

Epping Forest Public Meeting

24th October 2013

Murray Hall

18:00 to 20:00

Speakers

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PCC) Lindsay Whitehouse

Chief Inspector – Local District Commander – Tracey Harman

Chair of CSP – Gary Waller

Detective Inspector – Rob Huddleston

Community Safety Manager – Caroline Wiggins

Agenda items

1. Bogus Callers/Fraud
2. House Burglary
3. Night Time Economy
4. Topics for discussion raised by the audience

Highlights of Presentation

All Crime

- In Epping Forest district, all crime has reduced by 3.5% (267 fewer offences) when comparing reports for 1st September 2012 to 31st August 2013 against with those from 1st September 2011 to 31st August 2012.

Community Safety Partnership

- Priorities for Epping Forest District Council
- CSP initiatives

Bogus Callers/Fraud

- A policing operation has been set up to address this type of crime
- Targeted victims are mostly elderly

House Burglary

- The district continues to suffer a high number of house burglaries compared with other parts of Essex.
- There has been a significant decrease of 18.1% in the number of these crimes year on year.
- Operation Albatross (cocooning neighbouring houses)
- Operation Insight (predictive policing)

Night Time Economy

- Addressing busy night time related offences in Loughton and Epping around licensed premises.

1. Bogus Callers

Essex Police has a dedicated team set up to investigate these offences and is working closely with neighbouring forces as part of intelligence led operation.

Q.1 What should members of the public do if they receive a bogus call?

A.1 The caller may sometimes pretend to be a police officer. They try to convince the victim there has been a crime committed with the victim's debit card and ask for the PIN number to be clarified. They tell the victim to ring 999 for verification and to ask for a named officer. However, unknown to the victim, the fraudsters keep the telephone line open and fool the victim into thinking they have contacted the police. They then arrange for a courier to collect the victim's card. In such instances, use an alternate phone line and notify the police to inform them that you believe you have just been contacted for courier fraud.

2. House Burglary

From 1st September 2012 to 31st August 2013 there have been 166 fewer offences in the Epping district.

Q.1 What is being done to get information out to the public?

A.1 A community messaging service which is being part funded by the PCC New Initiative Fund and Proceeds of Crime Act. This will be a targeted communication messaging tool to update users on the latest issues.

Q.2. What about text information to people who have mobile phones?

A.2. There is a daily Twitter feed which keeps members of the public informed on crime, and the community messaging system will have an option whereby users can ask to receive text messages.

Q.3. What is being done to promote future meetings?

A.3. The OPCC is continuously looking at innovative ways to publicise these meetings. Next year the PCC will be holding a meeting in every district across the county. There will also be themed and targeted meetings to address specific issues. The office is currently in the process of putting together a 2014 schedule which will be published on the PCC website and distributed to all partner agencies.

3. Night Time Economy

There is a specific focus on addressing offences related to the busy and vibrant night time in Loughton and Epping.

Q.1. What is being done to address licensing applications and open/closed hours?

A.1 Licensing committees base any decision making on the evidence presented before them which includes the weight of any objections.

Q.2. What are the police doing to keep locals safe?

- A.2. The police are always reviewing resources deploying officers according to the needs of the public, placing officers in the right place at the right time. The Special Constabulary are also used to complement the regular officers.
- Q.3. No one seems to want club licences extensions approved. Why does it appear that the views of the public are not listened to?
- A.3. The Licensing Committee has to act on evidence presented to it. Local residents who have concerns should consider providing formal evidence to the Committee.
- Q.4. Can the police and council reverse licensing decisions?
- A.4. The Licensing Committee can respond to evidence and place conditions on licensed holders. Failure to adhere to the conditions may result in the license being revoked.
- Q.5. Who has the responsibility on anti-social behaviour after closing hours?
- A.5. The police have to prioritise response according to the severity of incidents, but will always attempt to respond to busy night time issues.
- Q.6. Can closing hours of licensed clubs be earlier?
- A.6. Permitted opening hours are subject to a framework of national legislation. Issues can be raised through your local councillors.

4. Open Questions Raised By Audience

- Q.1. What is happening about vandalism in play areas?
- A.1. Patterns and trends are continuously monitored. The police are trying to work with the Community Safety Partnership to look at why these crimes are being committed and what diversionary activities can be used to solve problems in 'hot spot' areas.
- Q.2. Is there any point in reporting crime?
- A.2. The police cannot problem solve unless crimes are reported. Information provided by members of the public often forms the basis for intelligence-led operations.
- Q.3. Neighbourhood Action Panel meetings have been scheduled around officer's shifts and are not always well attended as these tend to be on Saturday evenings. Is there an agenda to having these meetings scheduled at these times?
- A.3. Dates and times of NAP meetings can be found on the Essex Police website. These meetings should be owned by the local community and not governed by officers shift patterns. If these meetings are not well attended by the community due to the scheduled times of the meetings, this should be reviewed and scheduled at times which best suit the public.
- Q.4. The non-emergency 101 telephone number has a poor response. What is being done to improve this?
- A.4. It has been recognised that there are ongoing concerns about the non-emergency number and there is work currently underway to address this.
- Q.5. The council are looking to switch off the lights at night, how will residents feel secure and safe?
- A.5. There is no evidence which shows that as a result of the street lights being turned off crime increase. The PCC will continue to monitor data and crime trends. If evidence emerges of an increase in crime, this can be presented to councils and they have the power to review the decision.

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Q.6. Do you know the statistics for anti-social behaviour?

A.6. Overall there has been a 1.5% reduction of anti-social behaviour for Essex. From 1st April 2013 the way data is recorded and analysed will look at the number of incidents identified and the police will respond and react by working closely with partner agencies.