

Police conduct anti-robbery initiative

During a two-day period in mid-May, Redbridge police ran an anti-robbery initiative which saw approximately 150 people being stopped and searched in and around the Ilford town centre area.

The initiative involved 24 police officers from various police departments including Safer Transport teams, Safer Neighbourhoods teams, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and burglary teams conducting high visibility and plain-clothed patrols. The officers conducted proactive stop and search tactics as a means of deterring potential offenders from committing crime.

Over the two days approximately 150 stop and searches were conducted. Of those 150 stops, 13 arrests were made for offences ranging from offensive weapon (hammer on a bus), a breach of Anti-social Behaviour Order (ASBO), handling stolen goods and being wanted on a warrant.

Sergeant Seamus Hansford, of Ilford Town Centre team, has reported positive feedback from the business community and there are only two reported street robbery and snatches in and around the town centre during that period of time.

Acting Detective Chief Inspector Paul Trevers said:

“Analysis by our Borough Intelligence Unit (BIU) highlighted an emerging pattern in regards to schoolchildren being robbed in late afternoon hours and lone persons at night in and around Ilford town centre.

"Officers from our CID, Safer Transport team, Safer Neighbourhoods team and Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) conducted plain-clothed patrols, robustly but fairly utilising stop and search powers. Invaluable assistance was also provided by CCTV operators within the Redbridge partnership. Many potential robbery suspects were identified and their criminality disrupted. The use of those powers was clearly vindicated, no robberies and just one snatch offence being reported over the 2 day period of the operation. Public reassurance was delivered, positive feedback being received from the community and our partners.”

Homemade food and drinks raise money for Youth Art project

Over two days at the beginning of June, officers from St Margarets and North Twickenham Safer Neighbourhoods team (Richmond borough) raised money for a local youth art project by selling sandwiches and homemade cakes to other police officers.

Senior officer Chief Inspector David Henfrey showed his support for the fundraiser by briefly joining the team to sell food and drinks in Twickenham police station's canteen.

The cakes, made by St Margarets and North Twickenham Safer Neighbourhoods team, included glitter cupcakes, rocky road cookies and mini chocolate muffins.

The team raised a total of £295, all of which will go to Heatham House Youth Centre on Whitton Road in Twickenham, to help fund the creation of a community mural art wall.

The wall will be created in collaboration with the Urban Art Project and Richmond-upon-Thames council. The location of the wall is as yet undecided but once created, young people from Twickenham will be invited to create a mural on it.

The idea was devised by St Margarets and North Twickenham Safer Neighbourhoods team and led by PC Jo-Anne Hood.

Food and ingredients for the "Bacon Butty Days" were donated by Waitrose in Twickenham, Tesco Metro in St Margarets and Aly Threadgold, a former Richmond-upon-Thames PC, who now owns a sandwich business.



PC Jo-Anne Hood said:

"It's important that the police build a relationship with the younger members of Twickenham community. We want to do this by supporting their creativity in a

positive way. Street artwork can be a positive form of expression if done in a controlled environment.

"We're massively grateful to everyone involved in the fundraiser, including the officers who parted with their cash for the cause."

Richmond-upon-Thames Counsellor Pamela Fleming, Cabinet Member for Community, Business and Culture, said:

"Congratulations to St Margarets and North Twickenham Safer Neighbourhoods team. Heatham House Youth Centre provides support and activities to young people in the local area and every penny counts. I look forward to seeing the mural once the young people have created it."

Children partake in 'Police Day'

At the beginning of June, Swiss Cottage Safer Neighbourhoods team (Camden borough) held an educational 'Police Day' at Swiss Cottage Specialist SEN School.

The team were joined by officers from Brent and organised a range of activities for the children to take part in throughout the day, which lasted from 9:00am till 3:45pm. The aim of the day, which was attended by nearly 100 children, was to educate a vulnerable section of society about crime and provide them with useful life skills to prevent them from becoming a victim.

The day opened with a role play, acted out by officers, students watched as an individual found a phone and debated whether or not to hand it in to police. The individual is then seen to face peer pressure from other youths to become involved in youth violence, the role play ended with an individual being arrested.

The children were then divided into groups and taught about all of the different stages of a criminal investigation. The groups took part in exercises, which were all tailored to their learning needs, about:

- Stop and Search and what happens to an individual upon being arrested.
- Human rights - the students learnt about their human rights and the rights of an individual who has been involved in a crime.
- Fingerprints - science-related activities were carried out which explored how fingerprints are taken and used to solve crimes.
- Consent - students took part in role play exercises relating to giving their consent and seeking help from an appropriate adult.
- Youth related violence and knife crime - role play exercises were set up to educate the students about the dangers of knife crime and to show them how they can avoid becoming involved in youth related violence.
- Interviews - scenarios were set up for the children allowing them to interview a police officer, witness and victim of crime.

To add an element of fun to the day, students were joined by the character costume PC Lee, who they were able to have their picture taken with. Officers from the

Mounted Branch and Dog Unit also attended the day offering the children an opportunity to meet the animals and learn about their role within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). A highlight for many of the students was being able to meet the police officers and speak to them in a comfortable environment. Students were also able to sit in a police car with the siren and lights on.

At the end of the day students were awarded certificates for their hard work during the day and were given a goody bag to take home. One of the activities led to the students producing a newsletter, which included pictures and personal stories from the day - this was an excellent piece of work and will be a souvenir for the children to remember all of their experiences.



PC Phil Meatyard, of Swiss Cottage Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"The school day was organised with the aim of educating a vulnerable section of the community about the dangers of crime. We wanted the children to be able to take part in a range of fun activities that would also provide them with some useful crime prevention advice. I attended the whole day and thoroughly enjoyed taking part in all of the activities and interacting with the children. I am pleased that the children seemed to really enjoy themselves and benefit from what they were shown. I hope that we provided the children with a lasting memory and that we can organise similar events like this in the future".

