

East Devon's Community Safety Officer's Report

March 2010

The Sidmouth and Ottery St Mary Local Action Group met on 26th January

Total crime in both areas has decreased over the last 12 months. In Ottery St Mary from 665 to 653 crimes and in Sidmouth from 692 to 520 which is a decrease of 25%.

Violent Crime

- There are no major issues in either area with this crime type. In Ottery St Mary over the last 12 months violent crime reports have increased slightly from 79 to 87 offences but in Sidmouth they have decreased from 125 to 78 offences which represents a 37% reduction.

Acquisitive Crime

- Sgt Andy Turner reported that there is a continuing problem of thefts from rural locations and there has been an increase in such offences in recent times. He asked if the LAG was able to find the funds to purchase alarms to be supplied to potential or repeat victims. This was an initiative which was working in the Honiton and Axminster areas. £800 is therefore being provided by the LAG for this and this will enable Police to purchase 4 alarms. It is hoped that the Police will also be able to provide some additional funding.

Anti Social Behaviour

- There are still issues regarding youths congregating in Broadclyst on a Monday night and causing anti social behaviour. The youth club now opens between 7pm and 9pm in the hope that when it shuts the youths will go home rather than hanging around the area which they did when it shut at 8pm. The Police have issued warning letters to some of the young people who are involved in the anti social behaviour and as a result some parents have imposed a curfew on their children.

Public Confidence

- No new initiatives to report on.

Other Community Safety Issues

- Chris Gibbings reported that the work on the arches at Sidmouth seafront was in the process of being completed by Sidmouth Town Council. The middle arch would be open as toilets and a shower area for the summer. Another arch would be available for use by the Sidmouth Youth Trust. A youth leader will be sought for the summer.
- A senior teacher from a local school told the meeting that there is a drugs issue arising at the school but staff are dealing with it. Other members of the group reported that there has been a big increase in the use of drugs in the teenage group in East Devon. During the New Year the police in Sidmouth have carried out an operation trying to reduce under age drinking but had found that the teenagers have

replaced alcohol with cannabis. There was particular concern over the report that 11 – 12 year olds were using cannabis. Cannabis was a high strength drug that can cause mental health problems. The Police are giving a talk to students from the school in question within the next couple of weeks and the school have already contacted YSmart for advice.

The Exmouth Local Action Group met on 24th February

Total crime in the area has decreased over the last 12 months from 2653 offences to 2582 offences which represents a 2.7% reduction.

Violent Crime

- There are no specific initiatives re this category.

Acquisitive Crime

- The Police have mounted several ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) operations in and around the town recently in an attempt to impact on this type of offence.

Anti Social Behaviour

- The Flava Dance Group has performed at the Exmouth Community College recently. The intention is to get young people involved in dance as a diversion from causing asb.
- Nightshift staff are now doing two shifts on Saturdays in the town centre. On the first and third Saturdays of the month they operate from the AXIS Centre between 9:30pm and 12:30am. They are currently getting some 30 to 40 young people attending. They also continue with the late shift every Saturday evening.
- The Youth Service at Exmouth is working with a group of youngsters, some of whom are on the cusp of getting into trouble for asb. They want to get them involved in community projects.

Public Confidence

- Between 6th and 8th April a group of supervised young people will be working in Littleham, offering to mend fences, clear up litter, clean windows etc.
- Exmouth Community College staff are taking a lead in starting up a Community Cadet Scheme which will link in with other partner agencies such as the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Honiton and Axe Valley Local Action Groups have not met since the last Steering Group meeting.

The East and Mid Devon Domestic Violence Forum meets on 2nd March and will be reported on at the next Steering Group meeting.

The East and Mid Devon Drug and Alcohol Group met on 11th February

- There is a lot of concern about the increase in the use of 'Legal Highs', which has been flagged up at LAG meetings in both districts. YSmart are seeing constant use of methedrone. When doing assessments they are finding that lots of young people are unaware that it is a drug and they see nothing wrong in taking it because it is legal. EDP reported that in North Devon they have seen the first case of someone who uses only methedrone. The Police in Exeter are looking at tackling underage selling of methedrone in Exeter shops. Apparently 2 young people have been admitted to Exeter A&E since November due to methedrone use – this has not been widely publicised. There is a county wide meeting taking place to look at a strategic way of dealing with 'legal high' such as methedrone. The Government will be reclassifying methedrone as Class C, but the exact date when this will take place is unknown.
- EDP and ENDAS merge in April 2010 and will be known as Devon Drug Service. As a result of this restructuring a more effective service will be provided. Reducing waiting lists will be one of the issues addressed from the outset.
- The EDP mobile harm reduction unit is very successful, and is visiting Axminster, Seaton, Exmouth and Tiverton each week. In Axminster the service is providing contact with clients that EDP have not had contact with before. Exmouth is quiet and this may be because clients are going directly to EDP in Exeter. The unit therefore may relocate to Honiton. A high amount of referrals were received in January (47 compared to approx 15 in Nov) which may be due to the success of the van.
- The DAAT is getting smaller and is facing a big budget cut from April. A meeting is being held on 22 February to look at how work can be covered and options include going out to partners to cover some areas of work.
- The DAAT Drug Treatment Plan has been drafted and is available for comment. Feedback will be available in March. Main priorities remain the same, with the addition of work with families and safeguarding.
- The treatment plan for drug treatment in prisons is now operational in all 3 Devon prisons. The high turnover of prisoners in Exeter is having a big impact on this. Continuity of services for those coming out of prison will be introduced from April and this will include those returning to Devon who are in prison out of the area. Providing scripts on Saturdays is currently being looked at as many people are released from prison on Friday afternoons.

Other Community Safety Work

- I attended a drop in session / PACT meeting held at Axminster Town Hall on 28th January between 4pm and 7pm. This was well attended with nearly 80 members of the public attending to talk to a variety of agencies.
- I have also attended two Police Authority Liaison Meetings recently, one in Budleigh Salterton and one in Axminster.
- I have agreed to fund £1,800 for Police to provide 6 alarms to be given to persons suffering from domestic abuse. This will pay for the hire of the alarms from an alarm

company for 2 years. The alarms are linked in to the satellite navigation systems and can accurately identify the location of the person calling for help.

- The Police have devised an A5 flyer to be widely distributed. It advises people to lock their sheds and mark property contained within them.

Other Anti Social Behaviour Work

- Two case conferences have been held recently in respect of adults who are causing problems for neighbours. One lives in Sidmouth and the other Exmouth.
- Julia and I have had several meetings at Middlemoor Police Headquarters to discuss a multi agency pledge which it is hoped that all agencies will sign up to in respect of tackling anti social behaviour. This will apply to Devon and Cornwall.
- Two Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have been drawn up re two Exmouth youths who continue to cause issues in Littleham, Exmouth.
- A 14 year old girl who is currently the subject of an ABC and her mother, have been referred to the Strengthening Families Course run by the Youth Offending Team.

Gerry Moore
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East Devon.

25th February 2010