

Message in a bottle

A wide range of community safety, welfare and social care agencies, together with voluntary organisations, who deal with older people across Hounslow gathered at Chiswick Park recently. They launched a new initiative aimed at improving safety and security for older residents of the borough.

Hounslow Safer Seniors, a local police initiative, will see police officers and volunteers from across Chiswick, Brentford, Isleworth and beyond visiting vulnerable older residents and giving them tailor made home security advice and services. Simultaneously, police and volunteer partners will be distributing free 'Message in a Bottle' packs to older residents, sheltered housing, doctor's surgeries and more. These packs allow residents to record emergency information, such as details of medication taken, allergies and contact details for next of kin, and place them in their fridge, secure in the knowledge that, in the event of an emergency, health and welfare services can quickly locate this information and thus saving valuable time.

The bottles were provided by the Lions Club UK, and representatives from Osterley Lions Club were present at the launch. The scheme has been funded by Chiswick Park Enjoy-work, together with their security providers VSG. This funding has meant that over 3,000 bottles have already been purchased. Such is the interest in the scheme that other agencies are considering funding more bottles in order to allow the initiative to spread across the borough.

Sergeant Ben Clark, of Turnham Green Safer Neighbourhoods team, said: 'This initiative, which involves so many partners, will be one of the most comprehensive schemes to support older people in Hounslow. Whilst crime levels against older people are low, they often suffer a fear of crime, and anything we can do to reassure and assist this section of our community will be a positive measure. I am very grateful to all of the partners in this scheme for their support and I would especially thank Chiswick Park, VSG and Osterley Lions, as without them, this initiative could not have got off the ground. It has grown massively since we first mooted the idea back in January, and I am confident that we will see Hounslow Safer Seniors and Message in a Bottle extend across the whole borough.'

Oliver Ringsby-Burgess, VSG's security manager at Chiswick Park said, 'Enjoy Work and VSG relish this opportunity to bring an innovative new way to enhance social care for vulnerable older people in Chiswick and beyond.'

Street drinker banned for two years

Officers from the Church Street Safer Neighbourhoods team in Westminster have successfully achieved a two-year banning order prohibiting a man from entering Church Street Ward and Bryanston and Dorset Square Wards.

The man, who was known in the area, had been causing anti-social behaviour by being racially abusive to people and was also causing disorder by street drinking.

At the beginning of May, the man from W2 appeared at the City of Westminster Magistrates Court charged with racially aggravated threatening behaviour for which he was fined £85. A post conviction ASBO was then considered by the court who found it necessary to prohibit him from entering Church Street and Bryanston and Dorset Square wards. He is also prohibited from having any alcohol on him in any public place in Westminster.

Sergeant Ian Rowing of Church Street Safer Neighbourhoods team said: "The local community identified that disorder around street drinking had become a serious concern over last summer. We hope that this result will mean this man and his associates will stay away from the area."

Alcohol control zone introduced

Seven people had alcohol seized in Edgecot Grove by officers from Haringey's St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team in the first three days of an Alcohol Control Zone introduced at the beginning of May in St Ann's ward.

St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team and Haringey Council Street Enforcement Officers patrolled Edgecot Grove and the surrounding area, posting multilingual signs, warning against street drinking.

The order was granted by Haringey Council as a result of complaints from local residents and businesses due to an increase in anti-social behaviour associated with street drinking. Complaints included street drinkers urinating, littering and being loud and intimidating to local residents. It will be enforced predominantly by St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team.

The order covers the following roads; Avenue Road, Braemar Road, Cissbury Road, Culvert Road, Edgecot Grove, Grove Road, Kerswell Close, Lydford Road, Newsam Avenue, Oulton Road, Roslyn Road, South Grove and Victoria Crescent.

Evidence of anti-social behaviour associated with street drinking was gathered through partnership working between St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team, the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT), Street Enforcement Officers as well as local residents and businesses.

The order was made according to section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 and gives the Police powers to take action against individuals causing nuisance, annoyance or disorder whilst street drinking. Police will have extra powers to immediately stop individuals drinking alcohol irresponsibly and to remove alcoholic drinks from problem drinkers in the street. Non compliance could result in arrest and, upon conviction, a fine of £500

Sergeant Timothy Hannah of St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team said, "This was in response to community concerns about anti-social behaviour caused by street drinking.

This legislation means the community can now go about their daily lives, without the fear of being confronted by street drinkers, undoubtedly improving their quality of life. We will continue to enforce the control zone to ensure this area is free from this kind activity."

Counsellor Clare Kober, the leader of Haringey Council, said: "This kind of behaviour is unacceptable and enforcement action will help bring some peace and quiet to local residents."



Sergeant Tim Hannah and PC John Sayers, of St Ann's Safer Neighbourhoods team

Cannabis factory discovered

In mid-May Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhoods team of Brent borough attended an address in Wembley after information was passed to the team that the address was being used as a cannabis factory. The premises had been rented out and the owner was able to provide keys to the team. Once inside the property, officers discovered approximately 140 small cannabis plants. The electrical meter had been bypassed and the electrical supply overloaded so badly that the insulation on the wiring was beginning to melt under the strain, with the potential to cause a huge fire risk.

PC Colin Hobday of Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhoods team said, "I am very pleased with this result. Once we became aware of the premises we were able to act quickly and stop the crop being harvested.

Although the plants were small, with the growing techniques used it would have been no time at all before the house and attic were full of mature plants. I am more concerned however over the danger caused by the bypassing of the meter. We have built a strong relationship with the local community and if it was not for a homeowner helping us we would not have got this great result."

