Safer Yardley

Working Together for a Safer Neighbourhood

Issue 1 - Autumn 2009

Message from Councillor Khan, Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety

Birmingham is one of the safest cities in the UK thanks to partnership work - but we are not complacent about progress. In Safer Birmingham Partnership the Council, the Police, the Fire Service, the Probation Service, the Health Services and the third sector all work together - and so do Birmingham residents like you. We are working together on the things that you have told us matter to you, and matter to the quality of life in your neighbourhoods.

We know that you want to hear more news about how we deal with your concerns about anti social behaviour and crime and we think the this newsletter is a simple way to tell you about our work to make your neighbourhood a safer place. We hope you like it.

ACTION TAKEN TO COMBAT GRAFFITI

You said...
"Graffiti is a real problem in our area, what action is being taken to clean it up?"

So we...
Commissioned a partnership working project between the police, city council and environmental crime unit to tackle the issue.

Numerous joint operations have been conducted in the Yardley area targeting prolific "taggers" in graffiti hotspot areas. The primary aim of the operation was to bring offenders to justice. Following an in depth investigation with the Environmental Crime Unit, two offenders were arrested for carrying out several incidents of graffiti in the Yardley area. Both offenders are currently on bail awaiting charge.

In an effort to tackle this problem, the police have produced a leaflet which is targeted at the parents of potential taggers. It advises parents of the signs to look for that their child may be involved with graffiti, gives advice on how to tackle the issue and sets out the possible consequences for offenders. These leaflets will be distributed to the parents of students attending Cockshut Hill and Sheldon Heath School in September. We hope these leaflets will help to raise awareness of the problem issues associated with graffiti among young people and their parents.

Graffiti clean-up operation in action.

An excellent project is underway to tackle the cleaning up of graffiti in the area. Led by PC Lucy Bird from Sheldon police station, the scheme, entitled 'Youth4em', involves police and young people working together on positive activities which benefit the community, including litter picking and "paint over" days of graffiti hotspots.

For further information on 'Youth4em', contact PC Lucy Bird at Sheldon Police Station on 0845 113 5000 ext 7848 6225.

MEADWAY AND LEA ESTATE CLEAN UP PROGRAMME

In June 2009, we began a comprehensive programme of activity to clean up the Meadway and Lea Estate in response to concerns raised by local residents.

Our multi-agency approach to reducing crime and disorder has led to a number of key improvements in the area. A graffiti clean up programme was commissioned, fencing has been repainted, alleyways were cleared of rubbish and debris and gardens and homes were tidied up. These environmental improvements made a significant difference to the area and contributed to a 'sense of pride' which local residents have reported feeling within their community.

Clean-up operation in action.

A range of youth intervention activities were provided for young people, giving them somewhere to go in the evenings and during the school holidays, which assisted in reducing residents concerns about groups of young people hanging around on the streets.

Enforcement warrants and initiation of acceptable behaviour contracts were issued to some offenders living locally which impacted positively on reducing crime in the area. In addition to these measures, new public meetings and local neighbourhood watch groups have been established which has enabled residents to have a greater say and become more involved in ensuring their area continues to see crime reduction improvements.

We would like to thank all local residents and partner agencies for their support which has made this initiative such as success.

ACTION TAKEN TO CUT STREET RACING ON THE COVENTRY ROAD

You said...
"Street racing is becoming a real problem on the Coventry Road".

So we...
Worked in partnership with the police, Highways department and South Yardley ward to fund the installation of an additional GATSO speed camera. The camera is close to the Swan Island and monitors traffic travelling towards the City Centre.

Thanks to joint efforts by the police, City Council and fire service, street racing along the Coventry Road has reduced significantly. However, we are continuing to monitor the situation and have arranged for cones to be placed on the road at weekends to reduce the number of offences.

Partners across the city are continuing in their efforts to find a longer term solution to the problem.

FREE FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

As part of our commitment to making West Midlands safer, West Midlands Fire Service are carrying out free fire safety checks to ensure your home is not at risk of fire.

The home fire safety check will take about half an hour of your time. Fire-fighters will check your home and give you fire safety advice in order to keep you safe from fire. Free smoke alarms can also be fitted to your property if required.

Visits are by appointment only and can be arranged at a convenient time to suit you.

The fire-fighters who visit your home will be wearing uniforms and carrying identification cards. Please ask to see the identification card, and if you require confirmation, telephone the free phone helpline on 0800 389 5525.

Home fire safety checks are free - your safety is our concern.

For more advice please go to:

- www.wmfs.net
- www.direct.gov.uk/firekills

FIREWORK SAFETY

Fireworks are enjoyed by thousands of people across the country and each year the highest number of firework injuries happen at family or private parties. Over half of those injuries are to children. Any adult in charge of the festivities needs to know the Firework Code safety guidelines to help make their fireworks display a memorable occasion for the right reasons:

- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114.
- Don't drink alcohol if setting off fireworks.
- Keep fireworks in a closed box.
- Follow the instructions on each firework.
- Light at arm's length, using a taper.
- Stand well back.
- Never go near a firework that has been lit. Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.
- Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them.
- Always supervise children around fireworks.
- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves.
- Never give sparklers to a child under five.
- Keep pets indoors.

Free phone Helpline 0800 389 5525

REGISTER YOUR VALUABLES

WEST Midlands Police launched a new website earlier in the year to encourage members of the public to register their valuables.

The purpose of the site is to provide the police with a mechanism for returning lost or stolen goods they retrieve back to their rightful owner.

The easy to remember, www.registermythings.co.uk webpage, links to free national property database www.immobilise.com. Police officers check the immobilise database on a daily basis to see if property they retrieve is registered. All registered items are then returned to their owner.

