

DURHAM CONSTABULARY



District of easington

EASINGTON DIVISION POLICE

**DISTRICT OF EASINGTON COMMUNITY
SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT

TILLEY AWARD 2003

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EASINGTON COMMUNITY SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP,
JOINT ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT.

DURHAM CONSTABULARY

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TILLEY AWARD SUMMARY

EASINGTON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP / ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT

The District of Easington is situated on the North East Coast of County Durham. With the declining population of 94,000, there are high levels of unemployment and extreme levels of poor health, social isolation, poverty and low education attainment.

In the 1999 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Easington District ranked as the fourth most deprived area in England and Wales.

The Crime and Disorder Audit, undertaken between 1998 and 2000, identified anti-social behaviour as a priority for the District. During the audit period, anti-social behaviour complaints had risen 22% with a significant proportion of complaints relating to youths causing annoyance, vehicle nuisance, community problems and associated issues.

In response to the problems identified, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) secured funding from Neighbourhood Renewal funds for the creation of a unique multi-agency unit.

In July 2002, a joint Police / District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) was formed. The Unit comprised three Police Officers and two Council Enforcement Officers. At the time of its inception, it was believed to be the first unit of its kind in the country. The aim of the unit was to investigate complaints and co-ordinate enforcement, mediation, diversionary and educational activity. The overall objective was to use a problem orientated approach in order to find solutions as opposed to the traditional Police method of looking for immediate answers to problems. The Unit work very closely with the Fire Brigade and other partners of the Community Safety Partnership. More recently the Unit has been further enhanced through the addition of a Vehicle Nuisance Officer, whose role includes targeting nuisance complaints re off-road motor cycles, abandoned vehicles and proactively enforcing the new legislation. Achievements so far include:

- A 22% reduction in vehicle arson incidents
- A 14% reduction in secondary arson incidents
- A 24% reduction in off road motor cycle incidents, stemming the rise in anti-social behaviour complaints
- Seizure and removal of 243 vehicles
- A significant reduction in bus damage incidents
- Over 340 parental warning letters issued
- Focused interventions on hoax callers
- Progression of Youth Shelter project
- Test Purchase operations

TILLEY AWARD SUMMARY

EASINGTON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP / ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT

The District of Easington is situated on the North East coast of County Durham. There are approximately 94,000 residents in a population which has been declining since the pit closures of the 1980s.

The District is made up of 17 settlements, including the main towns of Peterlee and Seaham. The majority of settlements are ex-colliery villages.

The area has suffered huge job losses due to pit closures and has extreme levels of poor health, social isolation, poverty and low educational attainment.

In the 1999 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Easington District ranked as the fourth most deprived area in England and Wales. As part of the requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act, the District of Easington Community Safety Partnership undertook an audit of crime and disorder between 1998 and 2000. The following areas were identified as priorities:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Thefts from the home (including house burglaries)
- Vehicle Crime
- Violent Crime and Domestic Violence
- Substance Misuse

As part of the Community Safety Strategy, five task groups were formed to develop initiatives in respect of the above priority areas. A further task group was also established to develop work around young people, both as victims and purportors of crime. (List of Community Safety Partners – Annex 1).

Anti-Social Behaviour

The CDRP Audit identified that anti-social behaviour complaints had risen 22% during the audit period. The complaints were primarily youths causing annoyance, with the remainder relating to vehicle nuisance, community problems and other associated issues. The strategy of the Community Safety Partnership was to seek to impact upon this priority area through the formation of a joint Police and District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU). A Unit was formed in July 2002 and consists of one Police Sergeant, two Constables and two Council Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers. The Unit was funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and at its inception was believed to be the first unit of its kind in the country.

