

“For Excellence in Neighbourhoods”



South West Warden Resource Centre

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www.swindon.gov.uk/swresourcecentre

Email: swresourcecentre@swindon.gov.uk

Inside this Issue:

A Day In The Life Of ...

Disability Awareness

It's the big clean-up

Results of the clean-up

Regional Network Meeting

Contact us



Hello and welcome to Edition 9 of the South West (Swindon) Warden Resource Centre Newsletter.

This is your newsletter and we look forward to hearing your views on it. We would also appreciate receiving any best practice stories you may have which you would like to share with other schemes within the South West.

Everybody Needs Good Neighbours



The proud Neighbourhood Warden Team from Stroud which found itself in the centre page of the January 2006 issue of Cotswold Life magazine

New Starters

The Torbay scheme has doubled their number of wardens from



3 to 6. The full team including the new recruits from left are Nick, Sue, Dave, Joanne, Vicki and Brian

Our thanks are due to Mark Willis, Senior Warden Teignbridge District Council who has kindly written this article.

1000 - Arrive at Teignmouth police station. Book on; check E-mails and liaise with police regarding any information or incidents relevant to us.

1015 - Follow up action taken yesterday regarding rubbish in lane behind local shops. Make phone calls to Biffa Bin Cleaners, speak to legal department of council to find out who is responsible for the rubbish and advise Manager of the shop concerned accordingly. Decide to help clear up the rubbish with Manager advising her on future action.

1100 – Drive in Smart Car to Dawlish to attend the local Methodist Church Coffee Morning, where we are available for local people to come and talk to us about any issues or problems they may be experiencing within their community. On this morning we were approached by a Neighbourhood co-ordinator who explained there had been problems on his housing estate over the weekend with youths throwing stones and breaking down garden fences. We said we would step up patrols in the area and inform the local Beat Manager.

1200 - Foot patrol in Dawlish Town Centre. Information given over the airwaves radio regarding missing person from Teignmouth. This person was suffering with alzheimer and was deemed a very vulnerable person. This person had last been seen at 0930hrs in Teignmouth by the pier. Description was given. Search being carried out by police, traffic wardens, police helicopter and PCSO's as after 3 hours missing, concerns were growing for the welfare of the missing person.

1230 – Whilst walking towards the Teignmouth Inn Public House we spotted a male fitting the description walking down Teignmouth Hill towards the town. We approached the male and asked him his name. The man confirmed his name as the person we were looking for. Informed the police control room. We found the gentleman a seat and a drink of water checking that he was ok. The 70 year old confirmed that he had walked the 3 miles from Teignmouth to Dawlish. A police car arrived to take him back to the police station at Teignmouth and be reunited with his wife.

1300- Attended local primary school to support the Neighbourhood Beat Manager and Traffic Warden in escorting 300 children to the local church on the opposite side of the town for their carol service.

1350 – Approached by the local Wild Fowl Warden who informed us that on Tuesday evening one of his ducks had been shot with an air rifle. The duck died from the injury. The Warden was concerned that there was someone out there with an air rifle and expressed his concern for our safety. We thanked him for his concern and assured him that we would take care and keep watch on his birds.

1400 –Drove to Forde House to attend a meeting with a Councillor regarding the Teignmouth Skate Project. Discussed the proposals put forward for the new park and the way forward.

1600 – Drove back to Teignmouth calling in at 2nd Avenue to check on an elderly resident who has been having problems with youths knocking bins over and vandalising her perimeter wall. Stopped and talked with some of the local youths who were playing in the street.

1710 – Back to Teignmouth Police Station. Up-dated our notebooks.

1730 - OFF DUTY

Background

During November last year, I spent a morning with two Stroud District residents, both of whom live with varying types of disability. One resident is registered blind and uses a guide dog and cane; the other uses a mobility chair due to Multiple Sclerosis.

As part of my usual daily routine, I walked my beat with these residents to obtain an understanding of the difficulties they encountered as disabled pedestrians. I spent approximately two hours with each resident using a similar route, as I felt this would enable me to see the differences and problems encountered by the different types of disability.



Accessibility

- Road signs placed on the pavement-limited access due to their positioning.
- Roads with no pavements - there is no way of telling where you are on the road.
- 'A' Boards used by local businesses could be situated better while still advertising adequately.
- Shop canopies. These were not a problem for either resident, however they are about 6.0ft above the ground, and this means for someone of this height they could cause a collision problem.
- Railway crossing. The railway crossing has a gate situated at the bottom of a series of uneven steps, both in height and depth. The steps are edged with yellow paint to aid those visually impaired but have very poor levels of grip in wet conditions. Once successfully up the steps there is no way of telling where the track begins. The crossing itself is not straight and could cause a visually impaired person to fall onto the track.

Road/Paving

- Uneven pavements caused problems for both disabled residents.
- Dropped kerbs with a big distance to the road surface prevented access for the mobility chair and could cause a blind person to fall.
- Tactile paving. When located on a corner a cane user would use the flat edge of the dropped kerb to guide themselves to the other side. In the cases I came across this could lead to the person ending up in the middle of the road.
- Tree roots exposed through the pavement. A risk for all residents.
- Over grown hedges causing users of the pavements to step onto the road.
- Footpath that runs behind town centre car park uneven with a big drop on one side.
- Potholes filled with sand and gravel, Sand gets washed out leaving a large hole for someone to trip over. Adequate street lighting assists sighted residents only.

