg of cocaine with a street value of £70,300
- 109.4g of crack cocaine with a street value of £2,200
- other drugs to the value of £250.



RISING NUMBERS AT RINGMASTER

Ringmaster, the computerised messaging system that sends people information about criminal activity in their local area, is going from strength to strength.

Ringmaster gives people direct contact with the Police, sending them information about crime in their area, passing on crime prevention advice and asking for help in solving crimes that have taken place.

The service is free and information is sent via email. For more information visit www.safer-beds.org where you can now register on-line, or telephone Sandra Murphy on 01234 275149.



Cracking the Drugs Issue

Detective Superintendent Linda Kelly, says that working in partnership with other agencies is the only way to really get on top of the drugs problem.

Linda, who has responsibility for the force's anti-drugs strategy, emphasises that 'catch and convict' tactics need to be balanced with effective rehabilitation and resettlement of offenders, to prevent reoffending.

"The benefits to the community when people stop using drugs are significant," she explained. "Those dependent on crack cocaine or heroin will spend approximately £290 a week on their habit, often funded through serious acquisitive crime.

"On the other hand, every £1 spent on drug treatment saves the taxpayer £9.50 on typical costs associated with drug users."

There has been a seven-fold increase in detections of drug crime over the last five years and the force works closely with the two local drug action teams to ensure that appropriate services are available to users seeking treatment after arrest.

"Someone with a drugs habit needs a lot more help to stop using than just drug treatment," said Linda. "We want all the agencies, housing, benefits, employment, health, education, to work with the criminal justice sector teams to provide a real integrated solution to offender management."

Bedfordshire Police Call Handling Centre Just Keeps Getting Better!

Bedfordshire Police's Call Handling Centre (CHC) has been recognised as one of the best in the country by an independent report which found that 90% of callers were satisfied with the way their call was handled, which was answered within 20 seconds.

In addition Typetalk has been introduced for the hard of hearing community plus a translating telephone service for people whose first language is not English.

Another new service being considered is an SMS texting service, allowing the public and to communicate by text message. This is initially going to be trialled with the hard of hearing community.



Bedfordshire Call Handling Centre

OUR PERFORMANCE

Police forces are all assessed by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in the same way. Last year, for each performance area they were assessed against similar forces and then graded as 'Excellent' (performing significantly better than similar forces), 'Good' (better than its group), 'Fair' (broadly in line with the group) or 'Poor' (much worse than its group) and whether or not performance is improving.

Last year Bedfordshire was graded "fair" under the headings of tackling crime, serious crime and public protection, satisfaction and fairness and resources and efficiency. It was graded as "poor" at protecting vulnerable people, the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing and local priorities.

However, the same report also recognised the force as "excellent" at tackling violent crime, the fairness of stop-searching ethnic groups was graded "good/excellent" and efficiency was "excellent".

Work had already started to address problem areas and the progress made can be seen below.

In the year ending March 31st 2008

- All crime down 10% (nearly 6000 fewer crimes)
- Violent crime down 15% (1675 fewer crimes)
- Robbery down by 7% (78 fewer crimes)
- Vehicle theft down by 10% (188 fewer crimes)
- Theft from a vehicle down by 6% (395 fewer crimes)
- Detections up to 22% and still rising

Significant reductions have already been seen during the first part of the performance year for 2008-2009 particularly in Burglary Dwelling, Theft from Motor Vehicles and Robbery.

There has been a steady increase in the number of crimes detected and this has continued into the current year. Year to date figures show Bedfordshire detecting 27% of recorded crimes, close to the 28% average of our 'most similar forces'.

The level of confidence in "bringing offenders to justice" for Bedfordshire is significantly above the England and Wales average for this measure. Bedfordshire is third out of the 42 criminal justice areas for this measure and is first in its most similar grouping.

This year activity will be focused in four main areas:

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Incident Response
- Crime Management
- Protective Services

The Budget

To provide the funds essential to improve police performance and increase the number of frontline officers the Authority set the budget for 2008-09 at £96.056M.

The Government provides £68.508M towards the budget with local taxpayers providing the remaining £27.548M.



YOUNG MATTERS

Police Authority member Linda Hockey says that initiatives for young people are high on the agenda. "These range from our work on the Every Child Matters programme, which protects the most vulnerable, to inclusive and diversionary activities," she explained.

"The successful Police Cadet Scheme continues to attract young volunteers. After training they go out with Patrol Officers and take part in ceremonial duties such as the Remembrance Day Parade and many go on to pursue a career in the Police Service.

"The Police Authority's Youth Issues Group supports projects which are designed to keep young people off the streets and out of trouble, and has helped sustain a wide variety of diversionary activities for young people, from skateboarding and theatres, to advice centres.



Cadets at Kempston's Outdoor Centre

"The aim is to keep young people safe and confident in the Police Service."

LOCAL CONTACTS

If personal safety is under threat, always dial: **999**

To contact the police for non-emergencies,

North or mid-Beds: **01234 841212**
Luton or South Beds: **01582 401212**
Minicom Users: **01234 842233**

For advice and action on safety and anti-social behaviour issues,

Bedford Area: **01234 275260**
Mid-Beds: **01462 611224**
South-Beds: **01582 472222**
Luton: **01582 451478**

Crimestoppers: **0800 555 111**

Victim Support Line: **0845 30 90 900**

National Domestic Violence Helpline: **0800 2000 247**

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