The aim of the Unit was to investigate complaints and co-ordinate enforcement, mediation, diversionary and educational activity. The overall objective was to use a problem orientated approach to anti-social behaviour, looking to find longer term solutions, as opposed to the traditional police method of finding immediate short term solutions to problems. Included within the remit of the Unit, was the collation of evidence with a view to issuing Acceptable Behavioural Contracts (ABCs) for/and evidence to support Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

The ASBU are a uniformed presence with high visibility to also impact upon public reassurance in communities. The Unit has been further enhanced in April 2003, with a full

time addition of a Vehicle Nuisance Officer, whose role is to co-ordinate activity to combat the identified problem in regard to off-road motor cycles, vehicle nuisance and enforcement of the new legislative powers.

In a relatively short period the ASBU have impacted upon a range of problems associated with anti-social behaviour. This document attempts to provide the reader with some examples of the outcomes which the ASBU have achieved.

- **Arson Reduction Initiative**

Outcomes Achieved

- a reduction of 14 % in secondary arson incidents
- a reduction of 22% of vehicle arson incidents
- Seizure of 243 vehicles in conjunction with DVLA

- **Vehicle Nuisance**

Outcomes Achieved

- A 24% reduction in off-road motor cycle incidents
- Issue of 62 verbal warnings
- Issue of 23 official warnings using new legislation
- Seizure of 10 suspected stolen motor cycles
- 6 arrests
- 13 persons reported for road traffic offences

- **Individual Case Study Analysis**

Outcomes Achieved

- Analysis of 3, 955 calls of Youths Causing Annoyance incidents
- Caller Questionnaire to 47 "Persistent Complainers" / Victims
- Identification of hoax complainer through covert observations
- Use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Surveys

- **Diversionsary Projects**

- Youth Shelter Projects
- Use of Mediation Service referrals

- **Warning Letter Initiative Outcome**

- 382 parental warning Letters
- 7 secondary parental warning letters

- **On the Buses Initiative**

- Significant reduction in incidents of damage to PSB vehicles from 5 incidents per month to 1 incident per month

- **Off Licence Visits Outcome**

- Test Purchase Operations for 15 premises

ANNEX 1

THE EASINGTON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

District of Easington Council

Durham County Council

Durham Constabulary

East Durham Youth Offending Team

Durham Drug Action Team

Metro Mail

National Probation Service(County Durham)

Victim Support

East Durham Domestic Violence Forum

County Durham Darlington Fire and Rescue Brigade

East Durham and Sedgefield Specialist Health Promotion Service

East Durham Business Club

Easington Action Team for Jobs

Neighbourhood Watch

County Durham Health Authority

DISC

Council for Voluntary Services

Police Authority

East Durham and Houghall Community College

ARSON REDUCTION INITIATIVE.

One example of the partnership approach is; The Arson Co-ordinator, Station Officer John BOWERY who is a fire fighter meets with the ASBU on a weekly basis and an exchange of information takes place.

It was found that hotspot areas where incidents of secondary arson and vehicle arson occur were almost identical to those areas identified by the ASBU as being hotspots for Anti Social Behaviour.

It was also found that when fire fighters attended scenes they could identify individuals who always seemed to be present at these scenes. Although no positive evidence was found the details of the individuals were forwarded to the ASBU who paid a home visit and gave advice regarding their possible involvement.

In one particular area several derelict buildings were set afire and a young female was suspected of being involved. The ASBU visited her and a referral was made to the Fire Setter team (a scheme run by the Fire Brigade which gives one to one counselling) After the visit the amount of fire calls to the area decreased dramatically.

In the same area the district council also demolished out house buildings and cleared the yards of combustible materials of these derelict properties which again stopped persons using them a "dens" which would almost always lead to a fire Another major concern was the amount of vehicle arson throughout the district. (Annex 2)

A study was made with the Arson Reduction Officer taking the lead.

With the assistance of the ASBU, Beat Officers, Street Wardens and the local Traffic Warden a car clear initiative was started.

The Traffic Warden would organise sweeps through the district which was intelligence lead (Operation Mexico) with the assistance of the DVLA.

This has proven very successful with 243 vehicles being seized during a period September 2002 – April 2003.

