



E R S

Research and Consultancy

Showcasing Neighbourhood and Home Watch Achievements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an overview of the findings from research into good practice in respect of Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW). The main outputs of the exercise were 37 case studies, dissemination of the findings at a series of regional conferences and toolkits to assist practitioners. The research covered each of the 9 English regions plus Wales, and represents a good spread of scheme priorities (membership diversity, new areas/communities, local policy influence and new partnerships/types of activities) and of different contexts within which schemes are operating (urban/rural, affluent/deprived etc.).

Areas Served

Local schemes vary enormously, in terms of size (from 20 dwellings to 800), levels of affluence (or deprivation), character (new builds v traditional) and settings (urban v rural). This demonstrates that N&HW schemes are relevant the length and breadth of the country and amongst all sorts of communities.

Organisation

The quality and commitment of N&HW Co-ordinators is absolutely crucial to a scheme's success. It is their efforts that give it local credibility with residents, the Police and other agencies and their efforts which have gone a long way to securing its achievements. However, they need support, and the best schemes tend to feature small teams of volunteers working alongside the Co-ordinator.

Partnership Working

In most cases, partnership working with the Police has been crucial. It has given residents access to information, advice, guidance, support and resources, and it has given the Police a means of engaging with communities. In some cases, these relationships extend to other partners, most commonly local authority Trading Standards Departments.

Motivations

In most cases, groups seem to have been formed in order to contain/prevent crime/anti-social behaviour, rather than in response to a major problem, although there were some noticeable exceptions. Respondents to the e-survey of volunteers clearly identified burglary, fly tipping/litter, anti-social behaviour and cold calling as their chief concerns, although when asked to identify their number one concern, there were two that stood out: burglary and anti-social behaviour.

Activities

The most common activity in which N&HW groups are engaged is the dissemination of information and advice to residents from the Police and Trading Standards, as well as the distribution of anti-burglary/anti-theft equipment and personal security devices. A number of groups have also been active in having their neighbourhoods designated as 'No Cold Calling' areas. In addition, some groups operate more like community development projects, addressing issues of social inclusion and community cohesion; seeking to deal with the causes of local problems, not just the effects. Indeed, N&HW is, to a large extent about community spirit and neighbourliness. People want to feel part of a community and in many cases N&HW schemes have provided the mechanism through which this has been made possible.

Typologies

Membership Diversity - This was mainly linked to the recruitment of younger people, although in some areas this included attempts to engage recent migrants from Eastern Europe, mainly through the translation of literature.

New Areas/Communities - This has included the setting up of new schemes, the reinvention of schemes and the extension of schemes to neighbouring areas.

Local Policy Influence - A number of groups have sought to influence/improve the delivery of public services in their area, including seeking a greater Police presence/more patrols and improvements to street cleaning, street lighting and leisure provision for children and young people.

New Partnerships/Types of Activities - There is a general sense of wanting to be alive to new opportunities and pursue new ideas, often requiring a new partner in order to develop/deliver a new activity.

Impacts

Residents report becoming much more aware of the need to secure their homes and other property, and of becoming much more vigilant. It is also apparent that residents are more confident about reporting suspicious activity and, where they have witnessed crimes taking place, presenting evidence in support of prosecution. As a result, a number of Police Forces were able to confirm that crime had reduced in N&HW areas and, correspondingly, residents were able to report reductions in the fear of crime. It is clear that in many parts of the country N&HW has played a significant role in improving people's quality of life and in fostering community spirit.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2009 ERS was awarded a contract by Capacitybuilders to:
- develop case studies which highlight best practice in respect of Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW);
 - share the findings of this research with practitioners at regional conferences;
 - develop toolkits to assist practitioners; and
 - encapsulate all of the above in a final report.
- 1.2 This work forms 1 of 5 elements of a bigger project relating to the Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network (NHWN) that Capacitybuilders is undertaking on behalf of the Home Office. The other 4 elements are:
- Building capacity amongst local groups, through the use of toolkits and training;
 - Building capacity amongst members of the national network;
 - Engaging grass roots members (mainly through the 5 conferences held in early 2010); and
 - Overseeing the Design Council's re-branding of NHWN and associated research.
- 1.3 An Inception Meeting was held in Market Harborough on 11 November 2009. Following this an Action Plan was produced which summarised the essential components of the brief/proposal and incorporated additional information received subsequent to the award of the contract and guidance offered at the Inception Meeting.
- 1.4 Although the aim was to highlight good practice and innovation, it was agreed that if the research uncovered any other issues, these would be noted and reported in this document.
- 1.5 Undertaking this work has involved liaising closely with Capacitybuilders as well as working with the Chair of NHWN, (Marion Lewis), two secondees working in support of NHWN (Mark Custerson and Hannah Greenham) and maintaining contact with The Design Council and its appointed contractors (LiveWork) to ensure that all parties maximise benefits from this research.

2. APPROACH

Case Study Selection

- 2.1 The research covered each of the 9 English regions plus Wales. Each of the NHCN regional representatives was asked to submit 8 nominations, together with justifications for the schemes being included as a case study. However, this opportunity was not taken to its full extent in most cases, with a varied response from region to region. Initially, 57 nominations were received but with further prompting the number of nominations was boosted to 63.
- 2.2 ERS reviewed all 63 nomination forms and made follow up telephone calls in order to clarify certain issues/gather any additional information that would aid the decision making process. There was no fixed sampling framework, other than seeking to ensure a healthy representation across each of the 4 priorities described on the front sheets of nomination forms (membership diversity, new areas/communities, local policy influence and new partnerships/types of activities). A breakdown of case study typologies can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In addition, it was hoped to get a good spread of different contexts within which schemes are operating (urban/rural, affluent/deprived etc.). There was a particular interest in groups that involve those not usually active in N&HW, especially those aged under 50 and minority ethnic groups. Whilst nominations included the former, they did not include the latter to any significant extent. ERS then forwarded recommended case studies to Capacitybuilders/NHCN, all of which were approved.
- 2.4 Subsequently, 3 of the 4 proposed case studies in Wales had to be withdrawn. The time that would have been spent researching these case studies was diverted to recruiting case study groups to participate in conference workshops, supporting their preparation and liaising with all case studies in recruiting candidates for peer visits (offering N&HW volunteers the opportunity to visit colleagues and learn from their experiences).
- 2.5 In addition, ERS administered payments of £1,000 to each of the case study groups, as well as payments to those hosting and undertaking peer visits.

Fieldwork

Case Studies

- 2.6 Fieldwork commenced in early December and was completed by mid-January. This comprised a combination of:
- Face to face interviews with senior group members;
 - Focus groups with group members;
 - Wider resident consultations;
 - Partner/Stakeholder consultations;
 - Member surveys; and
 - Observation, through attendance at local group meetings.
- 2.7 Interviews/consultations/surveys covered combinations of the following:
- Methods and processes involved in setting up the group;
 - Recruitment/interest from a diversity of members;
 - Types of activities undertaken;
 - Local partnerships established;
 - Key achievements, particularly in relation to the four priority areas;
 - Critical success factors identified for each priority area;
 - Key challenges faced and overcome;
 - Impacts on the local neighbourhood in terms of crime and safety;
 - Sense of community cohesion, empowerment and inclusion;
 - Influence on wider service delivery;
 - Attempts to ensure the sustainability of impacts achieved; and
 - Advice for other groups to replicate the success achieved.
- 2.8 A standardised case study template was agreed, which was populated using the key information drawn out of the consultation exercises and research data, highlighting lessons learnt and areas of best practice. Each of the case study write-ups was agreed with each group and sent to the client for approval in advance of publication.

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- 2.9 In respect of the member survey, ERS utilised the email networks of a number of N&HW schemes to contact volunteers. Responses were received from a total of 172 volunteers, but these were not evenly or proportionately distributed across the case study areas. As an add-on to the planned fieldwork, the survey was not designed as it would have been had it formed a core component of the research. Nevertheless, the findings offered some interesting insights and are reported in the following section.

Conferences

- 2.10 Draft findings were presented at a series of 5 regional conferences, on the last Saturday in January and each of the following 4 Saturdays in February, held in Worcester, Leeds, London, Peterborough and Taunton.
- 2.11 These events were also an opportunity to test conclusions and gain feedback from NHWN members, thereby strengthening the final case studies.

Toolkits/Modules

- 2.12 Research findings have also informed the re-drafting of modules for the NHWN website's training toolkit, in terms of both the areas to be covered and the illustration of key learning points through the provision of good practice examples.
- 2.13 These modules are not presented in this report, but will be available to be viewed at www.mynhw.co.uk/training-kits.php as from April 2010.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Case Studies

- 3.1 Each of the 37 case study write-ups is presented in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The regional distribution of case studies broke down as follows:
- East – 4
 - East Midlands – 4
 - London – 4
 - North East – 4
 - North West – 4
 - South East – 1
 - South West – 5
 - Wales – 1
 - West Midlands – 5
 - Yorkshire & Humber - 5

Areas Served

- 3.3 Local schemes vary enormously, in terms of size (from 20 dwellings to 800), levels of affluence (or deprivation), character (new builds v traditional) and settings (urban v rural). This demonstrates that N&HW schemes are relevant the length and breadth of the country and amongst all sorts of communities. It is however noticeable that none of the Co-ordinators interviewed were from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, that active N&HW volunteers consulted were overwhelmingly white and areas served (notwithstanding the larger, sub-regional schemes) were predominantly white (though this does include some Polish immigrants in some areas).
- 3.4 However, further work is underway to determine the extent to which these case studies are representative of the ethnic profile of N&HW areas/volunteers and, if so, highlight barriers to participation amongst BME communities and how these might be overcome.

Organisation

- 3.5 The quality and commitment of N&HW Co-ordinators has been crucial to the success of most of the case study schemes. Without the drive, enthusiasm and organisational skills of these individuals, N&HW would be an empty shell of a scheme. It is their efforts that give it local credibility with residents, the Police and other agencies and their efforts which have gone a long way to securing its achievements. However, they need support, and the best schemes tend to feature small teams of volunteers working alongside the Co-ordinator. Indeed, it is important that the time, skills and contacts that other volunteers bring are utilised to the full, both for the benefit of the scheme and to ensure that responsibilities spread beyond the Co-ordinator.

Partnership Working

- 3.6 In most cases, partnership working with the Police, either through Community Support Officers or Police Officers, has been crucial. It has given residents access to information, advice, guidance, support and resources, and it has given the Police a means of engaging with communities and thereby provided a mechanism for the receipt and dissemination of information. Communications between residents and the Police have also led to greater understanding of each other and fostered better relationships. In some cases, these positive relationships extend to other partners, most commonly local authorities, especially Trading Standards Departments.

Motivations

- 3.7 In most cases, groups seem to have been formed in order to contain/prevent crime/anti-social behaviour, rather than in response to a major problem, although there were some noticeable exceptions. Indeed, there are examples of groups tackling some very serious issues, including drug abuse, intimidation and knife crime.
- 3.8 Whilst the scale and seriousness of the issues faced varies quite considerably, a common theme amongst N&HW volunteers is a desire to protect their quality of life; to be able to feel comfortable in their own homes and on the streets of their local community.

- 3.9 Respondents to the e-survey of volunteers clearly identified burglary, fly tipping/litter, anti-social behaviour and cold calling as their chief concerns, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: What are the main concerns affecting your neighbourhood?		
Concern	Number	Percentage
Burglary	113	66.9%
Fly tipping/litter	93	55.0%
Anti-social behaviour	88	52.1%
Cold calling	78	46.2%
Theft from vehicles	46	27.2%
Vandalism – open spaces	43	25.4%
Drugs	42	24.9%
Vandalism – other property	37	21.9%
Underage drinking	33	19.5%
Vandalism – vehicles	29	17.2%
Theft of vehicles	22	13.0%
Vandalism – houses	21	12.4%
Anti-social landlords	17	10.1%
Arson – property	5	3.0%
Arson – vehicle	4	2.4%

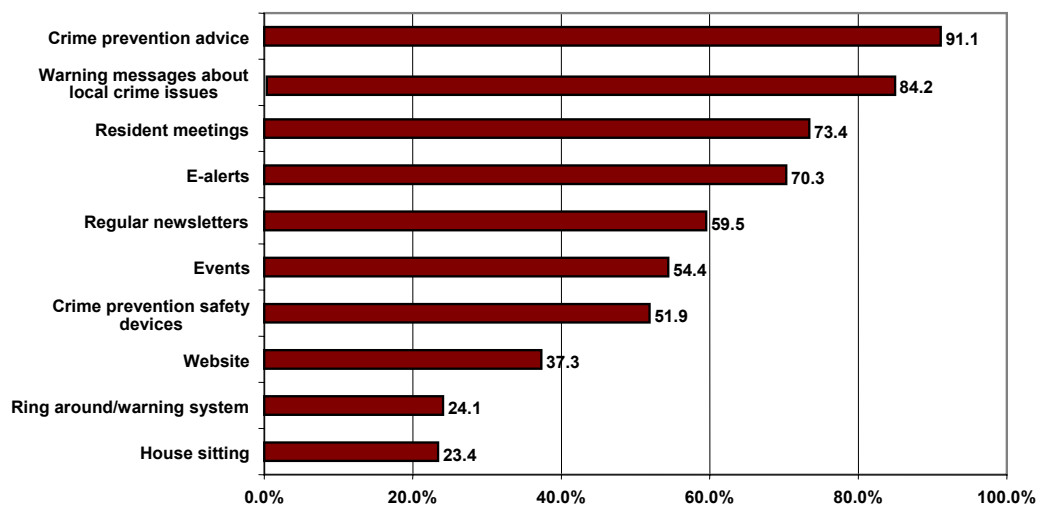
- 3.10 Interestingly, when asked to identify their number one concern, there were two that stood out: burglary and anti-social behaviour, whilst cold calling was relegated into 8th place, as shown in Table 2 overleaf.

Table 2: Which issue is of <u>most</u> concern in your neighbourhood?		
Concern	Number	Percentage
Burglary	59	37.1%
Anti-social behaviour	48	30.2%
Fly tipping/litter	30	18.9%
Vandalism	23	14.5%
Underage drinking	12	7.5%
Drugs	11	6.9%
Anti-social landlords	10	6.3%
Cold-calling	9	5.7%
Theft from vehicles	7	4.4%
Theft of vehicles	4	2.5%

Activities

3.11 The most common activity in which N&HW groups are engaged is the dissemination of information and advice to residents from the Police and Trading Standards, plus the distribution of anti-burglary/anti-theft equipment and personal security devices. A number of groups have also been active in having their neighbourhoods designated as ‘No Cold Calling’ areas. In addition, some groups operate more like community development projects, addressing issues of social inclusion and community cohesion; seeking to deal with the causes of local problems, not just the effects.

3.12 The bar chart below offers more detail, though it should be noted that some respondents described very similar activities in different ways.



3.13 Asked about the best aspects of N&HW, respondents highlighted information distribution, social interaction and events. This was a very clear endorsement of findings from interviews and consultations which showed that N&HW is, to a large extent about community spirit and neighbourliness. People want to feel part of a community and in many cases N&HW schemes have provided the mechanism through which this has been made possible.

Typologies

- 3.14 Each of the schemes was asked to classify itself to one or more of four typologies. Of the 37 case studies selected, 5 did not indicate any typology (2 of those being late entries) whilst 10 claimed to cover all typologies. In some cases, the latter might be attributed to schemes seeking to maximise their chances of selection, although it should be noted that several case studies are umbrella groups whose work will support individual schemes characterised by all four typologies. Overall, the breakdown was as follows:
- membership diversity, 17
 - new areas/communities, 19
 - local policy influence, 17
 - new partnerships/types of activities, 24.
- 3.15 Further detail on the distribution of typologies is presented in Appendix 1.

Membership Diversity

- 3.16 Although just over half of those groups that stated a priority included membership diversity, this aspiration appears to have met with limited success to date. To the extent that it has, this was mainly linked to the recruitment of younger people (including via the setting up of youth/junior Watch groups). The ethnic profile of the areas served by the case study groups was predominantly white, although in some areas this did include recent migrants from Eastern Europe. This meant that in some areas there was very limited scope to broaden ethnic diversity, but where opportunities arose to engage with BME groups this was being taken (e.g. through the translation of literature into Polish).

New Areas/Communities

- 3.17 This appears to have been interpreted in several ways, involving the setting up of a new scheme (e.g. Fenby Gardens in Scarborough is a new estate seeking to safeguard residents and develop a sense of community), the reinvigoration of a scheme (e.g. St. Peter's Home Watch in Tameside was losing momentum until the Police and local community combined to breathe new life into it) or the extension of scheme activities to a neighbouring area (e.g. environmental improvements championed by Peel Estate Neighbourhood Watch in Manchester).

Local Policy Influence

- 3.18 Whilst there is no suggestion that N&HW groups wish to become political organisations, a number of them have sought to influence/improve the delivery of public services in their area, especially from the Police and their local authority. This has included seeking a greater Police presence/more patrols and improvements to street cleaning, street lighting and leisure provision for children and young people.

New Partnerships/Types of Activities

- 3.19 To a large extent this has been covered in the previous sections on partnerships and activities. Nevertheless, whilst in many cases relationships with partners and activities being carried out are both well established, there is a general sense of wanting to be alive to new opportunities and pursue new ideas (often requiring a new partner in order to develop/deliver a new activity). Indeed, this is reflected in this being the most popular of the four priority areas amongst the 37 case studies. One example, is the development of a new partnership with the Trading Standards Department of the local authority in order to discuss/design/implement/police a No Cold Calling Zone.

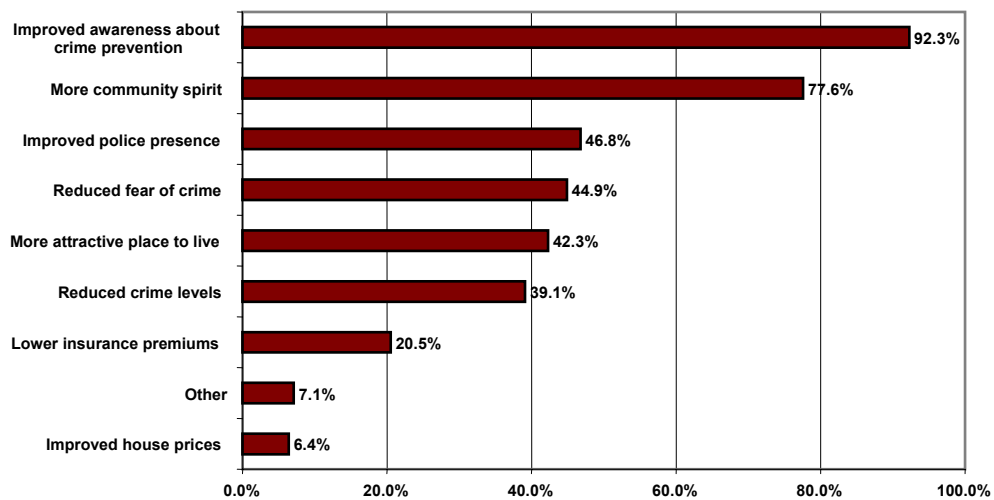
Impacts

- 3.20 Residents report becoming much more aware of the need to secure their homes and other property, and of becoming much more vigilant. It is also apparent that residents are more confident about reporting suspicious activity and, where they have witnessed crimes taking place, presenting evidence in support of prosecution. As a result, a number of Police Forces were able to confirm that crime had reduced in N&HW areas and, correspondingly, residents were able to report reductions in the fear of crime. It is clear that in many parts of the country N&HW has played a significant role in improving people's quality of life and in fostering community spirit.

3.21 In addition, 5 out of every 6 respondents to the e-survey, reported that they perceived there to have been improvements in respect of at least one of the following:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Fly tipping/litter
- Burglary
- Vandalism

3.22 This is especially significant given the prominence of the above in the list of people’s concerns. In other words, those living in N&HW areas appear to be experiencing improvements in respect of the issues of greatest concern to them. That having been said, e-survey respondents reported improved awareness about crime prevention and more community spirit as being the main benefits of being in a N&HW scheme, rather than reduced crime.



Key Learning Points for N&HW Schemes

- Identify concerns and gauge interest amongst residents in addressing those concerns.
- Encourage support by highlighting the benefits of being part of a N&HW scheme, such as cheaper home insurance.
- Identify a champion with the skills, commitment and time to play an effective role.
- Identify other people willing and able to take on relevant responsibilities, but make sure that new people are always welcome (avoid becoming a clique). Identify what skills are available amongst members of the community and make best use of them. Similarly, harness the enthusiasm of members – it can become infectious.
- Get to know your PCSO/neighbourhood police officer and involve them in everything you do. They can provide practical help and access to other support and their endorsement lends credibility to communications with official bodies, including the Police, the Council and Community Safety Partnership/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership..
- Identify the individuals within other key agencies who can make a difference and develop a rapport with them – requests are more likely to be favourably received than demands.
- Keep residents regularly informed and adopt multiple means of communication (meetings, leaflets, notice board, website etc.) in order to both generate and sustain momentum amongst the community.
- Target new residents to inform them/get them involved.
- Sustain support by being well organized and conducting affairs in a professional manner. Keep volunteers motivated, by generating community spirit, maintaining momentum, giving them the support they require and providing feedback on the outcomes of their efforts.
- Don't be shy – promoting activities and achievements will win credibility with residents, the Police and other agencies, and will convince any doubters that you are a force to be reckoned with.
- Be persistent – organisations that might provide support need to be convinced that their help is needed and will make a difference.

APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDY TYPOLOGIES

Summary of Case Study Typologies				
N&HW Scheme	Membership diversity	New areas/ communities	Local policy influence	New partnerships/ types of activities
East Midlands				
“A” Division NWA				
Beeches NW				
Harborough Be Safe				
Police and Community Support Group				
Sherwood and Mapperley Park NW				
East of England				
East Hertfordshire NW				
Stevenage Dog Watch				
Tring NW				
London				
Eaglesfield Park NW				
Harling Court Residents Association				
Northwesttwo Residents Association				
Wandsworth Council’s Community Safety Division				
North East				
Hunters Gate NW				
Junior NW				
Londonderry Road NW				
South Tyneside Association of NW				
North West				
Chadderton HW				
North Cumbria Bogeyman Action Team				
Peel Estate HW				
St Peter’s HW				
South East				
Woldingham NW				
South West				
Berryfields Estate NW				
Chippenham and Rural Villages NW				
Devon & Cornwall Community Watch Association				
Good Shepherd Umbrella Group				
Valleys and Vale NWA				
Wales				
Flintshire NWA				

Summary of Case Study Typologies				
N&HW Scheme	Membership diversity	New areas/ communities	Local policy influence	New partnerships/ types of activities
West Midlands				
Featherstone NW				
Larchwood NW				
Mid-Warwickshire NW				
Streetly Youth4em				
West Chadsmoor Community Partnership				
Yorkshire & Humber				
Borderwatch				
Fenby Gardens NW				
South Yorkshire NWA				
Sovereign Park NW				
The Groves NW				

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

East Midlands

“A” DIVISION NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION, DERBYSHIRE

“A” Division Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Association and South Erewash Crime Prevention Panel have worked in partnership with British Waterways and Derbyshire Police to expand NW into the canals and waterways of east Derbyshire, helping to make these areas safer and more enjoyable to use and live in.

Key Learning Points

- It is essential to have a strong presence in the community, by attending events and linking in with local groups who have an interest in the canals, in order to widen participation in the scheme and its impact.
- When setting up a Canal and Boat Watch it is essential to work with the Police, British Waterways and the community safety departments within local councils. In turn it is important to encourage joined up working between these partners.
- Devise appropriate means to communicate with the diverse range of people that make up the boat and canal community. This could include eye catching Canal and Boat Watch signs placed around the area and notice boards with Police and British Waterway’s contact details for people to report issues.
- The boating community is often transient, due to the fact that they do not always reside permanently within one mooring. This can create challenges in terms of identifying a key person to act as Watch Co-ordinator. In this way it is important to engage members and groups beyond the immediate issue, who can be regular points of contact. In this respect “A” Division have got British Waterways Wardens and canal side residents on board with whom they can maintain regular contact.

Background

The secluded and sometimes isolated locations of canal paths and boat moorings, make an ideal target for boat vandalism and burglary and the canal ways a prime spot for anti social behaviour. There have been specific issues with speeding motorbikes on the canal towpaths and groups of young people drinking and using mini motorbikes, particularly during the summer months. There can also be issues with fly tipping and dumping rubbish and stolen goods into the canal and the towpaths are often used as escape routes for criminals.

In response to this situation South Erewash Crime Prevention Panel in partnership with British Waterways secured funding back in 2001 to launch the Canal and Boat Watch scheme at the Sandiacre Lock in South Erewash. The Crime Prevention Panel joined forces with the NW Association and the scheme has been expanded to cover a 12 mile section of the Amber Valley and Erewash canal, starting at the River Trent at Sawley through to Langley Mill at Sandiacre.

Organisation

“A” Division Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Association was formed in 2000 as a means of supporting all the N&HW schemes and support groups across the Amber valley and Erewash Borough Councils in Derbyshire, including the towns of Long Eaton, Sandiacre, Ilkestone, Erewash, Belper, Ripley, Heanor and Alfreton.

Members of the Canal and Boat Watch scheme encompass a diversity of people from the boat and canal community, all of whom have an interest and a stake in keeping the canals safe and pleasant places to live and enjoy. They include boat owners and canal bank residents, dog walkers, cyclists, canal enthusiasts and the fishing fraternity. The NW group actively seeks opportunities to recruit new members to the scheme. They regularly attend boat festivals and fetes, local libraries and community centres, where they hand out a range of general crime prevention and boat safety literature. There are now around 200- 300 members signed up to the scheme. Once someone is signed up there is normally a lead individual from the boat or canal community whose contact details are passed onto the police and the wardens, who will communicate with them in case of any issues.

Activities

There was a festival held for the launch of the first Boat Watch scheme in 2001 at which the Crime Prevention Panel distributed crime prevention advice and leaflets from the Home Office, together with the Canal and Boat Watch pack. The pack includes Boat Watch stickers, ultra violet pens for owners to mark their property and contact details of their beat officers and British Waterways wardens to report concerns. Subsequently, the success of and interest in the scheme led the Crime Prevention Panel to join forces with "A" Division NW Association to expand the scheme, launched in 2008 at the Long Eaton Boat Festival.