My own notes on possible solutions to many of the above mentioned problems can be found in the full report, the details of which can be obtained by contacting Ashley Nicholson, Senior Neighbourhood Warden at Stroud District Council – 07739 852210.

The Resource Centre Staff teamed along with members of the Housing Team, Crime & Disorder, Environment, DVLA, PCSO's, Highways, Bromford Housing, Sarsen Housing, Swindon Commercial Services, Neighbourhood Wardens, Local ward councillors and Police on a pilot joint initiative to spread the message of a cleaner, safer and greener community and to build up the community spirit and restore some pride in the people living in Pinehurst. On the chilly morning of 14 December, the day of the operation 80 of us were gathered at the Pinehurst People's Centre for a briefing.



After the briefing all of us were divided into four mixed teams and armed with graffiti cleaners, litter pickers, hit the streets to tackle issues such as graffiti, litter and abandoned cars. The aim being to reduce the fear of crime in the community and make people feel safer in their homes.

For many of the residents of Pinehurst this sort of thing has become part of their daily lives. On one side of the road there was an abandoned car.



Next to it a mother was explaining how she could not let her young daughter go out to play because of the state of the area. Across the street there was a scrawl of graffiti covering the road sign.

One woman summed it up by saying her estate was easy to get a house on but impossible to get away from – because people don't want to move there any more.

Councillor Maurice Fanning who helped out with the clear up said, *'I think that now they have seen the area cleared up they will respect it far more and keep in mind it's just a matter of looking after it'*.

Amongst some of the surprises awaiting those taking part in the clean up included three 25-litre barrels of hazardous chemicals that had been dumped. Lynn our training officer found a handbag, which had been stolen in a recent burglary, during her patrol.

Cheri Wright, from Crime and Disorder who was running the operation said, *'it is now down to the people of Pinehurst to keep up the good work'*. She further said, *'the overwhelming thing is the fact that this is a clear demonstration of how, when we work together, we can achieve massive results for the community. This is the way forward now and we will strive to get it to other areas so more communities can benefit from this type of work. The aim is to make the communities better by tackling the low-level issues, which is then to be sustained by the community'*.

Sgt Robin Colbourne of Swindon Police said, 'the work in Pinehurst had been about empowering the community to make it a better place for themselves and their families'. 'The thing about this is trying to empower people. 'This is their community and they have got to try and treat it with respect and ensure other people treat it with respect as well'.

Tidy up operation will sweep across town



Steve Roberts from the Neighbourhood Warden Team says, 'It was a good idea to concentrate on hitting one specific area by surprise, involving the different agencies. It made the public aware of what the Swindon Council is prepared to do to rejuvenate the community'.

Operation Results

Litter:

- Approx 50 bags cleared (litter picks)
- 2 flat bed trucks filled and cleared with large litter/debris
- Road signs collected and cleared
- Prescription drugs found
- 75 litres of hazardous waste found
- 1 stolen hand bag with contents recovered following a burglary in the area

Fly tipping:

- Number of warnings given
- Sites identified for further action

Graffiti:

- Approx 70 sites cleared on graffiti, including road and street signs and lampposts
- Large scale graffiti removed from Clive Parade, library and school

Dogs:

- 6 owners spoken to re dg issues

Vehicles:

- 5 vehicles clamped (DVLA)
- 3 abandoned vehicle removed
- 1 moped removed
- 2 tickets re abandoned vehicles
- 1 overloaded vehicle dealt with
- 1 CLE 26 issued (no tax)

Warnings:

- 65 warning letters issues for a number of issues including tenancy enforcement re state of gardens etc, fly tipping
- 27 verbal warnings

Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR):

- During the time on site approx 2 hours the ANPR has 1300 reads of which 34 were positive.
- 1 vehicle seized and disclaimed by owner
- 1 stolen pedal cycle recovered
- 4 fixed penalty notice issues (3 for no seat belts and 1 no number plate)
- 4 tickets forwarded to DVLA failure to notify change of ownership

Highways:

- Section 81 notices to be served re missing NTL covers (10) and missing tap covers
- Letter to be sent to residents where gates open onto the highways
- 37 illegal vehicle crossings identified

Street cleaning:

- Both the large and smaller street cleaning vehicles were operating in the area cleaning the streets and pavements.

The next meeting of the South West Regional Network will be held on 17 March at Holiday Inn, Taunton, M5 Jct25 from 10:30 am to 3pm.



Here is a direct link to the hotel web page where you can get your map and directions.

<http://www.superbreak.com/home.cfm?GroupID=3600&content=Hotel>



You can now book training at any time from the comfort of your office desk via our online booking system at www.cbs-rcswind.org

Vicki Clarke and Hannah Beech recently attended 'Train the Trainer' training and will now be helping with the delivery of Warden Core Training.



Resource Centre Website
www.swindon.gov.uk/swresourcecentre

Resource Centre Fax: 01793 464005

Resource Centre Email:
swresourcecentre@swindon.gov.uk

Training Officer Lynn Jarvie:
ljarvie@swindon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01793 464003

Development Officer Sue Stevens:
sstevens@swindon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01793 464001

Administrator Michael Yohans:
myohans@swindon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01793 464006