To add to this a further scheme was devised in conjunction with Easington District Council where vehicles which could be considered a fire hazard i.e. Abandoned projects in peoples gardens, would be removed via the council at no cost to the owner.

Starting 6th May 2003 the scheme has been further enhanced with a partnership approach where vehicles which have been abandoned and meet certain criteria will be removed within one hour. (ERA initiative, Easington Reaction to Arson).

If a vehicle has been abandoned in an "arson hotspot" the system will enable vehicles to be uplifted within half an hour so minimising the risk of damage and arson.

This will impact on Fire Brigade resourcing which will free up crews to deliver fire safety talks and conduct preventative measures. There will also be cost saving implications to consider.

Initial comparisons with the previous nine months has shown a 14% reduction in secondary fires within the district compared to a 10% increase in other station areas within County Durham.

Vehicle arson within the same period has been reduced by 22% compared to no change in other station area areas.

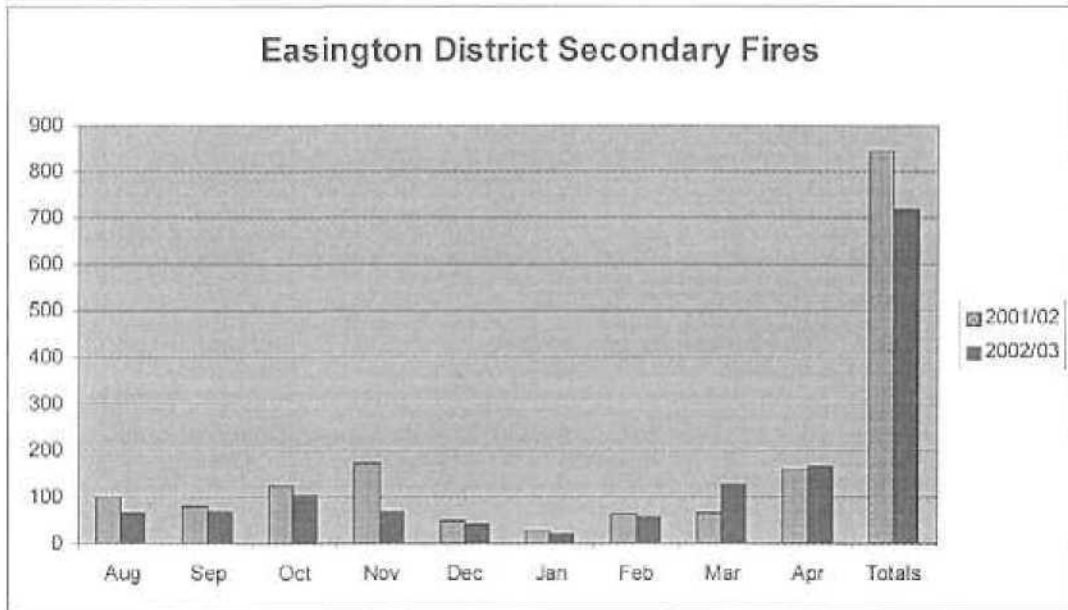
ANNEX 2

A brief update on Arson Reduction initiatives in Easington District.

Secondary Fires.

The last nine months as compared with the corresponding period in 2001/02 has shown a **reduction** in secondary fires in the District of Easington of **14%**

Secondary fires in the other wholetime areas have **increased** by **10%** over the same timespan. The unseasonal spell of dry weather from the beginning of March through till late April, together with the Easter school holiday accounted for the only monthly increases. This highlights the great need for the Arson Awareness presentation to be delivered into target area schools early in 2004.



