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Great results over last three years

Over the last three years the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership was signed up to a Local Area Agreement. We set ourselves a challenge of reducing serious acquisitive crime which is domestic burglary, car crime and robbery by 5% per year. During 2007/08 there were 3139 serious acquisitive crimes in Wycombe District, and at the end of 2010/11 this had reduced to 2252 – a difference of 887 offences, nearly 30%.

	Target number to reduce crimes by	Actual reduction	Variance
Year 1 (2008/09)	157	152	5 crimes below target
Year 2 (2009/10)	146	572	Target exceeded by 426 crimes
Year 3 (2010/11)	141	443	Target exceeded by 302 crimes

Our achievements for 2010/11 are as follows:

- Between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011 the number of serious acquisitive crime offences was 16% below our maximum allowable target (443 actual crimes).
- The number of theft of motor vehicle offences was 39% below our maximum allowable target (133 actual crimes)
- The number of theft from motor vehicle offences was 25% below our maximum allowable target (339 actual crimes).
- Burglary dwelling offences were only 1% above the maximum allowable target (which is equal to just 8 offences) but still meant a 4% reduction and robbery offences were 13% above the target set (which is 21 actual offences). This was the only category of crime where we did not manage to achieve a reduction.

Feedback from our readers

It is always lovely to hear from you after each publication. We occasionally get comments about some of our items, most of which are very complimentary but some of which offer a critical opinion about certain things. We will always welcome your comments as it helps us improve our service to you.

Following our last edition we had an email from a local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator who was happy for us to quote her:

“Well done. Just read the latest edition. I hope the cuts don’t have a big impact on you all as I think you produce one of the most useful, common-sense, informative documents the council produces along with all the other invaluable work you do. Good luck”

Do you agree? If you have any thoughts about this newsletter or you want to share something with our readers which you have undertaken locally to reduce crime in your area then why not let us know? Email us at communitysafety@wycombe.gov.uk

Recent rise in car crime and burglary

Despite all our hard work we have recently seen a rise in car crime which we are keen to halt. Motorists are being encouraged by police to remove valuable items from their cars after a spate of thefts from vehicles in the Marlow area.

Wycombe Community Safety Partnership will be writing to motorists, as part of the Clear Car Campaign, who’ve left their vehicles vulnerable to thieves by leaving valuable items on show.

To help us keep crime down you are reminded to remove all valuables, particularly laptops, satellite navigators and money from their vehicles whenever the vehicle is unoccupied. Most car criminals are opportunists and are unlikely to break into an empty vehicle. It is also advisable to park in a well lit area and to set the car alarm / immobiliser if the vehicle has one. Officers will be patrolling the hotspot areas to check vehicle owners have removed valuables.

If items are seen on display the vehicle’s details are recorded in Clear Car Campaign notebooks, along with the time and place it was seen and what was on display. A letter is then sent to the owner with appropriate crime prevention advice. The notepads are carried by community safety partners including Wycombe District Council’s Community Safety Team, along with Thames Valley Police Staff.



Anyone who may have witnessed the thefts or who has any information to help the police with their investigations should contact the police via 08458 505 505 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Thomas Brothers get ASBOs



Richard Thomas



Trevor Thomas

Two High Wycombe brothers have been issued with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), after Wycombe District Council, Thames Valley Police and the joint Public Safety Team received numerous complaints about their anti-social and offensive behaviour.

Wycombe Magistrates Court found that Richard Thomas, 26, of Buckingham Close and his brother Trevor Thomas, 30, of West Wycombe Road have not only been damaging property belonging to Wycombe District Council, but have acted in an anti-social manner which has harassed, intimidated and endangered the life of other council tenants.

The three-year-long ASBOs, prohibit the brothers from acting in an anti-social manner likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household in Buckinghamshire. Breaches of the ASBOs could result in prison time of up to five years.

To report incidents of anti-social behaviour to Wycombe District Council and Thames Valley Police's joint Public Safety Team, phone 01494 421 087 or email asb@wycombe.gov.uk

Got an ASB problem? – Call the Public Safety Team on 01494 421087 or email: asb@wycombe.gov.uk

Out of the Dark

‘Out of the Dark’ is a social enterprise project run by High Wycombe-based charity Street Dreams and started trading in autumn 2010. The charity aims to get disadvantaged, disengaged and disruptive young people off the streets.

Classic furniture brands that originated in High Wycombe more than 100 ago, such as Ercol, G-Plan and Parker Knoll are being restored with a 21st century twist, then sold to raise funds for the charity. Jade Blades co-founded Street Dreams with husband Jay, originally from Hackney.

Jade said: “This project is an ideal opportunity for disadvantaged young people to get motivation for further training and employment, in partnership with the local community. The young people love the creative process, and it keeps their mind distracted from getting involved in unsavoury activities.”