There are also a number of laminated Canal and Boat Watch signs displayed around the canals, which both the police and British Waterways help to fund and physically erect. British Waterways enforcement officers and wardens raise awareness of the scheme, handing out safety leaflets and providing crime prevention advice to the boat and canal community and maintaining the Canal and Boat Watch notice boards. They liaise frequently with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and feed back information and reports of any incidents to the Association and the police. The neighbourhood police teams patrol the canal towpaths and have helped roll out the scheme to other areas within the canal network. They respond to reports of anti social behaviour provided by British Waterways and N&HW members and communicate on a regular basis with the N&HW Association.

The Police are starting to distribute Smartwater to members of the Canal and Boat Watch scheme for a reduced price of £5. SmartWater is a colourless liquid solution that is applied onto valuables and contains a unique chemical 'code' which is registered to the owner, which makes it easy for the Police to prove the ownership of stolen goods.

The Association forms part of a Key Individual Network (KIN) which is managed by the Police. This involves the NW group exchanging intelligence with the police via email or telephone. This information and crime prevention messages are then passed onto the wider public and N&HW members via the Community Messaging and Ringmaster system. This is a web portal system which allows the police to phone, text or e-mail registered users, such as the NW Co-ordinators, quickly and directly to warn them about any incidents taking place that might affect the area where they live.

The NW Association has sought to link with existing Associations operating around the canals, for example the Erewash Canal Preservation Society in Sandiacre, whose members are now signed up to the scheme and discuss the Watch at their meetings. Similarly, the Canal and Boat Watch (CBW) at Langley Mill boat yard hold meetings about three or four times a year, to which their local beat bobbies and PCSOs are invited. Whilst meetings are not commonly held by CBW groups, “A” Division plans to help formalise CBW groups to a greater extent by supporting the establishment of meetings

Impacts

Boat owners have been given a greater sense of security as a result of a number of factors: an improved relationship with the police; receiving up to date information on crime risks in the area and regular crime prevention advice; and knowing that members of the Canal and Boat Watch look out for each other.

Police presence on the canals has increased and they have started to work more closely with British Waterways. This has helped provide the Police with greater understanding of the issues affecting canals and waterways and improved their ability to tackle these issues. Police report that they are getting reports of more incidents that they would not have been made aware of previously, which helps them target their policing of the area more efficiently. They have also made successful arrests as a result of information provided through the Watch. One example includes a series of burglaries that were being committed by a person travelling from one boat to another on a dinghy. Another example was the arrest of a person who had been spotted by a Watch resident, dumping a stolen motorbike and other goods into the canal at 3am. The police were contacted immediately and caught the person in the act.

THE BEECHES NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, UPPINGHAM, RUTLAND

The Beeches Neighbourhood Watch (NW) is an integral part of the estate's Residents Association. It has established the largest NW email alert group in Rutland and takes a significant lead in organising a wide range of community events and linking in with other groups and forums in Uppingham.

Key Learning Points

- For neighbourhoods which do not experience a high level of crime but which wish to form a NW group, incorporating it within an existing structure such as a residents association can be an effective mechanism.
- NW activity can go beyond an immediate response to crime; helping to build a sense of community and neighbourliness and thereby reducing perceptions/fear of crime.
- Develop a strong and positive link with your local Police Officers and Community Support Officers as they can support your activities, and vice versa.
- Identify a member of the community who can drive the group forward as otherwise it can lose momentum. At the same time, there also needs to be support from residents
- Perseverance gets results and all the hard work is worth it in the end.

Background

The Beeches is a relatively large estate on the outskirts of the rural town of Uppingham in Rutland. The estate comprises 130 houses laid out in cul-de-sacs. The majority of houses are detached, with a small number of bungalows and little 'low cost' housing. Many of the residents are the original purchasers from up to 20 years ago and are of retirement age, although there are also families on the estate. The Beeches does not suffer from a high level of crime, which is reflected across Uppingham as a whole, although low levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism have been reported. Nevertheless, residents have a fear of crime, particularly in relation to burglary with Uppingham experiencing a slight increase over the last 12 months.

Organisation

The Residents Association is lead by a chairman and vice chairman, with a treasurer, secretary, four committee members and the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator who act as an executive committee. The committee meets on a bi-monthly basis or more often if the need arises, with NW being a standing item on the agenda. An annual meeting is held to which all residents and partners (e.g. Leicestershire Chief Constable and the neighbourhood policing team) are invited. The meeting sets the priorities and actions for the forthcoming year. The Residents Association operates in a very open and democratic manner, with the executive committee elected each year by the residents.

Activities

Email acts as the main form of communication between residents and the NW Co-ordinator. An email group has been established as, given the size of the estate, this is the most effective and efficient way of disseminating information. Residents sign up to receive emails and it is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator to send out bulletins of local crimes on a weekly basis, with any other urgent crime or other matters circulated as appropriate. For those households without internet access but who wish to receive the bulletins, hard copies are available.

Given the size of the estate and that there is no focal point or community meeting space/hall, the Residents Association applied for and received a £1,000 grant from the Police Community Safety Group for a community notice board. The board acts as an information source, with the contact details for the Residents Association committee, the NW Co-ordinator and neighbourhood policing team, as well as helpline numbers. It is also used by residents to share information and by local charities and businesses (for a small fee).

The group has started a key holders scheme (i.e. neighbours looking after each other's property when they are away), and is looking into establishing a no cold calling zone. The NW Co-ordinator has also volunteered the Beeches as a pilot area in Uppingham for a wi-fi scheme aimed at improving broadband access in rural areas.

The NW Co-ordinator works with the Residents Association to foster a sense of community and events are held throughout the year to bring the community together. One of the more unusual initiatives has been the purchase of a community defibrillator, with 15 residents trained to use it. This is a good example of NW responding to community needs, whatever they might be.

Partnership Working

The Beeches NW works closely with Leicestershire Police, in particular the neighbourhood policing team which consists of a Police Officer and a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). The PCSO provides updates detailing the latest incidents in the area, with the group Co-ordinator cascading VC Relay Community Messaging alerts to residents via email, voicemail and texts. The Police have also been active in advising residents as to how best to protect their homes and property. For example, the Police have held bicycle marking sessions on the estate.

Impacts

There is a clear desire amongst residents to ensure that the estate remains a safe and nice place to live. By incorporating neighbourhood watch within the Residents Association from the beginning, it has become part of the community and accessible to all residents. The message has been 'prevention is better than cure' and residents have commented on how they have a better awareness of crime prevention and feel more comfortable talking to the local Police Officers and PCSO. This has resulted in reduced fear of crime amongst residents.

The work of the NW group and Residents Association has undoubtedly strengthened the sense of community spirit, with residents looking out for one another and the social events bringing together people from across the estate who perhaps would not otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know each other.

From the Police's point of view, the NW group is a consistent presence in the area, capable of providing a visible deterrent and reporting crime and providing the Police with intelligence.

HARBOROUGH BE SAFE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Harborough Be Safe helps the elderly, the vulnerable and victims of crime by providing a free-of-charge service to improve home security, as well as offering one-to-one support on security and crime prevention matters. Market Harborough Policing Unit is the only one in the Leicestershire Force area to have no repeat victims within the past 18 months and there has been a year-on-year reduction in the number of successful distraction burglaries, with this scheme thought to have played a major role in this achievement.

Key Learning Points

- Recognise the value of volunteers as they are more flexible and so can invariably spend more time with the victims of crime than can a Police Officer.
- Fitting safety equipment. Means recruiting volunteers with practical skills.
- Develop a reciprocal relationship with the Police, whereby the volunteers are encouraged to work alongside the Police and other agencies as a team.
- To support close working with the Police, volunteers need to be CRB checked and appropriately trained (e.g. MoPI training, basic health and safety, crime prevention). This can lead to them being given authorised ID badges and fob keys so that they can access the Police station as required.
- Work in partnership with other organisations as you cannot do everything on your own.
- Need to have a Co-ordinator with drive and enthusiasm, and harness the energy of volunteers.

Background

Harborough Be Safe works in the Harborough District of Leicestershire, which includes the towns of Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, as well as the surrounding villages. The objectives of the scheme are to ensure that every elderly or vulnerable person living in the area receives advice and, where appropriate, to install (free of charge) enhanced security against distraction burglary (where a falsehood, trick or distraction is used to gain, or try to gain, access to the premises in order to commit burglary). Victims tend to have money and/or valuables stolen and in many cases will only realise that they have been victims of crime some time after the offence has actually been committed. The aim is to improve safety and ultimately reduce the incidence of house and distraction burglary, and reduce the fear of crime. Harborough District does not suffer from a high level of crime, although at the time that Harborough Be Safe was set up, there had been an increase in the number of house and distraction burglaries.

Organisation

Harborough Be Safe was formed in 2002 by members of Market Harborough District Neighbourhood Watch (NW) and Leicestershire Constabulary in response to the increasing number of reported distraction burglaries. Some finance was raised from Leicestershire County Council, but the scheme is totally run, managed and funded by volunteers. It is a fully constituted group, with a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and committee members. It is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Co-ordinator and she is supported by a team of six volunteers. An annual meeting is held to which all volunteers and partners are invited, and the priorities and actions for the forthcoming year are set.

Activities

Harborough Be Safe provides personal and property safety advice and home security improvements free of charge. The team of volunteers will fit enhanced security equipment to the homes of elderly people who have been the victims of crime, as well as for vulnerable people who need improved home security to reduce the likelihood of being burgled. This includes door chains, door bars, door viewers, letterbox visors, memo minders and smoke alarms. In cases where the team does not have the equipment necessary to address a specific issue, they will try to source it or come up with a solution. The team also provides a property marking service.

Every attempt is made to visit a victim of distraction burglary on the same day or within a couple of days of receiving the referral (from agencies including Leicestershire Social Services, Victim Support, Age Concern), but given that the scheme is run by volunteers, this is not always possible. However, the scheme has the support of a locksmith who volunteers his time to respond to the most vulnerable people within six or seven hours of being informed. The scheme also recently recruited its first female volunteer who has been trained to fit the safety equipment so that she can respond to vulnerable female victims. All the volunteers have CRB checks and receive training from the Market Harborough Policing Unit, including MoPI training (the Management of Police Information), basic health and safety, crime prevention and diversity training.

The scheme holds a regular stall at the indoor market in Market Harborough, offering free safety advice and support to some 150 visitors each month. This includes distributing more than 10,000 purse bells and chains to protect shoppers from purse dipping and handbag theft (purchased using Community Cashback funding). The scheme also receives a high number of referrals through the stall. The team started running a market stall in Lutterworth town centre at the beginning of 2010.

In addition, the team gives presentations to local groups on crime prevention and safety awareness. In 2007 they received £5,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to produce a calendar on crime prevention in partnership with a range of agencies including Leicestershire Constabulary, Safer Leicester Partnership, Victim Support and Age Concern. This has since been repeated.

In May 2008 the Harborough and Oadby & Wigston Be Safe scheme (HOWSafe) was launched. This scheme has been developed with the co-operation of both districts and is jointly funded with £10,000 being given to Harborough Be Safe. The scheme will provide free enhanced security to victims of domestic violence, which includes a 24 hour 7 day a week locksmith service for high risk victims. Once the property has been made secure and the access risk is reduced, a volunteer will be sent to complete any further security enhancements required.

Harborough be Safe will also be part of the Leicestershire First Contact project, whereby volunteers, on visiting a victim or vulnerable person, will complete a short assessment of their needs from which they will be referred to an appropriate organisation. For example, if an individual was identified as needing improved safety, Harborough Be Safe could be asked to make a visit and fit the necessary locks etc. Harborough Be Safe has recently received funding to extend the scheme from Leicestershire & Rutland Community Cashback.

Partnership Working

Harborough Be Safe has a very good working relationship with the Market Harborough Policing Unit, with the group Co-ordinator having a permanent desk at the Police station. The Community Initiatives Co-ordinator for Harborough plays a particularly active role in the group, referring victims of distraction burglary to them. The Head of Harborough local policing unit, the Partnership Officer, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and the Community Initiatives Co-ordinator for Oadby & Wigston local Policing unit also attend the Harborough Be Safe annual meeting. In addition, the Co-ordinator attends the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings and the joint action meetings for anti-social behaviour. Harborough Be Safe works with a large number of other agencies and organisations who work with the elderly and vulnerable, including Leicestershire Social Services, Victim Support, Age Concern, Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Services and housing associations. To facilitate this partnership working, the group Co-ordinator sits on the Leicestershire Home Safety Action Group.

Impacts

It is the perception of the Police that the activities of Harborough Be Safe are having a positive impact on reducing the number of distraction burglaries. Market Harborough Policing Unit is the only one in the Leicestershire Force area to have no repeat victims within the past 18 months and there has been a year-on-year reduction in the number of successful distraction burglaries. A knock-on effect of the team's work has been improved awareness and vigilance within the area, with the local policing unit seeing a significant increase in the early reporting of suspected bogus callers and rogue traders by the public. This helps to prevent and support the detection of distraction burglaries. Distraction burglary also often goes unreported and there have been instances where the team has been able to support a victim in reporting an incident.

To date, the Harborough Be Safe team has secured the homes of almost 2,000 people, providing, on average, more than 150 volunteer hours a month. This has the direct impact of making elderly residents and victims of crime physically more secure and less vulnerable to distraction burglaries. However, the work of the volunteers also has a very important impact on the well-being of victims as they spend time with each victim, many of whom live on their own. The volunteers provide the advice and reassurance that helps them to feel confident and more secure. It is well known that the effects of being a crime victim do not end when the crime is over; there are a number of after effects that can continue over a long period of time. In 2009 the scheme was nominated as one of the top three groups caring for victims in the national Inside Justice Awards.

POLICE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP, LEICESTER

Partnership working between the community and key agencies delivers greater success by reducing crime and building trust. This approach also helps to create “communities that care”.

Key Learning Points

- It is important to be responsive to local issues and take the initiative.
- Excellent communications with local residents and agencies are a must.
- A bigger impact can be achieved by individual NW schemes working together as one group in an area, in partnership with the local Police station.

Background

The Police and Community Support Group (PCSG) operates in the Welford Road area of Leicester, seeking to support the local policing unit. The group is not a conventional Neighbourhood Watch (NW) group, although it comprises Co-ordinators and members from local groups from the surrounding area who work as volunteers, offering support to the Welford Road local policing unit and other agencies. The group was formed on the basis that instead of working as individual NW schemes, a bigger impact could be achieved by joining together as one group and working in partnership with the local Police station, to deliver crime prevention and community safety interventions across the area as a whole. The Group has been operating for 8 years during which time it has evolved into an active and well respected organisation which seeks out opportunities and the involvement of a range of partners. The PCSG is now considering how it can ensure the sustainability of its work through long-term funding arrangements.

Organisation

The Group comprises NW Co-ordinators living in the area. It has a formal constitution and individual roles are allocated accordingly. The main roles involve a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and a Secretary. The Group is represented at key meetings across different agencies, which gives them a presence within the strategic arena. In addition, they work with local establishments such as universities, schools and churches, which allows them to address a range of issues specific to the people using these venues. This demonstrates that the current remit of the group is wide ranging whilst the current structure of the group lends itself to an expansion in these areas of work.

Activities

The PCSG has set up numerous road show stalls and attends a variety of local events in an attempt to increase its visibility. It has developed a range of projects and invites guest speakers to their meetings, for example from the Fire Service, youth unemployment and council departments such as Environmental Health and Drugs team. In addition to picking up on local issues these meetings are an opportunity to disseminate safety and NW literature. At these meetings local residents raise issues, such as cold calling, which the Group will respond to by canvassing the area with the Police and no cold calling signs. The Group also initiated an alley gate campaign in an area of Victorian terraced housing, whereby funding was sought to put up gates on alley entrances. Group members have built up a good understanding of crime and community safety issues which enables them to signpost people to the relevant agencies.

The PCSG has also worked closely with Housing Managers in the deprived areas of Eyres Monsell and Saffron Lane. This has proved to be useful as the managers have funds available to them, which can at times be accessed by the PCSG. In addition, the Group has worked with Magistrates on a pilot scheme in Saffron Lane, where the public had a chance to comment on how criminals should pay back to the community. Magistrates have also accompanied the group whilst setting up no cold calling zones.

The Group has developed a variety of Watches in response to specific needs and issues. For example, Church Watch was set up by the PCSG following the robbery of lead roofing tiles from a local church, mainly involving people attending or living nearby local churches. The Group initiated the project and produced A3 sized signs, displayed around the area indicating that Church Watch is in operation, as well as distributing information packs on how to report any suspicious behaviour. To date, the Group has worked with 3 churches and plans to expand this to other churches in the area.

School Watch was set up at each primary school within the local policing unit covering 5 wards. Signs are displayed in and around each school and houses in the nearby area are requested to participate in keeping an eye on the school, particularly during holiday periods. They use different activities and methods to engage the young people in crime prevention and safety. For example, there was an art competition where participants had to depict how they feel about School Watch, offering prizes such as cinema tickets, swimming passes, bike locks and supermarket vouchers. In Eyres Monsell, a deprived area, Police have reported a reduction in crime around the area of a school where School Watch has been introduced.

One of the group's most successful projects, the 100% Attendance Reward Scheme, started off as a pilot in 2008 and was run for a second time in 2009. The impetus for this project came from the Police, who wanted to deliver a project to address truancy and anti-social behaviour. The project rewarded pupils with 100% attendance with a trip to the cinema and a goody bag. The project worked with all 12 primary schools in the Welford Road Policing Unit area and was delivered by PCSG in partnership with Welford Road Police. The original pilot was very well received by the schools and pupils. In 2009 the number of eligible pupils increased from 500 in the previous year to 800, with funding provided by ward councillors and the Joint Action Group.

In addition, 2 bikes have been purchased for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the PCSG continues to support the Police with specific crime prevention interventions, such as distributing free locks, acid etching (in houses where people have been burgled) and postcoding of bikes at schools. The group has also been involved in a criminal justice project, carrying out a public survey on the criminal justice system at the main shopping centre in Leicester city centre.

Representatives from the group attend public meetings in all four wards in the area. The first 40 minutes of these meetings are available for local agencies to set up stands that inform local residents. The PCSG routinely has a presence, providing NW information and literature. Members of the public often air their concerns to the group, which are then referred to the Police. These meetings prove particularly useful in recruiting new members, allow close contact with local people by becoming aware of the issues that concern them and help to raise the profile of the group. It is also useful for local people who prefer to raise their concerns with the group rather than the Police, demonstrating the role of the group as a conduit between the Police and local community

Partnership Working

The group works closely with the Welford Road Local Policing Unit as well as higher ranking police officers, councillors, magistrates, the Mayor, Housing Managers and a number of other agencies. As one example, the PCSG has benefitted greatly from contact with the Magistrates as this has helped to broaden their horizons and allowed them to have a greater presence amongst the community. Correspondingly, this has given Magistrates a valuable insight into the issues being dealt with at grass roots level.

The Chair attends the University of Leicester Community Liaison Meeting on behalf of the group. These meetings are held several times during the academic year and provide the opportunity to discuss student-related issues. The group also works with the Students Union and invites students on Criminology courses to attend group meetings and assist the members in delivering local community projects.

Impacts

The PCSG is generating measurable benefits which have a long term impact on the local community. Having community representatives working with key agencies also contributes towards community cohesion. By applying a common sense approach, the group has managed to develop a strategic alliance with community partners, galvanizing the support required to make a real difference and build confidence in the community and with local partners.

The ability to build confidence in the community has been achieved as a result of the group being able to demonstrate that joint action across different NW groups works well and adds value.

SHERWOOD AND MAPPERLEY PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, NOTTINGHAM

Neighbourhood Watch is about bringing people closer together and involving them in local life. A stronger community spirit grows as people get to know each other and look out for one another. By working together, neighbours can help reduce all sorts of local crimes. Any community or neighbourhood - however large or small - can join a Neighbourhood Watch team and everyone can play a part in its achievements.

Key Learning Points

- Running SAMPNW in a professional way, using effective management and communication systems, helps add credibility to the group and secure support from members and key partners.
- Collect and use robust data on the local area and scheme members (numbers and profile) to add weight to campaigns and secure support from partners.
- In areas where people are reluctant to join NW due to fear of reprisals from perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, it is important to facilitate their participation in the scheme without publicising the fact. This can include making reports/writing letters of complaint on their behalf.
- Adopt a cross-agency approach to addressing issues in the neighbourhood, particularly anti-social behaviour, by working closely with the Police and writing letters to the appropriate council departments and agencies to gain their ownership of the problems.
- Securing a high volume of membership is key to enabling the group to have real influence on decision makers and funders.

Background

Sherwood and Mapperley Park Neighbourhood Watch Association (SAMPNW) works within the geographical boundaries of Sherwood, a largely residential area approximately 1.5 miles north east of Nottingham City Centre. Historically the area has suffered from high levels of crime and fear of crime, specifically issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB), drug dealing and burglary. During the last 6 years, the Association has started to exercise a greater degree of strategic influence and generate impacts on the ground.

Organisation

SAMPNW has been operating for the past 13 years and is a collective of several smaller street or community watches. SAMPNW is a constituted association, created to assist Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Co-ordinators in running their own schemes.

Activities

Canvassing

SAMPNW canvasses in areas which are suffering specific crime or ASB issues following referrals from the Police or other agencies. Five out of six areas targeted in this way have gone on to form a NW group. This is particularly significant given that people in these areas have been more reluctant to participate initially due to fear of reprisals. Where this has been the case the NW coordinator may remain anonymous and official communications will come from the SAMPNW, so the "offending" neighbours cannot identify anyone on the street as having reported them.

Neighbourhood Alert Messaging System

One of the SAMPNW members, who is also the owner of a local ICT business, identified the potential to improve its efficiency by updating its ICT systems and developing a website (www.sampnw.co.uk) as well as engage non-traditional NW members, particularly young people, by developing online technology for receiving and reporting crime information. Through the Neighbourhood Alert facility local residents can receive crime reports, alerts by text, voice or email and can report incidents and problems in their streets on the system. A mapping facility within the alert system also shows the scale and distribution of membership, which is a powerful visual tool to demonstrate to partners the significance and coverage of NW.

Once users are registered as “website users” they can go a step further and become a “virtual Co-ordinator”. This means that they can define an area, make it visible to other web users and create their own crime reports and manage a discussion forum for their own “virtual members”. This allows them to experience what it is like to be a “proper” Co-ordinator without taking on the role and responsibilities straight away. 360 people have registered as website users and 36 as virtual Co-ordinators. One of the website users reports *“The main benefit is being kept up to date with crime activity in the area so that I can keep alert and aware. It is a useful and constant reminder to be on the look out”*. In particular this new approach has encouraged younger, ICT literate residents who want to get involved in their communities in a way that suits their lifestyle.

Communication

In conjunction with the Safer Neighbourhood Team, SAMPNW uses a range of media to ensure local residents are provided with regular updates on local crime data and prevention information. This is done through the SAMPNW website, Messaging Alert system and newsletter and the bi-monthly commercial neighbourhood magazine for Sherwood and Carrington. The commercial magazine, which is distributed to 7000 houses, includes five NW pages every edition along with a message from the Beat Manager Sergeant.

CCTV

In 2006, SAMPNW made a successful bid for £11,500 from the City Council towards the purchase of CCTV cameras. This, together with smaller pots of subsequent funding went towards buying 20 cameras which are placed strategically throughout the local area and two digital video recorders (DVRs). The Police monitor activity, although the recordings are stored digitally at a site accessed by SAMPNW. CCTV footage has been used on numerous occasions to support criminal investigations, including a road traffic accident and a robbery. SAMPNW has become the CCTV provider in the area and its footage is often used by the Criminal Investigation Department.

Neighbourhood Watch Contact Point

In 2001 SAMPNW campaigned to keep the Sherwood Police contact point open following threats of closure. They collected a range of intelligence to support their case, including residents’ views on crime and community safety (via a survey carried out by the SAMPNW) and extensive analysis of the crime statistics for the Sherwood and Mapperly Park area. The case put forward by SAMPNW was taken seriously by the Police, to the extent that in 2004 the local area Commander pushed for the contact point to be relocated to more suitable premises. In 2008, NW was allocated a space in the building for a drop in office.

Partnership Working

SAMPNW has built a substantial network of partners with whom they frequently work on cross-agency solutions to local issues. Partners include Nottinghamshire Police, the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team, Crime and Drugs Partnership, Nottingham City Council (e.g. Community Safety Partnership and Street Scene), the Highways Agency, Public Health and various housing partners, including Nottingham City Homes, Tuntum Housing Association and private landlords.

The relationship with the Safer Neighbourhood Team has been further strengthened by SAMPNW having an office base and drop in centre within the Police Station. The Council's Area Management Team is also located in the same building, which has supported joined up working between the Safer Neighbourhood Team, NW and the Area Management Team.

SAMPNW meets with the Beat Manager Sergeant once a month to discuss local issues/ seek solutions. A successful example of this was the co-ordinated campaign to address anti social behaviour in a residential road off the neighbourhood's main shopping precinct. SAMPNW responded by establishing a neighbourhood watch on the street and contacting relevant partners including the ASB Team, Nottingham City Homes, private landlords and local councillors.

Impacts

The Police report one of the key benefits of their collaboration with NW is that it has helped them to re-engage with the public, which directly supports the Government's priority of policing by consent and encouraging a more client-driven Police service. Regular communication with NW helps the Police access local intelligence which they would otherwise struggle to obtain. This in turn has enabled the Police to deliver targeted interventions, helping to reduce crime in the area. The use of CCTV has also helped the Police solve a number of crimes locally.

Involvement in NW has helped create a stronger sense of community and neighbours who previously did not speak to each other are in more regular communication and look out for each other. In this way the scheme has had significant impacts on community cohesion in the area. Residents feel that involvement in the scheme has improved their awareness about crime prevention and they believe there is improved police presence, reduced crime levels and reduced fear of crime. Retaining the Police contact point and having a NW office in the police station are seen as some of the most positive outcomes. Overall, SAMPNW reports that members feel that NW has helped the area become a better place to live. Additional tangible impacts have been improved house prices and decrease in home insurance premiums.

East of England

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

East Herts Rural Intelligence Gathering System (RIGS) provides an effective and instant means of communication between the rural community and the police, through the use of pagers. This has helped break down communication barriers that can exist in isolated rural communities and has brought the local community closer together and strengthened their relationship and trust in the Police.

