

How students are trying to be better neighbours

STUDENTS in Lancaster are only too aware that relations with local residents can become strained if relationships are not nurtured and understanding improved.

St Martins College (SMC) and St Martin's Students Union (SMSU) have been working hard to build and maintain partnerships in the local community between students and residents

Over the last two years, SMC and

SMSU have been working together to educate their students on how to be better neighbours.

Students making the move from halls of residence into houses in Lancaster are targeted with information on how they are expected to behave.

For over a year, the SMSU has been working with local councillors and from this collaboration launched the SSHH campaign (Silent

Students equals Happy Homes) during Freshers Week.

The campaign used flyers and t-shirts telling students to 'wise up' and show consideration by not being noisy in the early hours.

■ For more information, visit the SMC website at www.ucsm.ac.uk and the St Martin's Students Union website at www.thestudentsunion.org.uk.

NEW INITIATIVES WRITTEN INTO COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

Local people speak out on anti-social behaviour

THE Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership has recently launched its own Anti-social Behaviour Strategy, working to the Government's definition of anti-social behaviour – "a person having acted in a manner that caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons, not of the same household as the perpetrator".

The Strategy is based on a consultation, which asked local people what were their main concerns around antisocial behaviour.

This survey revealed that the main areas of concern were seen to be litter, nuisance behaviour criminal damage/vandalism and rowdy behaviour

A number of initiatives, some new, others already in place, were written into the Strategy as means of addressing these issues.

Some examples are:-

Litter strategy

The improvement of street cleansing is a priority of Lancaster City Council.

A group has been established made up of Councillors and officers from City Contract



Services and Environmental Health, to examine the best ways of improving the current situation.

The approaches that the group could use comprise: targeted litter clearances, more litter/bottle recycling facilities, education of the public and ultimately enforcement.

The Council also hopes to work with businesses to encourage careful management of their waste and to look at ways of dealing with litter, which fast food premises often produce.

Anti-social Behaviour Problem Solving Group

A problem solving group will be established to deal with serious instances of anti-social behaviour.

In using their expertise and resources they will obtain results more quickly than they could hope to achieve if working on their own.

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Centre's 'safety first' approach

MARSH Community Centre focuses on providing a safe environment for all ages at a neighbourhood level.

The work of the centre is particularly concerned with improving provisions for young people, working with Lancashire County Council Youth and Community Services, and providing activities as an alternative to anti-social behaviour and other forms of crime.

The centre provides a fully-equipped computer room with internet connection. Information and advice around employment, training and further education are also provided.

COMMUNITY SAFETY MATTERS

An idea that's streets ahead!

LANCASTER Skate Park opened last summer.

A thorough evaluation has been carried out which has demonstrated the positive impact that such a facility can have on an area in terms of attracting large groups of skaters and diverting them and their friends away from other "less desirable" activities.

In the light of this evaluation and demands from the young people of Morecambe, a skate park will also be built there.

This facility should be in place by late spring/summer.

Whilst, at this stage, it has been decided to pursue the construction of the Morecambe skate park, the agencies also fully support efforts to bring about a skate park in Carnforth.

Police seek new type of volunteer...

LANCASHIRE Constabulary is looking for a new type of volunteer within its organisation.

Although the Police Service does already engage volunteers in the form of officers in the Special Constabulary, it is looking at new and innovative ways of engaging other sections of the communities within Lancashire.

The new way of volunteering would allow people into the organisation to do a range of non-confrontational tasks, including leadership, community engagement and communication, and would support the organisation in its ambition to be the best police service in the country.

☐ To apply for an application pack, simply contact Volunteers Project, Lancashire Constabulary, Northern Divisional Headquarters, Thurnham Street, FREEPOST, (LA1 083), Lancaster LA1 1BR.

Officers appointed to tackle rural issues

TWO Emergency Community Support Officers have been appointed with specific responsibility for the rural district. In addition to dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, these officers will be able to provide fire prevention advice and will act as 'first responders' for the ambulance service.

Cash aims to put damper on arson

LANCASHIRE Fire and Rescue Service along with assistance from Lancaster City Council and the Police successfully submitted a bid for funds which will be used to provide a rapid response unit with a co-ordinator to promptly remove rubbish from private premises where it is at risk of being set alight.