To date, the scheme has had a lot of support from local companies and organisations. Jade is keen to stress that the scheme is not just about volunteering.

“It stems from core values; trust, family, friendship, volunteering and the concept of getting back what you put in – the young people show focus and commitment in exchange for training and a way to better themselves.”

The young designers are encouraged to take ownership of the work – from the idea stage to painting and even making a sales pitch on exhibition night. There have been 3 exhibitions locally to date and the team are taking the next show to London to exhibit during Clerkenwell Design Week.



The pieces have come from private residents, schools, sales and even from overseas. It is hoped people will buy the unique furnishings for their home or that traders will be keen to snap up a bargain – and that local businesses and clubs will throw their weight behind the scheme by purchasing or borrowing a piece to put on display.

Street Dreams are also keen to receive any further donations of old or unused pieces of classic furniture. To find out more about how you can buy a piece, commission a piece, donate some furniture or even volunteer on the project please contact Jade Blades on 01494 550286 / 07730 605564 or email Jade at jade@outofthedark.org.uk You can also visit the Out of Dark website: www.outofthedark.org.uk



Anti-social behaviour – it's not a good look

Thames Valley Police launched its summer campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) on 4 July. A group of students helped to make a film to show the impact that ASB can have on other people, as well as the consequences of noisy and rowdy behaviour.



There is an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour during the summer months. This is particularly relevant to teenagers and young people drinking in public places and causing a nuisance with noise and criminal damage. This campaign is designed to raise awareness and to discourage young people from behaving like this. It also aims to make them aware of the consequences and impact of their actions on communities. The campaign will ensure that residents are aware that neighbourhood teams will be patrolling over the summer period to prevent ASB.

The film features a group of teenagers and follows them through their end of term celebrations, starting with them getting ready to go out and ending with them being stopped by the police in a park. It shows the effects that drinking can have on behaviour and how annoying and intimidating ASB can be.

Full details of the campaign and further information are available on a dedicated Thames Valley Police Facebook page www.facebook.com/notagoodlook

Police crack-down on criminals

The crack-down continues across the Wycombe District on those who commit crime in the area.

Detective Inspector Sue Martin, based at High Wycombe Police Station, said: "In the last 12 months we arrested a staggering 588 people for committing burglary, robbery and auto crime offences in the area. We have also detected 349 of these crimes as opposed to 173 for the previous year which means more criminals are being caught and paying the penalty for their actions."

"More burglaries are being detected than last year, we are solving double the number of robberies than previously and we continue to increase the detection rate for auto crime. We will continue to actively pursue and challenge the small minority who are intent on committing crime in Wycombe to ensure that those who live and work here continue to feel safe and enjoy being in the area."

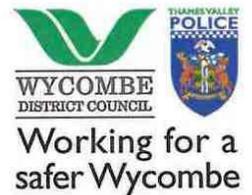
*These figures are for a 12 month period from 7 June 2010 until 7 June 2011

A Hawaiian Summer?

Everybody needs a holiday and the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership would like you to come home and find everything how you left it. However nearly half of burglaries happen when the property is empty. We have prepared a tick list of useful tips to consider before you take that deserved break.

POSTCARD

- Make sure your home looks occupied at all times.
- Don't leave your curtains closed during the daytime, as this shows the house is empty.
- Use automatic timer switches to turn your lights on when it gets dark.
- Cancel any regular deliveries such as newspapers and milk.
- Avoid discussing your holiday plans where strangers may hear the details of your absence from home.
- Cut the lawn before you go and trim back any plants that thieves could hide behind.
- Consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members or a bank; or lock them in a safe.
- Avoid putting your home address on your luggage when you are travelling to your holiday destination.
- If you normally leave valuable pedal cycles or similar items in your shed, consider putting them in your house.
- Finally, don't forget to lock all external doors and windows. If you've got a burglar alarm, make sure it is set.



The "Hawaiian" Community Safety Team has been giving out the postcards in High Wycombe Town Centre. We unfortunately chose a day when the weather was not at its best and we all wished we really were in Hawaii!





Tweet Tweet! – Police in Wycombe using Twitter on the beat

Police officers in the Wycombe area will be starting to use Twitter as a communication tool. Deputy Area Commander, Chief Inspector Colin Seaton said: “While we will continue to communicate with our communities through traditional methods we must realise that more and more people are using these sites to keep in touch with what is going on in their lives.

“We are going to be starting to use Twitter to provide people with regular updates and any information we think might be informative to the community, including details of events, crimes and local initiatives.”

To receive regular updates about the police in Wycombe, follow the link below:

http://twitter.com/TVP_Wycombe

Twitter is a micro-blogging and social networking site, where comments can be tweeted and read.

Catalytic Converters – Advice

Car and van drivers need to be on their guard following a spate of catalytic converter thefts. Catalytic converters are being targeted purely because of their scrap value. Vehicles targeted are usually those with high road clearance or commercial vans in both public car parks and residential roads.

