

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE 4TH JULY 2013
LOCATION PRINCES THEATRE, TOWN HALL, STATION LANE, CLACTON
TIME 5.00PM – 7.00PM

SPEAKERS

Nick Alston (PCC) – Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PCC)
Ch. Insp. Cat Barrie - Local District Commander
Cllr Paul Honeywood – Dep Leader, Tendring District Council (TDC)
Cllr Lynda McWilliams – Chair of Community Safety Partnership

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Crime in Tendring including involving knives and sharp instruments
2. Community Safety Partnership
3. Work of Tendring District Council
4. Topics for discussion raised by the audience

HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESENTATION

1. CRIME IN TENDRING

- Crime in Tendring has reduced. In the year ending 31.3.2013 there was a 5.1% reduction
- April and May 2013 have been challenging months but crime has further reduced by 1.3%, which is 115 less crimes
- The public must report crime. Police need information so they know what is going on and can plan accordingly
- Possession of a bladed article offences are up in Clacton and Tendring compared to the same period last year
- Robbery in Clacton is up compared to the same period last year from 7 offences to 17 compared to the same period last year
- The thrust to combat robbery is three pronged, Prevention; Intelligence and Enforcement
- S60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives the power to an inspector or above to implement an order to search people in a designated area where intelligence has been received to suggest that significant and imminent violence is likely. Seven such orders were implemented last year
- Robberies that are random opportunist for example on school children using the latest i-phone, Blackberry or Samsung etc., can be avoided if prospective victims are aware of their behaviour. The 'Find my i-phone App' is worth considering
- Clacton – illegal possession and use of drugs is prevalent. This has led to 'Turf wars' in Clacton and a police operation to respond to this has seen most of the protagonists arrested. Stop and search powers were used effectively in this operation
- There is unlikely to be any rise in police officer numbers. We must therefore make best use of the police officers we have

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

- The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) strategy for combating crime and disorder in Tendring is very good.
- Borderline is a multi-agency project for year-8 children where they are taught to identify the consequences of their behaviour and the impact of crime on victims, the community and themselves. The project has demonstrated an improvement in the self-esteem of participants and a 77% success rate in preventing offending and re-offending
- Crucial Crew project is aimed at year-6 pupils and covers basic safety awareness.

3. TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

- There was a discussion about the homeless, rough sleepers and beggars. Clacton does not have a homelessness problem
- Cheap housing in Clacton has made the town attractive to the unemployed, ex-offenders and people from outside of Tendring
- Houses with multiple occupancy (HMO) i.e. bedsits, have been increasing in Clacton
- There is no requirement in the planning laws for planning permission to convert houses into HMO
- TDC has now passed a local law (Article 4 direction) that now requires planning permission for such conversions. This is designed to halt the spread of cheap accommodation
- TDC are trying to make Clacton unattractive to outside people who do not contribute to society, for example there is a residency requirement of 3 years before a name can be put on TDC housing list
- Those in work and contributing to society now have increased chances of being housed
- If someone just moves into area, there is no council tax support for a period
- Ex-offenders come here because of cheap housing. TDC working with Police; Probation Service and the Prison Service to address this
- Some people are re-housed to Clacton by other authorities

Questions

1. CRIME IN TENDRING

Q1 If we report crime do we require an incident number?

A1 Essex Police receive several thousand calls a day. Sometimes one incident can generate a large number of calls and these will be all put onto one incident

Q2 Knife crime victims are taken to hospital. If they are not detained is it recorded as a crime?

A2 No firm process has yet been put into place. Most hospitals are reporting such incidents but there is more work to do. The Ambulance Service is very proactive in reporting such incidents that they attend

Q3 The 101 telephone system costs 15p a call. Essex Police used to have an email system for reporting crime. Why has that been removed?

A3 Email contact with Essex Police is not monitored constantly 24 hours per day and if an emergency was reported, it might be missed or a response delayed for an inappropriate length of time

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

No questions

3. TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

Q1 What can be done about all the people who are street drinking?

