



DORSET KeepSAFE

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Proactive Watch group scoops top award

At the Dorset Police Awards ceremony, the High Sherriff of Dorset, Mrs Victoria McDonough presented the ADW Shield for Watch Group of the Year 2009 to Christchurch Borough Home Watch Association.

Established in 2008 at the instigation of the local borough council, the Christchurch Borough Home Watch Association is a great example of effective partnership working. This has been shown through its many achievements which include organising and participating with partners in a complete week of events for "Not in my Neighbourhood Week"; forming a Junior PACT panel at a local school and encouraging interest in other schools; selling alarms to members and other partner agencies; establishing communications with residents through a regular newsletter, a website with a blog including links to the Dorset Police press website so press releases automatically go to all Homewatch contacts; and created a substantial traders' list.

Borough Councillor Ray Nottage, Portfolio Holder for Safe and Healthy Community and Chair of East Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, writes in support: "Under the chairmanship of Bernie Davis the Homewatch truly acts as the 'eyes and ears' of the community and has worked in partnership with all Borough PACT panels and other agencies to make Christchurch an even safer place to live and visit.

"In the two years since conception, CBHW has rekindled community spirit and community awareness of the opportunity to contribute to the principle of Safer Neighbourhood Teams. As a result Christchurch has seen a 15 percent reduction in the perception of 'fear of crime'. Bernie, and senior Homewatch Coordinator Barry Sherwin and the rest of the team deserve recognition for their hard work and contribution to community safety."

ADW Chair, John Shave commented: "I'm sure all Homewatch members will join with the CBHW committee in congratulating the Christchurch group on their achievements in such a short period of time since initial set-up."

News in brief

ADW has obtained funding from the Community Payback (proceeds of crime) monies to provide a demonstration kit of crime prevention aids to each Police station area across Dorset. The aim is to encourage residents to take steps to reduce the opportunities for acquisitive crime.

The kits are being distributed for use by local Neighbourhood/Home Watch Group Coordinators and by Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Your local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team has just published its latest newsletter. There will be a limited supply of printed copies available in libraries and police stations but for those with internet access a copy can be viewed and printed from the Dorset Police website. To access follow the linkages to your local SNT, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Feb 10 newsletter.

From the chair

By John Shave

As a result of feedback from the ADW, individual Watch members and members of Police Safer Neighbourhood teams, Dorset Police is conducting a review of Ringmaster messaging. On behalf of Watch members, ADW has submitted the following needs and suggested standards.

In terms of needs: urgent alerts received soon after incident (responsibility for sending needs to be assigned per station or section or division and sent to all neighbourhoods likely to be affected); series of like incidents picked up and actions recommended; programme developed to avoid repeats where relevant; cross-neighbourhood groups handled at divisional level e.g. Farm Watch, Industrial Watch; monthly crime summary including reassurance messages sent to each SNT area; consistent standards applied; standards adherence monitored; Watch member satisfaction measured on regular basis, timely feedback on intelligence or crimes reported to the Police; updates on crimes e.g. arrests etc.

In terms of standards: logistics – timely messages; appropriate, relevant messages only; checked for spelling and sense; appropriate recipients; only sent once to any household; sent to both e-mail and telephone recipients.

Content – incident reference; name and contact details of sender; warning; information; requested/ suggested action(s); re-assurance.

ADW will be consulted prior to final decisions on changes being made.

Your Questions – Chief Constable’s Answers

Police committed to county Watch schemes

Q. I understand that our Watch Manager in Poole is transferring to a new position and may not be replaced. Whilst I appreciate the intention to involve Neighbourhood Police teams more with Watch groups, there is still a need for someone to be educating them and driving forward the creation of new Watch groups and development of existing ones. Assuming you still believe Watch groups are important to crime reduction, can you reassure me that a new Watch Manager will be appointed?

A. In common with all Public Sector organisations, Dorset Police is facing a very challenging financial climate which requires us to constantly review our methods of working. It is our priority to ensure that our use of staff resources delivers the most effective and efficient service to our community; this means that our workforce deployment is very dynamic and that there is an inevitable degree of adjustment in staffing to fulfil community commitments.

Dorset Police is fully committed to the support of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. We recognise the important role which Neighbourhood Watch members play in making Dorset safe and making Dorset feel safer. The Force is planning a programme of Neighbourhood Watch scheme audits across Dorset to help us to identify ‘gaps’ in provision where Safer Neighbourhood Teams will work with current Neighbourhood Watch members and their community to encourage new schemes.

To create a closer partnership between Dorset Neighbourhood Watch groups and Dorset Police, Safer Neighbourhood Teams are engaging with Watch Scheme members to provide communication at a more local level which will meet the needs of Watch members more effectively. Safer Neighbourhood Officers are working more closely than ever with Watch scheme members in relation to National initiatives such as ‘Not in my Neighbourhood Week’ in November 2009.

In this way Dorset Police is able to offer far more support in partnership working than under the previous staffing arrangement. Watch members and Safer Neighbourhood Team officers are already developing plans for the forthcoming National Neighbourhood & Home Watch Week 2010 from Monday 14 June - Sunday 20 June to ensure that we all make the most of opportunities to give Crime Reduction advice, recruit more members and as part of our work to create and maintain a more caring community.

Cuts will not affect frontline numbers

Q. In the very near future it is more than likely that cuts in public spending will come into force. This could mean that the Police budget for 2010/2011 will be cut from the present level. If this is the case, will the number of operational Police Officers be further reduced? If reductions are predicted, how would you anticipate keeping Dorset a safe place to live?

A. Funding for the Police service in Dorset has been an issue for some time. We are currently amongst the worst centrally funded Forces in the country per capita and are constantly working hard with the support of local MPs and the Police Authority to address this inequality.

Despite this lack of funding from the centre we remain a top performing Force thanks to the efforts made by our Police Authority to ensure we receive appropriate financial backing through the local precept and by ensuring our back office support services are amongst the most efficient in the country.

Over the coming years the Force will maintain its commitment to ‘a safer Dorset’ and ensure that any enforced reductions in overall police officer numbers are targeted to non-operational roles, thus ensuring front-line numbers are maintained.

Email your questions for Dorset Police’s Chief Constable, Martin Baker, to the KeepSAFE editor at sally333@hotmail.co.uk by 20th April 2010. Answers will appear in the Summer issue.

Training initiatives focus on partnerships

Q. How much and what training and encouragement are Safer Neighbourhood teams given regarding Safer Neighbourhood partnership working particularly with Neighbourhood and Home Watch?

A. To ensure that this partnership working is embedded within our Safer Neighbourhood Teams, officers receive a range of training on developing awareness of other agencies and their roles together with such subjects as problem solving and ways of joint working. Officers have also been trained to use the Ringmaster messaging service to inform members not only of local crimes where information is sought and crime reduction advice proffered but also to spread news about the achievements of communities working in partnership with agencies. Teams will also use Ringmaster to encourage participation in setting local partnership priorities and other partnership initiatives and to provide a range of further local information such as road closures.