Key Learning Points

- It is vital to get the right people using the pagers, in terms of targeting those users who are out and about every day and across a wide geographical area.
- It is essential to get the rural officers on board with the scheme as they are the conduit to the rural community and have important local knowledge that can support the targeting of the scheme in terms of end beneficiaries and areas served.
- Sustainability can be supported by the users contributing towards the costs of maintaining the pagers, in terms of batteries and call charges.
- The meetings are conducted in an informal and community focused way, which helps encourage end users' sense of ownership over the scheme.

Background

East Hertfordshire is the largest of Hertfordshire's ten local authority districts. On the whole, the area has low crime but its rural communities are often isolated from services and other people living and working in the area. This isolation can lead to the community feeling vulnerable to crime, and a lack of Police presence or means of communicating crime warnings and prevention messages can intensify this fear.

East Herts Rural Intelligence Gathering System (RIGS) provides an on the spot solution to communicating reports of suspicious behaviour to other members of the community and the police by sending messages via a pager. A combination of logistical factors led to the use of pagers over mobile phones as a way to communicate. One issue relates to the poor mobile phone signal in some of the county's districts. Perhaps more significant though is the fact that it is a lot more cost effective and easy to send a message out to one common number as opposed to 260 different mobile phone numbers.

The project first started as a pilot 7 years ago, when the Watch Liaison officer made a successful bid for Action Against Rural Crime funding. This funding went towards renting pagers for 2 years, however once this funding came to an end the pagers had to be returned. The success of the pilot scheme meant that a demand had been created both by the rural community and the Police, with beneficiaries frequently contacting the rural officers and East Herts Neighbourhood Watch (NW) to request replacement pagers. In response, the Watch Liaison officer made a successful bid to purchase 260 pagers.

Organisation

East Herts NW is managed by a designated Watch Liaison Officer who meets regularly with their local Neighbourhood Teams and NW Community Co-ordinators, to ensure that information is shared to help fight crime.

Rural Watch meetings are held every 3 months in farmers' barns across three different parts of the district. These meetings are used as a public forum, to discuss crime issues and share information with the police and are open to everyone. They also offer the opportunity for the Police/other partners to provide crime prevention or related advice. For example the Crown Prosecution Service attended a meeting to provide advice and information on court proceedings. These meetings also have a social element to them. The meetings are always well attended by both members of the rural community and partners from NW and the Rural Police team, with whom East Herts NW has worked closely. For example, rural officers were asked how many pagers to purchase and the areas to be targeted by the scheme. Rural officers were also involved in the dissemination of the scheme and distribution of the pagers. In this way it has been important to maintain effective communication with the rural officers to ensure a consistent message is communicated regarding RIGS.

Activities

One of the key tasks of the Watch Liaison Officer and the NW Co-ordinator for East Herts is to identify and bid for grant funding to support NW activities. In 2008 the efforts of the Watch Liaison Officer and the District Co-ordinator paid off when East Herts NW secured funding from the Community Foundation for £5000 and a further £2000 was secured from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. This provided the resources to launch Rural Watch, which comprised the RIGS project and distribution of 55 A3 size Rural Watch signs.

People in receipt of a pager sign an agreement stating that they are responsible for covering the costs of battery replacements and costs of the calls. In this way there are no further costs to NW or the Police which aids sustainability.

The scheme is targeted at those members of the rural community who are out and about in the countryside on a daily basis, such as farmers, game keepers, horse riders and milkmen. These people can act as the eyes and ears of the countryside and if they spot something suspicious they can use the pagers to communicate what they see to the police and others in the area. Once a message is sent it appears on all pagers including those held by the rural officers out on duty. All messages are also sent through to the Police control centre where all messages are logged.

In addition to RIGS East Herts N&HW also use the Online Watch Link (OWL) system and all RIGS users are signed up to the OWL.

There is countywide recognition of the value of the system and RIGS is now being rolled out more widely within the county and across county borders. The Watch Liaison officer has provided support to North Herts NW in setting up RIGS and there are discussions with Essex Police who have also shown an interest in adopting the scheme. Interest from police services in neighboring counties has led to a greater sharing of information between these services. For example East Herts, North Herts, Suffolk and Essex police communicate every fortnight and the information gathered through RIGS supports a more co-ordinated effort to combating crime in the area.

Impacts

There is evidence that the information shared through the pagers has been successful in reducing crime. For example, in the north of the district there has ceased to be any incidence of hare coursing. Indeed, the rural police Sergeant reports that the system has helped make arrests and adds considerable value to the work of the rural officers on duty. He also reports the impact it has had on the effectiveness of partnership working with their counterparts in neighbouring Essex and Suffolk, with the information shared helping to support a more co-ordinated approach to policing the area and tracking criminals.

The RIGS initiative has increased access to NW in rural areas, to communities who were not previously engaged. The impact of this has been improved communication between rural communities and the Police which has enhanced people's sense of security and supports the Police in their task of combating crime. Participation in the scheme has also helped to bring the people living and working in these communities closer together, particularly through the barn meetings, where people have the opportunity to meet and interact face to face. Anecdotal feedback suggests that this has contributed towards a greater sense of community and wellbeing.

Both the police and East Herts N&HW report that the use of the pagers is empowering for the rural community, as they can take control of their situation. It has also given users more confidence in the Police, as they receive feedback from the Police on actions taken in response to the intelligence they have sent. This also gives a sense of satisfaction knowing that they have helped tackle crime.

STEVENAGE DOG WATCH, HERTFORDSHIRE

Stevenage Dog Watch brings together dog walkers and people who enjoy walking to be the 'eyes and ears' of the community. By simply walking in an area at all times of the day, and feeding back information to the Police on suspicious activity or environmental issues, dog walkers are helping to address quality of life issues in Stevenage.

Key Learning Points

- Having the support of the Police to provide guidance and of the local authority to assist with your activities.
- The importance of having an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has the time to make the group work effectively and an ability to come up with new ideas.
- Funding is important, especially in the early stages to help with start-up costs. In-kind support is also very important, including from the private sector, as and when appropriate.
- Need to have professional looking publicity material and merchandise as people do respond to it.
- Make it fun. If you are going to host an event, put on activities that are going to appeal to wide range of people.

Background

Stevenage Dog Watch is a relatively new Neighbourhood Watch (NW) group, formed at the beginning of 2009. It operates in the borough of Stevenage in Hertfordshire, which includes Stevenage town and the six surrounding villages. Stevenage is a predominately urban area but there are lots of parks and open spaces which people use to walk their dogs. Hertfordshire is one of the safest counties in the country, with the level of crime in Stevenage reflecting this. However, residents are concerned about anti-social behaviour, with parks and open spaces in Stevenage sometimes used as meeting places for people to drink alcohol, before going on to cause problems later in the evening in residential areas. Open spaces also attract fly tipping and abandoned vehicles, which not only looks unpleasant but can be dangerous.

The initiative came in response to efforts by Hertfordshire Police to increase the number of NW schemes in Stevenage and was developed on the back of a concept which originated in Barnet Borough Watch and the Metropolitan Police. The Police then approached the NW Community Co-ordinator for Stevenage at the end of 2008 with the aim of launching Stevenage Dog Watch in 2009. A grant of £2,500 was received from the Safer Neighbourhood Initiative which covered the start-up costs, the purchase of 1,000 personal alarms, member badges, dog watch contact cards and the member welcome packs.

Organisation

Stevenage Dog Watch is led by Hertfordshire Police, who resource the group's activity. The group is supported by a Sergeant from the Stevenage Safer Neighbourhood Team, a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), the Neighbourhood Watch Community Co-ordinator for Stevenage and the volunteer group co-ordinator who joined in September 2009. The Dog Watch co-ordinator is responsible for the day-to-day management of the group, acting as the main point of contact for members, organising the activities and liaising with the Police. The co-ordinator also attends the Stevenage NW Forum.

An email group has been established through which the PCSO sends out bulletins of local crimes, with any other urgent crime or other matters circulated via email and automated telephone systems. Email is also used to disseminate information about the group more generally, including forthcoming activities. All members receive a welcome pack which contains a list of useful telephone numbers and contacts, as well as the dogwatch contact card which can be kept in a pocket or wallet. The Dog Watch website also acts as a source of information, with incident reports, updates on the group and contact details.

Activities

Although Dog Watch has only been going for a year, it has gone from strength to strength and there are currently 405 members. Although the group is targeted at dog walkers, anyone can join as the emphasis is on encouraging people to be observant and pass on information to the Police and/or the Council. Dog walkers especially are out walking at all times of the day and often in areas that are not so well used by other residents. Members are not asked to put themselves at risk or walk in areas they are not happy to, or walk late at night, nor are they asked to get involved in anything that might lead to confrontation. Instead, they are asked to make a note of anything they may have seen and report it back.

For members who wish to get more involved, dog walks are held on a monthly basis whereby a group of people walk their dogs together and keep a watch on the area. The walks are also a good way of meeting new people and socialising. The walks are organised and attended by the Dog Watch Co-ordinator, together with one of the group's dog mascots. A member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team regularly attends these walks as they are a way for the Police to meet with the public informally.

Both the launch event and the summer carnival were well attended, certainly beyond the expectations of the group. The reason for this was that both events were well organised and publicised and acted more as a community fun day with working Police dogs on show, local animal charity stalls, the RSPCA offering discounted micro-chipping for dogs and welfare advice. There were also dog agility demonstrations, goodie bags supplied by Pets at Home and a local celebrity opened the event. In order to maintain the interest and momentum of the group, another summer carnival is being planned.

The Co-ordinator has recently started puppy-watch which involves taking the other dog mascot into local primary schools and talking to the children about the importance of staying safe, e.g. stranger danger, road safety, reporting broken glass and fly tipping. The Co-ordinator has also been invited by a young member of the group to visit his secondary school and talk at an assembly about community spirit.

Partnership Working

The Dog Watch Co-ordinator has a good working relationship with Hertfordshire Police, who are actively involved in driving the scheme forward and provide significant support. The co-ordinator liaises directly with the Stevenage Safer Neighbourhood Team and PCSOs on a regular basis, feeding back any issues raised by group members and in turn disseminating information from the Police to the group.

The group also receives support from Stevenage Borough Council, in particular the Community Safety Partnership Officer. This has been invaluable to the group when they require certain permission from the Borough Council, for example, securing an area of the park in Stevenage for the Dog Watch carnival and putting up posters. The Council has also supplied the group with the telephone numbers for reporting environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, broken glass and drug paraphernalia.

In addition, Pets at Home has been an important partner from the beginning as they hosted the launch event at the store in Stevenage (free of charge) and supported the subsequent summer carnival.

Impacts

The main aim of the Dog Watch scheme is to create a partnership between the local community, the Police and Stevenage Borough Council. From the Police's point of view, Dog Watch has enabled them to re-engage with the public on an almost daily basis, with the PCSOs being particularly visible. Residents now feel much more comfortable in approaching the Police, including discussing issues they might have previously considered too trivial to bother them with. Members have been active in reporting criminal activity to the Police, including stolen and abandoned vehicles, an arson attack and a man behaving inappropriately near a school. The Police are keen to see how many reports are made by Dog Watch members as currently this level of information is not captured on a consistent basis. Ways to try and capture this are being explored.

The group has been particularly successful in attracting a wide range of members, from children through to elderly residents and from different ethnic and social backgrounds. As such, the group is bringing together people who perhaps would not otherwise have interacted. Involvement in Dog Watch is certainly having a cohesive effect, encouraging people to take an interest in where they live and get involved in policing their own environment. It also promotes healthy living by getting people outdoors and active.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH TRING, HERTFORDSHIRE

Tring has become Hertfordshire's first "Neighbourhood Watch Town", with more than 90% of streets covered and signs declaring its status on entering. Neighbourhood Watch in Tring works with a large network of local partners making it an integral part of the town with real influence to help make Tring a safer place.

Key Learning Points

- Harness and encourage the enthusiasm of Co-ordinators and members, providing them with opportunities to make a difference in the local community.
- Good leadership, enthusiasm and commitment are critical to making NW work.
- It is important to develop relationships with partners and NW members in order to secure their ongoing support and participation, including feedback on NW activities.
- Use a variety of methods to engage residents, from knocking on people's doors and running a stall at a local fair to using the OWL system and Facebook, as this supports wider engagement.

Background

Tring is a small market town within the district of Dacorum in West Hertfordshire. Neighbourhood Watch (NW) has been particularly strong in Tring and now 92% of roads in Tring are covered by schemes, making it the first NW town in Hertfordshire and the second in the country.

On the whole, the area has low levels of crime, but there is a fear of crime. This is partly due to Tring's position on the Thames Valley police border. This has meant that, historically, the area has been policed on a more reactive basis rather than there being a constant police presence. In this way, NW schemes, supported by the Crime Prevention Panels (CPP) and NW Liaison officer, have made an important contribution to real and perceived community safety in the town.

Organisation

The CPP supported the establishment of NW throughout Dacorum and it still operates in Tring, although much of its function has now been taken on by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Given the large scale of the NW network in Tring and the desire to roll out its success, the Dacorum NW Association has been set up to support the strategic and operational development and sustainability of NW across the district. The Association comprises ten "champion" Co-ordinators from across the district and is supported by the NW Liaison Officer and with local authority funding. The Association will be forming four sub-committees: communication; fund raising/sponsorship; Co-ordinator training/ development; and strategic development/research. They aim to increase engagement with young people, using online social networking sites, such as facebook and twitter.

Activities

Recruitment

Each CPP member was allocated a specific area of action which they targeted for recruitment and whose Co-ordinators and residents they supported. Neighbourhood “walk-about”, were used to attract new members and to highlight potential crime risks to local residents. Other outreach activities included attendance at local fairs, events and the local supermarket, where they provided community safety advice and handed out leaflets and stickers. The CPP also organised open days at the Police station and held special events, such as Women Aware Evenings.

One of the challenges for the association is to reach residents in more deprived communities where there is less engagement with the Police. In these areas they are running covert Watches that do not use NW signs.

Communications

Herts Constabulary was the originator of the Online Watch Link (OWL) system. This is an online information exchange system that facilitates communication and exchange of crime reports and prevention information between the Police and NW Co-ordinators and members, which is managed by NW Liaison officers. Of the 841 NW Co-ordinators in Dacorum, 630 receive OWL messages via e-mail and the remainder by phone through the OWL system. In recognition of the contribution that the OWL system makes in delivering better public services, Herts Constabulary received a national e-government award for best e-Government and technology-driven services. The system has since been bought by other police authorities and Herts Constabulary continues to promote the system through delivering presentations to police authorities around the country.

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators can access the Herts Constabulary website which provides a wide range of information related to crime prevention and community safety, with priorities updated on a monthly basis. It also has contact details for the Safer Neighbourhood Policing Teams (PCSOs, beat officers and Crime Prevention Officers) within each ward, as well as timetables and locations of mobile police stations and beat surgeries and guidance on reporting crimes.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is supported through attendance at public meetings which are run by the Police and attended by NW, ASB team, ward councilors and residents. Partners at the meetings discuss local issues and set priorities which are then uploaded onto the Safer Neighbourhood Police Team website and worked towards and reviewed on a monthly basis. There is also NW representation at Dacorum Community Safety Partnership meetings, and going forward the Dacorum Neighbourhood Watch Association aims to increase the presence and influence of NW in this partnership.

Impacts

The most significant impact has been the huge take up of NW in Tring, which now boasts 215 Co-ordinators. One of the Tring street Co-ordinators has 55 out of 60 houses in his street actively supporting NW. The use of the OWL system has further supported engagement, particularly with more diverse groups. Both the police and street Co-ordinators report how their involvement in NW has strengthened their relationship, which contributes to more effective policing and crime prevention. Indeed, Co-ordinators report that people feel safer and more protected, knowing that there is a point of contact in the community available beyond the working hours of the police.

There is a sense of pride amongst local residents that Tring is a NW town and the community spirit that has always characterised the town is as strong as ever, despite the growth in the town's population.

London

EAGLESFIELD PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME, LONDON

Eaglesfield Park Neighbourhood Watch (NW) was created in response to significant problems with anti social behaviour and vandalism in and around the local park. The group has addressed these problems through its vigilance in reporting and through successfully engaging with the Police and the Council to highlight problems and lobby for resources and improvements.

Key Learning Points

- A group will not survive without regular communication with residents. Maintain visibility through communicating using a variety of means. Face to face contact is particularly important e.g. when dropping off newsletters knock and say hello.
- A website is low cost once set up and enables crime messages to be shared quickly via e-alerts. It can also open up communications with neighbouring groups and enable everyone to observe trends beyond NW group boundaries.
- Social events are very important for sustaining interest and building a sense of community. Give people constant encouragement and importantly, thank them. The Eaglesfield Park group runs an annual community event and thank you events for Co-ordinators and stakeholders.
- Be confident in approaching stakeholders and do not be afraid to approach those at a high level. Exploit opportunities to work with local businesses, who may sponsor your newsletter, for example, or lend you facilities for meetings.
- It is very important that the Co-ordinators gel as a team and give out consistent messages. With too many Co-ordinators below them group leaders can be overburdened with people management and managing expectations. It is better to have a smaller team with a narrow set of clearly focused objectives.

Background

The group is located in the Eaglesfield Park area of Greenwich, South East London. It was set up in January 2006 in response to problems with a particular group of young people, who were frequently drinking alcohol, intimidating residents and vandalising play equipment in Eaglesfield Park. Following a particular incident in January 2006 two local residents distributed a leaflet to their neighbours asking for volunteers and since then the group has established itself through word of mouth.

Organisation

The group serves 248 residents and businesses in four streets in close proximity to the park. A married couple lead the group as Principal Co-ordinators and are supported by a team of twelve Co-ordinators, each responsible for communicating with residents on a dedicated 'patch', comprising a number of houses. Membership of the group is free, which is seen as important for attracting new members. However, the group has secured financial and other resources from local businesses to support its work. For example, the tennis club sponsors the newsletter in return for advertising space and the local shop has donated prizes for the annual community event. In addition, the bowls club provides the group with meeting space which is seen as lending more formality and credibility than having meetings in houses.

The group launched a website in June 2009 and those with email can sign up for alerts to notify them when content is updated, which is particularly useful for alerting people quickly to incidents of crime and anti social behaviour. The group is enthusiastic about the potential for the website for developing stronger partnerships with other NW Groups and have recently expanded its remit to cover the whole of the Shooter's Hill Ward. However, they feel it is important to retain the quarterly newsletter and face to face communication in order to maintain contact with those without computers and retain a 'personal' feel.

Activities

The group adopts a 'zero tolerance' approach to anti social behaviour and has addressed it through a variety of means including keeping incident logs and providing them to the Police and Council. The group also founded a local 'problem solving' group led by Greenwich Council which has produced tangible results.

In recognition of the link between anti social behaviour and the lack of youth provision in the area, the group has sought to obtain opportunities for young people to engage in structured diversionary activities. For example, as a result of its discussions with the Council, youth workers were brought into the area as was the Connexions youth bus, which ran a number of summer activities. Although the youth workers found the local 'gang' challenging to engage, the activities were successful to an extent in that they were well attended and enabled the group to start a dialogue with some of the young people.

The group is very vocal in the area and has successfully campaigned for a variety of other improvements and resources including a 'Your Call Counts' fridge magnet which was distributed to residents, community notice boards and anti fly tipping signs for Eaglesfield Park and road safety improvements.

Impacts

Specific impacts have included getting the local youths to help clean up the park and paint over the graffiti, which was seen as a significant achievement. In addition, there was a spot near the park where a group of young people were congregating and intimidating residents who lived nearby. Following discussions of the problem solving group the Council shortened a wall to stop the 'gang' congregating to play football there and the Police installed temporary CCTV. These measures stopped the problem. Whilst the park still experiences problems periodically, on the whole it is much improved (aesthetically and in terms of reduced crime and anti social behaviour) and now a more pleasant environment for the local community to enjoy.

The work of the group has had a definite positive impact on community spirit in the area by providing an opportunity for residents to get to know their neighbours through the annual community event, NW meetings and through face to face contact with the Co-ordinators. Residents and businesses are clearly appreciative of the support system that is now in place and there is now a sense that you are 'not on your own'.

The group has been crucial in developing closer links between the community and the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), and it is felt that there is an enhanced Police presence in the area. There has also been an increase in the level of reporting of incidents of crime and anti social behaviour, with a decline in the apathy that existed prior to the group's existence.

HARLING COURT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, LONDON

The group is operating in a difficult context (anti social behaviour, drug dealing and burglary) in which residents are often hesitant to acknowledge or report problems due to fear of reprisals. The committee is working hard to build relationships with residents, to increase reporting of crime/anti social behaviour and deliver security improvements.

Key Learning Points

- In the context of a culture of fear and apathy it can be challenging to get residents to come together and attend meetings, but this should be encouraged as much as possible. Try to keep meetings relatively informal and positive and provide refreshments for attendees.
- Encourage residents to be vigilant and report all incidents of crime and suspicious activity. Where people fear reprisals reassure them that a support system is in place and let them know that group leaders can contact the Police on their behalf.
- Emphasise to residents the importance of working together and that having a unified voice will have more credibility with both the Police and the Council.
- Seek support from your local authority. Wandsworth Council's Community Safety Division have supported Harling Court Residents Association through attending meetings and plan to bring their community safety 'road show' vehicle to the flats.
- Be aware that it takes time to establish a presence and secure the trust of residents. You may face a number of challenges and barriers and feel that you are making little progress, even though you are. Do not be disheartened when things seem difficult.

Background

Harling Court is a housing block in Wandsworth, South West London comprising 60-70 individual properties. It experiences a number of problems relating to crime and community safety, with one of the most significant relating to anti social behaviour perpetrated by a small group of the block's own residents. The group congregates in communal areas to drink alcohol and frequently harasses and intimidates people, having a significant negative impact on the quality of life of other residents. There have also been issues with drug dealing and using taking place around the block, and several instances of burglary. The Residents Association was formed following the burglary of a vulnerable elderly resident and then one of the (now) committee members. The latter got together with another resident and they contacted Wandsworth Council's Housing Department, who suggested they form a residents association and visited them to advise on setting one up.

Organisation

The group is led by a committee of three consisting of a chair, secretary and treasurer. The committee communicates with Harling Court residents via leaflets and informal discussions. The chair receives a weekly email from Wandsworth Council's Community Safety Division on crime in the Latchmere ward and this is printed and distributed to other residents. The Council has recently installed notice boards at Harling Court and these will now be used to advertise meetings and provide information and contact details for the residents association. Whilst the group incorporates Neighbourhood Watch (NW) activities, crime and community safety is not its sole focus. For example, the group also seeks to improve the block aesthetically and provide a unified voice for raising issues relating to the environment and cleanliness with the Council.

Activities

The group has only been in existence since Spring 2009 and is still establishing its presence and working to build trust with residents. It is operating in a difficult environment in which residents often want to turn a blind eye to problems such as drug dealing because of fear of reprisals, and historically there has been a degree of apathy amongst residents too. A large focus since its inception has been in trying to let all residents know there is a support system in place and to encourage everyone to be vigilant in reporting incidents of crime, anti social behaviour and suspicious activity. The committee emphasise to other residents that they are willing to contact the Police on their behalf if they do not wish to do so themselves.

The group has held a number of meetings at a local community venue to try to get residents together to discuss the problems at Harling Court and identify practical solutions. These have been attended by Latchmere Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team officers, Council representatives and one of the Latchmere ward councilors, with whom the group has established productive working relationships.

Getting residents to attend meetings has been challenging due to the issues identified above. The group tries to encourage attendance by advertising meetings with a leaflet through every door, providing refreshments and keeping the atmosphere informal and the focus positive. To illuminate the difficult and sensitive context in which the group is operating, there have been incidents in the past where residents perceived to be the perpetrators of anti social behaviour have attended meetings whilst drunk and behaved antagonistically towards other residents. The committee has addressed this by making it clear that alcohol is banned from group meetings and that anyone perceived to be intoxicated will not be permitted entry.

The group continues to petition the Council for various security improvements such as closed circuit television (CCTV) and lockable bicycle sheds on each landing. Harling Court is due to receive approximately £4,000 of funding from the Housing Department's Small Improvements Scheme and options for utilising this money have been discussed at the group's meetings. Council representatives attended the group's AGM in December and talked through options for using the funding proposed by attendees, which included lockable car entry gates and a communal area where residents could come together such as a barbeque area or resident allotment.

Impacts

Although relatively new, the committee feels it is now making progress in building relationships with their neighbours and establishing a level of trust. They have encouraged residents to take more pride in Harling Court and report all incidents of crime and anti social behaviour and feel that the level of reporting is starting to improve. Some residents are now becoming more confident in confronting problems such as drug dealing and there have been occasions where residents have spoken to drug dealers loitering in the stair wells and asked them to leave.

The group has established productive working relations with the Latchmere Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team and with the relevant Council personnel within the Housing Department and the Community Safety Division, and the committee feels that with a unified voice they now have more credibility when reporting problems and requesting security improvements.

NORTHWESTTWO RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, LONDON

The group has run a number of successful campaigns and petitions and uses social activities such as quizzes and community events to enable residents to get to know each other and generate funds for the group's work.

Key Learning Points

- Good relations with the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) and local councilors are key. Police support will mean you are better placed to access funding opportunities and councilors can act as an advocate for you within the local authority.
- Aesthetic improvements such as hanging baskets get residents communicating with each other as they create a starting point for informal conversations in the street. Where improvements are installed a small plaque will enable residents to see what you've achieved.
- Door knocking is vital for getting to know residents. If you can build a rapport with residents they will be more likely to inform you of crime and anti social behaviour.
- Utilise a number of means of communication. A community notice board is excellent for establishing a local presence, maintaining contact with people and making a group seem more official.
- Be confident in seeking out opportunities. Apply for funding where it is available and enlist the support of local businesses.

Background

The NorthWestTwo Residents Association is located in the Cricklewood district of North West London, which experiences problems with environmental crime such as fly tipping and graffiti, burglary and anti social behaviour which is often associated with street drinking. The group was launched with a public meeting in September 2007.

Organisation

NorthWestTwo is led by a committee of eight people. It has three open meetings a year at which residents are updated on its activities and achievements. Recruitment of new members is conducted at these meetings, at social events and informally through word of mouth. Decisions about the group's activities and campaigns are made informally between the committee members, enabling the group to respond quickly to emerging issues. The group introduced a subscription for members in March 2009, which is £5 per year or £2 for pensioners and the unwaged.

