

## **Southwark Safer Neighbourhoods Team donates money to youth club**

The East Walworth Safer Neighbourhoods team (Southwark borough) has donated £2,500 from its partnership fund to Victory House youth club. This has helped to set up this youth club available to all young people across Southwark.

The money has provided much needed IT, music equipment, several pool tables and multi-purpose games.

The youth club is a voluntary organization. It is held on the last Friday of every month located at Victory House on Congreve Street in London.

Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Becky Burch explains further, “It was really great to be able to donate this money to the club. We have attended the youth club on several occasions challenging the young people to pool and table tennis competitions. This has helped us engage with local young people who now regularly ask when we are available.

We have also been asked by Victory Church to hold several talks regarding issues that affect the church and its congregation. We have also attended several special events that the church has organised. This has included a youth rally with over 1000 people attending.

Due to the excellent working relationship between Victory Church and the East Walworth Safer Neighbourhoods team, we have set up a youth ward panel meeting.

This will run once a month at the youth club. It will enable young people to provide the police with their views on what is happening in their area and they can talk to police concerning the issues that are affecting their lives. This will enable the East Walworth Safer Neighbourhoods team to address their issues as a ward priority.”

## **Hammersmith and Fulham Safer Neighbourhoods Team involved in successful crime reduction initiative**

Operation Sheriff was a crime reduction initiative run within Shepherds Bush Green Safer Neighbourhoods ward (Hammersmith and Fulham borough) in the lead up to Christmas. The ward is also home to Europe's largest Shopping Centre 'Westfield' that is located within its boundaries.

The operation included all the officers from Shepherds Bush 24/7 Safer Neighbourhoods team (13 officers), 27 special constables and assistance from British Transport Police (BTP) with their own crime prevention stand located in and around transport hubs on the ward. The operation took place during the period of Thursday till Sunday as intelligence showed that this was when the majority of the offences were being committed.

There were a total of 20 arrests made, ranging from 'street gambling' to burglary. A total of 19 people were charged and will be put before the courts. Other matters included a vehicle seizure, issuing of penalty notices, three cannabis warnings and 29 stop & searches.

The operation highlighted the close partnership between Hammersmith & Fulham police and Westfield Shopping Centre Management/Security. Police officers were actually deployed to work within the centre's CCTV room to direct resources within the vast shopping centre.

The operation was a resounding success and was only made possible with the assistance of those concerned changing their working hours to cover late turn in the lead up to Christmas. It was also helped by the enthusiasm of officers from the Special Constabulary who gave up their own time to assist.

Sergeant Ian Lewis from Shepherds Bush 24/7 Safer Neighbourhoods team commented: "Taking into consideration the 29 million people who passed through Westfield Shopping Centre in the past twelve months, crimes have remained low around Shepherds Bush Green and were further reduced during the month of December due to the efforts of the Shepherds Bush Green Safer Neighbourhoods Team and the Hammersmith & Fulham Special Constabulary"

### **Tower Hamlets Safer Neighbourhoods Team helps to reduce crime in Brick Lane**

Tenants and neighbours in the Brick Lane area have expressed their gratitude as they have seen a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour and drug dealing, particularly in the Cheshire and Swanfield Street area.

This follows months of research and action between September and December in a joint initiative between Look Ahead Housing and Weavers Safer Neighbourhoods team (Tower Hamlets borough).

Weavers Safer Neighbourhoods team conducted a number of warrants following information provided by the community and Look Ahead Housing. A number of arrests were made and property seized including Class A drugs and a dangerous dog. The team links in with Look Ahead Housing when a particular address becomes a repeat problem so action can be taken when residents continually breach their tenancy agreements.

Police Constable (PC) Gary Rowlands said: "Working with the Housing Association pays off when information is shared and used to solve community problems, reducing the need for further intervention."

Police Sergeant (PS) Charlie Earwicker said: "Positive action was taken to tackle residents concerns. We will continue to work closely with Look Ahead Housing and act on any information from the local community."

Gamal Dixon from Look Ahead Housing said: "We worked closely with Weavers Safer Neighbourhoods team and this is a shining example of how productive working in partnership can be."

### **Dispersal Zone in Bexley reduces Anti-social Behaviour by 73%**

A dispersal zone that has been in place in parts of East Wickham and St Michael's since late October has resulted in a 73% reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB) calls to police.

The dispersal zone covers the Ridley Road area in Welling and was implemented to tackle ASB where large numbers of young people were going to the area to cause trouble, seriously affecting the lives of local residents.

In the three months prior to the dispersal zone's implementation, police were receiving an average of 15 calls a week in relation to ASB in the Ridley Road area. Since the dispersal zone has been in place this has reduced to an average of four calls a week.

The dispersal order gives officers and PCSOs discretionary powers to disperse groups of people who do not live in the area and ban them from returning for 24 hours. Police also have the right to return home under 16s who are found in the dispersal zone between 9pm and 6am. Failure to comply can lead to a fine or imprisonment.

Since the dispersal zone came into place, 235 people have been dispersed from the area and as a result, police have prevented them from loitering in large groups.

