



**WILDMILL BRIDGEND.**

**(A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO  
REDUCING CRIME AND DISORDER)**

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## **The TILLEY AWARD 2004** **Wildmill Bridgend**

### **Summary**

The Wildmill area of Bridgend, is a social housing estate of approximately 1000 dwellings, which includes blocks of flats, maisonettes, detached and semi-detached houses; estimates of the population of the area vary, but are put at approximately 2,500 people.

The estate covers a relatively small geographical area, which lends itself to social deprivation, which includes higher than average levels of criminality and youth annoyance.

The Wildmill estate, was built in the 1960's and 70's and has a run down appearance, with many of the dwellings needing refurbishment, in addition there are several empty commercial premises on the estate. There is little provision for the youth of the area, therefore many of them tend to congregate around the local streets. Many of the adults held a view that they are responsible for many of the problems in the area. This was a wrongly held, though understandable viewpoint. Research which was commissioned <sup>(1)</sup> by 'Youthworks' Wildmill, (part of a National youth works programme, operating through local groundworks trusts), showed that the youth of the area believed there was little for them to do; illegal use of and trafficking in controlled drugs played a significant part in developing a feeling of deprivation within the estate. Wildmill itself has, in comparison with the rest of the Bridgend County Borough, a higher proportion of single parents, many of whom are young mothers. It has become clear that this section of the population especially who had become an easy target for drug traffickers, the selling of stolen goods and those involved on the fringes of prostitution.

Historically, the area had been policed by one Community Beat Officer (CBO), backed up by response officers from Bridgend police station. This was clearly not enough, to make tangible inroads to the problems being encountered by the residents of the area.

In 2003, a decision was made to give a far greater commitment to the policing of the Wildmill estate.

In 2003 through a Problem Orientated Policing (POP) approach and in conjunction with others within the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, real improvements were made in relation to levels of crime and disorder traditionally experienced in Wildmill and a significant reduction in both areas has been evidenced.

The process by which this problem was identified, the response to such a problem and the results being experienced from this project, forms the basis of this nomination for the Tilley Award 2004.

### **Definition of the problems.**

It was evident that the Wildmill estate had experienced significant problems in relation to crime and disorder, but exact details had to be defined. It was obvious from all the visible signs, community tension indicators, word of mouth and crime figures that a problem existed, but a more specific and thorough analysis had to be completed.

This was carried out in a number of ways, the most important of which was actually listening to what the residents themselves had to say about the environment in which they lived. As a result a series of steps were undertaken to gauge the extent of the problem.

### **Public Consultation.**

In order to gain an awareness of public feeling representatives of the local authority and the police attended a public meeting in the Wildmill Community Centre. This was attended by over 150 residents and local representatives, which in terms of public meetings represented a significant proportion of the local adult population.

At that meeting, residents were invited to raise questions regarding issues that affected them and their families, both from a policing and housing perspective. Through that meeting, an insight was gained into the concerns of the residents and what they saw as the priorities; it was acknowledged that more could have been done over recent years and through such acknowledgement a considerable degree of credibility was gained.

Information gained from the meeting was confirmed whilst attending other public meetings, such as local council, neighbourhood watch and tenant's and residents associations. The information received and the viewpoints of the various stakeholders were considered alongside information gained from numerous other sources. Very quickly a clear picture of the problems being experienced within Wildmill, began to unfold.

### **Partnership Consultation.**

The Bridgend Basic Command Unit (BCU) is a vital partner of the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership (Safer Bridgend), which includes representatives from the local authority, probation service, youth offending team, health and fire services etc. Through such a partnership, a steering group has been formed which is able to have a positive impact in many locations across the borough, with a view to improving the quality of life of the residents within Wildmill.

Through such partnership working, the anti social behaviour sub-group was formed, reporting to the steering group, to pool information on anti social behaviour issues specifically involving young people and seeking to target action where it was most needed. Through this group a 'Youthworks' project was set up within Wildmill and secured funding to address youth problems on the estate. Through the exchange of information within the partnership, it was clear to all concerned that a clearer commitment to helping to resolve the problem had to be not only displayed, but also followed up.

### **Youth annoyance database.**

Through the Bridgend police Youth Crime Reduction Officer (YCRO), a database was maintained in relation to every anti social behaviour incident involving young people that occurred in Wildmill. The database gave a clear picture of the number and type of incidents that occurred on the estate and so enabled the Community Beat Officers (CBO's) and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's), to have a better understanding of their 'hotspots' so that effective targeted patrols could be carried out.

