

Youngsters dance to the beat in Bexley

A ten week street dancing club for five to 19 year-olds in Bexley held its last performance recently in front of an audience of family and friends.

The street dance club has been running in the borough for two years after Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Jean Attfield spoke to young people who told her that they wanted to do a fun and different activity.

PCSO Attfield approached Kent dance teacher Amy Hill, who agreed to provide young people with after school street dancing sessions. The sessions provide youngsters with a worthwhile and diversionary activity and are funded by London Borough of Bexley's youth opportunities funding scheme.

Celebrating the end of the course, the 65 dancers performed a show for their loved ones at St James the Great Blendon Church.

Safer Neighbourhoods officers attend the sessions, giving them the opportunity to engage with young people in an informal and unconventional way and to show that the police are approachable.

PCSO Jean Attfield, of Sidcup Safer Neighbourhoods team said: "The street dancing sessions provide young people with a fun activity that gets them off the streets and gives them something to do. The scheme also provides us with the chance to break down barriers with a traditionally hard to reach group of the community and promotes communication skills and teamwork.

"The final night was a great success and the dancers gave a performance to be proud of."

Chiswick schools protected by Smartwater

Chiswick Business Park has teamed up with Hounslow's local police Safer Neighbourhoods team (SNT) to ensure every school in the area is protected against thieves. Chiswick Park Enjoy-Work have funded Smartwater kits for all schools in Chiswick meaning that hi-tech equipment can be uniquely marked and is traceable back to the schools in question.

Smartwater has proven to be an effective deterrent to thieves, and, if marked items are stolen, the unique code in Smartwater means police are quickly able to identify stolen goods, secure good forensic evidence and ensure items are returned quickly.

As well as having the kits and a subscription paid for by Chiswick Park, Turnham Green Safer Neighbourhoods team assisted by getting high profile signs made for each school to display.

Sergeant Ben Clark of Turnham Green Safer Neighbourhoods team said: "I'm very grateful to Chiswick Park for funding this security measure for our local schools. Whilst incidents of theft and burglary at educational establishments are rare, the

distress and disruption that thefts cause can have a knock on effect to teaching and to the safety of staff and pupils. By having Smartwater in our schools, we hope to deter criminals who might think schools are a soft target.”

Kay Chaston of Chiswick Park said: “We are very pleased to help the local police in this initiative. We are keen to promote safe and secure environments where young people can flourish. Chiswick Park Enjoy-Work is always looking to work together to help the local community in Chiswick.”

PCSO Steve visits primary school in Hackney

Police Support Community Officers (PCSOs) from Hackney Central Safer Neighbourhoods team and Hackney Safer Schools team in partnership with ‘Inspire’, visited Brook Community Primary School. ‘PCSO Steve’, a Safer Neighbourhoods team character costume, accompanied them.

PCSO Steve supports engagement with young age groups, helping to explain serious messages in a fun and friendly way.

The visit was designed to encourage children from years one and two to talk to the PCSOs and understand who they are and what they do in the community. The PCSOs also explained their uniform and equipment to the children. The children had fun trying on different pieces of policing equipment.

The team asked the children questions in order to gain an understanding of their concerns. There was also an opportunity for the children to ask the PCSOs questions on whatever subject they liked, which seemed to prove very popular.

Teaching assistant Malcolm Richards said: “The visit was a great opportunity to build bridges, to show the children that the police are not something to fear but is there to help them and to make our community a safer place in which to live”.

PCSO Laura Crosbie said: “Through Inspire, I was able to engage with the local primary school and explain my duties as a PCSO. The event gave the children an opportunity to ask us questions and they now know that they can come and say hello to us when we are out patrolling. We hope to return to the school in the near future to visit the older children”.

Inspire is an independent charity that supports the education, training and development of young people by linking businesses or organisations and their employees with schools and colleges.

Keep safe poster competition

Three primary school children from Northumberland Heath have won a poster competition following a ‘keep safe’ campaign arranged by a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) from their local Safer Neighbourhoods team in Bexley.

The winning poster and two runners up from Belmont Primary School were chosen by the Northumberland Heath Safer Neighbourhoods Team and the posters will be displayed in the front office of Belvedere Police Station.

The winning poster was designed by an 11-year old girl, a 9 year-old girl won second place and third place went to an 11 year-old girl.

Temporary Borough Commander Glyn Jones presented the winners with vouchers kindly donated by WH Smith.

Competition organiser PCSO Jane Syndercombe, of Northumberland Heath Safer Neighbourhoods team said: "It is important for children to be aware from an early age of personal safety and the poster competition was a creative way for them to keep this in mind."

Temporary Borough Commander Glyn Jones, Bexley Police, added: "Child safety and education are very important and this competition successfully combined both elements."

Safer Neighbourhoods Team targets crime reduction

Towards the middle of last year the local ward panel for Hammersmith Broadway, which is made up of local residents and local businesses voted that the local Safer Neighbourhoods team (SNT) should work to reduce the number of thefts being committed in King Street in particular pick pocketing and bag thefts.

Although robust enforcement by the team has proved successful it does not necessarily guarantee long-term benefits for the local residents and businesses.

Recently, at the Novotel Hotel in Hammersmith, Police Constable Paul Trueman and Police Sergeant Jayme Johnson from Hammersmith Safer Neighbourhoods team, presented their vision for lasting solutions to tackle and deter thieves in and around the main shopping area of King Street.

The presentation was supported by Professor Lorraine Gamman and her team from Design Against Crime, part of Central Saint Martin's College of Art & Design, with expertise and innovation in crime prevention design.

Attendees included representatives from the Home Office, Cabinet Office, Design Council, Association of Chief Police Officers, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, multi-national corporations with headquarters based in Hammersmith as well as local businesses such as banks, licensed premises and other retail outlets.

Police Constable Paul Trueman said, "We want to make Hammersmith bottom of the list for thieves, but top of the list for businesses and visitors. The aim of the presentation was to win support from local organisations and businesses to put in place long-term, innovative solutions. The next steps are to develop these suggestions and work with specific businesses to rally resources and get results"

Sergeant Jayme Johnson said, "The presentation was very well received. We balanced the needs of the businesses - who do not want to be associated with crime - and the needs of the wider community, who deserve to live and shop without fear of being victims of thieves"