

World Heavyweight Boxing Champion backs Boxing Sessions

Former boxing Heavyweight Champion of the World Tim Witherspoon has given the thumbs-up to Heathfield Safer Neighbourhoods team's (Richmond borough) new motivational sports club for Twickenham Academy pupils.

Towards the end of April, the American sports legend, famed for twice winning the World Heavyweight Championships and for beating Frank Bruno in the ring 25 years ago, showed his support by accepting an invite from Heathfield Safer Neighbourhoods team to join them at their first weekly boxing session for youngsters.

Tim said he backed the Safer Neighbourhoods team's initiative which was created after talks between the Safer Neighbourhoods team, pupils and teachers had indicated that a disciplined and diverting sport would help prevent local youngsters from getting involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.

The training sessions will be led by a mix of police officers from the borough - some of whom will give up their free time to coach the young members - and funded by the Community Safety Partnership.

As well teaching pupils to box, the sessions will feature brief modules on junior citizenship and local policing issues such as gun, knife and gang crime. Other subjects to be covered include bullying, truancy, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, robbery, graffiti, anti-social behaviour and road safety.

The club, which is free, is currently targeted at young people aged 14 to 16 years-old who attend Twickenham Academy but Heathfield Safer Neighbourhoods team hope to open it to other young people in the area as it increases in strength and popularity.

Tim kicked off the debut training session by giving its first young members a talk on how sports could help them avoid a life of crime and achieve great things.

He told them:

"I've come to talk about reality. If you want to be someone, it's easy - you've just got to get up and do something positive. Even if you've been a bad person.

"Remember, it's easier to get into trouble than out of it. One way out is education. Don't give up. Get up with a smile on your face. That's what I do".

One 14-year-old girl from Twickenham Academy, who received some one-on-one boxing tips from Tim at the session, said:

"I've always wanted to box and my mum was going to pay for me to get training but now I can do it here. I've had fights in the street but boxing helps me calm down so I don't fight so much.

"Mr. Witherspoon's speech was interesting and what he said is true - you need education. You can box your way through life but if you get an injury and you need a calm job, how are you going to do it if you haven't got an education?"

Fellow peer Meroy Youssef, 15, who also sparred with Tim, said:

"I love boxing and now they're finally doing it at my school!

"I love the power of boxing. I wouldn't use it to start something outside the gym but if it came to the worse I'd know how to protect myself and the other girls in the group. Fights on the street often start because someone has anger issues but boxing means you can get your anger out and learn new skills."



Sergeant Rhiannon Ivens, of Heathfield Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"I'm incredibly grateful to Tim for his support and for coming along to inspire the boxing club's first members.

"I would also like to extend my thanks to the other coaches - Richmond borough police officers and PCSOs who have dedicated much of their own time to the project and have even volunteered to coach on their days off. My special appreciation goes to Heathfield Safer Neighbourhoods team's PC Justin Scott, who approached me with this idea almost a year ago and has since played an integral part in the arrangements.

"Thanks also to the local authority for approving our request for funding this initiative and to Twickenham Academy for engaging with it. It's an exciting and worthwhile project that is totally new for the police in this borough. I'm confident that we'll see some very happy - if a little tired - young people at the club."

CitySafe scheme proves to be a success!

Since the launch of the first CitySafe zone in Lewisham shopping centre more and more retailers are taking up the scheme.

The pioneering scheme is a community-led response to crime, supported by Lewisham borough police and its partners, in which local shopkeepers display a sticker in their window to show they take a zero-tolerance approach to crime and illegal activity and that they will contact the police when necessary.

The scheme has been enthusiastically adopted by Lewisham shopping centre and there are now over 200 'Safe Havens' for young people throughout the borough of Lewisham.

As part of the CitySafe initiative the Crofton Park Safer Neighbourhoods team (Lewisham borough) met Baroness Janet Royall of Blaisdon, Leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, earlier this month as she visited Predergast and Ladywell Fields College. The visit was to celebrate the successful execution of CitySafe Haven's led by the school which has worked closely with Crofton Park Safer Neighbourhoods team and the local community to sign 45 local shops up to the initiative.



Sergeant Mark Deacon, of Crofton Park Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"Implementing the CitySafe scheme throughout Crofton Park has been a truly multi-agency event involving community members, community leaders, Crofton Park Safer Neighbourhoods team officers, school pupils from local primary schools, faith groups from all over the borough and of course pupils from Prendergast & Ladywell Fields College. Such wide adoption of this scheme sends a clear message that this tight knit community will pull together and use all its resources to keep its residents safe and take no-nonsense approach to crime."

Pupils take part in Junior Police Academy

A total of 59 year-six pupils from Ryelands Primary School in Woodside, Croydon took part in a week-long Junior Police Academy, organised by officers from the local Woodside Safer Neighbourhoods team (Croydon borough).

The activity began in mid-May and the pupils learnt how to carry out a police investigation and put that into practice by arresting somebody in a special scenario set up. There were also visits from officers from the MPS's Mounted Branch and the Cycle Task Force who talked to the pupils about their work and what they do.

The pupils were briefed about personal safety and Internet safety and were given a talk about the dangers of gangs by a representative from the St. Giles Trust.

The week culminated in a special "passing out parade", which took place also in mid-May at the Croydon Arena stadium, and parents and family were invited to see the graduation of their children and saw them carrying out some parade ground marches and manoeuvres.