A1 Bye-laws can be put into place

Action: Cllr Honeywood to discuss this issue with the Licensing Committee to explore what can be done to resolve the problem of street drinkers

There are a number of Designated Public Places where police can remove alcohol from street drinkers

Q2 There is a considerable number of homeless people sleeping in Clacton under the car park ramps and in the cemetery. Most are professional beggars. What can be done about it?

A2 TDC was not aware of this. It will be looked into

Action: Cllr Honeywood to ensure officers at TDC investigate this and obtain more comprehensive data. A strategy to resolve this will be discussed

4. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Q1 What is being done about the drugs in Clacton?

A1 Police are very active in combating drug possession and supply. Intelligence is obtained and developed. Operations are carried out and search warrants executed. Known drug offenders and those people whom intelligence indicates are dealing drugs are targeted

Q2 What is being done about street drinkers?

A2 Designated Public Place Orders and Dispersal Orders are used frequently. Since the beginning of 2013, there have been 113 Dispersal Orders for anti-social behaviour resulting in 5 arrests, 33 seizures of alcohol, 43 beggars moved on and in the retail park 67 vehicles dispersed

Q3 Why is CCTV not used and collected more?

A3 CCTV is used. Most systems are now incredibly complex and most have a 28 day over-ride. Because of their complexity, some staff cannot operate them and cannot retrieve the images for police. They then require an expert to attend at a cost, to retrieve it. Tendring Business Against Crime for a small fee, will provide a radio which is used to pass on and circulate intelligence. Facewatch is used and this displays pictures of people convicted of crime or anti-social behaviour. Local PCSOs with their excellent local knowledge have been instrumental in identifying suspects from grainy CCTV images

Q4 Are cautions being used appropriately by Essex Police?

A4 Essex Police are using cautions the right way and appropriately. Prisons do not work and imprisonment is expensive, it costs on average £40k per annum per prisoner. The right intervention by the Probation Service by comparison costs £6k per annum per person

Q5 Are PCSOs being phased out?

A5 There are no plans to phase out PCSOs. Vacancies from natural wastage have not been filled over the last 12 to 18 months. Some PCSOs are subject to contractual commitments as they are match funded and this issue is being explored by Essex Police. There is a need to ensure that there is coverage across the District and the Force and some areas may have experienced a reduction in their PCSO cover as a result

The extent is yet unknown but the recent Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will impact policing further but Essex Police will commit to PCSOs although the numbers will be reviewed

Q6 There has been a lack of police visibility in our communities and people are not seeing enough police?

A6 There is obviously a need to concentrate on hot-spots and ensure that we are using police in the right areas at the right times. We must be smarter in the way we use police services and look at other solutions as well as new technology

Q7 Rural roads are not suitable for today's traffic and vehicles are parking inconsiderately, usually on kerbs and pavements. This forces parents with prams and children to go into the road to go round parked vehicles. This is dangerous and could cause a serious accident. What are police going to do about it?

A7 We will contact the Casualty Reduction Unit who will carry out a review to see if anything needs to be or can be done

Action: Ch Insp Barrie to contact Casualty Reduction Unit and review police action

Q8 With regard to Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) teams there is a growing feeling of 'we' in relation to police, communities and NHW as opposed to 'us and them'. What is your impression?

A8 The PCC has just invested £25k for communications for NHW so that information can flow out to NHW teams and back to the police. There is a feeling of improved integration. Crimestoppers, where information can be left anonymously can also receive information. One murderer a week is caught through Crimestoppers

Q9 Have you surveyed the public to find out how they want to be communicated with?

A9 We have not done so and will consider it

Action: PCC to consider a survey regarding methods of communication

Q10 Is this a one-off event?

A10 The PCC is committed to holding two meetings per year in every district. The next Tending meeting is scheduled for 11th December 2013 in Harwich