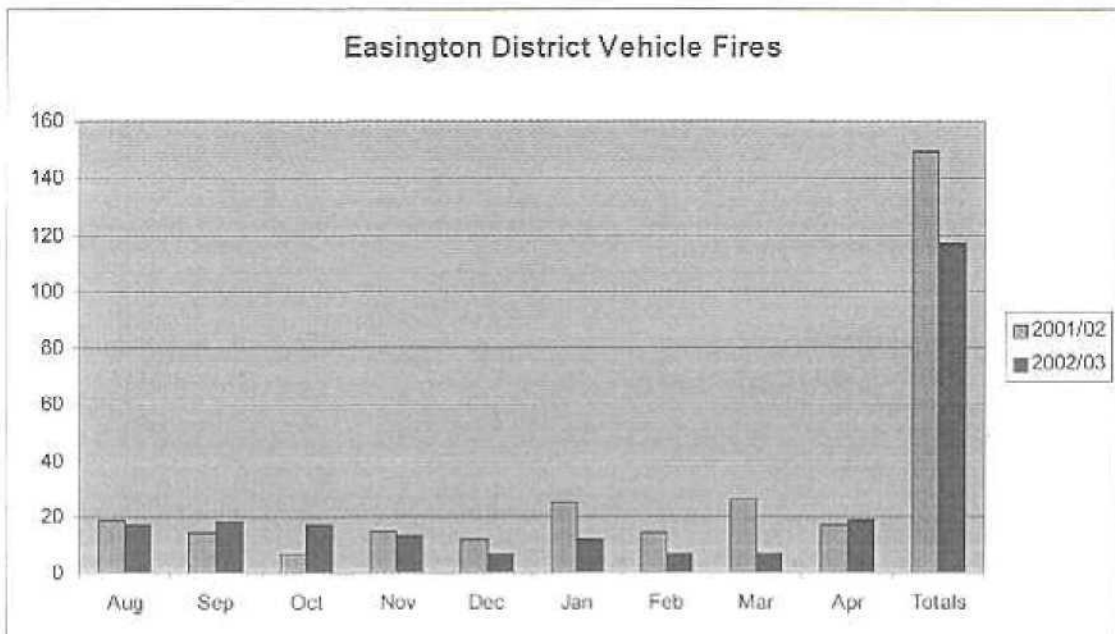
Vehicle Fires.

Data has been scrutinised over the same times but this time it was related to vehicle arson.

There has been a **reduction** of vehicle arson fires in the District of Easington of **22%**

The other whole time stations recorded **no change** in vehicle arson over the same period.

There is clear evidence emerging that vehicles are being torched well after they have been abandoned in streets/estates. May 6th in Easington District welcomes a rapid removal of abandoned vehicles initiative and it is felt that this will lead to further reductions in vehicle arson in Easington.



Car Clearance initiatives are now fully up and running in the Easington District and includes 3 central areas of activity;

DVLA..where unlicensed vehicles are removed from the area. Following this action they are either destroyed , or taken back into ownership following payment of the whole due licence fee.

Removal of Abandoned vehicles ..utilising various legislation , vehicles are removed from target areas within 1 hour of their being reported.

Vehicle Amnestywhere old vehicles on gardens or driveways etc are removed following agreement with the owners.

The above actions are leading to reductions in vehicle arson.

| Station Area | Jan – May 10 th 2002 | Jan – May 10 th 2003 | + or - % |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Seaham | 31 | 12 | -61 % |
| Peterlee | 53 | 43 | -19 % |
| Wheatley Hill | 20 | 13 | -35 % |
| Totals | 104 | 78 | -25 % |

This is a look at vehicle arson over a 3 month timeslot, comparing this year to last year. The greater reductions have occurred in Easington District where there has been a heavy DVLA presence. Over 215 unlicensed cars have been lifted from Easington. Of those approx ¾ have been crushed. In this district there is also a vehicle amnesty operation, the end result of course being a further car clearance.

DVLA have a one day per month arrangement here with the Easington District Council to carry out mopping up operations to keep the pressure on tax dodgers and they are delighted to do it for free because of the back tax they secure.