The group communicates with residents via email, newsletters, community notice boards and a website. In addition, the local newsagent is used as a community hub where residents can pick up a subscription form or drop off their membership subscription, leave messages for the Co-ordinators and donate raffle prizes. The newsagent also holds the key to the community notice boards and the community allotment which the group rents. This is seen as an excellent partnership, with the group having provided hanging baskets with flowers around the shop and in turn the shopkeeper lending the group his support.

Activities

The group has improved the area aesthetically with flower troughs, hanging baskets, tree lighting and planting underneath trees, which they feel encourage people to take pride in the area and talk to each other more. The hanging baskets were funded through a grassroots grant of £5,000 from the North West London Community Organisation, which also supported a community event in Rainbow Park in June 2009. The event had children's games, live music and a raffle and the group was also able to obtain 100 troughs and plants from Brent Council, which committee members and other volunteer showed residents how to plant. The group has also installed two community notice boards, one made by a local resident with the materials paid for through self-generated funds and the other paid for by a grant from Brent Council's Wardworking fund.

Social activities are also seen as important for generating and sustaining interest and events have included pub quizzes, an Easter egg hunt, and the community event in Rainbow Park. The group rents an allotment which is available for all local residents to use. The group will be encouraging young people to get involved with the allotment and have designed a small programme of work which will contribute towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The group has run a number of campaigns and petitions, for example, successfully objecting when a local shop applied for a 24 hour license to sell alcohol. They are also campaigning to make Barnet a controlled drinking zone in order to reduce anti social behaviour associated with alcohol consumption.

The local area is culturally diverse and the group has proactively tried to engage with residents from minority ethnic groups. For example, information on the notice boards and newsletter is translated into Polish and as a result the group has a good number of Polish members. In addition, the group is exploring the idea of holding one of their open meetings in the local mosque.

Partnership Working

NorthWestTwo's campaigns are strengthened through the productive local partnerships they have established with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), a range of Council departments and two ward councillors. They have also developed a relationship with a local charity Cricklewood Homeless Concern, with whom they have formed a strategy group to campaign for a town centre management programme for Cricklewood Broadway, in order to address issues of street drinking and anti social behavior.

Impacts

Residents feel that the group's greatest benefit has been in creating a sense of community spirit. In addition, the group has made the area a much more attractive place to live through its efforts to provide and promote planting, and subsequently the area has won the 'Brent in Bloom' award two years running. Residents also report reduced litter, fly tipping and graffiti. Graffiti in particular has been dramatically reduced as a result of a regular 'walk around' undertaken by one of the committee members who logs every item of graffiti and reports it to the Council Streetcare team. Many residents also report a reduction in anti social behaviour and street drinking. Improving Rainbow Park is also seen as a key success. The group's vigilance in reporting incidents and its work with the Parks department have significantly improved its appearance and reduced the problems with anti social behaviour.

Residents also feel the group has improved communication between residents and the SNT and the Council and brought an enhanced Police presence to the area.

WANDSWORTH COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION, LONDON

Co-ordination of Neighbourhood Watch (NW) activity is one of the core functions of Wandsworth Borough Council's Community Safety Division, which is responsible for establishing new groups and supporting existing ones in their activities. The team's wealth of experience and innovative ideas make them an excellent source of information on how NW potential can be realised.

Key Learning Points

- Regular contact is key to sustaining interest in NW – i.e. between NW Co-ordinators and umbrella groups (in this instance Wandsworth Council), and between NW Co-ordinators and their members.
- Take a holistic approach to NW activity in order to maintain interest. Social events help to build a sense of community and are key to a successful group. In Wandsworth, NW Co-ordinators have been able to access a number of training opportunities.
- Ensure NW is not too negative or solely focused on crime as this can promote fear amongst the vulnerable. It can also be a hindrance in high crime areas where people may be hesitant about joining an anti-crime group due to fear of reprisals.
- When setting up a new group, utilise an existing tenant group/resident association if possible, encouraging this group to incorporate NW activities into their existing programme. This is an excellent way of establishing groups in high crime areas and in sheltered accommodation.
- Make contact with neighbouring NW groups in order to share information and good practice. In Wandsworth the CSOs are seeking to establish a more structured NW, with the intention that Co-ordinators from each ward will meet regularly.

Background

Wandsworth is located in South West London. Whilst it does not experience particularly high crime rates, it borders some boroughs that do and as such there is displacement, particularly if a high profile crime reduction campaign is launched in a neighbouring borough. Wandsworth experiences great inequality and consequently there is diversity in the level and types of crime experienced between different areas. Affluent areas tend to experience different types of crime such as bogus callers targeting the elderly, whereas the more deprived areas experience higher rates of violent crime and drug related problems. Generally speaking, across the borough the most significant problems are burglary, street crime and car crime. NW has long been recognised in Wandsworth as a major contributor to community safety.

Organisation

The Council took over responsibility for co-ordinating NW from the Police in the late 1980s, though it continues to be well supported by the Police. Within the Council's Community Safety Division, two Community Safety Officers (CSOs) spend approximately 50% of their time coordinating NW. They are responsible for establishing new groups, supporting those already in existence and ensuring that the database of group Co-ordinators is kept up to date. Individual groups vary in terms of size and levels of activity. Typically a group might cover 15-30 households but can be as few as 6 and as many as 100.

Activities

The CSOs are responsible for helping to establish new NW groups, providing them with identification badges (following a Criminal Records Bureau check) and NW street signs. The CSOs will then provide the NW group with ongoing support as necessary, for example providing advice, attending meetings or assisting with campaigns for resources. Groups that have been in existence for twelve months are eligible to apply for a security grant from the Council's Technical Services Department, which can be used for improvements such as security lighting and CCTV.

Regular communication is seen as key to sustaining interest in NW. In Wandsworth the NW coordinators receive a quarterly newsletter and a weekly email from the CSOs on crime in their particular area and are encouraged to pass both of these on to the residents in their group. It is also felt that NW should be a positive movement rather than being too negative which can promote fear, particularly amongst the vulnerable, and as such the CSOs are looking at the possibility of putting 'good news' items in the weekly email messages. For example, a newsletter might state that '76 of 85 roads in Latchmere ward had no crime at all this week'

Some NW Co-ordinators (currently 84) have been designated 'Emergency Volunteers', and have participated in training sessions and presentations from organisations including the Counter Terrorist Branch, the London Fire Brigade on fire safety and domestic flooding and the NHS on dealing with flu pandemics. This approach is about building capacity within the community and producing a pool of people who could help out in the event of emergency. It is also seen in the context of making NW more holistic and not solely focused on crime, which is perceived as a good way of sustaining interest (e.g. when crime levels are low) particularly where residents may be hesitant to join a group which is solely focused on combating crime because of fear of reprisals.

Impacts

NW currently covers around 23% of Wandsworth households. Whilst the Community Safety Division recognise there is diversity across groups they feel that they are now building a network of more active groups. Whilst it is not possible to accurately measure the impact of the NW groups on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, burglary figures have fallen and NW is credited with making a valuable contribution.

NW groups have also proven effective in enhancing community spirit and the CSOs very much encourage groups to include a social aspect and make NW something positive for the benefit of the community rather than being solely focused on crime. The introduction of the Emergency Volunteers is regarded as key development and the team is very keen to continue to work with partners to up-skill the community. NW is seen as an excellent avenue for tapping into a potential that has not previously been recognised.

North East

HUNTERS GATE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, USHAW MOOR, COUNTY DURHAM

Hunters Gate Neighbourhood Watch (NW) has developed from a small group of residents of the Hunters Gate Estate into a group that has created a constitution, undertaken village-wide consultation and received a mandate to represent the people of Ushaw Moor. It undertakes significant lobbying for changes to the community and, in doing so, attracts support to ensure that improvements are sustained.

Key Learning Points

- Openly communicate with your neighbours and prioritise the key issues. One of the biggest problems can be consulting the community and then not acting upon the information. Focusing your energies will give you the best chance of instilling change and will simultaneously reduce public apathy and increase interest;
- You need to have a vision, construct a strategy to fulfil the vision, and put the strategy into an action plan. Having documentation is not only professional but gives the group a clear direction;
- The commitment and correct use of the community's skills to ensure individual talent is not wasted or people become disenchanted;
- Develop a close relationship with the Police and Councillors, these are the people who will support you and implement a change in local policy. The management of the scheme should be undertaken solely by residents, although a committee should be developed to include members of the local council and other community stakeholders, and;
- Don't take no for an answer, do your own homework and research and find out what the community wants. Where they have been told their efforts would be fruitless, they have succeeded by being persistent and loud.

Background

Hunters Gate Neighbourhood Watch (NW) covers approximately 300 houses in Ushaw Moor, a former coal mining village approximately 6km west of the city of Durham. The group was formed in 2007 in response to significant levels of youth anti-social behaviour occurring on the estate. At the time the estate was being used as a thoroughfare, particularly by local teenagers (and youths from neighbouring villages), as well as a place to congregate and drink alcohol, causing disruption and vandalism. In 2009, Hunters Gate NW was given a mandate by local residents to cover the whole village and are now in the process of forming Ushaw Moor Village Watch.

Organisation

The group is made up of a Managing Committee (3 people) and a General Committee (approximately 10 people). The Managing Committee prioritises issues to discuss with the General Committee. The priorities discussed are informed using the results of the household survey (see below), as well as information gathered through other methods of community interaction. A strategy and action plan is created for a particular issue and the community is consulted about the proposed actions. All residents are invited to attend quarterly meetings.

Activities

A £10,000 Lottery grant has funded Hunters Gate NW to undertake a village-wide needs analysis survey and develop a Community Plan. The group produces and delivers quarterly newsletters to local households and organisations (such as the cricket club, GP surgery and Post Office) and has a website (www.huntersgate.org).

The main source of anti-social behaviour in the Hunters Gate estate and Ushaw Moor was the underage consumption of alcohol. So when plans for the opening of another alcohol retailer in the village were put forward the group undertook a petition to prevent planning approval. With more than 700 signatures the petition was the largest ever presented to the licensing department of Durham City Council and the application was withdrawn. The Police subsequently tested a series of premises by using teenagers to buy alcohol. As a result of this a retailer in the village had its alcohol license revoked. The group is currently lobbying their MP to increase the £80 fixed penalty notice usually given to retailers selling alcohol to children to a more substantial fine.

Improving the relationship between individuals in the community, increasing interaction and encouraging residents to take active ownership of their village are some of the objectives the group aims to achieve. Events such as summer barbeques, litter picks, organised trick or treating, and tree/bulb planting have been well supported and have encouraged communication between members of the local community as well as improving the physical surroundings.

The group is developing a Community Garden to instill further a sense of community pride. Vacant land is in the process of being leased by the village church, and after lobbying the local MP the group has been allocated three allotment plots adjacent to the church building. The concept is that the spaces can be created and maintained by villagers for the benefit of the village, with the flowers and vegetables from the allotments distributed within the community to those in need.

Partnership Working

The group works in partnership with a number of local organisations and individuals depending on the issue being addressed. These can include their MP, the Probation Service, Community Wardens, Highways Agency, the local school as well as community groups. The secretary of the NW group sits on the board of the Mid Durham Rural West Area Action Partnership, which ensures that the concerns and aspirations of residents are represented.

Undoubtedly the most important of these partnerships is the relationship held with the Police. The group has a strong rapport with their Police Sergeant and Community Liaison Officer and actively supports the Police in seeking to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in Ushaw Moor. As part of this the group has joint-funded the purchase of bicycles and cycle equipment for two Police Community Support Officers.

Impacts

During the initial stages of the group's formation some members of the community expressed scepticism, but it has since demonstrated its effectiveness in tackling anti-social behaviour. This has increased the confidence of both the group members and the wider community, and has consequently stimulated action against other priority issues identified by local residents, such as vandalism and environmental improvements. Investments have been made across the community as a consequence of the lobbying work undertaken by the group. The organisation is now providing the community with a loud and coherent voice. Additionally, the presence and reputation of the scheme is thought to have discouraged rogue traders and bogus callers from operating in the area.

JUNIOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, STOCKTON-ON-TEES

The Junior Neighbourhood Watch (JNW) scheme consists of five individual groups, representing five primary schools in the Stockton-on-Tees area. Approximately 20 pupils from each school attend their JNW group, during which they can participate in creative activities based around citizenship, personal safety, and the impacts of crime.

Key Learning Points

- Let the children decide what to do. Whilst guidance from adults is needed, this element is essential to ensure buy-in from the children and stimulate their interest.
- Funding will define the scale of the JNW. The format of this project has proved to be extremely popular, yet the lack of funding (especially for a paid project manager) has reduced the project's capacity significantly with it not currently able to fulfil the demand.
- Approaching the school correctly is crucial. Once one school is on board, the competitive nature of surrounding schools will likely generate additional interest, making access to subsequent schools easier.
- A professional approach is integral to maintaining interest from participants, schools and partners. The JNW in its current form is heavily dependent on a part-time volunteer without whom the continuation of the project would be extremely hindered.
- When starting a group, seek advice on the processes required to set up such an organisation (legalities, risk assessments etc.).

Background

The project stemmed from the Police and local Neighbourhood Watch (NW) groups desire to engage with young children to encourage and assist them in reporting anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in their community. The JNW was piloted in 2007 at a local primary school. The participating children initially learnt about what they should do if they see any suspicious or antisocial behaviour near school premises. During the school holiday period the school building was subjected to a higher risk of vandalism (being centrally located in the community) and the JNW used the theme of protecting the school building to arouse the interest of the children.

Organisation

The JNW has since expanded to include five primary schools and is co-ordinated by a project manager on a voluntary basis. Each school has an appointed staff member to oversee activities which generally take place once every two weeks for one hour, although some activities have taken place on a weekend. The five individual schools give the JNW a geographical spread across central Stockton-on-Tees and the surrounding areas of Ingleby Barwick, Lowfields and Thornaby and include children from a range of educational, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Interest in joining the group is generated by the project manager supported by a Police Liaison Officer. Together they conduct a school assembly in which they promote the concept and types of activities on offer. Each school is then asked to select a group from those interested, thereby forming its JNW group. Once the school has selected its representatives for their JNW, the first activity is to choose a colour for their Watch uniform and design their own logo. The uniform (provided free of charge) is a physical symbol of the new group and helps to generate a sense of community amongst the children. The groups have used their logos on stationery items which they have then been able to sell to parents and the community to generate additional funds.

Activities

The activities of each of the JNW groups take place both in the classroom and within the community. This provides the sessions with a degree of informality which appeals to the young participants. For example, one session themed around cruelty to wildlife took place at a local wildlife sanctuary, giving the children a tour of the grounds and space for the set activity. Activities have also included visits to the Police heli-pad and Police stables. These visits allow the children to participate in events and meet members of the emergency services in an environment that delivers the information in a format that is new and exciting for the children. Furthermore, knowledge acquired is not restricted to the members of each JNW, with information regularly communicated via class and school presentations. The groups also undertake home-based tasks, applying knowledge in their home environment and passing on knowledge to friends and family members. One fire safety session requires the individuals, in conjunction with their parents, to design an escape plan for their home in case of fire, using the advice and information received from the local Fire and Rescue services.

Where possible some activities allow for the different school Watches to undertake activities jointly, enabling children from a variety of backgrounds who may otherwise not meet to work together, reflecting the community cohesion that the project wishes to promote outside of the classroom.

Partnership Working

The project is well supported across a number of Cleveland Police departments as well as other community services/organisations. The majority of partnership working is through the delivery of the JNW's annual activities plan as well as input into specific events throughout the year. Previously, the Fire Service has conducted sessions on fire and firework safety, the RNLI/local lifeguards have provided beach and coastal safety sessions and the Dog, Mounted Police and Air Support units of Cleveland Police also organising visits and talks for the groups.

Impacts

A high level of interest has been generated from staff and children within engaged schools. The main objective of the JNW scheme is to increase personal and community safety by engaging children during their early development. By instilling a positive message about caring for the community it is hoped the next generation will have a greater awareness and desire to keep their community safe.

The use of emergency service personnel as part of the activities provides the children with positive role models. Consequently, as well as making the children more vigilant against crime and reducing the risk that they become the victims of crime the JNW also seeks to reduce the risk that the children become perpetrators of crime.

Over the course of the year the actions undertaken by the JNW equates on average to an extra 18 hours lesson time and educates the members on themes that are not thoroughly covered in the national curriculum and promotes positive messages to the school and local community. The structure of the JNW allows for a variety of pupils to mix and communicate in a group setting over which they have input and ownership.

LONDONDERRY ROAD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, STOCKTON-ON-TEES

The Londonderry Road Watch is a street-based watch that undertakes activities in partnership with neighbouring street watches and key agencies from the community to provide a united front against criminal activity and anti-social behaviour to prevent its proliferation in the area. By developing partnerships the watch has embedded itself within the local community as an effective entity in ensuring the safety of the community.

Key Learning Points

- With partners, the Watch has provided a united front against the issues facing the area. Tackling issues in partnership, whether with the Police, resident associations, housing associations or council departments, creates a strong pressure group that can instigate change.
- The success of the group is down to the commitment of like minded individuals. Communication across the community is therefore important to include all those affected to gather support for a cause. In Londonderry Road this has been most effective through door-step deliveries of newsletters and resources, particularly as this provides the opportunity for the Co-ordinator to maintain personal links.
- The long-term existence of the group is also key to its success. The continuous presence of the group and its work has enabled the Watch to become established and accepted by both the residents and stakeholders in the local community, strengthening the Watch's ability to tackle problems in the future.

Background

Londonderry Road is situated in the Newtown ward approximately 1km to the North West of central Stockton-on-Tees. Neighbourhood Watch (NW) has been operating in the Newtown area for approximately 22 years. The Co-ordinator of the Londonderry Road Watch has also been involved in the set-up and organisation of many of the other neighbouring Watch groups currently operating in the area.

Londonderry Road NW covers 48 households and is home to families and single people including elderly residents. The area is also ethnically diverse, and is made up of both transient and permanent residents, some of whom have been established in the local community for generations.

Organisation

The Londonderry Road Watch is part of a network of watches which together cover 2,374 residences across the ward. Working in partnership, the network jointly tackles anti-social and criminal issues (drug abuse/selling, burglary, vehicle theft) to prevent the problem spreading to other parts of Stockton-on-Tees.

The Londonderry Road Watch has a single Co-ordinator who formally meets with the neighbouring Watch Co-ordinators on a quarterly basis, to which the Police and other key local agencies are invited. Subsequently, the street Coordinators inform those residents unable to attend of any pertinent discussions/developments. The Watch Co-ordinator (who also is the Area Coordinator of Newtown and has been the North East's representative for Neighbourhood Watch) is involved in a number of community associations, resident groups and Boards including: the Central Area Partnership, Stockton Safer Partnership, Stockton Residents and Community Group Association, Catalyst (a third sector body) and the Fair Share Funding Panel. These well established relationships with organisations in the local community enable the Watch to keep in touch with developments across Stockton-on-Tees.

Young people are becoming increasingly involved in the local community and the local NW groups. The concept of engaging young people in NW in Stockton-on-Tees was instigated and developed by the Londonderry Road Co-ordinator, who helped set up the pilot scheme of what would become the Junior Neighbourhood Watch (another good practice case study). Although the involvement of young people in the Londonderry Road Watch is rather informal, the Co-ordinator has been keen to generate interest amongst local children who have assisted with the delivery of newsletters, resources and information to residents across the area.

Activities

One of the most important roles of the Watch is to gather and forward intelligence about anti-social and criminal behaviour to the relevant authorities. This has directly led to the closure of houses in the neighbourhood where drug dealing/use was occurring, with residents recording the details of vehicles which had been visiting a particular address at unsociable periods of the day and night. To reach the same conclusion without the input of the Watch would have required a Police investigation that may have taken months to conduct. Fortunately the actions of the group saved police resources and accelerated the process, with the tenants evicted within six weeks of the problem being identified.

The group has worked hard to solve some of the anti-social behaviour issues which were affecting the area previously and to prevent a reoccurrence. Bike safety packs, door/window locks and alarms, torches and safes masquerading as household objects are all crime prevention resources that have been secured through funding bids and distributed to the local community. Additionally, the group operates a "house sitting" programme whereby residents within the Watch area can inform the Co-ordinator that they are away from the property for a period of time. During this time Watch members will visit the property and make sure the property appears to be inhabited. Members of the Watch are also encouraged to join up to a "Vehicle Watch". This helps the Police to identify cars which may have been stolen, with members inserting Vehicle Watch stickers in their car windows. If the car is seen being driven after midnight, the Police can pull over the vehicle to ensure it is being driven by a named driver.

The Watch Co-ordinator holds contact details for each of the members and is able to inform residents of any suspicious behaviour that may have been seen in the area and warn them to be vigilant. Communication between group members is important to ensure that any untoward behaviour or arising issues can be nipped in the bud.

Partnership Working

The Watch conducts the majority of its activity in partnership with the other NW groups in the Newtown area, sharing crime prevention advice, information and undertaking activities jointly. The Co-ordinators from each of the Newtown Watches meet regularly as part of an Area Watch in conjunction with their Neighbourhood Policing Team. As previously noted, the Co-ordinator of the Londonderry Road Watch has established relationships with numerous stakeholders in the community, including local housing associations. Tri-Star, Tees Valley Housing and Accent Housing, all of whom have significant housing stocks in Newtown.

These relationships ensure that the group is well connected both to the residents and the officers that can support change. Working together, partners have implemented a series of measures that reduce the number of problematic tenants in the community. When new residents arrive, NW volunteers welcome them into the community and inform them of the Watch and its activities/services. This serves as an opportunity to increase interest in the group and inform residents that their neighbours are vigilant against negative behaviour. Conversely, if a problematic resident is encountered the group contacts the owners of the property (whether individuals, housing associations or the local authority) and informs them of their behavior, and this is said to have proved very effective in addressing problems such as drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.

Impacts

During resident consultation undertaken by the Safer Stockton Partnership in 2007 the key Community Safety priorities identified across Stockton-on-Tees were: Anti-social behaviour; Drug related crime; Violent crime; and Criminal damage. Since 2007 the group's actions have contributed towards a reduction of each of these priorities. Whilst the area still has pockets of persistent drug use, the extent of the problem has been significantly reduced since the removal of problematic tenants.

Additionally, a large proportion of the anti-social behaviour from local youths has been eradicated, this has been particularly noticeable following the closure of the retailers which had been selling alcohol to minors. This resulted from the evidence submitted by the group to the Police and eventually led to the revoking of its alcohol license. The intimidating congregation of youths, acts of arson and attacks on firefighters have ceased completely as a result.

SOUTH TYNESIDE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES (STANW), SOUTH TYNESIDE

Some people think that crime is for the Police to deal with and if there are problems in their neighbourhood it's because the Police aren't doing their job. STANW works jointly with the Police, loaning resources and in some instances provide funding, to assist the Police in combating crime.

Key Learning Points

- Use the Police. STANW has a very good relationship with the South Tyneside Area Policing Unit as an organisation as well as with the Community Support Officers. This has not only been of benefit to the group and the community, but also to the Police, with the activities undertaken by the Watch often giving the Police a head start in combating problems.
- The Police can also assist in the set-up of the Association. The Police legal team assisted with the development of STANW's constitution and legal documentation. This allowed the Police to be involved at the start and in doing so their involvement served to "rubber stamp" the Association's purpose and appeal to local Neighbourhood Watch groups.
- Everything they do relies on funding and it's important to do everything you can to present your group as a diverse and professional entity. In the past the group had to compete against other 'charitable' sectors for funding, and have found crime to be one of the lower priorities for the majority of funders. However, as a community group it is important to highlight the impact their work might have for a variety of groups (elderly, young, disabled, BME groups etc)
- Promote everything you do. One of the biggest barriers to getting individuals involved is apathy. Some people will think that they do not need to do anything because others will do it for them. Publicising everything that goes on within the local community will promote NW, generate interest and facilitate action, demonstrating to people that they can make a contribution and that it will have a positive impact.

Background

South Tyneside Association of Neighbourhood Watches (STANW) was set up in the 1980s after a big publicity drive of the scheme at a national level. Two groups from South Shields decided to conduct joint meetings, from which it was suggested by the local police to expand the group meetings to include more groups from the wider area. It has since developed into a forum of representatives from Neighbourhood Watch (NW) groups across South Tyneside district. South Tyneside is approximately 25 square miles with a population of 152,000. STANW was set up over 25 years ago and has been governed by a variety of individuals (voluntarily) since its inception. Its services are accessible to all residents of South Tyneside, regardless of whether they are members of a NW scheme. Crime prevention across the district is managed by the South Tyneside Area Command of Northumbria Police, which splits the district into the three policing sub-districts.

Organisation

The Forum has a chair, vice-chair and treasurer and is made up of representatives from each of 15 localities across the district (up to 4 from each). Some of these groups have their own chair and committee, and some represent a number of smaller NW schemes. Quarterly meetings are held between STANW and the Police to allow information to be exchanged concerning regional policy and local crime statistics. In addition, issues can be raised by attendees and crime prevention resources can be distributed.

The group also produces newsletters and has a website (<http://stanw.netfirms.com/>) which offers information about STANW, advice on setting up a NW group, projects and resources which can be accessed by residents in South Tyneside, news bulletins, and information and contact details for their local partners. The group regularly conducts presentations and disseminates crime prevention resources in schools and at community events and meetings. This promotes their work, encourages participation and raises their community profile, which is extremely important when applying for funding.

Activities

Much of STANW's funding comes from the six Community Area Forums (CAFs) across South Tyneside, with the group making an effort to continuously publicise their current impact (and further potential impacts subject to CAF funding) across the region through presentations to the forums. Additionally STANW has received money from the Local Criminal Justice Board and South Tyneside Council as well as through a local branch of Victim Support. The funding has been used for a number of projects aimed at both crime reduction and crime prevention. The most successful of these has been the CCTV operating systems. The group purchased a number of mobile CCTV cameras that can be loaned to repeat victims across South Tyneside. The cameras are small and can be placed in items such as plants, door bells and clocks, and have been used for evidence gathering and to improve detection and conviction rates, particularly with regard to burglaries, anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Other equipment which has been put to use in the community has been STANW's digital projector. This has been used to project crime prevention information onto the side of buildings and landmarks in parks and town centres where anti-social behaviour and criminal activity is concentrated. Typically, information includes contact numbers and advice warning against drink driving, drink spiking and travelling alone at night. Following the success of these projects, STANW is in the process of applying for funding for three additional projectors to be loaned to each of the three Policing districts.