Council 'willing and able' to crackdown

LANCASTER City Council Housing Department already operates a comprehensive anti-social behaviour policy. There are a raft of existing and proposed measures covering all of their estates across the district. These measures include target-hardening initiatives, a rapid response to racist graffiti, projects to assist and support problem tenants and empower tenants' groups and finally a package of measures to support victims of crime. If it transpires that all efforts to support problem tenants fail, the department is willing and able to utilise a range of legal measures to protect victims.

Wiping away graffiti

WITHIN the heading of criminal damage, graffiti was identified through the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy consultation as an issue of major concern to the community. It is also well known that graffiti, if left in situ for any length of time, will only attract further graffiti and other types of criminal damage, with the resulting negative effect on the environment. With this in mind Lancaster City Council Wardens have purchased equipment costing over £1,500, which will enable them to offer a free graffiti removal service to owners of private property, whether commercial or residential, within the Poulton and West End areas of Morecambe.

Bad behaviour

tackling it from every angle

"...almost inevitably outcomes include a better understanding of their impact on the community... and a reduction in nuisance complaints."

POSITIVE Activities for Young People (PAYP) is a new government multi-agency initiative, with organisations such as Connexions, Youth and Community Service, Police, Youth Offending Team, Education Welfare Service, Lancaster City Council and voluntary groups working together to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour by young people.

A caseload of 22 young people are provided with ongoing support by a youth and community worker throughout the year and helped to access sport/recreational/other activities on a regular basis.

Diversionary activities for these 22 and a further 70 'at risk' young people are organised during all school holidays.

Lancashire County Council **detached youth work team** operates in prioritised areas of the district, making contact and working with groups of young people who meet on the streets

The legal remedy

FORMS of tough penalties available to the Partnership have been the high-profile Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). These are usually used as a last resort against repeat offenders, restricting the freedom of individuals and decreasing the likelihood of crime and disorder. During the first week in March, Lancashire Constabulary obtained two ASBOs on persistent offenders.

● On the 9th March, Daniel O'Donnell, born 13/03/86 appeared before Lancaster Magistrates' court for a drunk and disorderly offence. The ASBO obtained against him comprises the following restrictions and was imposed for a 3-year period:

- Not to enter Lancaster city centre between 7pm and 6am
- Not to enter the Skerton area (as defined by Aldrens Lane, Main Street, Mainway and Owen Road) on foot or bicycle
- Not to take part in any criminal activity
- Not to possess alcohol in a public place (highway or park area which the public have access to).
- Not to cause alarm, harassment or distress to any person.



● On the 5th March, a successful application was made to Preston Crown Court for an ASBO on conviction against William Morrison, a persistent offender from Morecambe. After serving his 22-month prison sentence he will be subject to an ASBO for two years on the following prohibitions:

- Curfew from 9pm to 7am
- Not to enter the West End of Morecambe (defined area)
- Not to sit in the driving seat of a motor vehicle whilst disqualified
- Not to carry tools in a public place other than in the course of employment
- Not to cause alarm, harassment or distress to any person



and other open areas.

Targeted areas include those with an identified juvenile nuisance problem, even if this is a perceived one.

Whilst the purpose of the team is to work with young people on issues they themselves identify, almost inevitably outcomes include a better understanding of their impact on the local community and through dialogue a reduction in the number of juvenile nuisance complaints.

If, however, diversion does not do the trick the Community Safety Partnership can also make use of a range of penalties to steer young people away from crime.

One new and demanding community penalty is now

being used in Lancaster.

Intensive Control and Change Programme (ICCP) is designed to cut offending by those aged 18-20 who are persistently in trouble and normally reconvicted soon after release from prison.

Lancashire is one of 11 areas including London piloting this tough new intervention and Lancaster became one of the first places in the county to see the sentence imposed.

Joining forces to deliver it, a whole range of agencies is working with each offender intensively – to tackle all the factors behind their offending and steer them to change away from crime.

This is teamwork by Probation, Police, the

Courts, Securicor Justice Services electronic monitoring agency, plus Lancashire Youth Association which manages mentors who work with each offender together with the involvement of employment agencies, Job Centre Plus and Connexions.

ICCP consists of: supervision by Probation and the Police to restrict an offender's liberty by curfew, electronic tagging, and rapid arrest if the offender breaks the conditions.

The offender must attend a total of 25 hours a week of education and supervised unpaid work.

□ To find out more you can visit the website www.probation-lancashire.org.uk