PC Nick Lindsay, of the Woodside Safer Neighbourhoods team, who organised the week of activity said:

"It was a fantastic week for us and the children and it was a really great way for us to address issues about personal safety, which will be affecting them as they move into secondary school next year.

"It's important that we give young people as much support and advice as possible as they are amongst the most vulnerable in our society. Hopefully doing something like this will also help them later in life if they're faced with difficult choices or situations."

Head Teacher Ms Carmel Dolan added:

“We are very proud of our Year 6, as well as having fun they learnt important lessons - particularly about personal safety. The week has also influenced some of their career choices.

“It was a great opportunity for the wider school community to work together - PC Lindsay and the Woodside team did a great job.”

Prolific beggar receives 5-year ASBO

A 41 year-old man of Moberley Road, SW4 has received an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) for 5 years following a hearing at Tower Bridge Magistrates Court in mid-May.

Streatham Hill Safer Neighbourhoods team (Lambeth borough) was instrumental in securing the ASBO which prohibits the man from:

- begging anywhere within the London borough of Lambeth
- approaching stationary cars at traffic lights and asking drivers or passengers for money anywhere in the London borough of Lambeth

The man is a prolific beggar frequenting Lambeth particularly within the Streatham Hill, Knights Hill and Brixton Hill areas. Complaints were received from the public that he was walking into the road and begging at stationary cars, trucks, vans and buses waiting at the traffic lights.

Sergeant Biju Premnath, of Streatham Hill Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

"There was a strong fear within the local Safer Neighbourhoods teams that this man could cause or even be the victim of a fatality at one of the junctions he frequents. He has in the past shown no regard for his own personal safety. This action will ensure that members of the public can now travel through the area without feeling harassed or intimidated."

Safer Senior Scheme launched to update local residents

Raynes Park Safer Neighbourhoods team (Merton borough) have introduced an innovative new programme to ensure older members of their community receive important team news, police advice and guidance, offering support and easy team contact access.

Many residents and businesses already receive e-mail updates and internet information regularly, but this is not always the most appropriate contact method for everyone.

The Safer Seniors Scheme was launched by Sergeant Dan Wheatley and his Raynes Park Safer Neighbourhoods team with members of the Carters Estate tea club, whereby newsletters and items such as emergency 'message in a bottle' packs (kindly provided by provided by the Lions Club) were distributed.

These plastic containers are designed to contain medication and doctor information to be kept in the resident's fridge in case the emergency services are called to them and need to find out about their medical history.

The scheme is supported by Merton's Safer Neighbourhoods team's community partners including Age UK, Dial-a-Ride and Merton Adult Social Services.



Sergeant Dan Wheatley, lead contact on the borough for the scheme, said:

"This scheme is very important in keeping regular communication between the police team and those residents who are more likely to become victims of crime such as artifice burglary and rogue traders.

"This closer contact will also enable us to identify the most vulnerable people on our ward and to keep a database of their next of kins should the emergency services require them."

A member of the Carters Estate Residents Association said:

"I've got one of the message in the bottle packs and it was really helpful when the ambulance service came to my house. I've given some of these out to friends because I think it's so important to have."

Chief Inspector Mark Lawrence, Merton Partnership Lead, said:

"Looking after people on their wards and building bridges underpins everything that Merton's Safer Neighbourhoods team's are about.

"Raynes Park's launch of the Safer Seniors Scheme is a unique and well-planned project which will directly benefit our older residents, and sets a great example for other teams to follow."

The Safer Senior Scheme will be extended to other Merton Wards.

Police introduce 'Allotment Watch' to reduce crime

PCSO Jackie Blade of Barnhill Safer Neighbourhoods team (Hillingdon borough) has set up an 'Allotment Watch' scheme after a spate of shed burglaries and incidents of anti-social behaviour in the allotment areas within their ward. Following her visits to the two sites last autumn in Carlyon Road and Burns Close in Hayes, and speaking to plot holders it was decided that the first allotment watch meeting would be set up in spring when the allotments get busy.

Both allotment sites have approximately 25 plots and are used by residents from Hayes and Yeading. Pupils at the Yeading Junior School which is close by in Carlyon Road also have a plot at the allotments. The Warren Park residents association which encompasses the area also had a keen involvement in helping to set up the scheme. At recent meetings held by PCSO Jackie Blade, property marking was available as well as shed alarms, window alarms, personal attack alarms and crime prevention advice. She visited the Carlyon Road allotments again in mid-May 2011 to continue with her efforts to mark property using an ultra-violet (UV) pen so that it can be identified if stolen.

PCSO Jackie Blade explained that plot holders identified problems they were having such as vandalism and criminal damage to their plots and also the impact that this was having on them. She said:

"Plot holders work very hard all through the winter to prepare their plots for growing produce and feel a great deal of disappointment if someone spoils it in a moment of mindless vandalism."

Since receiving reports of these incidents Barnhill Safer Neighbourhoods team has also provided anti-climb paint for use on the surrounding fencing in order to deter this type of crime. A sign has been put up at both allotments with the local Safer Neighbourhoods team contact details as well as the non-emergency police number. Local police at Barnhill ward have contacts for each allotment in the event of needing access to the sites.

PCSO Jackie Blade said:

"It is a real joy to work with residents who have plots at the allotments and together we have been able to resolve problems that were causing a lot of distress for them. This is one example of how we can work together within the community to deal with problems and make it a better place. I would encourage our residents to come and speak to us or their local Safer Neighbourhoods team if they have any concerns within their neighbourhood."