### **Crime pattern analysis.**

Various crime pattern analysis exercises were completed to indicate the types of crimes being committed and to identify possible suspects, so that both the suspects and the 'victims' could be targeted. Predictive analysis was also carried out to assist officers in targeting possible future victims of crime.

### **Police I.T. systems.**

Rigorous interrogation of I.T. systems was carried out to develop a clear understanding of where the 'hotspots' were, in relation to both crime and youth annoyance. The information gleaned from such a process was considered alongside the information coming from other sources, so that a clear overview of the problems could be attained.

### **Analysis**

The Bridgend BCU, carries out a daily tasking and co-ordinating process in line with the National Intelligence Model. A fortnightly process is also carried out, during which problems are clearly identified and analysed.

In collating the findings from the above processes and in comparing statistics with other areas in the locality one thing became clear, the residents of the Wildmill estate were much more likely to be the victims of crime and youth annoyance, than residents on other estates within the Bridgend area.

Having drawn such a conclusion, it was obvious that a committed project had to be implemented to help improve the quality of life for residents of Wildmill. A feasibility study <sup>(2)</sup> was carried out in Wildmill, which established that the area satisfied the criteria for a 'Youthworks' programme and in April 2002 a project manager was appointed. (Interestingly one of the youths who had been causing annoyance on the estate was invited and agreed, to sit on the interview panel that was convened to appoint the manager.)

### **Objectives of the project**

It was identified that Wildmill had become 'the forgotten estate' of Bridgend, with very little in the way of youth projects etc having been put in place. One of the main objectives of this project was to increase public reassurance and confidence in the police. For too long, residents of Wildmill had a perception that the local police had not given sufficient commitment to combating incidents of criminality and youth annoyance. The objective was to eradicate that feeling of having been let down, to work in partnership with other agencies to help improve the quality of life for the residents and to engage public disorder and criminality through: -

- Improved visibility
- Siting a police office on or near the estate
- The prevention and detection of crime.
- The reduction of youth annoyance incidents.
- Greater involvement within and accountability to, the local community.
- Improved partnership working
- Maintaining improvements in quality of life issues.

A significant improvement in recorded crime figures and the increase in detection rates were considered to be an optimistic but achievable target. Until the project was established it was not possible to set specific goals in relation to percentages, but once commenced and the effects of the additional commitment could be assessed, a steady reduction in crime and increase in detection rates was to be the end goal.

Incidents of anti social behaviour involving young people were proving to be one of the greatest issues as far as quality of life for local residents was concerned. As in any area of similar socio-demographic and economic background, such incidents were high in number and proving to be one of the greatest concerns for those being subjected to them; in many instances they were of more concern than incidents of crime.

A reduction in the number of such incidents was an achievable goal, which would improve the quality of life for residents. As with crime reduction, difficulty was experienced in trying to set specific targets, but addressing this issue was to be the main objective for the project and would be tackled by way of law enforcement and the 'Youthworks' arm of the project.

It was evident that to be able to address the issues identified, improvements would have to be made to the way that the police and their partners worked together within the community. This objective was set, so that communication could be improved which would then facilitate the positive marketing of successes achieved by the partnership.

In the long term, any improvements made within Wildmill would have to be sustained, so that no ground was lost in the fight against crime and disorder.

To that end, the Bridgend BCU commander made decisions, to make permanent improvements in relation to the police staffing levels, which would include the introduction of three police community support officers (PCSO's), who would be posted to the Wildmill area alone.

### Response to the Problem

Having defined the problem and set the objectives, it was clear that a targeted response had to be set, not only in relation to law enforcement with regards to crime, but also in relation to improving the surroundings of the area and the use of 'distraction tactics' such as the development of the 'Youthworks' centre, to reduce the youth annoyance problem.

Throughout 2003, several aspects of the response developed simultaneously, in order to address the various issues that had been evidenced during the scanning exercises. Through the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, CCTV cameras were installed throughout the estate; those cameras having been linked to the Bridgend County Borough CCTV system made a positive impact in public reassurance and have been instrumental in the arrest of several offenders for various criminal offences.

- **The police presence was significantly increased and a firm commitment was given to maintaining a highly visible police presence on the estate, so those residents could actually 'feel' safer.**

Such was the importance placed upon this problem, that in June 2003, every special constable within the Bridgend BCU was seconded onto the Wildmill project.

What in effect that meant was that a huge amount of additional foot patrol time was committed to the area.

In total 17 Special Constables committed themselves to additional patrol time within the Wildmill estate and over a six month period from June to December 2003, over 500-hrs additional patrolling was carried out within Wildmill.