Following a series of targeted thefts the group funded purse bells which can be attached to handbags and which ring when a purse or wallet is moved. Additional activities have included the creation of "no cold-calling" zones, park improvement events and the funding of equipment for the Police, such as a bicycle and a digital camera.

STANW has built a database of contacts within partner organisations to ensure that the most appropriate individuals are contacted in each case, making for efficient operations.

Partnership Working

Since its inception, STANW has worked in close partnership with the Police. Not only is the group a forum in which the Police can engage with the members of the public at a grassroots level, but they are able to utilise the networks that have been established within STANW to disseminate resources and advice. The Police have supported the group during presentations for funding and community-based events. The visible support offered by the Police has helped the organisation develop from a residential pressure group into a recognised community group.

In turn, STANW assists the Police in any way it can, from loaning electronic equipment to providing the Police with funding for crime-fighting equipment. An example of the two-way relationship can be seen when STANW funded a bicycle and related equipment for a Police Constable, when there were no other resources available. Consequently the PC was much more visible in his patrol area, and enabled him to build a rapport between the Police and local residents. Other examples include loaning digital projectors for events and camera equipment.

In addition, STANW provides regular presentations to the six Community Area Forums of South Tyneside, updating their members about the work they have achieved and are planning to implement, keeping the organisation embedded in the minds of individuals and organisations with the ability to fund community groups.

Impacts

The partnership work of STANW has made more organisations more accessible to the local community. When an issue arises STANW is often able to signpost residents to the correct contact.

One of the biggest benefits of STANW is its ability to access funding not available to the Police but which can assist in crime prevention/detection. This has enabled it to procure CCTV cameras, digital cameras, projectors, purple bells, and cycle equipment and for use across South Tyneside. Had the same resources been funded by the local Watches that constitute STANW the resources would have been restricted to use by each Watch group. These resources have provided evidence on which perpetrators have been arrested, and provided reassurance to victims of crime.

STANW brings together groups that would not otherwise meet, to offer each other support, share ideas and provide resources to tackle crime. One outcome was significant improvement in a park suffering from youth disorder. In partnership with the Police, STANW assisted residents neighbouring the park in setting up their own group to respond to local issues and which has since secured funding for improvements to the park.

North West

CHADDERTON HOME WATCH. OLDHAM

Chadderton Home Watch (HW) creates a sense of community and gives its members a chance to get to know their neighbours. Run primarily through a network of Co-ordinators, it creates a forum for dialogue between various service providers and local residents.

Key Learning Points

- Strong organisational leadership: a good chairman keeps meetings on track but also can foster an atmosphere of respect and credibility with external partners.
- Develop strong relationships with the local Police at all levels.
- Through education, Chadderton HW Co-ordinators and members have a clear understanding of the criminal justice system which has helped all concerned to better appreciate their roles and those of the Police and other partners.
- HW can be an important resource to organisations such as the Police.
- Reach out to your local services and engage with them.
- Encourage members to use their personal and professional networks to benefit the Group.

Background

Chadderton is in Oldham, on the edge of Greater Manchester, with the Neighborhood Policing Team part of Greater Manchester Police. Chadderton has a population of approximately 34,000 people from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds and living in a wide range of dwellings. Although the HW group is aware that its Co-ordinators do not reflect the diversity of Chadderton, the organisation attempts to represent the entire community and stimulate some level of engagement with all members of the community

Although HW has been operating in Chadderton for quite some time, developments over the past 6-7 years have significantly improved its practice and effectiveness, through HW and the local police working together. In May 2003 a new Township Divisional Inspector was appointed, who viewed HW in Chadderton as an under-utilised resource and promoted greater engagement between the Police and HW Co-ordinators. In April 2005 a new Watch Scheme Administrator was appointed by Greater Manchester Police. His motivation and reliability have greatly contributed to the Chadderton HW's success.

Organisation

There is a clear organisational structure with strong lines of communications. Changes in individuals over recent years have shown that the structure can adjust to change and is flexible enough that individual's strengths and contacts can benefit the Group. Chadderton HW currently has 192 Co-ordinators, each of whom interacts with an average of about ten individuals in their particular area. It is accepted that not all Co-ordinators are able to deliver the same amount of engagement with their community.

The Group engages with at least 2,000 members directly or indirectly. One of the strengths of its monthly meeting is strong leadership and chairmanship which creates an atmosphere of respect and honesty.

Activities

In September 2005 the current HW Secretary was elected and put together a programme of invited speakers in order to improve Co-ordinators' knowledge of the wider criminal justice system. These speakers have included judges, probation officers, drug officers, and solicitors. He also organised a series of field trips, including visits to local courts. The Co-ordinators have been able to pass on this knowledge to their members, helping them to support the Police effectively and better understand their role within the criminal justice system.

The Group focuses its actions on obtaining and distributing information. Members are kept informed of bogus callers and scams that may be operating in the area on a regular basis. Specific activities have included:

Supermarkets - The Group set up stalls in local supermarkets. These proved highly successful, in some cases inspiring the setting up of new groups.

Linking - Members attend and share minutes with a neighbouring group in New Moston.

Smartwater - HW Co-ordinators have been trained to apply this product, which links stolen items to their rightful owners and can help in prosecutions.

Reflective Jackets - The Group has purchased a number of these so that when working on outside activities with the Police they have a recognisable presence.

Bogus Callers - The Group has supported several events, held in local community buildings, involving amateur dramatic groups where common scenarios which have resulted in vulnerable people becoming victims of crime are acted out.

Personal Security Items - HW funds have been used to purchase personal alarms, door and window alarms which have been passed on free of charge to elderly and vulnerable people via the Police.

Partnership Working

A mutually beneficial relationship has been built up with the Chadderton Neighbourhood Policing Team (CNPT). This has gone beyond just speaking to Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and involves a free exchange of ideas and challenges between the HW Group and the Police. CNPT and HW have worked together to distribute personal safety devices (personal alarms, bells for purses, etc) and home security devices (electric timers etc.) amongst the community. In addition, at each monthly HW meeting, the Police provide information on crime statistics, primarily explaining trends rather than going into detail. This is appreciated by the Group as it shows the value of any work they are doing but also allows HW to target future activities based on the needs of the community. A partnership has been established with several youth clubs in the area, which has been useful for engaging young people and informing them about the activities of HW.

Impacts

The Police have been able to distribute safety equipment and advice so that it reaches a key target audience. In turn the police can take on board feedback in order to improve their practice. Through their interaction with the community, the Police have seen a decrease in crime in the Chadderton area, helping them to achieve crime reduction targets and resulting in improvements in the quality of life enjoyed by everyone living in Chadderton.

NORTH CUMBRIA BOGEYMAN ACTION TEAM (BAT)

By developing sustainable structures, clear processes and accountability, the North Cumbria BAT scheme has coped with a reduced budget and local restructuring to secure police commitment and become embedded as a means of delivering action against doorstep crime.

Key Learning Points

- The mainstreaming of police-led community safety schemes can ensure they are sustainable and have a solid foundation for delivery over a long period of time, despite issues of restructuring and budget cuts.
- N&HW Groups can inform delivery of community safety information to ensure it reaches the most vulnerable individuals in local communities.
- Links between N&HW members and the Police Community Volunteer Scheme help develop the skills and knowledge of individuals and provide a route for involvement in a wider range of community activities.

Background

Doorstep crime involves manipulating entry into a home in order to steal or otherwise persuade the householder to hand over money. Typically, such criminals may pose as officials, try to sell something or seek payment for doing a job such as garden maintenance, drive resurfacing or roof work. It includes people who persuade householders to part with money for goods and services that they never see or charge extortionate amounts for shoddy goods or services. The Bogeyman Action Team (BAT) scheme has been developed in North Cumbria and Eden to address the issue of doorstep crime by building awareness and resilience, particularly amongst those most at risk of falling victim.

Organisation

The BAT scheme has evolved alongside changes in the way that Cumbria Police supports Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW) Groups. These changes are ongoing as the service undergoes restructuring. Up to March 2009 the BAT scheme was funded through the local Safer and Strong Community Partnership (SSCP), a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership. During that period, all 32 of the area's Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were trained in providing information and raising awareness of doorstep crime. The PCSOs then engaged local N&HW Groups, providing training and support to enable them to implement the scheme.

Since the end of SSCP funding, a reduced budget has seen the BAT scheme integrated with local Neighbourhood Policing structures. One PCSO in each of the seven Neighbourhood Policing teams has direct responsibility for the BAT scheme in their area. The other local PCSOs no longer receive BAT training as a matter of course. The lead PCSO in each area works with N&HW Groups to identify the best means of targeting information. However, training is only provided to those registered with the Police Community Volunteer Scheme, who then go on to be more actively involved in delivering the scheme. As well as maintaining a high standard of delivery through volunteers (and ensuring they are vetted and insured), this arrangement provides a streamlined and sustainable model for the scheme.

Activities

Lead PCSOs engage local community groups and individuals through a variety of means to raise awareness of doorstep crime and measures to address it.

Working closely with local N&HW Groups, the scheme's message is delivered to local residents through group presentations and individual (pre-arranged) face-to-face meetings in their homes.

The BAT scheme also involves training volunteers to deliver locally, providing systems and support to help them do so.

Partnership Working

N&HW Groups and Trading Standards are seen as key partners across the scheme. There is also an aspiration to actively engage partners such as Help the Aged and Social Services in developing and implementing appropriate referral schemes to target the dissemination of information on doorstep crime at those most in need.

The BAT scheme operates at a very local level, on the footprint of the Neighbourhood Policing teams. It is at this local level that partnerships are established, developed and utilised for delivery and because this approach is shaped by individual volunteers and the lead PCSO, these partnerships can look different in each local area.

Impacts

The BAT scheme has raised awareness of doorstep crime, particularly amongst vulnerable groups in North Cumbria. The delivery of information to community groups has empowered them to disseminate key messages to vulnerable individuals in their communities, improving the scheme's reach.

In addition, the Scheme is seen to have successfully impacted on how local residents feel able to influence local decision making and their general satisfaction with the local area (National Indicators 4 and 5).

It is a sustainable scheme with established police support and is embedded in local service structures. North Cumbria has a structure to address the issue of doorstep crime and build the resilience of vulnerable individuals as well as wider communities.

PEEL ESTATE HOME WATCH, WYTHENSHAW

Home Watch can provide the means to bring local residents together around shared concerns, helping to build links between people, increasing community resilience to crime, raising community spirit and taking ownership of public spaces. Openness to partnership working has been a key element in this success.

Key Learning Points

- The process of establishing a N&HW group is important, as it sets the tone for future development. Much of the Group's success is attributed to its early focus on being inclusive and working in partnership.
- Seeing crime prevention and community safety in the context of wider issues affecting quality of life can help engage more people and partners as well as creating greater opportunities to have an impact.
- 'Quick win' projects, such as environmental improvement schemes (woodland clearance and bulb planting) can help build momentum and enthusiasm, getting people actively involved and encouraging them to believe in the Group, themselves and their communities. They also offer a practical context to engage partners, creating a sense of shared achievement that benefits relationships.
- Communication is a key to maintaining momentum and ensuring inclusive approaches. By distributing meeting notes throughout the estate, everyone can know what is happening and have the opportunity to contribute.
- Identify key local people who can contribute in a positive way and give them an appropriate channel to do so. This should harness their enthusiasm and utilise their skills.

Background

Peel Estate consists of 306 privately owned homes located in the South Manchester suburb of Wythenshawe. The estate was built to re-house families following Manchester's regeneration; the 1960s design is based on shared frontages and all homes have garages and front and back gardens.

Wooded areas bordering the estate have provided a congregation point for young people who are often involved in drinking, drugs and anti-social behavior. Such areas have afforded privacy from any passing Police vehicles, and the design of the estate (one road in but many pathways out) means that escape from Police coming onto the estate is easily effected.

The estate suffered a high rate of burglary and anti-social behavior, which led a number of residents to establish a new Home Watch (HW) scheme that built upon some existing resources (Co-ordinators from Neighbourhood Watch schemes that were no longer active) and sought to effect positive change.

Organisation

Upon inception, the Group contacted the South Manchester N&HW co-ordinator, who outlined key first steps such as hiring a local venue, inviting local residents, discussing issues and priorities, establishing a constitution and notifying local councilors. The support provided at this stage helped embed an approach that attributes a high value to relationship building and partnerships. This was cemented through the experience of working with, and obtaining resources from, a range of local agencies.

Peel Estate Home Watch (PEHW) has two leaders (the Chairman and his Deputy), supported by a dozen or so Co-ordinators who have links with each other, the Police and individuals on their 'patch'. The Group's constitution allows it to obtain and manage funds in relation to its objectives and the established list of priorities. The constitution also embeds key aspirations to raise community spirit and engage in partnerships to deliver its objectives.

Activities

Plans for a significant alley gating scheme have been established with the support of local residents and the Police. This would manage the flow of footfall on the estate with the aim of reducing burglaries and drug dealing.

The Group has delivered a range of environmental improvements including a mass bulb planting exercise and tree clearance. There are plans to introduce planters and hanging baskets further enhancing the environment and building residents' ownership (they have already agreed to undertake maintenance of a public green space, where volunteers will cut the grass in summer). Links to the local Youth Offending Team have led to young people working with the Group's volunteers on several environmental initiatives. This is an ongoing relationship, with work planned throughout the year, aiming beyond the work itself to develop cross-generational relationships that will benefit the estate.

The local Co-ordinators provide a means of cascading information through the estate, a system that has been used to forewarn residents about the presence of suspected criminals in the proximity of their properties. This 'early warning system' has resulted in at least one arrest and several incidents where criminals have been scared off, adding value by increasing the levels of interest that neighbours take in each other and helping to build local community awareness of, and resilience to, crime. Practical measures to reduce the risk of burglary are promoted, such as securing utility boxes (used as an access point by burglars), parking in garages rather than on the street and opening and closing neighbours' curtains when they are away.

Local incidents of 'cowboy' tradesmen or criminals posing as doorstep salesmen have been highlighted through meetings and via word of mouth through the Co-ordinators. The Group's response has not only been to make residents more aware and resilient, but to establish a list of local reputable tradesmen to act as a first point of contact. This links to the Group's desire to utilise the skills and knowledge of local residents as much as possible, as illustrated by the voluntary contribution of specialist skills by residents towards a range of schemes, from building a website to taking on maintenance of local public green spaces.

Co-ordinators' local knowledge enables them to identify and engage particularly vulnerable people in their areas, such as those likely to be targeted by conmen. As a result, vulnerable residents have been provided with alarms and safety advice and targeted for support and information on a range of issues. The experience of recent snow, and its impact on local people, has motivated the Group to establish a system for the storage and application of salt for footpaths. This scheme is being designed to focus particularly on routes required by the elderly and most vulnerable.

Partnership Working

The Group's aspiration to work in partnership with others is highlighted in its constitution and has been a key element of the approach to date. Key contacts, such as local councillors and the Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW) Support Officer, have helped link the Group with Housing Associations, Regeneration Partnerships and public service providers. Partnerships have also been established with the local school and community groups through working together on specific areas of shared concern, such as hotspots for anti-social behavior and vandalism. Productive local partnerships have brought additional support and resources, enabling the Group's ideas to be realised through practical schemes that have established momentum, enhanced volunteers' experience and built commitment from a wide range of local stakeholders.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are in regular contact with the Group. Through their relationship with the Police, the Chairman and Vice Chairman have become networked with other community groups in Greater Manchester. This has enabled them to learn from good practice, gain new ideas and knowledge of additional funding and support.

Good communications are seen as vital and partners have helped fund the distribution of minutes to all houses on the estate. These also go out to the wide range of groups that are current or potential partners. This has helped to identify shared areas of concern and highlighted where partnership working might be most useful. As a result, the local Primary School and a Housing Association from a neighbouring estate have been positively engaged in separate environmental improvement schemes.

Impacts

Peel Estate Home Watch has built the sense of community locally. One local resident interviewed stated that the sense of community is greater than at any time in his experience over the last 30 years. People feel reassured that they are not 'on their own' and are actively involved in looking out for each other. The Group has provided the opportunity to bring together local residents who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know each other, addressing issues of isolation and making the area more resilient to criminal threats.

The level of crime (particularly burglaries in the run up to Christmas) is seen to have fallen significantly and the estate's profile has been raised to the extent that more resources are being earmarked for local use. Partners' support for activities is strong and continues to grow.

Several local residents have linked the Group's activities to increasing the value of their properties.

ST PETER'S (TAMESIDE) HOME WATCH, GREATER MANCHESTER

Through local knowledge and by building up a long term relationship with the community, Tameside Home Watch has been able to work with and support other local organizations in improving the quality of life for all residents.

Key Learning Points

- The move away from a strict definition of who is a 'member' of the Home Watch and who is not, created a more inclusive approach which has helped the group to thrive.
- Through partnership work St Peter's Home Watch has been able to engage traditionally hard to reach groups, including young people and BME populations.
- The Neighborhood Policing team has clearly recognised the assets that the Home Watch has brought to their partnership. This positive relationship has increased the confidence and effectiveness of the Home Watch.

Background

St Peter's is a predominantly working class area, with a population of just over 10,000. According to the 2001 Census, around 20% of the population are Asian/British Asian (mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi) and since then this proportion is believed to have risen. Approximately three years ago Greater Manchester Police (GMP) introduced Neighborhood Policing teams. Tameside HW used this as an opportunity to shift its focus and re-brand its message, with an emphasis on partnership working and inclusion. The focus has become less on 'Home' and more on 'community'/'neighborhoods'. In the St Peter's ward, a Community Beat Manager and Asian Liaison Officer came into post 18 months ago with the responsibility of linking Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the community. He viewed HW as a valuable asset for the Neighbourhood Policing Team, but recognised that the local group was at risk of breaking down and losing momentum. At this point, St Peter's HW became more 'Police-led', but with strong levels of community involvement.

Organisation

St Peter's is one of several hundred Home Watch Groups in Tameside. From a neighborhood policing perspective, St Peter's is combined with the Holy Trinity Ward and these two areas are served by two Community Beat Managers and three PCSOs.

Activities

St Peter's HW tries to respond to crime incidents and support crime prevention measures. This has included direct youth engagement, engagement around 'respect and self respect' and increasing communication about crime prevention activities taking place on a community level. Local Councilors who are also HW Co-ordinators help create a virtuous 'communication loop' from the HW to policy makers, feeding the outcomes back to the local group.

Because of its strong networks and inclusive approach, the Group has been able to act as a gatekeeper for other organisations coming into the area for the first time. For example, this is said to have been greatly beneficial to its work as part of the PACT (Partners And Communities Together) Network in Tameside. The HW Group has been able to offer support and essential local knowledge, making the efforts of these organisations more effective and thereby directly and indirectly reducing crime and the perceptions of crime in the area.

The HW group has assisted the Police in surveying the population and by visiting victims of crime to give immediate support and advice. The group has links to the “Pub Watch” network particularly in relation to residents’ complaints, working closely with both licensees and the Licensing Officer to resolve disputes.

St Peter’s HW has used ‘Battle of the Bands’ competitions, festival events, engagement with local youth clubs, and work in schools to distribute a crime prevention message to young people. This has raised awareness of Home Watch and reinforced information for young people to stay safe and avoid either becoming victims of crime or becoming involved in crime directly.

Partnership Working

St Peter’s HW has worked in partnership with a number of different organisations including: Residents Associations, Third Sector networks, Tameside Patrollers (Tameside Council), St Peter’s Partnership (an independent charity) and the PACT network (Partners and Communities Together). As a member of PACT, the group is able to raise awareness of issues arising in the area and once these have been brought to the attention of PACT, they must be actioned within 6 weeks.

St Peter’s HW has used these networks to great effect to distribute crime reduction and safety information to a high proportion of residents, thereby engaging them in efforts to reduce crime and make residents feel more secure.

Partnership work has helped in respect of diversity and inclusivity. In particular, although the Asian community has shown resistance to joining or setting up HW Groups, some elements now actively participate. For example, the local Mosque operates a Tannoy System in 250 homes for religious purposes, but this is now also used to send out key Crime Reduction and Safety information and to spread knowledge about current dangers (bogus callers, active criminals in the area, or scams targeting vulnerable people). These messages are also being translated into relevant languages to reach individuals whose understanding of English is limited.

Impacts

Through partnership working, St. Peter’s HW has been able to engage with a significant proportion of the local population, including significant numbers of BME residents. This has enabled HW to raise awareness of policing initiatives, increase Police presence and improve relations between the Police and local community.

South East

WOLDINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, SURREY

Woldingham is an established and well-defined community with a strong sense of identity and purpose. As such it has clear views about the standards of service it requires from the Police and local authority. Through strong leadership, effective organisation and positive engagement with its partners, the Group has been able to influence policy and service delivery in ways that have brought significant benefits to residents.

Key Learning Points

- Arouse commitment and passion amongst local residents. This will demonstrate to a variety of organisations the extent and depth of feeling in respect of issues of concern and bring forward volunteers to support the operation of the Group.
- Take the national NW guidelines and, if needs be, adapt them to local circumstances. Flexibility is key to ensuring that a NW scheme works for the people it is intending to benefit.
- Identify a leader with the skills, dedication and time required to ensure a NW scheme operates effectively.
- Establish a positive working relationship with the Police. A relationship built on mutual respect and understanding is more likely to deliver positive results than one where both sides are at loggerheads.

Background

Woldingham is an affluent village in a semi-rural location, in Tandridge, Surrey, covering 800 houses over approximately 110 square miles. It comprises mainly large houses set well back from the street in fairly long roads and with no street lighting. Its residents therefore feel rather vulnerable to burglary/theft, cold callers and rogue traders.

Over the past 10 years or so, there had been a number of suggestions that there would be merit in establishing a Neighbourhood and Home Watch (NW) scheme, but there was insufficient interest to get anything going. However, in 2004, residents began to voice concerns about rising levels of crime and their overall security. These concerns were subsequently discussed at meetings of the main village organisations (the newly formed Woldingham Parish Council and the Woldingham Association, the residents association) as well as represented in articles/letters in the parish magazine.

From these discussions, two proposals were put forward: for the area to have its own Police Community Support Officer (PCSO); and to establish a NW scheme. In respect of the latter, Woldingham's present Group Co-ordinator, offered to take the lead on setting up a scheme, having been involved in a number of projects within the local community previously. As a first step a village meeting was called and a total of 170 households were represented. The Co-ordinator gave a presentation on how the scheme might operate, based on national NW guidelines, and there were contributions from a Surrey NW representative and the Police. It was apparent from this meeting that there was a 'natural core' of about 15 enthusiasts, all of whom were active in village life.

Organisation

Co-ordinators were recruited for each road in the village with the intention that they would recruit members from amongst their neighbours and thereafter provide a contact point through which residents could raise issues as well as a conduit through which the Group Co-ordinator could cascade reports to those not on email via door-to-door distribution. It was estimated that about 40 volunteers would be needed to cover the whole village, with each person covering an average of 20 houses each.

Interestingly, the approach adopted runs counter to national guidelines, which suggest that each Road Co-ordinator ought to have a direct relationship with the Police. However, residents were clear that the model adopted is the one that better suited their needs, in having a single Group Co-ordinator representing village-wide interests, supported by a network of more local Co-ordinators. This arrangement was considered to be more efficient and has the blessing of the local Police. Each of the Road Co-ordinators was given a standard letter of introduction as a tool for recruiting their neighbours as members and to obtain their email addresses (these are not held centrally, just by the Road Co-ordinator). Those without ready access to email were offered a hard copy of the weekly report. New residents are approached once the Road Co-ordinators/PCSO have learnt of their arrival.

Activities

Spreading the NW Message

The Group's biggest initiative related to NW signs. The size and layout of the village does not lend itself to road signs here, there and everywhere. After discussions with the planning authorities and the parish council, signs were installed at the entrance to the village and then at strategic points of high visibility, funded by the Parish Council and the Woldingham Association. These were then supplemented by gate post signs (locally sourced and designed) that residents could purchase at a cost of £5 each. In total about 300 were sold, providing effective reinforcement of the NW message and generating income from which other activities could be funded.

No Cold Calling

The establishment of a No Cold Calling Zone was initiated by the Group Co-ordinator, with the endorsement of the Parish Council and an application was prepared by the local PCSO and submitted to Trading Standards which confirmed that it met the criteria and could proceed. Discussions were held at a series of residents meetings and as a result funding was provided by the Parish Council, the Woldingham Association and the police to cover the cost of printing and signs. Packs were put together containing a letter explaining the scheme and how it would work, plus relevant telephone numbers, Trading Standards information and a 'No Cold Calling' door sticker. These were delivered to every house in the village by the Road Co-ordinators. As well as being a worthwhile exercise in its own right, it is thought that this demonstrated the practical value of NW to residents.

Keeping Residents Informed

All residents are provided with weekly reports, which include material supplied by the Village's PCSO, Caterham Police Station, Countryside Watch and, on occasions, from Trading Standards. The Group Co-ordinator undertakes some editing/formatting and each Road Co-ordinator is also free to tailor the report to very local interests (either removing information considered irrelevant or adding additional information specific to the local area). As well as covering reported crimes, these reports highlight potential crimes such as email scams, cold calling and briefings on Police initiatives. However, the content has to be crime/security-related and must not be used as a general village notice board. The approach taken is regarded as straightforward and not especially demanding of anyone's time. As well as maintaining a regular flow of information through weekly reports, there is an article in the monthly Parish Magazine (which includes contact details for the Group Co-ordinator, PCSO and local Police station).

The residents made it clear that e mail was the preferred method of communication (and covers approximately 85% of the village). Of course, it also has the benefits of offering a quick and no cost means of disseminating information.

Partnership Working

There is a close and mutually advantageous relationship between the NW Co-ordinator and the local PCSO, with each supporting the work of the other and benefiting accordingly. It should be noted that separate to the NW scheme residents agreed to part-fund their own PCSO (to supplement the service they would otherwise have received via the Police). This means that for the past 4½ years the village has had a dedicated PCSO who knows the area and its residents and provides a visible deterrent. When the PCSO is on leave, cover is provided.