When the dispersal zone first came into force, officers were dispersing an average of eight people a day, which reduced to three in November. In December, they dispersed an average of two people a day, which shows that there are less people loitering within the location.

Officers have also arrested 27 people for breaching the dispersal zone. They have either received a youth reprimand, final warning or have been charged to appear in court. Nobody has been released from custody without any further action being taken.

The dispersal zone is part of a longer term plan to reduce ASB in the area and the police are working with the London Borough of Bexley to provide youth provision, diversionary activities and make environmental changes to the area such as improved lighting.

Sergeant Philip Smith of St Michael's Safer Neighbourhoods team, said: "Tackling anti-social behaviour in the locality of the dispersal zone is a priority for both East Wickham and St Michael's Safer Neighbourhoods teams and we have worked really hard to improve the area for local people and will continue to do so."

Councillor Katie Perrior, London Borough of Bexley's Cabinet member for Community Affairs, said: "I am pleased that the dispersal zone seems to have addressed the serious concerns local people raised with us. Our focus now is on working with the police to tackle the underlying causes of the problem and hopefully bring about a permanent improvement in the quality of life of people in the area."

### **Lambeth Safer Neighbourhoods Team assist to save an event**

At the end of December, Vassall Safer Neighbourhoods team (Lambeth borough) assisted in securing a venue for the end of year gathering party for the Youth Faith Group run by Mimi Asher on the Myatts Field North.

The event saw 300-400 young people from the local area attend the gathering held at Charles Edward Brookes School in Stockwell.

The event was set to be held at another venue, which due to the estimated attendance would have been too small. Although the request for a larger venue was of short notice, Vassall Safer Neighbourhoods team offered to help. With their good community links and working partnership approach between the team and the local secondary school, a solution was achieved.

The event took place between 2pm and 10pm. It was a successful gang diversion initiative. Many of the youths that attended were aged between 12 and 25 years old and were from the local estates. Many had previous links to gangs and anti-social behaviour. The event was policed by Vassall Safer Neighbourhoods team who was there to lend their support as well. The event was well received and took place peacefully with no incidents or problems.

Police Sergeant (PS) Jeff Palmer of the team comments: "This is testament to the work done with these local young people by Mimi Asher and her helpers. It is probably remarkable to many that an event of this magnitude with the young participants from the local area was able to be conducted without any trouble. It would be inconceivable that this could have been done a year ago with the reputation and opinion held of the Myatts Field North and surrounding area."

"This work, which Vassall Safer Neighbourhoods team has supported, is vital to the local community and the way in which this event was run and the outcome shows what can be achieved. The youths at this event behaved impeccably and the music, food and celebrations were enjoyed by all present."

### **Westminster North Safer Neighbourhoods Team close cannabis factory**

Officers from Bryanston and Dorset Square Safer Neighbourhoods team (Westminster North) working alongside detectives carried out a warrant on premises in Harewood Avenue after receiving intelligence that the property was being used to grow cannabis.

The team went inside the premises alongside the Westminster North Neighbourhoods Support Unit who were assisted by a utilities engineer who ensured the property was safe to enter.

It soon became apparent that the electric meter had been tampered with and the people responsible for the cannabis factory were abstracting electricity direct from the mains. The house had been converted into a location solely for the use of cannabis production. The basement rooms were converted into an area for growing the plants. Over 100 mature cannabis plants were found in the basement along with hydroponics equipment, industrial fans and humidifiers.

Several other rooms in the house had been used for storage of growing equipment and on the top floor there was an area set aside for growing seedlings. There was evidence throughout the house that cannabis cultivation had taken place in several other rooms and the house had undergone structural alterations in order to produce the correct habitat for growing the plants.

Acting Detective Inspector Richard Baker added: "As a result of intelligence led operation conducted by Westminster Crime Squad and the local Safer Neighbourhoods team a Cannabis factory has been closed down. This was a good example of the pooling of resources in Westminster to solve a problem, which in addition to being part of organized crime, was also having a detrimental effect on the local community."

Sergeant Al Cowen of the Bryanston and Dorset Square Safer Neighbourhoods team said: "The investigation is still ongoing; however the closure of this factory will certainly have an impact on those involved in the manufacture and selling of drugs on both the ward and the borough."

### **Enfield Safer Neighbourhoods Officers detain prolific burglar**

A prolific burglar who had been circulated as wanted for four separate offences has been arrested. Police Community Support Officers, Antony Rivas and James Oliver, were aware that the man had been seen by other officers in the area but had lost sight of him. Using their local knowledge, they systematically checked every possible hiding place that would be used by someone very familiar to the area.

Antony and James found the man as he tried to take cover in a Doctor's surgery waiting room, pretending to be waiting for a GP's appointment. He was discreetly escorted out of the busy surgery and successfully detained despite trying to escape, with local officers arriving and arresting him.

Police Sergeant Martin O'Donnell said: "These officers acted intuitively and professionally to catch a prolific offender that had, until now, repeatedly evaded justice."