Tracy Edwards from Swiss Cottage SEN School said:

"The day supported all our hard work around safeguarding children and young people. Learners were taught how to access help in different situations. They were also given the space to reflect on how they have choices in life, and how these choices have consequences. Levels of engagement, across the school, were high, and learners clearly enjoyed the experiences which the day offered."

Joint licensing initiative set up to cut crime and ASB

At the beginning of June a joint partnership licensing initiative took place at several locations on Redbridge borough. The initiative involved Redbridge Police Licensing officers, Mayfield Safer Neighbourhoods team, Redbridge Volunteer Cadets and the local authority Licensing Enforcement team in response to the ongoing crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues occurring in and around the small parade of shops in Longbridge Road near Goodmayes Lane on Mayfield ward. The premises were identified through recent intelligence reports gathered by police that the premises were suspected of unlawfully selling alcohol to persons under the age of 18 years without first asking the appropriate age verification questions.

One of the local licensed premises failed the underage test purchase. It was of great concern to police that the offending salesperson was the holder of a personal license, but was unable to produce it when requested by the authorised officers (contravening sections 146 and 135 of the Licensing Act 2003) and the individual was dealt with by way of summons.

Further visits to licensed premises then took place and included George Lane, South Woodford and New North Road in Hainault. A licensed premises that had failed the test purchase on the previous round of testing was visited and after complying with corrective measures previously put in place by the police, the defaulting premises passed the retest this time round.

John Brady, Licensing Officer, said:

"Test purchasing is a year round initiative and all failed premises are retested on the next outing. Premises that fail on two consecutive occasions within a three-month period face prosecution for persistent selling of alcohol to underage persons".

Operation Poppins reduces burglaries

Officers from Fortune Green Safer Neighbourhoods team in West Hampstead (Camden borough) have been tackling residents' concerns head-on, with an initiative aimed at driving down burglaries which has seen a reduction in reported burglaries so far in June.

Operation Poppins takes a three-strand approach to reducing the long-term burglary problems in the Fordwych Road area; by aiming to arrest offenders, reduce potential victims and secure vulnerable locations.

Increases in covert patrols are seeing suspects being targeted, cold-callers and "officials" being challenged, people hanging around in the area asked to account for their presence, and officers using local rooftops to observe activity. An intelligence picture is being built up as a result, with local neighbourhood watch schemes regularly passing and disseminating information. Highly visible crime prevention signs have been posted on street lamps in Fordwych Road and a wave of publicity materials and prevention packs are being delivered to homes.

Officers are determined to raise public awareness of how to protect their properties in order to prevent crimes. For example, one unfortunate resident, found themselves confronting someone who had forced their way into their home through the rear door using a screwdriver. The victim contacted police, however the suspect had already made their escape, luckily, on this occasion empty-handed. It is incidents like this that the team hope to prevent.

Uniformed officers from Fortune Green Safer Neighbourhoods team have been quick to respond, identifying vulnerable and insecure addresses and where it appears there is nobody home, climbing inside and securing the address - prominently leaving a calling card to notify residents that they could have been burgled. On one occasion, a lone female was startled when a uniformed officer walked into her living room having climbed in through an open bedroom window. After the initial surprise, she was very grateful when officers gave her some crime prevention advice and some tips on how to make her home safer.

Not content with the recent overall drop in burglary offences, Fortune Green Safer Neighbourhoods team are also working with Railtrack, Camden Council, housing associations and local residents. Together they are identifying where simple, cost-effective repairs or improvements could make it more difficult for opportunist burglars, who seem to strike during the day and favour rear access to premises, hoping to go unseen. A number of repairs have already been undertaken and police are intent on "target-hardening" vulnerable premises to ensure they become more secure.



PC Adam Owers, of Fortune Green Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"People don't realise how quickly a burglary can take place and most residents are surprised when we tell them how little it would cost to make their homes safer. Burglars are creatures of habit, they are opportunist, and they prey on the easy target. Operation Poppins is all about raising people's awareness and, if they see something suspicious, letting them recognise they can tackle it head-on by calling the police and the local Safer Neighbourhoods team. Likewise, if you're worried about security, call the Safer Neighbourhoods team and we will visit you".

Acting Sergeant Aaron Clarke, also of Fortune Green Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"Burglary is a disgusting, invasive crime, which has no home here in London. We are not content just to catch burglars, but to prevent people becoming victims in the first place by working together and encouraging collective responsibility. We've had a great response from people who have noticed an increase in our presence and who like our innovative approach - residents said we should focus on burglaries; that is exactly what we are doing, and we will continue to do so until people can rightly feel safe in their homes."

Theft of vehicle number plates are driven down

In mid-June Kenton West Safer Neighbourhoods team (Harrow borough) led by Sergeant Wesley Goodridge and Kenton Safer Neighbourhoods team (Brent borough) led by Sergeant Katie Ruff jointly conducted an operation to fit tamper-proof screws to vehicle number plates.

With criminals often stealing number plates in order to facilitate other crimes such as burglaries and making off without payment from petrol stations, this operation was designed to make it more difficult for criminals to get access to honest motorist's number plates.

By simply fitting tamper-proof screws to both number plates it virtually eliminates the possibility of a criminal removing them.

In total, officers working together from both teams fitted tamper-proof screws to more than 50 vehicles.



Sergeant Wesley Goodridge said:

“This is the second year running that we have conducted this event and once again it has been very successful. This is a great way to engage with our communities and offer them practical crime prevention advice whilst at the same time giving them an easy solution to prevent them becoming victim to this type of crime.”