Impacts

Crime is reported to be down by about 1/3 over the 5 years since the NW scheme was established, bucking the trend within the local police force area. The NW scheme is attributed with having:

- Reduced crime;
- Eased the fear of crime;
- Increased individual security;
- Heightened vigilance;
- Cultivated a closer working relationship with the Police;
- Boosted the number of calls to the Police and Trading Standards;
- Led to 2 current investigations relating to cold callers/rogue traders in the past year;
- Persuaded the Council to install CCTV in the car park of the local station;
- Assisted the re-establishment of Tandridge's Crime Prevention Panel; and
- Promoted a stronger sense of community.

The NW Group does not presume to take all the credit, acknowledging the substantial contributions made by their PCSO and the local police team.

South West

BERRYFIELDS ESTATE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, CORNWALL

Berryfields Estate Neighbourhood Watch (NW) is working to address community safety issues, to improve residents' quality of life and encourage a greater sense of community spirit. The group provides a vital communication link between residents and the Police and local authority, which has served to re-establish a level of trust and confidence that had previously been lost.

Key Learning Points

- Where residents feel let down and distrust the Police and Council, there is a role for an independent third party (in this case DaCCWA) to engage with residents.
- From a Police perspective, having day to day contact with the group and other residents greatly facilitates addressing local concerns and being able to deliver a rapid response approach on the estate.
- In an emergency situation, the ability of investigating officers to access established channels of communication with residents can be vital.

Background

Berryfields Estate is a 1960s development of around 320 social housing dwellings. The estate is tucked away, up the hill from the centre of Bodmin, which makes it feel isolated. As there is no through traffic, only people accessing the estate go there which no doubt contributes to negative perceptions of the estate amongst non-residents. Historically, although actual crime levels were relatively low it was considered a 'no go area'.

Berryfields Estate NW Group started in 2005 as a result of engagement with residents by Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA) and the local Force Active Communities Co-ordinator. DaCCWA was invited by the Police to engage with residents as their own previous attempts were hindered by a lack of trust and confidence in the Police and the local authority. This was a legacy of previous failed attempts to evict a number of families who were key perpetrators of the criminal activity and anti social behaviour (ASB) on the estate. Residents who had trusted these service providers ultimately lost faith when, at the last minute, a key family was not removed from the estate. Although the Police and a Housing Officer remained active in the area, links with residents were severely curtailed. DaCCWA hosted a number of public meetings on the estate that sought to identify exactly what issues were affecting residents and ways of responding to these in a drive to restore confidence in the Police and Council. The result of these meetings was the establishment of Berryfields Estate NW Group.

Activities

As there were still a number of problem families residing on the estate their removal was prioritised and the process for securing their evictions were started with the residents and Police working together. The Police provided extensive witness protection to residents and the ultimately successful evictions have gone some way towards the Police regaining residents' trust. Having addressed many of the longer term issues on the estate the Police now take a rapid response approach to addressing issues as they are identified by residents to sustain trust in addition to reducing crime.

In relation to environmental improvements, visual audits are regularly undertaken by the Street Ranger (an environmental improvement officer), residents and other service providers which are used to record issues such as rubbish and graffiti. This has been very successful and its impact clearly evidenced by a reduction in fly tipping and general cleanliness of the streets and garages within the estate.

There have been a number of other activities which have served to improve community spirit, such as the youth boxing project organised by the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), carol singing at Christmas and the quarterly NW newsletter. There are plans to hold an estate street party, set up a buddy scheme for single parents moving into the estate and establish a Junior Street Rangers group.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is a fundamental component of the operation of the group, particularly its relationship with the local PCSO/other Police officers and the Council's Housing Officer. Although there is good partnership working and awareness of the local issues among the Police and some Council departments there are still barriers to overcome. For example, there is no engagement with Council planners or regeneration staff which is attributed to the area never being included in any local regeneration or development plans

In addition to establishing the NW group, there is now a Community Action Group with a focus on the wider issues affecting the estate. One of its aims is to engage with a broader range of service providers, such as Council planners or regeneration staff, and as such raise the profile of the area to more effectively address the issues and concerns raised by residents.

Impacts

One of the main impacts has been significantly improved links between the community and their local PCSO/other Police officers and the Council's Housing Officer. For example, on Bonfire night 2009 there was a fatal house fire resulting from the misuse of fireworks. Initially residents were sure they knew who the perpetrator was and there was a real concern that some may seek justice themselves. However as the local PC and PCSO had a good relationship with some of the residents, they were able to establish a channel of communication to residents via members of the NW group. The group were used to pass information on to other residents, particularly in relation to what was happening with the progress of the investigation and the investigating officers were able to get information from residents via the NW group. It is strongly felt that if this situation had occurred prior to the NW group being set up there is no way the Police would have been able to communicate with residents as effectively as they did, which served to support the investigation and stop any residents taking action against the supposed perpetrator (who, it transpired, was innocent).

In relation to actual crime and the incidence of Anti Social Behaviour there has been a reduction particularly the burning of cars, graffiti, and fly tipping. There is consequently a reduced fear of crime.

There has been an increase in the sense of community pride and spirit among residents and in the numbers of residents interested in becoming engaged in local activities.

CHIPPENHAM AND RURAL VILLAGES NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, WILTSHIRE

In recent years Neighbourhood Watch (NW) coverage across Chippenham and the surrounding villages has been significantly increased and new schemes have emerged in areas which have traditionally been difficult for NW to penetrate, such as high crime areas and those which predominantly consist of social housing.

Key Learning Points

- Maintain the visibility of NW to generate interest and make residents feel safer. Provide stickers and apply for street signs. Co-ordinators have identification badges and wear a T-Shirt with both the NW and Wiltshire Police logo.
- It is vital to establish relations with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and maintain regular contact. Umbrella groups should provide new NW Co-ordinators with relevant contact details or introduce them personally if possible.
- Regular communication with NW Coordinators from the umbrella group will ensure they feel included and supported, even if it is only via email. Providing an initial welcome pack helps to make Co-ordinators feel 'part of something'.
- Individual NW groups should be kept relatively small so they are manageable for Co-ordinators.
- An umbrella organisation should provide ideas for activities, but not be prescriptive. Allowing groups to take shape themselves is empowering, encourages a sense of autonomy and allows groups to respond to local needs.

Background

The group's remit is the town of Chippenham in Wiltshire and its surrounding rural villages. Crime rates in Chippenham are average for the county in respect of robbery, burglary, vehicle crime, violent crime and anti social behaviour. The problems that tend to get people interested in NW are burglary and 'mindless' crimes such as vandalism, with many of the residents expressing interest having been victims of crime themselves.

Organisation

The group operates a three tiered structure which is employed across Wiltshire and Swindon. At the bottom tier, the Scheme Co-ordinator (SC) provides a point of contact between the Police and the NW group, typically a dozen or so neighbouring households. At the next level up, the Area Co-ordinator (AC) looks after eight to ten NW groups, acting as a conduit between Police and the SCs. The Community Area Co-ordinator (CAC) is the top tier, leading NW across Chippenham and liaising with strategic level stakeholders. The three tiered system is thought to make communication across the network more effective. For example, the ACs provide an additional point of contact and source of support for the SCs, and may possess greater knowledge of the local context than the CAC.

Activities

Reviving Neighbourhood Watch

NW has existed in Chippenham for more than twenty years. The current CAC took on the role three years ago, having been involved with NW for a number of years. In recognition that a high proportion of the groups were dormant, she immediately commenced work to ensure that the Police NW database was up to date. She worked methodically, completing an area at a time, to establish whether groups were active and obtain the correct contact details for Co-ordinators. Where Co-ordinators had resigned or moved on, the CAC recruited new post holders, firstly canvassing interest amongst the group's existing members and then knocking on doors and talking to people wherever they could be engaged.

Supporting N&HW Groups

New SCs are registered by the CAC with support from the Police. Referrals of new SCs may come from an existing NW Co-ordinator, the Police or an individual member of the public. Following a referral the CAC meets with the interested resident to complete the registration form, provide advice on setting up the group and introduce the local AC and a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) if possible. The CAC maintains close contact until the new Co-ordinator has settled in and is confident handling their 'patch'.

The CAC provides SCs with crime prevention advice and ideas for activities, such as making homes look 'lived in' when people are on holiday, implementing a 'ring around' warning system when an area experiences problems with vandalism and social activities such as Christmas events, which help people to get to know each other and create a sense of community.

The CAC emphasises to SCs that they are free to decide exactly what they do with their group and how active they want to be, which encourages a sense of ownership and autonomy and enables groups to be responsive to particular local issues. Consequently there is diversity in the types and level of NW activity between groups.

Raising the Profile of N&HW

In addition to her activities in supporting NW groups, the CAC has worked to establish a presence and enhanced credibility for NW in Chippenham. For example, since taking on her role she was able to secure an invitation to the Mayor of Chippenham's annual meeting for civic groups and voluntary organisations which NW had not attended previously. In addition, she is keen to involve younger people in NW and has made contact with schools. For example, she ran a N&HW poster competition with prizes in a local primary school and has also given a talk on NW at a local secondary school with the support of a PCSO.

Impacts

Since taking on the role three years ago the CAC has supported the establishment of a more organised and active network of N&HW groups across Chippenham and its rural villages. This has resulted in significantly increased coverage, with around 220 groups now operating – the largest number the area has ever had.

The CAC, in conjunction with the Police, has established N&HW groups in new parts of town, including those experiencing significant problems with drugs. One area is predominantly covered by local authority housing in which it has historically been difficult for N&HW to establish itself. In addition, new groups have been established in outlying villages where there has never been N&HW previously.

Communication between residents and the Police and between residents themselves is much improved, and residents often report feeling safer and more secure as a result of the support system that NW provides. It is also felt that there has been an increase in community spirit and that NW has in many areas moved away from being solely focused on crime. For example, during the recent cold weather many NW Co-ordinators notified the Police about potentially vulnerable members of the community so that PCSOs could call in and check on their welfare.

Burglary in Chippenham decreased over the period October to December 2009 compared with the same period in 2008, and whilst it is not possible to accurately measure the impact of NW on crime reduction, it has had an important role in raising awareness of crime prevention methods.

DEVON AND CORNWALL COMMUNITY WATCH ASSOCIATION

Devon & Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA) provides the structure and support necessary to enable Neighbourhood Watch to make a real difference in terms of reduced crime, reduced fear of crime and improving quality of life for all.

Key Learning Points

- Setting up a Service Level Agreement between DaCCWA and the Police has allowed the group to undertake more focussed activity with the Police. Establishing the SLA was possible because DaCCWA has both an appropriate legal structure and is effectively managed to ensure delivery of agreed services.
- Developing Awards is a great way to promote the work that is done at the local level and in particular for engaging with young people.

Background

The Devon and Cornwall Force covers a 4,000 square mile area with the Association representing a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) membership of around 5,350 schemes. This equates to 156,580 households or about 22% of the area's household population.

The Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA) was established in January 1998 and is a registered Charity. DaCCWA aims to promote good citizenship and greater public participation in the prevention and solution of crime and quality of life issues. This is to be achieved by providing effective links between the Police and Neighbourhood Watch communities and making every effort to ensure NW infrastructure is aligned to local policing structures.

Organisation

The Association is structured along local authority boundaries meaning there are a total of 16 district groups, 1 for Plymouth, 9 for Devon and 6 for Cornwall.

The Current Structure of DaCCWA consists of four levels:

1. **The Strategic Board** – comprising 16 NW representatives from each district, representatives from other Watch Groups (e.g. Boatwatch), Police Officers from each of the 4 Basic Command Units and support officers from the Force Neighbourhood Policing Unit. Key officers of the Board link directly to regional and national groups. It meets quarterly to discuss and determine any strategies, policies or development initiatives across the entire force area.
2. **Basic Command Unit N&HW Committee** – consists of 4 committees, each representing the Basic Command Units (BCU) of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Exeter, Plymouth and Devon. Members include elected District representatives and appropriate Police and partner representatives. Committees meet quarterly to share good practice and discuss any issues or development initiatives across its BCU.
3. **District N&HW Forums** - made of elected NW members from the individual Beat Areas within the district. It is the responsibility of the District Forums to ensure that the district NW schemes are serviced properly. The forums provide the means for local solutions at the local level, ensure members have access to information, and provide NW scheme members with opportunities to be involved locally in decision making and problem solving. The District Forum is also responsible for the election of its District NW Representative to serve on the DaCCWA Board.

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4. **Local Beat Area N&HW Groups** – provide opportunities for meetings for local NW groups to discuss any concerns and identify local solutions. This structure ensures that NW Co-ordinators have access to decision and policy making at all levels and, more importantly, have access and support at all levels as and when appropriate.

Activities

Community Activities

One of the key activities undertaken is promoting NW and its work with Neighbourhood Policing through bi-annual force-wide conferences and at local events. Another has been seeking out funding from the Police, local authority or externally to support the delivery of local and force-wide initiatives.

Localised free training is made available to Co-ordinators. Sessions cover relevant issues including Anti Social Behaviour, Section 17 in relation the welfare of children, Problem Solving [scan, analyse, respond, assess], and conducting domestic security assessments.

The DaCCWA Awards were introduced in 2001, and are given to individuals or groups who have made a significant voluntary contribution to local community initiatives. An annual ceremony is held which brings all the nominees together to celebrate their work. The award categories include: Rural Category; Urban Category; Scheme of the Year; Co-ordinator of the Year; Special Awards; Crimestoppers Young Citizen of the Year Award; and Community Support Award. This year the awards were presented by the Assistant Chief Constable, with a number of other senior officers also in attendance.

Communications

Improving the level of communication between the Police and NW schemes has been one of the main actions addressed. For example, establishing NW Support Offices within police stations, staffed by NW volunteers as part of the Police Volunteer Programme, has improved daily communication. Volunteers provide information and support to local schemes and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. There are currently 19 support offices. This arrangement has also improved the two-way flow of information between the Police and NW members at the local level, which was previously identified as an area of concern by Watch members.

Lets Talk is the community messaging service used in the area to send out alerts and other information. Residents are able to receive these by phone, fax or email. Importantly, given the size of the area covered, residents are able to identify specifically which scheme or schemes they wish to receive information about, such as general NW information or Business Watch.

Partnership Working

DaCCWA works with a wide range of partners across the area, particularly in relation to neighbourhood-specific issues. The key partner they work with is the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, with which they have a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA serves to ensure that both partners are in agreement regarding each other's commitments and expectations in relation to working together. The SLA was helpful in establishing clear and accountable roles and responsibilities between DaCCWA and the Police. This has made working in partnership easier and also allows for the identification and redress of any issues which may arise. Fundamental to this is the implementation of neighbourhood policing across the county and the view that NW schemes are essential to the success of this initiative. The benefits of working together include joined up community consultation and engagement activity to help fight crime and disorder, provide reassurance, reduce fear of crime and improve the quality of life and good neighbourliness within local areas.

Signing an information protocol with the Police has greatly increased the scale of information volunteers have access to. Subject to completing data protection training, this facilitates more efficient distribution of information to scheme members, reducing the burden on Police staff to first remove sensitive information (i.e. a burglary victim's address) as this is done by the volunteer. This is only possible since DaCCWA is a registered organisation and therefore able to sign a protocol. It also reflects the professional approach taken to recruiting, training and managing volunteers.

Impacts

One of the key impacts has been an increased recognition of NW and the individuals and groups who are working in their communities. The Annual Community Awards Scheme began in 2001 with 12 nominations, in 2009 there were 90. Of particular importance is the increase in young people who are involved, representing the increased focus schemes and partners are placing on this group.

Running local conferences has helped increase capacity and facilitates networking across the area. In 2009 11 conferences were held with 600 attendees. Half of these were NW coordinators and half were from the Police. Conferences are themed, focusing on a particular issue or topic such as Partners and Communities Together (PACT) or the Police Volunteer Programme. Conferences offer opportunities for informal learning and networking.

In addition to the information and training offered at conferences localised, free training is available for coordinators in response to need. Sessions cover relevant issues including Anti Social Behaviour, Section 17 in relation the welfare of children, Problem Solving [scan, analyse, respond, assess], and domestic security assessment. Importantly, coordinators who are able to undertake light touch security assessments for their members, in non-hot spot areas, allows the Police to focus on working in hot spot areas by reducing the instance of opportunist crimes.

GOOD SHEPHERD NW UMBRELLA, BRISTOL

The Good Shepherd Umbrella Group covers the six Neighbourhood Watch Groups which surround the Church of the Good Shepherd in Bishopston, Bristol. Although almost on the verge of closing down, due to an over reliance on an individual running the scheme, a reorganisation of its structure and of the roles and responsibilities of Co-ordinators and members has rejuvenated the group highlighting the importance of sharing scheme responsibilities amongst members.

Key Learning Points

- To ensure Co-ordinators are engaged with residents in their patches requires a structure that is not reliant on one or two individuals. This was achieved by agreeing clear roles and responsibilities for Co-ordinators and members.
- Working in partnership is also important, particularly being able to contact and engage with those service providers who operate at the ward or city level.
- Local NW Administrators can help enormously, as has happened in this case, being instrumental in facilitating the clean up activities.

Background

Formed in 1987, initially as Queens Drive Neighbourhood Watch (NW), the Scheme expanded quickly to include adjacent roads surrounding the Church of the Good Shepherd. The group was originally run by a committee and after approximately 10 years included 150 houses. However by 2001 interest in the group had declined. One issue the group faced was that a number of individuals attempted to run the group single-handedly, which due to its size was proving ineffective.

Organisation

In 2005 it was decided that the name Good Shepherd Neighbourhood Watch (GSNW) be adopted to better reflect the wider scope of the area covered and be more inclusive. At this time, when the group was close to being wound up, a previous Co-ordinator rejoined and with the assistance of another resident volunteer they sought to reorganise and rejuvenate the group. The reorganisation focused on clearly delineating and sharing responsibilities amongst Co-ordinators and members, and included agreeing that:

- The Good Shepherd NW would be an “umbrella watch” with a Co-ordinator and Treasurer;
- There would be four Scheme areas, each individually registered with the Police, with their own Co-ordinators who are responsible for recruiting ‘Contact People’ and registering their details with the Police; and
- All four watches would join together for NW meetings, internal newsletters and community events.

At present, the GSNW Group is led by a committee, comprising the Co-ordinator and six Patch Co-ordinators. The structure is designed to value more in-depth engagement with fewer people as Co-ordinators are now more closely engaged with residents in their patches.

Activities

One of the early activities involved Co-ordinators approaching patch members to increase the number of 'contact' people who could disseminate information within a set group of houses. In doing so, the group recognised the need to modernise by embracing email, which has greatly increased their ability to communicate with members. The group also reactivated the collection of a membership fee which served as a good way to recruit new members. A newsletter is now sent out 4 times a year instead of annually and a successful Open Gardens afternoon was held to bring people together.

The reinvigorated group's first specific project was to address the graffiti along local back lanes. Through the support of the local NW Administrator the group engaged with the Bristol Clean and Green Team, who arranged for Royal Sun Alliance volunteers to support the removal or painting over of graffiti on garages and walls. Due to the success of this initiative the group has expanded clean ups into a nearby area and now incorporates the removal of graffiti, fly posters and rubbish. At present there are 11 volunteers who have been trained and given the necessary material for removing graffiti.

Partnership Working

The group has good working relations with the Police. As the group covers three beat areas (and three ward boundaries) there are 3 beat managers with whom they engage on a regular basis. The local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have recently become more engaged and are keen to meet with Co-ordinators in their respective beats.

There are also good working relations with a number of city council services, in particular the Bristol Clean and Green team who have supported a number of clean ups and graffiti removal days. Additional support and guidance is provided by the NW Administrator who is highly valued by the group, as it was the local administrator who brought the group together with the Clean and Green Team.

Impacts

The main impact the group has had since reorganising has been facilitating greater resident interaction and generating enhanced community spirit. This has been brought about through the clean up days, open garden days and street parties. Residents also noted there is an improved awareness of crime prevention, which some consider to have helped reduce the incidence of opportunistic burglary. Overall there is a good level of communication between residents and Co-ordinators, which had declined significantly, with information provided about crime prevention and resident meetings and activities.

In terms of environmental improvements, residents noted the reduced incidence of graffiti as one of the main impacts the group has achieved. After the first successful clean up and graffiti removal day a team of volunteers now deliver a rapid response approach to removing any new graffiti. Clean up days have also been run in adjacent areas. Between 2008-2009, of more than 400 sites cleaned up in the area more than 300 were done with volunteers.

VALLEYS AND VALE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION, STROUD

Valleys and Vale Neighbourhood Watch Association was formed to promote better communication between Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators throughout the Stroud District Council area. This was the first association set up within the county and has since developed strong partnership working with a range of stakeholders.

Key Learning Points

- Good communication is essential to support joined up working and to ensure information is accessible to diverse audiences.
- Recognition of the support the Association could provide to the Police played an important role in facilitating the subsequent scale of its partnership working.
- Due to the rural nature of the area, having the NW Mobile Unit has greatly increased the Association's ability to engage with communities and promote NW in addition to being able to support partnership working at community events.

Background

The Valleys and Vale Neighbourhood Watch Association (VFNWA) operates within the boundary of Stroud District Council, which is mostly rural in nature with large population centres in the towns of Stroud, Stonehouse and Dursley. There are currently a total of 372 schemes covering more than 12,000 households, representing 27% of the district's housing stock.

Organisation

VFNWA was formed in 2000 in response to Co-ordinators' recognised need to formalise both communication between individual schemes and links with the Police and Community Safety Partnership. VFNWA is governed by a committee of 13 elected Co-ordinators from across the area. The committee meets 4 times a year, or when required. VFNWA was the first association to be formally established with a constitution and bank account within the county. Now there are associations in the other districts and a county- wide group whose meeting the VFNWA attends.

Activities

Working with the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership (previously the Community Safety Partnership), VFNWA contributes to the delivery of activities and initiatives in relation to reducing house burglaries, the number of young people involved in crime (as either perpetrator or victim) and the incidence of bogus callers.

Visits to schools are used to introduce Neighbourhood Watch (NW) to young people in Year 6, aged 10, and provide them with advice about how to avoid being the victim of crime. This includes stranger danger sessions, information about preventing mobile phone theft, and postcoding bicycles during cycle proficiency training.

VFNWA facilitates communication across the district through the use of newsletters and Watchword. Watchword, their messaging system, is used to disseminate information across the area, ensuring that Co-ordinators and other recipients are made aware of any issues in a prompt manner. Importantly, Watchword distribution can be tailored to an area meaning that if required a criminal activity can be reported at the village level only or if appropriate disseminated more widely.

The newsletter is produced 4 times a year and is used to give updates on VFNWA activities and other information and tips (e.g. noting the increased incidence of burglars stealing car keys from inside dwellings as a consequence of modern cars being more difficult to steal).

Partnership Working

VVNWA has particularly good links with the Police, the District Council and its Community Safety Team, the County, Town and Parish Councils, and the Fire and Ambulance Services. VVNWA is a member of the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership, the local community safety partnership, where it works with the Police and District Council and reports on its delivery against the partnership's strategy.

From the outset the benefits that VVNWA could provide to the Police and various council services was recognised by the then Community Safety Partnership. For example, VVNWA has a NW Mobile Unit, purchased with financial support from the District Council, which is used to attend various events such as 'Pride in your Neighbourhood'. Given the rural nature of the area this give the association and its partners greater mobility to reach out to communities. The Mobile Unit has been used at around 130 events promoting NW and encouraging the establishment of new schemes, often in conjunction with partner agencies. This has included Stroud District Council's abandoned vehicles department, energy efficiency department, community safety department, Gloucestershire County Council's trading standards, Care and Repair (helping the elderly stay in their own homes), and Care Direct (health and benefits advice for the elderly).

At the local level, the Police and Community Safety Team work with VVNWA and Co-ordinators supporting NW at local events and attending VVNWA meetings as appropriate. As some NW volunteers are also members of the Key Individual Networks (KIN), a non-NW meeting for local people to meet formally to discuss policing priorities, there is regular contact with the Police which helps ensure local policing priorities are informed by local knowledge.

VVNWA also works with the Stroud and District Access Group to support those residents who are impaired / disabled or housebound. This group started in response to the activities of a number of residents, one of whom was a member of NW. Very quickly this group gained recognition and subsequently became the District's Access Group. Due to the cross membership with NW, links with VVNWA were established at an early stage. VVNWA has provided people with security markings on mobility scooters and wheel chairs, produces its newsletter in yellow and black to make it accessible for visually impaired people, and provides its membership 'handbook' on DVD.

Maintaining and improving communication is one of VVNWA's key roles, and communication between Co-ordinators has improved significantly. Co-ordinators and the Police are also keen to put in place a mechanism for small localised groups of coordinators to get together in an informal way with their local Safer Community Team. To this end progress is now being made on the piloting of 'cluster groups' to bring Co-ordinators from adjacent areas together to share knowledge and information.

Impacts

At the strategic level, early recognition of the Association's value meant that it was able to quickly establish partnership working with a range of services, particularly through the use of the NW Mobile Unit. At the local level, via the Key Individual Networks, NW coordinators regularly meet with the Police which helps ensure policing priorities are informed by local knowledge. This has resulted in 50 No Cold Calling zones being set up and reported crime across the district dropped by almost 20% between September – November 2008 and the same period in 2009.

Wales

FLINTSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (FNWA) runs schemes that help people come together and promote a sense of community to support the prevention and fighting of crime as well as reducing the fear of crime.

Key Learning Points

- The Association has grown significantly over the years but this has been a slow process, not rushed, to ensure that it neither diverges from its core function of supporting and expanding Neighbourhood and Home Watch nor takes on new areas of work against which it cannot deliver.
- A key component of FNWA is that staff are not only enthusiastic and dedicated but have the necessary skills and experience, such as project development and management and community engagement. This ensures the robust delivery of services and activities, which in turn has gained and maintained partners' trust and support.
- Working in partnership is essential as it facilitates partners taking a wider view and not operating in isolation and also facilitates networking leading to new delivery partnerships being developed on a project-specific basis.

Background

The Association's roots are in a group of local people making informal contact with Police Officers on the beat. Subsequently, they formed a voluntary group with support provided by a Special Constable. In 1997 a re-launch of the group saw it turn into a more structured voluntary organisation operating as Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (FNWA), which is a registered charity employing several staff.

Organisation

FNWA covers the county of Flintshire with more than 1,700 Street Co-ordinators and 29,000 households. The Association has a Board of Governors, made of active Co-ordinators within 15 areas of the County, who ensure that the work of the FNWA relates to the aims of the organisation, whilst meeting legal requirements.

