

AREA NORTH COMMITTEE

28 September 2011

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The item for information does not form part of the agenda. Should members have questions regarding the item please contact the officer indicated for the report. If, after discussing the item with the officer and it is felt appropriate, a member may request an item to be considered at a future Committee meeting.

1. Area North Neighbourhood Policing Report

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*Avon and Somerset Constabulary: Sgt. Alan Bell, Neighbourhood Police Team Sergeant (North)
Tel: 101 or email: alan.bell@avonandsomerset.police.uk*

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide a Community Safety and Neighbourhood Policing update to the Area Committee.

If councillors' require any clarification of information contained within this report, you are asked to contact Sgt Bell direct.

Public Interest

Promoting safer communities, through reducing crime and the fear of crime is a vital aspect of work by most public services in Somerset.

Neighbourhood Police Report from Sgt Alan Bell:

Introduction

The focus for the Area North Neighbourhood team is to: -

- Reduce the fear of crime within our area by tackling offenders
- Investigating crime
- Offering crime prevention advice.

We are committed to working with partners such as South Somerset District and Somerset County Councils and the all of the Parish Councils. We will also continue to support other agencies in delivering projects designed around diversion and under the community safety umbrella.

Tackling Rural Crime

Area North remains a comparatively safe place to live. (Details of crime statistics for your area can be found at www.police.uk). What is acknowledged is that as a rural community, we are vulnerable to what can be bracketed as "rural crime". This normally involves thefts from outbuildings, sheds and garages, farm buildings and machinery being targeted and as the price of scrap metal has increased, the numbers of metal thefts increase as well. These are the main types of crime we suffer from in our area.

To combat this, a "rural crime" team was formed consisting of two beat managers and a PCSO. To date, the team has recovered £200,000 worth of stolen items and made over 50 arrests. Work continues and a number of initiatives are being planned for Area North over the coming months. More recently the Beat team has been responsible for a number of arrests where the thieves have targeted iron gates (Hamdon ward) and theft of cable (Islemoor ward). This proactive approach to targeting our known offenders has started to reap tangible benefits.

Staff Changes

PC Jon Watson (Beat Manager) leaves us at the end of September to return to response Policing. Jon has worked for a number of years in neighbourhood policing and we wish him well. His position will be taken by PC Tim Rust who joins us from the Rural Crime team. Tim has been part of the successful team tackling rural theft. I have no doubt he will continue to have an interest in reducing this type of offending on his new area. Tim will take responsibility for Martock, South Petherton and the Hamdon wards.

PC Terri Lines, who has been with us in a temporary capacity, will now stay on a permanent basis. Terri has built up sound relationships with the communities she has been working with and will have responsibility for Turn Hill, Wessex and St Michaels' wards.

PCSOs Rachel Napper and Beth Unthank have left the organisation. Both Rachel and Beth served Area North well and we wish them luck in their alternative careers outside of the Police Service. We have been joined by PCSO Kym Rudge, who has become the focal point for South Petherton ward and has already settled in well.

I am frequently asked questions around the cuts to the policing budget and how it will affect front line delivery. People are concerned that there will be a reduction in the neighbourhood team and whether we remain committed to delivering neighbourhood policing. I can reassure you we are. It's not to say things won't be challenging or that we may have to adopt different practices, but we will continue to focus our efforts to achieve our main aim: Reducing the fear of crime.

Crime reduction and community safety schemes

I would encourage the community to sign up to the various schemes that are available, that promote good crime prevention advice and practice. These schemes should also take a proactive approach in helping those in our communities, by looking out for each other.

We continue to support our 'watch' schemes but acknowledge we are in a state of transition in relation to the administration to them. With the loss of our Admin support, I have had to look at how best this can be achieved.

Community Speedwatch

http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/units_and_departments/operations/rpu/speedwatch/index.aspx

This year sees the 10th anniversary of the birth of community speed watch in Ash. Five volunteers have been recruited in Area North to take on elements of the admin support. These were recruited from CSW volunteers themselves. The processing of warning letters sent to speeding drivers is still being carried out by staff from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

There are currently 14 active schemes on our area and they have conducted 253 CSW sessions monitoring 63,111 vehicles of which 2,605 (4%) were recorded as speeding. 20% of these sessions were supported from both the neighbourhood team and roads policing unit.

High Ham is currently looking for new volunteers to restart their scheme and interest has been shown by individuals in Puckington and Pibsbury. Should you wish to start a

scheme contact your local PCSO who will pass on your details to the CSW Volunteers who will make contact.

Horsewatch

http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/horsewatch/index.aspx

We are no longer supported by PCSO Support Tess Smith, PCSO Kym Rudge is now responsible for the administration of the scheme. Kym will also conduct the site visits and offer our free marking service and signage. Should anyone be interested in joining the scheme, please contact Kym either through the new number 101 (from the 19th September) or via email kym.rudge@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/nhw/index.aspx

Providing effective support to this scheme is still in transition with the loss of Tess Smith. PCSOs should still be the point of contact for individual coordinators. The responsibility for the administration of the database now rests with the NHW coordinator based at Bridgwater Police Station. A PCSO will be appointed as the point of contact in relation to Ringmaster messages and a request has gone out to all coordinators asking for volunteers who may be interested in taking a more proactive part within the scheme. One member has expressed an interest.

For me the emphasis is still on schemes to become more proactive. They should lead on "Bobby Van" referrals where the vulnerable in their communities are identified to offer home security advice and if appropriate supply and fit window and door locks.

During National Neighbourhood Watch Week in June, Coordinators were invited to "patrol" with PCSOs and identify and refer vulnerable households. This was a successful week with a number of schemes participating and attracting media attention.

Farmwatch

http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/farmwatch/index.aspx

Farmwatch continues to gain more members, especially after the results of the work conducted by the Rural Crime Team. The scheme has over 800 Members and they have access to crime prevention advice, marking equipment to identify machinery and an information sharing network. For more information contact melanie.austin@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Community links – 'Police Posts'

In addition to the direct ways to contact the police, both local community offices in Martock and South Petherton act as links between the community and the local policing team. With some additional training and support, the 'Police and Community Volunteers' can offer crime prevention advice and are the point of contact for the public with their local policing team.

New non-emergency number

A new non-emergency number to contact the Police will become available from the 19th September 2011. Part of a national programme, the new number 101, will certainly be

easier to remember. All calls will be charged at 15p, whatever the duration or location of the call and applies to both landlines and mobile telephones.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing or speech impaired can contact the Police by textphone 18001 101. (More information on 101 can be found at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/101)

Alan Bell
Neighbourhood Sergeant
Area North, South Somerset Rural
Phone: 101 or 07789 336666
E-mail: alan.bell@avonandsomerset.police.uk
Mail: Somerton Police Station, 11 Kirkham Street, Somerton, TA11 7NN
www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

Financial Implications

None from this report.

Corporate Priority Implications

- 4.4 Increase understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police.
- 4.5 Improve perceptions of anti-social behaviour
- 4.8 *Improve dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police.*
- 4.9 fear of crime by maintaining a level of 92% of the population that feels safe in their community by 2012.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

Addressing causes of crime can help promote community cohesion.

Background Papers: Area North Community Safety Action Panel – Agenda and Minutes and action plan