Hillrise Safer Neighbourhoods Team take the smart approach to burglary

Hillrise Safer Neighbourhoods team of Islington borough are helping to protect the homes of 450 residents by providing them with free SmartWater kits, which uses advanced property marking technology, worth up to £60.

This tactic is being introduced by officers from Hillrise Safer Neighbourhoods team in response to local concern about burglary, which has been chosen as a priority by the Hillrise ward panel. Street signs have been installed across the ward to warn and deter potential burglars.

Residents who live in areas on the ward where there are higher than average rates of burglary will benefit from a home visit by police, a SmartWater kit with demonstration on how to use it and personalised crime prevention advice for their home.

The SmartWater kits, which have been funded by Islington Council, mark valuable items with a unique code, which can only be seen under ultra violet light. Once applied, it is virtually invisible, near impossible to remove and enables property to be restored to its owner if it is lost or stolen.

Officers from Hillrise Safer Neighbourhoods team will be using UV lights to check for SmartWater marked property in local shops, when stopping and searching people on the street. Suspects brought into police custody will also be actively scanned for traces of SmartWater in a bid to catch burglars.

They will also be setting up 'dummy' vehicles and houses, which will use SmartWater technology to catch burglars in the act.

Other parts of the UK where SmartWater has been used have seen big reductions in burglary - in some cases by up to 80 percent.

Police Constable Edd Marques-Mortimer of the Hillrise Safer Neighbourhoods Team, said, "We want criminals to know that Hillrise is a no go area. We are committed to using all possible methods to reduce burglaries on the ward. These SmartWater kits will act as a deterrent and significantly reduce the risks of residents being burgled."

Counsellor Barbara Sidnell, Islington Council's executive member for community safety, said, "We are committed to working with police on tackling burglary. These kits are something new for Islington, and this funding shows we will look at all kinds of measures to deal with crime.

"Burglars know this technology can land them in prison - and this should make them think twice."



PC Edd Marques-Mortimer, local resident Caroline Oakes, and Inspector Clare Messer next to one of the Smartwater signs

Bexley Safer Neighbourhoods team wheel out speed reduction initiative

A high visibility sticker campaign has been rolled out by police in Blackfen to remind drivers to keep within the 30 miles per hour speed limit.

With over 4.8 million vehicles travelling through Blackfen Road each year, speeding is a real concern for local residents, business owners and shoppers. As a priority set by their neighbourhood panel, Blackfen & Lamorbey Safer Neighbourhoods team have tackled this issue in an innovative way.

PC Howard Newcombe from the policing team developed the idea of a sticker for the side of every waste bin throughout the 1.25 mile length of Blackfen Road, which also runs through neighbouring Blendon & Penhill ward. He developed the design and worked with local letting agents, GPS, to have the first 1000 A3 size stickers produced ready for distribution at the start of April.

With the artwork and printing sponsored by GPS, the stickers, displaying the words 'IT'S THE LIMIT NOT THE TARGET' are on regular display along both sides of the road. As part of the Street a Week initiative Blackfen & Lamorbey and Blendon & Penhill Safer Neighbourhoods teams are jointly distributing the stickers.

The Blackfen & Lamorbey Safer Neighbourhoods team has also been carrying out enforcement operations to monitor and reduce speeding, using a hand held speed detection device along with Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology (ANPR).

In total, 12 traffic initiatives have been conducted in Blackfen Road recently; the team has issued 15 fixed penalty notices for speeding (£60 each and three penalty points on their driving license), one for no insurance (£200 and three penalty points), two vehicles were seized for not having road tax and one driver was arrested for taking and driving away.

PC Howard Newcombe of Blackfen & Lamorbey Safer Neighbourhoods team said, “Drivers sometimes become complacent and oblivious to existing signage. With this once a week repeated message drivers have no excuse; they must keep their speed down to 30 miles per hour or slower. We expect drivers to take note, reduce their speed and the stickers are an innovative way to get the attention of those speeding motorists who drive outside the limit. The response we have had from local people has been fantastic, they fully support the initiative.”

Debbie Jones, GPS Director, said: “It’s a busy road and we have witnessed lots of traffic collisions. As a member of the local neighbourhood panel I was pleased to see this issue taken up as a police priority. We are happy to work closely with our local Safer Neighbourhoods officers to help reduce speeding in our road.”



From left to right: PCSO Peter Burt (Blackfen & Lamorbey Safer Neighbourhoods team), Debbie Jones (GPS), John Palermo (GPS), Ben Jones (GPS), Jay Weston (GPS), Ruth Goldsmith (GPS) and PC Howard Newcombe (Blackfen & Lamorbey Safer Neighbourhoods team)

PCSO Steve visits children at the Market Nursery

Toward the end of May, police mascot PCSO Steve accompanied PCSOs from Hackney’s Queensbridge Safer Neighbourhoods team and Hackney Borough’s Safer Schools team on a visit to the Market Nursery in E8.

With the help of PCSO Steve, the team gave a presentation to the children, aged 3-5. In a fun and friendly environment, the PCSOs were able to explain to the children their role within the community. The PCSOs also showed the children their uniform and equipment and explained its purpose and uses. The children were invited to wear different pieces of policing equipment.

PCSO Laura Stocker, of Hackney Safer Schools team, said, "Visiting the Market Day nursery and seeing how enthusiastically the children reacted to PCSO Steve was really rewarding. It was a great opportunity to speak to these very young children and explain to them that we are there to help them."



PCSO Steve greets a young nursery child