Being able to effectively communicate is a key aspect of FNWA's work. This is done in a number of ways, including a newsletter, website (www.fnwa.org.uk) and a fleet of vehicles to assist in maintaining and promoting the association's presence in local communities. FNWA also uses the Online Watch Link (OWL) system to disseminate relevant crime alerts and other information to members.

Activities

The core activity of FNWA is running Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW) Schemes to provide support to existing schemes and encourage the growth of new ones. At present, there are a total of 7 schemes across the county which include N&HW, Farm Watch, Caravan Watch, Church Watch, Business Watch, Golf Watch and School Watch.

The Safety & Assurance Service supports an average of 4,000 victims of crime and people who are elderly or vulnerable. .

The Y-factor Programme - Young People was established in 2006 and has engaged many young people in voluntary activities, such as graffiti removal and litter removal projects. Utilising the Y-factor Mobile Unit, a van converted and designed by young people for promoting Y-factor, the programme is virtually self promoting through word of mouth by young people at community events. The aim of the programme is to support young people's recognition for their work in the community, as well as building their skills and self confidence while addressing local issues of concern to the community.

The 50+ Forum Development Project supports older people across Flintshire to allow them to have a strong voice in the community and on the services they receive. This is done through establishing local Forums which in turn are represented at the Advisory Group. Coordinating Forums and the Advisor Group, in addition to engagement with other informal groups across the county, facilitates council services directly engaging with 50+ residents as part of the Older People's Strategy for Wales.

Partnership Working

The level of partnership working is extensive and underpins the work of FNWA. Of particular importance is the work undertaken at strategic level which serves to ensure that all partners are able to look at the wider picture and allows for greater partnership delivery and targeted responses. In this respect, FNWA plays two important roles. The first, and primary role, is that through the various Watch schemes FNWA is able to communicate the ideas and concerns of residents from the neighbourhood level directly to members of the Community Safety Partnership. In turn FNWA is also able to convey information from this strategic level to N&HW members, making for effective two-way communication. The second role relates to delivering services and programmes on the ground, supported by securing funding from the Community Safety Partnership and the Children and Young People's Partnership, establishing an SLA with the Council, and other project related funding, such as from the Welsh Assembly Government. That FNWA and its staff are able to successfully secure these resources indicates they have the necessary skills, such as project development and management, required at this level. FNWA's delivery role has developed over time and is considered by stakeholders to be a particular strong characteristic.

Impacts

In relation to FNWA's core role, one of the most significant impacts has been the increase in active N&HW schemes across the county. In 2001 there were only 472 schemes whereas now there are more than 1,700 working with residents, farmers, schools/young people, and businesses. Another key achievement has been the introduction of OWL, which is highly regarded. Last year a report highlighted that Flintshire, the only county using OWL at the time, was the only county to report a reduction in crime despite an increase of 9.4% across North Wales.

In respect of FNWA's delivery role, the best indication of success is the number of awards won in recognition of its work. Recently the Eco Rangers Groups won the Tidy Wales Award, whilst one of the FNWA's young volunteers won a North Wales Volunteer & Community Justice Award for her DVD film, "Dying to take the call" highlighting to young people the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officer won the Leading Wales Award for Team Leader, whilst one of their sponsored Police Cadets won the Young Leader Award.

West Midlands

FEATHERSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE

Featherstone Neighbourhood Watch (NW) provides local residents with the tools and confidence to self-manage crime prevention in their area. The profile and scope of the scheme has been raised through links made with local groups and associations, who are working together for the benefit and wellbeing of the local community.

Key Learning Points

- Adopt multiple means of communication (meetings, leaflets, attendance at events etc.) in order to both generate and sustain momentum amongst the community.
- Identify and harness the enthusiasm of key figures in the community who are willing to put their head above the parapet and drive NW forward.
- Identify opportunities to link in with local groups, as a way of sharing responsibility and efforts to promote safer and more pleasant neighbourhoods.
- Promote the involvement of young people in NW initiatives and their positive interaction with older people, in order to build intergenerational relations and allay fears around young people and anti social behaviour.
- Raise awareness of crime without increasing the fear of crime, by advising people on appropriate preventative measures and building a sense of community.

Background

The village of Featherstone is located in South Staffordshire and has a population of 3,870. The village is bordered by two major motorways which gives residents a feeling of being somewhat isolated and needing to look after themselves. The village is clearly divided geographically into the old and new neighbourhood. Historically there has been little social interaction between the communities of “old” and “new” Featherstone, but evidence points to a bridging between the two as a result of their involvement in Neighbourhood Watch (NW).

There are 13 NW Schemes in the village, with a collective membership of around 800 people. NW had been operating in the area for a number of years but had lost momentum. However, the introduction of a new street Co-ordinator in May 2009 has helped to reinvigorate the scheme across the village. This started with the Co-ordinator boosting membership in his local watch area, but his presence in different groups within the locality has led to a greater interest in NW across the village. The enthusiasm and commitment of this new Co-ordinator has seen membership and active engagement with the scheme amongst residents grow considerably. A further development has been the inclusion of NW within the *Featherstone Pride* project, a county-wide pilot project on locality working established through the Staffordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA). The project supports local partners and community groups to develop their own approaches to working together to improve quality of life.

Organisation

Each NW Group in Featherstone is supported by the Watch Liaison Officer, who facilitates communication and the exchange of information between Co-ordinators and the Police/other agencies. Each Co-ordinator has a direct link with the local beat officer and the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), and both are aware of NW membership in the village. To date, there has been minimal communication between NW Co-ordinators, with no formalised means of communication and issues around data protection preventing the exchange of personal contact information. This is set to change with the introduction of a Featherstone Co-ordinators Forum run by the Watch Liaison Officer. The Forum will be held every 6 months or so and will ensure greater communication and sharing of practice and intelligence between Co-ordinators and in turn a more integrated approach to crime prevention across Featherstone.

Activities

NW Co-ordinators seek to raise awareness around crime prevention and recruit new members through a range of channels and networks. The new Co-ordinator has attended local events (e.g. tree planting at the local primary school) and presented to a variety of community groups. New members are provided with a NW sticker and community safety information, including contact numbers to receive and report information regarding crime.

Staffordshire Police's Online Watch Link (OWL) system, which is managed by the Watch Liaison Officer, allows members to receive and report crime and community safety issues. Those members who are not on the OWL receive information through voice message and, if it is urgent, a Co-ordinator will hand deliver information. This information is helping to make local residents more aware of security risks and putting in place appropriate safety measures to help prevent crime.

Partnership Working

Featherstone NW works with a diverse range of partners and groups within the village, district and county. This partnership approach has been developed as a result of various factors: at local level through the Neighbourhood Watch's role in the *Featherstone Pride* project and the attitude of the new Co-ordinator; and at a more strategic level, the involvement of the Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Officer, who facilitates linkages with wider initiatives, such as *Not in My Neighbourhood* week. One of the local outcomes has been the Owlettes project, a young persons NW group that arose from work with the local youth club. NW also works closely with the Parish Council with the information exchange helping the council to respond to local issues. The Parish Councillor and new Co-ordinator have attended each others meetings and NW is now going to be discussed as a set agenda item at council meetings.

Impacts

Since the new Co-ordinator took over the operation of the scheme, members report having a greater knowledge and awareness about crime in the area and to feeling safer and better equipped to report crime. One clear example of this was a member who witnessed fly tipping in one of the nearby country lanes. The new Co-ordinator, together with the Watch Liaison Officer provided this person with the necessary support and guidance in preparation for his appearance as a witness in court. The witness reports that prior to his involvement in NW he would probably have turned a blind eye to the offence, but knowing that he had support and having increased awareness and sense of responsibility to act against crime he felt confident about taking action.

There is also a greater sense of people looking out for each other and community spirit, which contributes towards the feeling of security and wellbeing. One of the members stated: *"it's pulled most of the community together and made us aware of what's happening in and around"*. Indeed anecdotal evidence points to a bridging between the "old" and "new" Featherstone communities as a result of them coming together to address common concerns under the NW banner.

For the Parish Council the scheme provides them with invaluable information about issues affecting the local area that the council can look to address. Equally the Police receive intelligence that supports them in doing their job.

LARCHWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, STAFFORD

This group involves residents coming together to maintain and enhance the quality of life on their street, working with the Police and the local authority, through actions such as becoming a no cold calling zone, enhancing the appearance of the street by planting flowers and holding social gatherings to foster a sense of community.

Key Learning Points

- Provide opportunities to socialise as a community outside of the Neighbourhood Watch meetings, as this helps people to feel included and, therefore, safer.
- Involve your local Police Officers and Community Support Officers as they can provide direct practical help and also access to other support and information.
- Identify people willing and able to take on relevant responsibilities. It is particularly important that the Co-ordinator is driven and committed. However, the decision-making needs to be open and democratic.
- Identify what skills are available amongst members of the community and make best use of them.
- Keep it simple; do not over complicate things as people will lose interest.
- Where possible, use emails as a way of providing regular updates and information.

Background

Larchwood is a quiet cul-de-sac of 20 detached houses about three miles south of Stafford. The properties were built at the start of the 1980s and form part of the larger Wildwood estate. Many of the residents are the original purchasers – albeit their families have now grown and moved on. As such, the majority of residents are of retirement age, with just one family living on the cul-de-sac.

Larchwood does not suffer from a high level of crime, although there are occasional incidents. During 2009 there were three incidences of theft and attempted theft on Larchwood, and as the cul-de-sac backs onto a wood, it does experience occasional disturbance from motorbike scrambling during the summer months. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Watch (NW) group is to maintain and enhance the level of security and sense of safety the residents currently experience, as well as informing residents of how best to secure their homes and look out for one another.

Organisation

Larchwood NW was set up in 2005, with the inaugural meeting on 12th January 2006. There had been a previous group but it ceased when the Co-ordinator moved away. The group was not re-established in response to a particular issue, but conversations between residents led to the realisation that they had common concerns and wanted to ensure that their street was a nice place in which to live. All 20 households are members of the group and whilst not all residents wish to play an active role, the positive and welcoming attitude of all concerned means that residents have the opportunity to get involved should they wish. This extends to new residents receiving a welcome pack when they move in. There is a chairman, treasurer, co-ordinator and committee team. An annual meeting is held each Spring, to which all residents and the Police are invited. The meeting sets the priorities and actions for the forthcoming year. Other meetings are held throughout the year in response to specific issues, with newsletters produced two or three times a year to keep residents informed of group activities. Although the Co-ordinator undertakes most of the work involved in running the group, he is supported by a number of others, and the group operates in a democratic and open manner.

Activities

A significant element of Larchwood NW is supporting one another and fostering a sense of community spirit. The residents are keen to preserve and enhance the appearance of the cul-de-sac, and have purchased troughs and planters to display flowers all year round. A garden party is also held each year and a traders list has been set up, detailing reliable traders that other residents have used and would recommend. The group has involved a number of the houses opposite the cul-de-sac as associate members and shares crime information and safety advice with them. It is yet to be seen whether this encourages other streets to set up their own NW group.

An email group has been established as residents agreed that this would be the most effective and efficient way of disseminating information. The Co-ordinator sends out bulletins of local crimes via email on a weekly basis, with any other urgent crime or other matters circulated via email and automated telephone systems as appropriate. A newsletter is distributed two or three times a year, informing residents of what has been happening with regard to the NW group and life in Larchwood more generally.

The most significant activity has been establishing a No Cold Calling zone in response to concerns from residents that they were receiving unwanted callers. It is seen as being a worthwhile exercise as not only has it resulted in a decline in the number of unwanted callers but has assisted with the reporting of cold callers to the Police. The next aim of the group is to set up a key holders scheme (i.e. neighbours looking after your property when you are away), and a proposal has been made to residents about installing CCTV.

Partnership Working

Larchwood NW works closely with Staffordshire Police, in particular the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and, through them, the local Police Officer. The group has a good relationship with the Stafford and Stone Community Engagement Officer who is responsible for NW in the area and hence supported the group in setting up and subsequently in designating Larchwood as a no cold calling zone. The group also receives support from the Community Safety Co-ordinator for Stafford Borough Council. This has been invaluable to the group when they require certain permissions, for example, putting up the Neighbourhood Watch and No Cold Calling signs.

Impacts

The group has undoubtedly been able to foster a sense of community, reassuring residents that they are not 'on their own', especially for some of them who are getting older and those living alone. Involvement in NW has certainly had a cohesive effect, bringing together people who perhaps would not otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know each other. There is evidence of neighbours helping one another and making the street a nice place to live, both aesthetically and socially. Residents have commented on how they also have a better awareness of crime prevention and more contact with the Police through the local PCSOs. This has resulted in a reduced fear of crime amongst residents. So far as the Police are concerned, the existence of an effective NW group makes their job easier, helping to improve their performance, but also helps them in engaging with the local community and fostering good relations. Home insurance premiums are reported to have been reduced as a result of households being active within the scheme.

MID WARWICKSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

Mid Warwickshire Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Association believes that joint action is a major step forward in the fight against crime and the fear of crime, and that by becoming a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme you can help to strengthen your community and make your area an even better place to live.

Key Learning Points

- Umbrella organisations can play useful role in providing advice and support to NW groups to get them off the ground.
- It is crucial to establish a membership network, developing a list of individuals who are willing to make a positive contribution.
- It is important for the key local statutory organisations to take on advice from NW Associations and individual groups about the best approach to tackling crime.
- Partnership working is more successful if everybody works towards a shared action plan.

Background

Mid Warwickshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (MWNWA) is an umbrella organisation promoting and supporting Neighbourhood Watch (NW) groups in the area. The Association works across the different areas of Mid-Warwickshire delivering a range of activities and representing all NW members across Warwick District as a whole. It was formed in 1986 following a request from the Chief Superintendent at the time who had contacted residents in the local area to generate interest in setting up a NW scheme. Prior to this, there was little support available for local groups, but the Association has established clear communication channels with local agencies and all parties feel well informed as part of this network of multi-agency working.

Although the work of the Association manages to reach a range of areas and different groups of people, there is currently little contact with the transient population in the area, especially in South Leamington where there is a very large student population. The Association is fully aware of this existing gap in their work and is constantly exploring different ways of addressing this issue. Recently, as part of the Operational Delivery Group (ODG), discussions were held about using landlords as a communications tool to raise awareness amongst students about better security.

Organisation

The Association has a committee of individual NW members. There are 18 members in total and three lead members who undertake the day to day management of the Association. Committee meetings are held approximately four times a year and there is an Annual General Meeting where the Accounts and an Annual Report are presented.

Activities

Information and Action Days

As an umbrella organisation, the Association provides support and guidance for individual NW groups in Mid Warwickshire. Any individual wanting to set up a scheme is offered advice and provided with two leaflets, produced by the Association that advise people about how to set up a scheme. Groups that have reduced their level of activity over time are also encouraged to reinstate their schemes. The Association also works very closely with local partner agencies and disseminates important NW information, as well as designing leaflets. Over the past year the Association has begun to work more closely with the Police and attends the ODG meeting as mentioned above. Committee members as well as other community volunteers are asked to contribute towards activities, such as Action Days that are delivered in particular areas across Mid-Warwickshire. This joint working helps to spread the ethos of community working and raises awareness/improves understanding of the aims of NW.

The Action Days are delivered by Community Action Teams and there are plans to expand the number of volunteers involved in these so that these activities can eventually be delivered across the whole of Mid Warwickshire. The Action Days were initiated by the Association in partnership with the Police and have covered a variety of events. For example, in the run up to Christmas 2009 volunteers handed out leaflets in a shopping centre during late night hours; which helped to increase public awareness of safety. In addition, volunteers stood in local car parks to raise awareness amongst drivers about car theft. An anti-burglary Action Day was also held in Milverton; an area that has experienced a high number of burglaries in recent years. During this day the volunteers went around the area knocking on doors and providing people with information about how to keep their homes safe. Another Action Day is planned in Hatton Park in Warwick, which is also experiencing a high number of burglaries and theft from motor vehicles.

Awareness Raising and Increasing Membership

The Association plays an active role in raising awareness of community safety. A drop in session is held at the local CHAIN (Community Help, Advise and Information Network) Community Centre on Tuesday mornings, during which members of the community have the opportunity to come in and discuss any safety issues they may have. These sessions also prove useful for the Association to hold sub-meetings with committee members. Resident queries are usually varied and not always linked to NW, however on occasion NW advice and leaflets are given to those who are interested and people are encouraged to attend their local NW meetings.

A questionnaire has been circulated asking residents whether they are interested in joining NW, as well as their willingness to receive and disseminate information alerts about local crime from the Police. These alert messages offer a second tier membership, which is attractive to those residents who prefer not to get involved in specific activities. Details of people who have signed up for these alerts are kept at the Police Watch Office and from that point residents begin to receive messages about crime occurring in their areas. This helps to raise awareness and allows important, up to date information to be disseminated across communities. If these residents are willing to give their information out to local NW Groups, then the Association will pass details onto relevant groups in the area so that they are aware of potential new members who may become involved in local activities.

Not in my Neighbourhood Week

The Association has also provided support during 'Not in my Neighbourhood Week' by distributing leaflets and setting up stalls to provide information to the public. NW members delivered these activities jointly with the Police and the Council. They visited several supermarkets during the week and helped to raise awareness of NW. They also managed to recruit 150 new members. The 'Not in my Neighbourhood' was the point at which the Association (and the Police) decided to introduce the second tier membership for local residents in the area.

Partnership Working

The Association has worked closely with Warwickshire County Council to arrange the Action Days, which have also been delivered jointly with the Police. They have also worked closely with the District Council for many years and are viewed as a key asset, supporting the Council's approach to community safety. The Association supports the Council to deliver tailored services to local people and sends out positive messages via Action Day events. To develop the work further the Council would like to appoint a Neighbourhood Watch Manager to provide direct support to groups.

Warwickshire Police have also been keen to involve Neighbourhood Watch in promoting community confidence and consider the Association as a key partner in achieving this impact. The Police are keen to develop this relationship further and over the last year they have encouraged the Association to become more involved in local decision making, especially through the Crime and Disorder Partnership Group meetings.

Impacts

Local membership and interest in Neighbourhood Watch has increased considerably and there has been a 15% increase in membership since April 2009. A key contribution to this increase was made by the recruitment of 150 new members during 'Not in my Neighbourhood Week'.

The Association has also had a positive impact on community safety and contributed to a reduction in crime in the area. All partners have recognised the success of the 'Theft from Cars' project that has led to a significant reduction in vehicle crime as a result of informing local residents about the dangers of leaving items on show in their vehicles. In addition, there has been a reduction in burglaries in Milverton as a result of knocking on doors and talking to residents about the security of their homes.

Partner organisations highlighted that the support offered by the Association has been invaluable and some of the activities would not have taken place or proved as successful without their involvement. In 2008 the Association received a Civic Award from Warwick District Council in recognition of its community action work and its willingness to work with local agencies and to be fully involved in resolving community matters.

The support offered has helped the Police to develop a pool of resources and volunteers based in Mid-Warwickshire, who can be called upon to drive forward crime reduction projects. This is particularly useful for the Police as they are currently struggling with limited funding and resources. The support of the Association has also helped the Police to build confidence in the community. The commitment displayed by the members of the Association has helped members of the community to enter into the spirit of partnership working. Local people appreciate the efforts being made and can see that the work of the Association is making a real difference.

STREETLY COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH/ STREETLY YOUTH4EM, WALSALL

Many people are affected by issues relating to disturbance from youth or professionally organised criminal activity. Neighbourhood Watch aims to eliminate these negative experiences and build community confidence by involving young people in the fight against crime.

Key Learning Points

- It is important for Neighbourhood Watch to be seen to be making a difference by trying out new ways of engaging with the community.
- It is important to give the local community a 'voice', especially young people.
- Neighbourhood Watch needs to be championed, with commitment shown by all group members and volunteers.

Background

The Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Group operates in Streetly, Walsall, providing advice about crime and safety to more than 5,000 houses. Streetly is a well established community with partner agencies involved in addressing the concerns of the area, especially anti-social behaviour. The group was established in 1989, driven by a local resident, in partnership with local Councillors, the NHS, Youth Services, the Police as well as Friends of the Park (Blackwood Park). The Forum adopts a collaborative approach, and has been specifically adopted to tackle anti social behaviour issues on one particular road. Young people were first engaged when they were invited to take part in a barbeque. Once the group is fully established, young people will have responsibility over the day to day management of the Forum.

The first barbeque event in Streetly was a huge success as it attracted 70 young people and gave them a unique opportunity to interact with local residents, the Police, NHS representatives and youth services, thereby breaking down barriers between young people and local agencies and demonstrating the breadth of issues that NW can address. Involving young people is also helping to encourage greater community cohesion and understanding between different generations.

Organisation

Streetly Community and Neighbourhood Watch Group has been the key link for the development of the Streetly Youth4em. The Chair of the NW Group has used long established working relationships with West Midlands Police to set up this scheme. The broader West Midlands Youth4em as a whole is split into smaller neighbourhood groups and Streetly is the newest group to have been formed as part of this. Streetly NW Group members are encouraged to promote the Streetly Youth4em to their own children; helping to raise the profile of the forum and increase membership by spreading the word across families and amongst young people in the Streetly area. As the NW Group is already very active and successful in the area, it is proving to be a good anchoring point for the Streetly Youth4em.

Streetly Youth4em also has a fully established constitution and has adopted a Child Protection Policy and a Disability Policy. The website is used by young people to add suggestions for improvements to the Police and Neighbourhood Watch services. The forum operates on a community based network of young people, who are called upon (through parental consent) for their involvement in activities.

Activities

Streetly Youth4em organised the first barbeque in May 2009 and has arranged a further 6 since. These events have linked with healthy eating, taught young people about health and safety, how to keep the environment clean and proved to be a useful way of integrating people from different parts of the community. A promotional DVD about the work of the forum has been produced, showcasing the activities of the group. A grant of £200 was received for the production of a short film based on knife crime. Members have also been working to remove graffiti and clear litter, in order to improve their local environment. Young people were taken to Woodlands Camp where they took part in different physical activities; challenging personal boundaries and building confidence. Members of Streetly Youth4em are hoping to arrange a 'Streetly's Got Talent' event and are working on plans for the local Pavilion to be refurbished into a gym.

Partnership Working

A multi-agency approach is widely practiced. For example, local partners were closely involved during the first barbeque, and the local Cooperative grocery store manager deployed staff members to assist at the event. Streetly Youth4em also received funding from the Children Area Partnership and the Safer Wallsall Partnership (£500 from each).

Partner agencies have also benefitted a great deal from their involvement. For example, levels of engagement between the Police and young people have built confidence in the Police, as well as assisting the personal development of Police Officers in helping them to work better with the community. The forum has also helped the local youth services to meet their targets and has resulted in an increase in attendance at a local youth club.

Impacts

The Youth4em is emerging as a key contributor to success in improving feelings of safety amongst residents and in encouraging community cohesion. The barbeques have helped break down intergenerational barriers and challenge stereotypes linked to NW. The forum provides young people with a 'focus', deterring them from engaging in anti-social behaviour; which is also helping to change community attitudes towards young people. During the visit to Woodlands Camp young Muslims had the opportunity to interact with other young people, which also helped to create greater cultural awareness. Overall, incidents of anti-social behaviour have dramatically reduced and calls received from the public have also reduced by 50%.

Young people have been encouraged to join the Prince's Trust, which resulted in one member of the group receiving a Young People's Award. The forum is therefore setting the foundation for longer term goals and has been recognised by the Association of Chief Police Officers as a 'best practice tool for the community'. It is hoped that it will be used as a model across the West Midlands region. By allowing young people to work in partnership with the Police and the local authority, Streetly Youth4em is demonstrating a unique method of partnership working that addresses issues deep set within certain communities.

WEST CHADSMOOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, CANNOCK

West Chadsmoor Community Partnership aims to build strength in the community by establishing a network of partners who will work together towards tackling neighbourhood issues. The driving force behind this partnership has been a 17 year old young man, who became concerned about vulnerable elderly residents living on his street. He would like to develop links with existing Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the surrounding area and achieve greater membership diversity by involving young people.

Key Learning Points

- Action taken by young people can have a very positive impact on community cohesion.
- Groups need to develop methods of working that allow them to evolve; with systems and partners in place that also ensure future sustainability.
- Communication tools such as email and mobile phones are basic essentials for a NW group to operate to its full potential.
- It is important to start off with small ventures; taking on larger projects as confidence in the community develops and contact with key agencies is established.

Background

The Neighbourhood Watch (NW) scheme operates in the West Chadsmoor area of Cannock, covering approximately 120 houses, although the area is set to expand as attempts are made to work across different parts of the neighbourhood. West Chadsmoor suffers from social and economic deprivation as well as apathy from local people to resolve issues within their neighbourhood.

The need for intervention became apparent when local elderly residents were being targeted for burglaries, and anti-social behaviour involving young people was becoming more widespread. One particular example is when the local church was vandalised by youths. The area has also experienced a large number of burglaries over the past 18 months and generally suffers from high unemployment and low educational achievement. As a result of these issues, members of the local community expressed their frustration to the Area Co-ordinator who decided to set up a local scheme and take action.

The Community Partnership is currently at a very early stage of development, having been set up by a 17 year young man who acts as the Area Co-ordinator and has been working closely with the vicar from the local church to implement NW activities in the area. The young volunteer began by writing to his Member of Parliament and enquired about the possibility of setting up a community awareness partnership. He was advised to speak with a representative from Staffordshire Police and has subsequently worked closely with the Police and attended meetings with the public.

Organisation

The next steps in establishing the Partnership will involve the scheduling of regular structured meetings with local volunteers, who are in place to take action when projects move forward. In future, meetings will be advertised more widely and leaflets will be printed and distributed in the local area.

Activities

One of the key activities undertaken as part of the NW scheme has involved the demolition of a block of garages, which stood derelict for 10 years and attracted anti-social behaviour. The clearing of the garages has reduced anti-social behaviour and demonstrated to the local people that a real difference can be made if the community pulls together as a joint force to tackle such issues.

The lead members of the Partnership are currently focusing on a local woodland area which also attracts anti-social behaviour. To date it has proved difficult to enter the site and therefore the local authority has been alerted to these issues. The lead members are also working closely with the Fire and Rescue Service and local councils to reduce the risk of arson in the area, which is also a particular problem in West Chadsmoor. To encourage greater involvement from the community, a clean up day for the woodland area is being arranged in partnership with local organisations.