Vehicle Arson In Durham and Darlington D1, E1 and F1 are in Easington district

| Station Area | January – March 2002 | January –March 2003 | % change |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------|
| A1 | 22 | 20 | -9 |
| B1 | 19 | 18 | -5 |
| D1 | 19 | 5 | -74 |
| E1 | 33 | 18 | -45 |
| F1 | 14 | 2 | -86 |
| G1 | 26 | 11 | -58 |
| H1 | 0 | 0 | - |
| J1 | 6 | 1 | -83 |
| K1 | 6 | 2 | -66 |
| L1 | 0 | 0 | - |
| M1 | 8 | 7 | -12 |
| N1 | 20 | 22 | +10 |
| O1 | 0 | 0 | - |
| P1 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Q1 | 32 | 32 | - |
| Totals | 195 | 138 | -30 |

INDIVIDUAL STUDY ANALYSIS.

Many studies have been carried out by the ASBU in a short period of time since it's initial conception.

During the period 2002, 3955 calls of youths causing annoyance were received.

When the information was analysed found that 486 of these calls were made by only 47 persons. (12 %). They were designated as being persistent complainers/victims. The 47 were all contacted and a Questionnaire sent to each one asking questions such as what the exact problem was and had they done anything themselves to tackle the problem.

35 of the "47" replied to the questionnaire.

Each answer was considered and in a lot of the cases it was found that these persons either had a genuine complaint or had a low level of tolerance.

In one of the cases a man was making regular calls to Police of youth nuisance (40 calls between June 2002 – January 2003). The incidents were investigated on each occasion but no evidence of the incident was present when officers attended. The complainant was given the use of a video camera but it always appeared to not work when he wanted it to.

Eventually the ASBU and local beat officers initiated a covert operation to capture evidence of youths in the area but what they found was the complainant made allegations that incidents were occurring yet the officers in the observation point could not see anything happening.

As a result of this the complainant was asked to make a statement which he willing did so. He was then formally interviewed regarding making false allegations which he admitted and received a formal caution for his actions. The main point of this tale is that when dealing with complainants do not always look at the initial problem but take time to analyse the complaint prior to taking action. A case study of this incident was made.

In the case of genuine concern the ASBU visited the locations and decided which course of action would be appropriate. In cases where a low level of tolerance was perceived the individuals were referred to UNITE which is a mediation service and has since been replaced by mediation services offered by DISC.

In 3 locations they sought the help of the Crime Prevention Officer who gave advice on how the particular problems could be addressed by using CPTED. (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

In one of these locations which included 9 complaints from one resident (One of the "47") a group of youths were sitting on low level fencing on a green area next to a Fish shop and an Off licence premises. The green area was surrounded by Aged Persons homes and became an area of concern due to the noise, litter and fear of crime. The group were approached by the

ASBU and were asked to consider what they were doing and how their presence could be interpreted by other persons in the area. The majority of the group took heed but the leaders of the group decided it was their meeting place and the problem persisted.

After more complaints the ASBU sent letters to the parents of the group advising them of the problems their children were causing. The amount of calls declined but occasionally the group would still sit on the fencing. The solution was to remove the fencing, reinstate the path way and to plant low level bushes to discourage the group from remaining there. This has been done to a successful result.

With the fear of crime being so prevalent in the district the ASBU attend as many meetings as possible with local residents groups, Parish, Town and District councils to listen to the main problems and to assist in allaying their fears. (A power point presentation is given).

Another study was carried out with one of the "47" which dealt with a group of young people congregating on a village green public seat. The seat had been in place since 1897 and was a meeting place for the young people as it was a focal point being close to the local secondary school. The study is ongoing but with research and the help of the young people the school will be opening on Friday evenings which is what the young people wanted to do on a Friday evening. (Green Seat Study Annex 3)

The ASBU have also made contact with several youth groups within the district and are working with them to find solutions in their particular parish. One group in the Shotton area are using a local community centre IT learning area to make a youth shelter project. They have set up formal meetings with the ASBU and the Parish Council and are using the IT resources to record their progress. This not only helps the young people with their ultimate aim of obtaining a youth shelter but also provides them with good practice when dealing with the adult world.

