

Message to the Community No 50

June 2009

from Chris Ball, Chief Inspector - Mid Sussex District

Performance

The Police Force sets a yearly Policing Plan and as part of this the district is set challenging targets to be met by the 1st April. The following is an update on these targets for the performance year 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009.

Total crime

There has been another significant reduction of 515 victims in the last year, an exceptional 7.9% reduction from the previous year. This builds on the above target reductions seen in Mid Sussex over the last four years and sets us a challenge for the future.

Burglary dwelling

In the previous year we had a huge reduction of 27.8% (this represents a reduction of 81 victims). This set us a difficult task to achieve and during last year we have seen a further 1.4% decrease. In reality the Mid Sussex area suffers 3.9 burglaries a week, with a population of approx 125,000.

Vehicle crime

Again there has been a further reduction of 3% compared to last year and this means 19 less victims. This carries on the downward trend over the last three years.

Criminal damage

Last year we achieved a reduction of 9.2% and we have built on this by a further reduction of 7.4%. This means there are 124 less victims. I know that from the priorities set by the panels that this area of business is regarded as a key target and the neighbourhood teams will continue to focus and work with our partners to make a difference in the communities.

Violent crime

In the Policing Plan we were not set a reduction target in violent crime but I'm pleased to tell you that there was a reduction of 23.9% in reported actual bodily harm offences, fifth best in the Force.

Domestic abuse

This crime is still prevalent in Mid Sussex and still under reported and I'm committed to working with our partners to identify the victims and prosecute the offenders. We have focussed on this area for the past six months and have achieved the second highest detection rate in the Force of 56.9% (Target 55%).

Neighbourhood Panels

You will remember we wrote about Neighbourhood Panels in our message number 48 sent out in February. As a reminder of how important I view them I want to update you with the progress. The panels are made up of local residents, representatives from the community and a local councillor who meet approximately every 10 weeks to discuss issues they feel are affecting their community and that they wish to be taken up by the police. The panels provide an excellent way to engage with the public at grass roots level allowing us to focus on issues that are important to local people. Police Community Support Officers co-ordinate the meetings providing them with data that may be relevant to a particular issue and this allows the group to make informed decisions.

We have now set up 17 panels across the district, six in Burgess Hill, five in East Grinstead and six in Haywards Heath. The panels have a mixture of members and Haywards Heath has all six chaired by the public, Burgess Hill has five of the panels chaired by the public and East Grinstead has one chaired by a community member. At this time we have 13 local councillors involved across the district and following the local elections this week I would encourage any new members to join. The challenge is to sustain the panels, particularly in the rural locations and give a voice to

the local people and if any neighbourhood watch member, community group representative or member of the community is interested then check the Sussex Police website and contact your local PCSO.

Test Purchase Operations

As part of our licensing enforcement we carry out random tests at Public Houses and Off Licenses using volunteers who are aged between 15 to 16 years of age. The first of these operations was carried out on 1st May and 11 outlets were tested and 2 failed by selling alcohol to the teenagers. Both these premises were in the Haywards Heath area and the seller was issued with an £80 fixed penalty. The second operation was carried out on 28th May and I'm pleased to say that all the premises passed and refused to sell any alcohol to the volunteers. We will continue to carry out these operations over the next few months.

Operation Southam

Most of you will be aware that we are lucky enough here in Mid Sussex to have an excellent team of volunteers who are always ready should we need them for search and rescue.

We like to make sure that their skills are kept up to scratch and for that reason we carry out a couple of search and rescue exercises throughout the year.

Operation Southam was a search and rescue exercise putting the volunteers through their paces. The scene was set as realistic as possible; the scenario was a 35 year old man, who relied on medication, and had gone missing.

Hundreds of people are reported missing in Sussex each year and the volunteers from in and around Sussex have already been used in many real search situations.

The volunteers when trained are specialists in their own right and a vital asset in finding vulnerable missing persons as quickly as possible. Training takes place at Haywards Heath Police station and comprises of two morning sessions over the course of one weekend. Two outdoor exercises are conducted each year to keep the skills at a high level.

We are currently appealing for more volunteers and hope to have a group of 150 people.

Operation Crackdown

Between March 16th and 29th Officers from Sussex Road Policing Unit conducted a series of mobile and static checks across Mid Sussex district as part of a two-week operation to tackle road safety issues raised by the local community. The operation was run with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and partners including the Sussex Camera Safety Team and the Vehicle Operator Services agency.

Operation Crackdown is a partnership initiative designed to allow members of the public to report incidents of deliberate or persistent anti-social driving in Sussex via the website: www.operationcrackdown.org or the dedicated phone number 01243 642222.

Information provided by the public was used to target individuals and areas within Mid Sussex that pose the greatest risk to road safety. During the two week period of the operation there was an increased visible police presence providing reassurance to the public. 107 drivers were reported for excess speed including one driver who thought it was acceptable to drive at 54mph in a 30mph limit!! 15 drivers were reported for using their mobile phone whilst driving and 41 for not using their seat belts. A number of drivers were reported for construction and use offences (mechanical fault to you and I) and four drivers had their vehicles seized for using them without insurance.

Two schools were also targeted for Public Service Vehicle construction and use compliance and out of ten school coaches dealt with, two were issued with prohibitions.

We will continue to target road users in this way because safety is paramount for everyone and therefore we urge members of the public to report matters of anti-social driving to us and we will definitely follow it up.

Once again, to report anti-social driving to Operation Crackdown either visit: www.operationcrackdown.org or use the dedicated phone number 01243 642222.

New Inspector at Burgess Hill

In case you have not heard already Inspector Potter has moved to pastures new and has been replaced by Martin Pattenden as the new inspector at Burgess Hill. I am sure you will join us in wishing them both well.

New Chief Inspector for Mid Sussex

It's been three and half years since I started as the Mid Sussex District Commander and the time has passed very quickly. I have been very fortunate in my career to work in this area and have been part of the local policing for over 10 years, working in Crawley as a community Sergeant, Burgess Hill as a community Sergeant, Haywards Heath as the Neighbourhood Inspector and then promoted to the Chief Inspector rank. I will be leaving my current post at the end of June to work in the Gatwick division as the Neighbourhood and partnership manager. Over the last 10 years I have worked with a great team, who are committed to delivering a first class service to the community, and have achieved a fantastic performance with crime reduction and an increase in the numbers of offenders brought to justice. I wish to thank all the police staff I have worked with, the partners and the public I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with.

The new Chief Inspector for Mid Sussex will be Ed De-la-Rue, who joins the team from 6th July. Ed brings a wealth of experience of neighbourhood policing with him and I wish him all the best for the future.

C/I Chris Ball

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As with previous messages, please find below the email addresses of the neighbourhood Inspectors based at East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. Whatever fears, concerns, needs or expectations you have, feel free to contact them.

East Grinstead

Inspector Scott

paul.scott@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Burgess Hill

Inspector Pattenden

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Haywards Heath

Inspector McPhilemy

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