Property registration is very simple. Visit www.registermythings.co.uk and follow the links through to 'immobilise'. Your items can be registered and identified using the serial number assigned to them when they were manufactured. Serial numbers can typically be found on the body of an electrical item or on the packaging.

Mobile phones can also be registered using the unique serial number, known as the IMEI number. This can be found underneath the battery or by dialling *#06# from your handset.

Immobilise is not just for registering electrical items; you can register anything from bikes and art pieces to furniture. Digital pictures can also be uploaded to the site to aid identification of items such as jewellery, ceramics or artwork.

DARKER NIGHTS – STAY SAFE

As the darker nights approach, it is important that we are all more vigilant about protecting ourselves and our homes from criminal activity.

West Midlands Police recommend that all residents follow these simple tips to reduce their chances of being a victim of crime:

- leave a light on at home to giver passers by the impression that someone is in – you could set a timer switch to do this;
- make sure you close your curtains and do not leave valuables on show;
- try to park your car in well lit areas;
- consider installing a flood light/security lighting on your driveway to protect your home and any vehicles parked outside your house; and
- remove all valuable items from view - such as laptops and satellite navigation devices - when leaving your car;
- protect items within your shed and garage during the dark nights by ensuring you have a strong lock and/or shed alarm
- secure items within your shed and garage to make them more difficult to remove;
- if you go out, leave a radio or TV on in the house so it sounds as though someone is at home; and
- always check the ID of unexpected callers. If you are unsure of their identity NEVER let them in. If you are concerned about the identity of a caller phone the police.

If you would like any further crime reduction advice, or would like a security survey conducting on your home, contact your local neighbourhood policing team by phoning 0845 113 5000.

WORKING TOGETHER TO CUT CRIME IN YARDLEY

West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, Birmingham City Council and other key agencies have formed a strong and successful partnership in Yardley.

Known collectively as the Safer Yardley Partnership, the local arm of the citywide Safer Birmingham Partnership, we have spent the last four years working on the community safety agenda to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in your area.

Our multi-agency work has contributed to a massive 27.8% reduction in crime in the Yardley constituency between 2007/08, compared to the figures for 2003/04. Over the last 12 months, serious violent crime has fallen a further 21.6%, acquisitive crime such as burglary and robbery is down by 13.4% and arson is down by over 25%.

The three overarching outcomes of the Safer Birmigham Partnership which we strive to achieve are:

- Birmingham/Yardley will BE a safer place to work, live and visit;
- Birmingham/Yardley will FEEL a safer place to work, live and visit; and
- Young People will make a positive choice not to become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

For more information about the Safer Birmingham Partnership, visit www.saferbirmingham.org.uk

OVER 250 RESIDENTS' PROPERTIES SECURED AGAINST BURGLARY

During 2008/09, the Safer Yardley Partnership carried out 210 property security checks across the area, offering security tips and advice to residents on home improvement techniques.

Already this year we have carried out 66 property checks and are applying for Home Office funding to enable us to continue offering this service.

If you are interested in finding out more, contact Nicci Collins, Community Safety Co-ordinator on 0121 783 5254.

FUNDING SECURED TO PROVIDE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2008/09 we were successful in securing funding to provide after school activities for young people living on the Bierton/Richmond Estate and also around the Chestnuts/Meadway area

We have again been successful in securing further funds to allow these projects to continue until March 2010.

Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP), previously known as Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, is the new name given to the City's crime and disorder reduction partnership which includes West Midlands Police, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Fire Service, Probation, PCTs and the third sector. We all work together to tackle difficult problems that affect communities. We listen to your concerns and do our best to respond to them. We deal with issues such as effective drug treatment, support for people suffering domestic violence or hate crime, protecting people from fire, burglary or anti social behaviour.

The Safer Birmingham Partnership has three core outcomes which are the driving force behind its work programme. It is SBP's aim that Birmingham will:

- Be a safe place in which to live, work & visit
- Feel a safe place in which to live, work & visit
- Be a place where young people choose not to engage in criminal and anti-social behaviour

SaferBirmingham Partnership
Working together for a safer city

Tel: 0121 303 3160 / www.saferbirmingham.org.uk

HELLO FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Dave Boucher is Station Commander at Sheldon Fire Station and is the newly appointed Chair of the Safer Yardley Partnership.

From a personal point of view, I am really looking forward to working on this agenda to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Yardley. I am confident that we can identify solutions and interventions to local safety problems and address the areas of concern which you tell us about.

We will continue to strive towards achieving our goals and have had some fantastic successes in recent months. This newsletter will give you an idea of the activity we deliver and tell you more about how you can have your say on making Yardley a safer place to work, live and visit.

Clive Burgess is Vice-Chair of the Safer Yardley Partnership and is also Chief Chief Superintendent at Stechford police station, which covers a significant part of the Yardley constituency.

From April 2010, the police operational command unit (OCU) boundaries will change. At present there are nine OCUs covering the city of Birmingham but from April this will be changing to just four. As a result of this change, Stechford's police headquarters will cover the whole of the Yardley constituency.

There are currently over 100 police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) based in Sheldon who are working in your neighbourhood to tackle local priorities.

Within the Safer Yardley Partnership, my role is to make sure that the police and partner agencies work together to deliver on the issues that are most important to you and to smooth out any problems that are encountered locally.

With that in mind, we have been part of a major drive against graffiti and have been involved in a large proportion of the community clean up days that are taking place. Looking to the future, I am keen that more young people play a positive role in our area of work to help make Yardley even safer.