Once this project is completed it will be used as a role model for other Parish or youth groups who want to obtain funding for projects.

As a result of further analysis and consultation with young people within the district funding has been obtained for 3 youth shelters which will be built in the hotspot areas. (The foundations of the first shelter are being laid as I write this document).

A questionnaire is sent out to complainants after work in the area has been completed in order to evaluate what was done and how it has affected the local residents.

ANNEX 3

THE HISTORY

The Green Seat located in Church Walk at Easington Village was erected in 1897. The seat was originally known as The Form Seat, which was and still is a place for villagers to sit and look out over the green to the sea and down the coast towards North Yorkshire.



THE PROBLEM

This case study looks at the problem of youths causing a nuisance on the Village Green at Easington Village, in particular, the area of the Green Seat.

During 2002 Easington Division Police received 94 complaints in relation to youths causing a nuisance within Easington Village. Over half of these complaints, 53, were in relation to the Village Green, with 21 complaints specifically for the Green Seat.

The Green Seat was erected in 1897 and is of historical importance, so it is unable to be removed.

Out of the 53 complaints received for the Village Green area, 33 complaints came from just two residents. One of these residents lives next to the Green Seat and the other resident lives opposite the Green Seat.

Since November 2002 the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Officers have been assisting Easington Section Police Officers to patrol the Easington Village Green area on a Friday evening, as this is the main day of reported complaints. This is obviously a short term measure, but the ASBU are looking at a multi agency approach to solving this long term problem.

On 13th January 2003 members of the ASBU attended the Easington Village Parish Council meeting in order to outline the problems of the Village Green and the possible solutions.

Easington Village Parish Council declined the offer of a youth shelter as it was felt that there was no suitable land within the Village and a shelter would merely move the problem to another area.

The Parish Council do support the use of St. Marys Church Hall or the Easington Community School being used for youth provision on a Friday evening.

On the evening of Friday 24th January 2003 a snap shot of young people was carried out by the ASBU around the Village Green and the following pages show the results of a questionnaire completed by 35 young people. It is estimated that 50 young people were in the Village Green area that evening. (See appendix 1. attached for summary)

CONCLUSION

The ASBU and Easington Section Officers have patrolled the Easington Village Green area, on a Friday evening for the past few weeks.

There are no major anti-social behaviour problems around the village green, but there is a genuine lack of youth provision for teenagers.

Up to 50 teenagers can be seen on a Friday evening wandering around the village green area and they do tend to congregate at the Green Seat, as well as the bus shelter in Low Row and on the seats on the centre of the village green.

Small amounts of alcohol have been seized from teenagers, mainly at the bus shelter in Low Row. Several warning letters have been sent out to inform parents of any misconduct, but only one youth had to be arrested and that was for a breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

As well as Easington Village, the teenagers come from several surrounding villages to meet their friends, due to their attendance at the Easington Community School, which is located within the village.

The teenagers just want somewhere to meet their friends and they believe they have every right to sit on the Green Seat, but they do understand that if a large group do gather at the Green Seat, then the Police will move them on.

The results of the questionnaire show that the teenagers want somewhere to meet their friends with a disco and perhaps some sporting activities. The teenagers have chosen the most suitable venue as the Easington Community School.

On a weekly basis the Police receive complaints from 2 residents next to the Green Seat who expect the Police to move the teenagers on, even when their behaviour is not anti-social and would be seen as acceptable at another location. The ASBU Officers have spoken to other residents who live near to the Green Seat and they have no problem with the teenagers who meet at the Green Seat and the village green. It would appear that these two residents have a very low tolerance level and the Police are unfair to the teenagers when they ask them to move on.

The problem of the Green Seat can be solved by providing youth provision for the teenagers at Easington Community School on a Friday evening.

The ASBU are therefore working with other agencies to provide this youth provision, which if successful will release Police resources on a Friday evening as well as improving the quality of life for the teenagers and the residents around the village green.