Drivers need to be extra vigilant, perform regular safety checks on their vehicles and inform police immediately if they see any suspicious behaviour around parked cars.

It only takes a few minutes for a thief to crawl under a vehicle and remove the converter which is then sold on, but each time a catalytic converter is stolen from a vehicle it costs the owner more than £1,000 to replace as well as the inconvenience of taking and leaving the car in a garage to be repaired.

Many people don't know that the catalytic converter has been removed from their vehicle until they are driving and notice the vehicle is making an unusually loud noise. Owners of any vehicle should remain vigilant and not leave their vehicles at risk. There are also measures drivers can take to help protect their vehicle against this type of theft:

Defensive Parking

In the case of businesses with a fleet of vehicles, it is possible to block the high-clearance vehicles by parking near structures such as walls and low clearance vehicles to prevent access underneath. At the very least it will slow the thieves down so other security measures have time to effectively respond. Think where you park

and try to limit access whilst maintaining any natural surveillance there may be. Consider allowing employees to take vehicles home to more secure parking locations than industrial estates.

Effective Security Lighting

Lighting is vital to reducing catalytic converter theft. Though opportunistic thieves may strike in busy areas in broad daylight, the more organised thieves are more professional, risk averse and likely to offend at night. Good security lighting can make vehicles more visible and improve natural surveillance. External dusk to dawn lighting which automatically stays on during the hours of darkness and goes off as it starts to get light is the most appropriate type.

CCTV/Alarms

The installation of CCTV to cover parking areas can help reduce theft. Remote monitored CCTV could even stop catalytic converter theft before it happens if the monitoring centre can notify the police in real time as an offence takes place. The use of driveway alarms can help alert you to anyone trespassing on your property. Try to park in areas which are covered by CCTV.

ID Etching

Etching a catalytic converter with a serial number will help police track a stolen converter and overtly advertising that a vehicle is protected by property marking may also deter offenders as it will potentially reduce the opportunities for selling on the converters at reputable scrap metal dealers. Whilst we can not recommend companies you might find if useful to see more information on ID etching which can be found at www.retainagroup.co.uk.

Perimeter Security

Fencing will deter the occasional/opportunistic catalytic thieves and slow down the more organised thieves.

Welded Bolts

If a catalytic converter is a 'bolt on' it is possible to have the bolts welded shut. This is only a deterrent to the lowest grade of catalytic converter thief working with a wrench but may still be enough of a deterrent to help prevent a theft.

Catalytic Converter Protective Sleeves

Protective coverings are quite expensive but make it much more difficult for the saw wielding thief to steal catalytic converters.

Drugs – The Facts: Cannabis

The effects

Some people may feel chilled out, relaxed and happy, while others have one puff and feel sick. Others get the giggles and may become talkative. Hunger pangs are common and are known as 'getting the munchies'. Users may become more aware of their senses or get a feeling of slowing of time, which are due to its hallucinogenic effects.

The law

Cannabis is a Class B drug which means that it's illegal to possess it and to supply it. Possession can result in up to five years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Supplying someone else, even your friends, can result in 14 years in jail and/or an unlimited fine.

Did you know?

- Drug driving is as illegal as drink driving. You could go to prison, get a heavy fine or be disqualified.
- Allowing people to take cannabis in your house or any other premises is illegal. If the police catch someone smoking cannabis in a club they can prosecute the landlord, club owner or person holding the party.
- Using cannabis to relieve pain is also an offence. Possession is illegal whatever you're using it for.

Appearance and use

- Cannabis comes in different forms.
- Hash is a black or brown lump made from the resin of the plant. It's quite often squidgy. In the past, this was the commonest form of cannabis in the UK, but this is no longer the case.
- Much less common is cannabis oil, made by separating the resin from the cannabis plant using various solvents. It is a sticky, dark honey-coloured oil.
- Herbal cannabis (grass or weed) is made from the dried leaves and flowering parts of the female plant and looks like tightly packed dried herbs.
- Most people mix cannabis with tobacco and smoke it as a spliff or a joint. Some people put it in a bong or a type of pipe. And others make tea with it or stick it in food like cakes or 'cannabis cookies'.

The risks

- Cannabis can make you become anxious, panicky, suspicious or paranoid. It can affect coordination, which is one of the reasons why drug driving is just as illegal as drink driving.
- Cannabis isn't harmless. Like tobacco, it has lots of chemical 'nasties', which can cause lung disease and possibly cancer with long-term or heavy use, especially as it is often mixed with tobacco and smoked without a filter. It can also make asthma worse, and cause wheezing in non-asthma sufferers.
- It increases the heart rate and can affect blood pressure. It can cause paranoia in the short term, but in those with a pre-existing psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia, it can contribute to relapse.
- If you use cannabis and have a family background of mental illness, such as



schizophrenia, you may be at increased risk of developing a psychotic illness.