There are also plans to establish a local youth centre and a nursery club as an attempt to bring people and different generations together. To date there are more planned activities being developed rather than actual delivery, as the Partnership is still being established and gathering momentum by aiming to work closely with the community and local partners.

Partnership Working

The Area Co-ordinator has good working relationships with Staffordshire Police, the traffic division at the local Police Station and the local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Working relationships have also been developed with the Fire and Rescue Service, the county and local councils (Highways, Housing and Environmental Health) and the Forestry Commission, and there are plans to work more closely with the Chase Council for Voluntary Services. Multi-agency working is considered a key tool in achieving success in resolving broader issues in the area. The lead members are therefore very keen to get the Partnership up and running by establishing a formal structure and building a network of contacts. Partnership working will also develop an understanding of the different responsibilities and influences that each agency has and how this can benefit the West Chadsmoor area.

The Area Coordinator is currently working with the Chase Volunteer Services to write a constitution and developing important links with other NW groups in order to launch the Partnership. The two lead members have also developed links with a Community Association in a neighbouring area. They feel it is important to learn about what other groups are doing in the surrounding area to eliminate the risk of 'reinventing the wheel'.

Impacts

There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour, which has begun to build community confidence in local agencies. Effective communications now exists between the Police, residents and other key partners in the West Chadsmoor area. The process of building relationships has been encouraged through multi-agency working and young people have already begun to show an improvement in behaviour. The demolition of the garages, achieved by working collaboratively with the local Police, is seen as a key local success and led to a sense of community cohesion. Police reports have demonstrated a reduction in crime rates in the area, which is also contributing to an increase in community confidence.

Once the Partnership group has achieved greater credibility it will be possible to identify the full impact of the activities currently being explored. The Partnership would especially like to achieve an increase in the number of young people involved in its activities. This will help young people to become more community aware, increasing their sense of responsibility and giving them the opportunity to portray themselves as responsible members of their community. Their involvement is likely to give them a structured outlet; channelling their energy in more productive ways and benefitting the community overall.

There is also a need for greater community ownership over what is happening on the streets of West Chadsmoor. Once a greater number of successful activities have been undertaken in the area, it will be easier to demonstrate the benefits of joint working to the local community. Giving the local people a voice will empower them and encourage greater community cohesion.

Yorkshire & Humber

BORDERWATCH, RICHMONDSHIRE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Communities suffering from crime need the Police and the Police need communities to help tackle crime. The obvious solution is to work together for mutual benefit, but rarely does that happen so effectively as in Richmondshire. Whilst the detailed scheme is suited to a particular rural locality and may not be transferable to many other areas, there are aspects of its operation from which others might learn lessons.

Key Learning Points

- Where possible, assign a police officer with knowledge of the specific laws pertaining to wildlife, empathy with rural communities and the commitment that achieves credibility with local people.
- Identify a Co-ordinator who commands respect locally and who can therefore organise, mobilise and enthuse volunteers and thereby ensure that the scheme operates effectively, with everyone playing their part.
- Keep volunteers motivated, by generating community spirit, maintaining momentum, giving them the support they require and providing feedback on the outcomes of their efforts.

Background

The Neighbourhood Watch (NW) scheme was launched in June 2005 and was formed by the Police in order to help them combat rural crime. The size of the area relative to the size of the Police Force is such that it cannot be policed effectively and so the volunteers play a vital role in adding value to Police resources. The focus of the scheme is on the areas to the north and east of the district, towards the A66 and A1, which provide easy access to and an easy exit from the area for criminals living the other side of its borders.

Richmondshire is a relatively affluent rural area, although in large part is inhabited by people working in businesses whose viability has been threatened by the financial losses and disruption suffered in the past in relation to thefts/burglaries and poaching. Indeed, most of those involved have been victims of crime or have close family/friends who have been victims of crime.

Organisation

The Group involves about 50 volunteers spread across 4 beat areas with each area having its own Co-ordinator, one of whom also performs the role of Group Co-ordinator. The Police play an active role, with one officer in particular directing/working in support of the Group's activities. Volunteers offer detailed local knowledge, being aware of people and vehicles from outside the area and knowing on which land people are allowed to be and which they are not allowed to be.

Activities

Volunteers mount patrols in their local areas, late at night and into the early hours of the morning (usually up to about 2.00am but sometimes beyond). Each patrol involves a minimum of 2 people, though can involve 3 or 4 people on occasions. They work to a rota established by the designated police officer, to ensure that responsibilities are shared and that good coverage can be maintained such that patrols can be mounted every night. The officer also participates in some patrols.

Those involved are required to observe, note and report, but not to try to apprehend or confront anyone acting suspiciously. Clear guidance notes are provided, setting out a list of dos and don'ts and all volunteers are given a full briefing by the lead Police Officer. Patrols support any suspicious activity to the Police, mainly using radios that link them directly to the control room in Richmond. Some groups have been provided with night sights and there is an ambition to purchase more of these.

Where number plates have been recorded, these are checked by the Police. If considered appropriate, several days later, they will visit the address at which the vehicle is registered to ask what the vehicle was doing in Richmondshire at the time it was spotted. The aim of this exercise is not to pursue that particular enquiry to any great extent, more to make the vehicle owner aware that any future visits in the early hours of the morning are likely to be observed and thereby discourage further visits to the area from those with criminal intent.

Partnership Working

The Group is funded by the Community Safety Partnership and works very closely with the Police. In particular, the designated police officer has detailed knowledge of the specific laws pertaining to wildlife and therefore volunteers have confidence in his ability to provide the advice and guidance they require. In addition, his individual commitment and that of the Police generally has enhanced their standing with local people.

Impacts

Group activities and associated intelligence gathering/witness evidence have resulted in arrests and convictions at court for crime and wildlife incidents (poaching). In the 3 weeks after the scheme was launched, the Police reported that burglaries from farms, garages and sheds fell 9% compared with the same period a year earlier.

Just as importantly, the NW Group's activities have become a significant deterrent to those who might otherwise commit crime. Those seeking to engage in criminal activities are likely to think twice about doing so in Richmondshire, knowing that they may be under observation.

Volunteers report having becoming much more security conscious and much more vigilant. They have developed skills/experience which have made them more effective on patrols and more aware generally of suspicious behaviour. High levels of participation and willingness amongst everyone to 'do their bit' has supported community cohesion. From the perspective of the Police/Community Safety Partnership, the NW scheme has achieved a level of community engagement far in excess of that which existed previously, in terms of both numbers engaged and the quality of engagement, as evidenced by the scale and nature of volunteering, attendance at police events and in feedback from those involved. Local people also believe that they now get a better service from the Police and, consequently, their appreciation of the Police has grown.

FENBY GARDENS NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, SCARBOROUGH

People moving onto a nice new estate want to make sure that they and their properties are protected, not least by each other's vigilance. On Fenby Gardens, people watch out for their neighbours, knowing that their neighbours are watching out for them.

Key Learning Points

- Identify concerns, gauge interest amongst residents in addressing those concerns and then articulate them clearly to the Police, local authority and other relevant agencies in the pursuit of better service delivery into the local area.
- Encourage support by highlighting the benefits of being part of a NW scheme, such as cheaper home insurance.
- Identify a champion with the skills, commitment and time to play an effective role.
- Sustain support by being well organised and conducting affairs in a professional manner. Effective communication with local residents is crucial in this regard.
- Establish a good relationship with your PCSO, as they are often the key contact within a neighbourhood policing team.
- Social and communal activities are important to building a sense of community engagement and ownership. NW schemes are more likely to be effective where residents are connected via social networks.

Background

Fenby Gardens is a relatively new estate in the suburbs of Scarborough, comprising 32 detached houses and 30 flats. It is close to the town's 6th Form College and a hospital, with a number of doctors who work at the hospital being resident on the estate. Fenby Gardens is a quiet cul de sac, home to relatively affluent people and not suffering any significant crime issues and no anti-social behaviour issues. The formation of the Group was prompted by a desire to prevent any problems arising and provide reassurance to residents in respect of community safety issues. The Group was formed in May 2006, following discussions over the previous month or so and a meeting of residents, which the Police attended. There was a high level of support for a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) scheme, and it was decided that its remit ought to be: security-related issues; council-related issues; and social activities. It was explicitly stated that it ought not be used for inter-neighbour issues. The strapline that has been adopted is: Making Fenby Gardens a Safer and Better Place to Live.

Organisation

There is an annual subscription to the NW Group of £5 per household, with two thirds of households having agreed to contribute, covering 30 of the 32 houses but a minority of the flats, attributed in part to about half of the occupiers of flats renting for short periods and therefore feeling less engaged. One of the volunteers lives in the flats and has been charged with seeking to recruit more members. As well as providing resources, it is thought that subscriptions also demonstrate support/commitment, whilst the level of subscription is so low that it has not proved to be a disincentive to becoming a member.

The Co-ordinator is regarded as vital to the scheme's success, providing the commitment, drive and skills required to galvanise support amongst residents and represent their views to the relevant authorities. Other members provide support and attend meetings, but all agree that having a strong leader has been invaluable. There is regular communication with residents at meetings (held at the home of the Co-ordinator, and usually involving half a dozen or so people). Minutes of these meetings are distributed promptly to demonstrate professionalism and inform all residents of decisions in a timely manner. Initially, these meetings were bi-monthly but are now quarterly. Newsletters do not follow a regular pattern, but are produced as and when it is felt there is something meaningful to communicate. Routinely, they include contact details for the Co-ordinator, the Police and residents offering domestic services. Those that cannot be emailed are delivered by hand.

Partnership Working

A good relationship/regular contact is maintained with the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) whose area includes Fenby Gardens and he is the main conduit linking residents with the Police. He attends all meetings and reports on local police activity. The relationship between the NW Group and their PCSO has also led to the Group making presentations to other NW Groups locally to demonstrate good practice.

The 'Ringmaster' system operated by North Yorkshire Police provides alerts to local residents that can be cascaded via email to 24 NW members who have provided their email addresses to the NW Co-ordinator. This happens about once a month.

Although there are no wider links with the NW movement, it is felt that being part of a Home Office endorsed network is hugely beneficial, in recruiting members, in fostering relationships with the Police and in sending out a message to criminals.

Activities

Encouraging Vigilance

The Group encourages members to watch each other's property, look out for strangers in the area, report anything suspicious, let your neighbour know when you go away and put your neighbour's bins out/back if they are away.

Promoting a Sense of Community

Some activities have been social, including an annual barbeque that was attended by more than 70 people last Summer. These are said to be well supported and received by residents. They are also said to have played an important role in people living on the estate getting to know each other better or at least in people recognising who else lives on the estate should they see them on the street. This social interaction has both promoted a strong sense of local community and facilitated taking forward the other activities mentioned below.

Improving the Environment

Through the Council's Parks Department, bulbs and shrubs have been obtained, at a combined cost of £150, funded from NW Group reserves, and volunteers were mobilised to plant them. Those involved included children as well as adults and the exercise was thought to have promoted greater community ownership than had the bulbs and shrubs been planted by the Council. This sort of community engagement activity is highly valued by the local authority.

Improving Service Delivery

The NW Group has also been a mechanism through which issues have been taken up with the Council, relating to car parking, dog fouling, signage, maintenance of public areas and no cold caller signs, drawing positive responses. In this respect, the Co-ordinator was said to have performed a role similar to that of a Ward Councillor.

Impacts

Having a NW scheme in place was reported to have helped engender community spirit, promoted social inclusion and improved the quality of life for a number of residents, some of whom now felt much safer knowing that they had neighbours looking out for them and their property. Having a NW scheme is thought to have prevented burglaries and opportunistic crimes. From the Police's perspective the existence of the NW Group appears to encourage a heightened sense of vigilance and it is thought that in this environment, burglaries and other crimes are much less likely to occur as perpetrators will think success much less likely.

More generally, there is a belief that both the Police and the Council seem inclined to offer a better standard of service to an organised group than any individual, being aware that concerns raised are common to a number of residents, not just isolated incidents.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION (SYNWA)

By definition, Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW) has a very local focus, but there are times when it is helpful to see a bigger picture and feel part of a bigger movement. SYNWA provides just such a mechanism at sub-regional level.

Background

SYNWA was established in 1998 as a co-ordinating body for Neighbourhood and Home Watch (N&HW) groups across South Yorkshire. It seeks to engender good citizenship and greater public participation in the prevention and reduction of crime and the fear of crime in partnership with the Police and local authorities.

Organisation

SYNWA comprises a Chair and 10 Directors, drawn from across South Yorkshire. They oversee the activities of about 3,500 N&HW Co-ordinators who in turn cover about 100,000 households. There is an ongoing process to align Co-ordinators with Safer Neighbourhood Teams and to link in consistently with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

Activities

Using New Technology

Autumn 2009 saw the launch of a website (www.synwa.com) believed to be the first of its kind in the UK. At its most basic level, it provides information about N&HW activities and which can be translated into various languages using the Google translate tool. However, on a much more sophisticated level it provides opportunities for residents to register and become part of a N&HW Group and, uniquely, plot information onto a Map. Once approved by a Co-ordinator, this is then shared with other Group members, for information and to enable patterns to be identified and, if necessary, acted upon by the Police. The nominated officer at South Yorkshire Police is sent an email every time a report is made, so nothing is missed and feedback is provided to all of those submitting reports. This system can be used both to reassure Co-ordinators (e.g. young people walking through a village at night could be part of a legitimate organised group) or to provide supplementary evidence were a crime to be committed. It is also a means of emailing/texting all who have registered. In addition, access to the basic service can be gained via digital television, with access to mapping scheduled for August 2010.

Engaging New Communities

A translation service in the Doncaster area seeks to engage communities for whom English is not their first language, beginning with Doncaster's Polish community. Although N&HW has taken the initiative, the problem is common to all public services, not just the Police. This will run as a pilot scheme from March 2009, with a budget of £10,000. It will take the form of an interpretation hotline, providing information on all public services 24/7, but is not to be used for reporting/seeking urgent assistance. Three quarters of the budget has been spent on establishing the telecommunications facilities, with the balance spent on promoting the service.

Recording Good Practice

SYNWA has recently established a database of activities undertaken by each N&HW group. Although this is more a matter of record than a tool for disseminating ideas/good practice, it could be used to search for groups that have carried out particular activities, secured different types of funding etc.

Impacts

Clearly, it is too early to say what the impacts have been, but it is hoped that, in respect of the first initiative, Doncaster's relatively new Polish community will feel socially included and, in respect of the second initiative, that younger people in particular will be encouraged to become involved in N&HW activities to a greater extent than has been the case hitherto.

SOVEREIGN PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, YORK

New estates throw together all sorts of people and can throw up all sorts of problems. Neighbourhood Watch can provide the means by which like-minded people can come together to address common concerns on a concerted basis.

Key Learning Points

- Get to know your PCSO and involve them in everything you do. They can offer direct practical help but also provide access to other support and information and their endorsement lends credibility to communications with official bodies, not least the Police and the Council.
- Identify people willing and able to take on relevant responsibilities, but make sure that new people are always welcome (avoid becoming a clique). Identify what skills are available amongst members of the community and make best use of them. Similarly, harness the enthusiasm of members – it can become infectious.
- Keep residents regularly informed and sustain momentum, not least by approaching new residents to inform them/get them involved. Adopt multiple means of communication (meetings, leaflets, notice board, website etc.) in order to both generate and sustain momentum amongst the community, with the use of ICT particularly effective in disseminating information quickly and cheaply.
- If possible/relevant, get the developers of a new estate involved and taking responsibility for their actions.
- Undertake succession planning, such that systems are in place to sustain activities regardless of changes in personnel.

Background

Sovereign Park is a relatively new estate, most of it having been developed over the past 4-5 years. It lies in the suburbs of York and comprises 257 dwellings, mostly owner-occupied houses but including owner-occupied and rented flats. In July 2007 it was highlighted by the Police as an anti-social behaviour hotspot, with large gangs causing concerns and acting in an intimidating manner. Whilst the impact was not dramatic, it was insidious, corroding residents' quality of life

The estate was developed in phases and the cleared sites and availability of building materials attracted young people onto the estate, in some cases to reportedly steal materials but mainly to congregate. Since the development was completed the problems have been with young people gathering at the children's play area and in the bin sheds. The former has meant that younger children have been unable to use the play area and residents living nearby have been disturbed by noise and foul language. The latter is said to have involved drinking and, possibly, drug abuse, making some residents wary about using or even walking past their bin sheds at times, especially after dark. There are no reports of attacks on residents or damage to property, but the anti-social behaviour of young people coming onto the estate has been a significant cause for concern amongst many residents. In particular, parents of young children wanted them to be able to play in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Ad hoc conversations between residents led to a realisation that they had common concerns and a shared conviction to addressing those concerns. A meeting in a nearby pub helped forge relationships and provided reassurance that individuals were not alone in having concerns and that there was a common determination to do something about them. The Group was then galvanised by the preparation and submission of a petition to the Council requesting adoption of the estate (in terms of taking responsibility for its roads and other public spaces).

Organisation

The NW Group has only been established with any structure since July 2009, There is no single leader, but there are 3 main Co-ordinators, supported by a dozen or so other significant contributors, and the group operates in a very democratic and open manner. Volunteers cover most of the estate, but there are some gaps, most notably in the flats (which are not easily accessed by non-residents).

Having established these systems, any changes in personnel amongst NW members would not be overly disruptive. Replacements would be able to take up the roles of their predecessors with little fuss. This is seen as especially important, as the loss of the leading member in the early days of the scheme, stunted its progress, not merely because of the loss of that individual's contribution, but the disheartening effect on others.

Activities

Keeping Residents Informed

Good communications are seen as vital. One of the volunteers ran a number of websites and his wife suggested a community website might be of interest to estate residents. It can be viewed at www.sovpark.co.nr. It has been used to promote events, raise issues, co-ordinate activities and enable residents to communicate via a message board.

The 'Ringmaster' system operated by North Yorkshire Police provides alerts to local residents that are posted on the community website and which can be cascaded via email, text and the community notice board. In addition, the Police produce a newsletter and, although this relates to an area slightly wider than the estate, it contains plenty of relevant material and maintains the flow of information to residents.

NW volunteers deliver newsletters and flyers door-to-door, keeping all residents informed of achievements and upcoming events. A recently erected notice board near the children's play area is another means of residents staying up to date with pertinent issues.

Spreading the NW Message

NW packs have been delivered door-to-door throughout the estate by a team of NW volunteers. The packs include materials sourced from York NW covering a range of security issues and what to do about them, as well as promoting the availability of security devices at no cost.

Deterring Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour

A simple suggestion to deter youths from gathering in the play area was to lock the gate each evening. Even though the gate/fence is easily scaled, the message that it is not to be accessed after a certain time seems to have had the desired effect. Contributions towards a lock were gathered from those living around the play area and two of the families living near the play area take responsibility (on rotation) for locking it each night.

Improving the Environment

The Group is also keen to preserve and enhance the appearance of the estate and has recently organized a mass bulb planting exercise. This involved a dozen or so volunteers and has helped to further develop a sense of community and of ownership of the common areas of the estate.

Partnership Working

The relationship between the NW Group and their Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and, through him, the neighbourhood policing team is fundamental to the scheme's success. Work has also been undertaken with a Police Architectural Liaison Officer to identify design issues that were creating problems, such as badly lit areas, open bin stores and open cycle stores and efforts to resolve these issues are ongoing. For their part, the Police have seen NW volunteers as their eyes and ears and are greatly appreciative that a network exists through which it can communicate with residents, both passing on and receiving information. In particular, the Police have been able to educate residents as to the appropriate response to different issues and provide them with contact details appropriate to each circumstance. Subsequently, the NW Group has played an important role in encouraging residents to report incidents.

There is also a good relationship with the NW office in York, through which resources can be obtained and other services arranged, such as free home security checks and free low-cost security equipment.

With several of the NW volunteers also performing key roles with the local Residents Association, there is naturally a very close working relationship between the two groups, almost to the extent that they have become indistinguishable in certain respects.

Impacts

The City of York Council is set to adopt the estate more quickly than it has ever adopted any estate, attributed to the enthusiasm, persuasiveness and doggedness of NW volunteers.

The NW Group has undoubtedly been able to foster a sense of community. People feel reassured that they are not 'on their own'. Involvement in NW has certainly had a cohesive effect, bringing together people throughout the estate who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to get to know each other. For some people, this has addressed issues of isolation. It has also resulted in sense of inclusion regardless of whether a resident is an owner occupier, renting, in private housing or in social housing.

So far as the Police are concerned, the existence of an effective NW Group makes their job easier and helps improve their performance. In 2008 there were 12 burglaries and in the year to early-December 2009 there were only 4 burglaries. Home insurance premiums are reported to have been reduced as a result of households being active within the scheme.

THE GROVES NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, HULL

The Groves was a forgotten area, seemingly ignored by the Police and other agencies and thus a breeding ground for all sorts of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. Finally, a group of local people decided that enough was enough and that it was time they did something about it.

Key Learning Points

- A good Co-ordinator is key to a successful NW scheme. This should be an individual who can dedicate time and energy to the role and will be able to drive the scheme forward. In this case, it involves someone who will champion every cause and won't rest until they achieve satisfaction.
- Co-ordinators ought to be prepared for a lot of work in the early days and for the fact that some people will continue to contact them rather than the Police/other agencies direct. However, all of the effort invested returns great reward to the community and a strong sense of personal satisfaction.
- There should be an inclusive approach, getting neighbours involved and developing community spirit. People can make contributions in a variety of ways and these can be vital in supporting the work of the Co-ordinator.
- Building relationships with other stakeholders is also key. It is important to establish a good relationship with neighbourhood police teams and individuals within key agencies who can make a difference.

Background

The Groves is about a mile outside Hull City centre in what is largely an industrial area. It comprises 234 houses and 16 businesses. The area includes a significant number of private rented houses which have attracted many people who have behaved in an anti-social/criminal manner. This has ranged from noise disturbance to drug dealing.

The area suffered a range of issues, impacting on all types of residents, with the younger and older residents thought to suffer disproportionately. Older residents were the victims of criminal damage and verbal abuse, and many were afraid to leave their homes after dark. Younger people had nothing to do and nowhere to go, which in some cases led to alcohol and drug abuse and/or causing the anti-social (and sometimes threatening) behaviour which made their neighbours' lives a misery.

The frustrations of one local family came to a head on the evening of 4 November 2006 when they heard a youth, high on drugs, trying to kick down the door of an elderly neighbour. When the youth was challenged he drew a knife though thankfully the situation was defused without anyone getting hurt. The individual who challenged the youth decided it was time that the decent people of the area stood up for what was right, and he and his partner – now the mainstays of the NW Group – called a meeting of local people at which the decision was taken to form a NW Group.

The area was also prone to cold calling and in one case an elderly couple had £2,500 stolen by bogus tradesmen. Other problems highlighted by residents included poor street lighting in some areas, bushes/shrubs providing hiding places for would-be attackers and speeding cars/car parking.

Activities

Keeping Residents Informed

This is seen as essential in promoting the benefits of the NW scheme amongst residents, as well as highlighting successes to partner organizations. This has been achieved through press briefings on specific issues and circulating newsletters. More recently, newsletters have been translated into Polish for the benefit of some of the Polish families that have moved into the area.

Another key aspect of information/publicity has been the local profile achieved by the Co-ordinator and his partner. Their enthusiasm and determination has encouraged local people to become involved, attracted support from external volunteers and raised the profile of the area in the local press and with partner organisations.

No Cold Calling

The group has established the largest No Cold Calling area in Hull. Since then, cold calling has been virtually eradicated, with residents feeling empowered to challenge anyone appearing to knock on doors uninvited.

Improving Service Delivery

A key aim has been to organise activities and improve facilities for children and young people. Prior to the NW Group being established, the only local facility for young people was a poorly equipped park, with no local authority or other services delivered in the area. Since then the NW Group has successfully lobbied for improvements. Currently, there is rugby training each Monday, football training each Tuesday and remote control car racing each Wednesday. In addition, Youth Workers from the City Council are now active in the area, organising various events and trips. Most activities are aimed at 11-19 year olds as it is slightly more difficult to obtain funding for activities aimed at younger age groups. The rationale is to provide diversionary activities in the short term and to promote improved community cohesion over the long term.

Pressure from the Group on the local authority led to an enhanced street cleaning service, cutting back of trees and bushes, improved street lighting and the installation of alley gates. In addition, a residents parking scheme has been implemented.

Getting Young People Involved

Recently, a Kids NW has been set up, involving those aged 16 and under and supported by the Police and local authority. As a first initiative, the young people involved raised a petition which led to the installation of a bus shelter.

Fundraising

The Group has excelled at fundraising. For example, it has obtained a licence from Hull City Council to run its own lottery (costing £40 initially, and £20 each year to renew). In its first year it generated £234 in income for the Group, net of prize money paid out. In addition, there is a *Raffle and prize bingo at the Group's quarterly meetings and it also received ad hoc donations from local residents who wish to show their appreciation for its work.* This money pays for stationery and sports equipment loaned out to local children. The Groves NW also secured a grant of £250 from Kingston Communications which funded the provision of Christmas hampers for 25 older residents.

Partnership Working

The Group has created successful partnerships with a number of City Council departments and the Police, as well as the local press. Engagement with City Council Youth Workers has been especially successful. The approach has been to use a combination of tact, diplomacy, persuasion and pressure, as appropriate. Making demands of service providers and being confrontational is regarded as counter-productive, with positive engagement seen as much more beneficial. It has also been found to be especially helpful to be able to identify key individuals within partner organisations who have decision making authority, rather than going through the usual channels and getting nowhere.

In respect of the Police specifically, there have been difficulties arising from not having a consistent Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). However, by working closely with the neighbourhood policing team as a whole, a productive relationship has developed.

Impacts

Crime and anti-social behaviour are believed to have reduced significantly and, with them, the fear of crime amongst local residents. Within its first year of operation, crime was reported to have reduced by 30% and it is believed that NW activities led to the closure of 5 drug houses in the area.

There is also evidence of barriers between younger and older residents having been broken down, even to the extent of speaking to each other in the street. This might appear relatively insignificant, but has actually reassured some older people that young people should not necessarily be feared.

More generally, community spirit has been revived, and there is now a feeling of The Groves being an area in which people can enjoy living and, in many cases, share a real sense of neighbourliness.