- It is reported that frequent use of cannabis can cut a man's sperm count, reduce sperm motility, and can suppress ovulation in women and so may affect fertility.
- If you're pregnant, smoking cannabis frequently may have some association with the risk of the baby being born smaller than expected.
- Regular, heavy use makes it difficult to learn and concentrate. Some people begin to feel tired all the time and can't seem to get motivated.

Slang names

Weed, pot, grass, puff, ganja, hash, hashish, herb, skunk, draw, gangster, dope, spliff, marijuana, solid, wacky backy, reefer and token.

Much of this information has been taken from the FRANK website. If you have concern about drugs or want to know more information then help is at hand through the FRANK website : www.talktofrank.com or further information is also available on the Buckinghamshire Drug and Alcohol Team's website : www.bucksdaat.co.uk

Springhill Open Prison

I had a very interesting visit to Springhill Open Prison recently with the then Chairman of Wycombe District Council, Cllr Bendyshe-Brown and Caroline Stevens of the New Leaf Project, which looks at the resettlement back into the community of prisoners released after short-term sentences.

We went there because of our interest in understanding how we can help prisoners who have served their sentences settle back into our communities and go on to be useful citizens. The visit was interesting to me from the very start. Being an open prison I was not sure what to expect. Having visited Bullingdon Prison in the past I was expecting it to be fairly similar and so in my head had pictured the comparison between caged and free range chickens! Both being totally enclosed but both having very different living conditions. I was pleasantly surprised at this not being the case and that the open prison was fairly open.

During this visit we met with a group of prisoners who had offered to come and chat with us about what they feel would help them most when they get released from prison. It will come as no surprise that to have a job is the most stabilising factor. It will also come as no surprise that this is the hardest thing to achieve.

We found out some very interesting things about Springhill Open Prison. It has the lowest reconviction rate of all prisons and it is the cheapest run prison. It has many projects running including a project to produce its own bio diesel, and has a Lottery Grant for £250,000 to establish a self sustaining business enterprise in garden/food produce waste management. It now has a unit that recycles for the prison and the local community and it now makes a profit.

The prison provides gas engineer training for prisoners along with plant equipment training and brick laying skills. These skills have been used to rejuvenate buildings within the prison.

A young man who had the gas training course has said:

“Since completing my outside placement on the practical side of training, I have gained experience with not only working with different gas appliances but with different customers and gaining confidence with members of the public again. This course has given me a qualification which I can now go out and use to get full time employment and work in the gas industry until I retire. The future for me now is positive and I am looking forward to coming out of prison, getting full time employment and staying out of prison for good and going straight.”

The prisoners at Springhill are low risk prisoners and before they are released they are required to do a number of community service hours and can even go on work placements and also hold down paid jobs.

One young lad spoke to me about how excited he was to have been offered a job recently in a large garden and how he had to go for an interview and was successful. The excitement and joy in the way he told me this and his desire to ensure he kept the job were very obvious. It was about giving him the opportunity and he assured me he was not going to ‘mess it up’. I made an enquiry about him again this week and have been told his reports have been excellent and he loves it. A scheme to provide mopeds to young people to help them get to jobs is now being investigated for him to help him to and from work.

Another recent activity was the Armed Forces event in Aylesbury where the prison provided a large number of prisoners to help set up the event and then take it all down. They have been thanked for their help and advised the event would not have taken place without them.

The core aim of the Employment Links Service within the Prison is to get prisoners integrated back into society as useful citizens. They ensure they are educated, coached and trained to enable them to compete in the competitive job market.

Part of this process is to take part in unpaid work within the community, where talent and acquired skills can be utilised in support of charities, not for profit organisations and local and central government agencies.

HMP Springhill currently sends prisoners to 40 different organisations in the area. They can also provide appropriately skilled prisoners to organisations as placements. These can be for just a small number of prisoners or quick impact projects involving up to 20 men. Work carried out can be as diverse as driving, administration, construction works, warehousing, large scale clearances etc.



If you are an organisation that could benefit from this type of assistance then Principle Officer Paul Chadwick, the Employment Links Manager would like to hear from you. He can be contacted on 01296 445228 or by email to paul.chadwick@hmps.gsi.uk



Springhill House has had a long and varied past, starting in 1872 as a family home, becoming a wartime base for first MI6– the Secret Service and then the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in 1941. After the war, Springhill had a multiplicity of uses, and became the first Open Prison in the country in 1953.

Item by Gillian Stimpson, Community Safety Manager

Wycombe
Community Safety
Partnership

c/o Wycombe
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Got information about crime?
Don't want to speak to police?
Don't want to give your name?
Then call the independent charity, Crimestoppers on:

0800 555 111



Thames Valley
CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime

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