As well as providing a high profile public reassurance message, the commitment shown by the Special Constables resulted in some very worthwhile arrests, which included arrests for drug offences as well as for thefts, burglary and other dishonesty offences.

The previous establishment of one community beat officer, was doubled and those officers were resourced in such a way that, (abstractions permitting) a Wildmill CBO would be on duty every day. Both officers were involved in highlighting the problems and targets within their area, by developing a profile of Wildmill which included identification of **every** resident who was known or suspected to be actively engaged in criminal activity.

- **The Youthworks programme was developed and continued to grow in both credibility and standing within the community and a 'Groundworks' project was invited into the estate, to help develop the environment by involving the youth of the area.**

Wildmill has had the first 'Youthworks' Programme in Wales and is seen as a flagship programme. This programme arose from a request by the police for a project to be based in what was seen as a deprived area of Bridgend. This request was given the full support of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) manager and the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, through its Anti Social Behaviour Sub Committee.

The programme was backed by the Safer Bridgend Community Safety Partnership and was granted £20,000 to assist with the running costs which went towards paying for two part time youth workers.

The 'Youthworks' Programme has a manager and key workers appointed to it and their main aim, is to provide various activities within the community to help distract local young people from committing crime and acts of public nuisance. The programme itself is situated in what was empty

shop premises, within a central shopping precinct and the young people that use the premises, have been encouraged to have some say in the appearance and the way it was managed. Young people from the estate have themselves helped to decorate the premises, which in turn has given them a sense of involvement and responsibility.

A developing programme has been set up, which is delivered by youth workers and local volunteers; it's worthy of note that some of the older youths who have attended various programmes have shown an interest in helping to run some of the sessions provided.

The activities run by the 'Youthworks' programme includes sports, computer sessions, art and craft sessions, photography/video projects and health related projects. In the summer of 2003, ten young people went on a camping trip and the programme has also included Duke of Edinburgh Award sessions.

The programme manager, his youth workers, together with all the volunteers have to take full credit for the considerable amount of work that has been put into, not only setting up the project, but also the development of a wide and varied programme of activities.

This has contributed significantly to the reduction in anti social behaviour committed by young people on the Wildmill estate.

Figures provided from the past years evaluation <sup>(1)</sup> of the effects of the programme, suggest that from January to September 2003 alone, **123** young people became involved in **432** sessions, totalling over **1000** hours and over **5800** attendance's.

- **A robust and pro-active approach was taken, to targeting known criminals operating within the estate and also those criminals resident within the area, but who were committing crime elsewhere.**

Numerous pro-active operations have been carried out within Wildmill during 2003. These operations proved very successful in both targeting individuals who had previously felt 'safe'

within their own environment and also providing the law-abiding residents of Wildmill with reassurance. A clear message, that a commitment to policing the area was not only being spoken about but was actually being acted upon, was sent out to all involved. Several co-ordinated operations were carried out at numerous addresses, involving considerable numbers of police officers. The targets chosen were premises and occupants who had been identified and complained about by members of the Wildmill community itself. This clearly evidenced the facts that not only were the residents' views being considered, but that they were also being acted upon.

These targets emerged via the implementation of the National Intelligence Model, as warranting positive action. In one instance, a premises semi-detached to the local Wildmill Tenants and Residents Association (WATRA) office was raided, and a successful operation in respect of the misuse of drugs was carried out; this action had a clear impact on public reassurance.

- **Community and partnership working.**

A greater involvement within the community was seen as a crucial stepping-stone to resolving the problems that Wildmill had been facing over recent years. Rather than being seen as merely enforcers of the law, it was vital to the project, that the police had more involvement within and accountability to the community itself. This involvement was to be increased through various ways, which included increasing levels of visible patrol and police activity at crucial times and locations and introducing police community support officers (PCSO's).

Within the Wildmill Residents and Tennants Association (WATRA) offices, which are situated on the estate, a police office was established which is regularly staffed by CBO's and PCSO's alike.

Wildmill has several different representative bodies, all working within the same community. Many of those bodies were working towards the same goal but in a somewhat disjointed way. The police introduced an overarching representative body, the Wildmill Police Liaison group. This incorporated representatives from groups including residents associations, neighbourhood watch

schemes, the housing authority and drugs rehabilitation groups etc. The committee is chaired by the local community sergeant and meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues affecting the area and to feed back into the community, any initiatives and operational results that have been achieved in the past reporting period.

In so doing the community is kept up to date with the pro-active stance that has been undertaken by local officers and maintains a two way flow of information. The process ensures that the community sees the results of the information that is regularly being received from the residents, thus encouraging future co-operation.

- **After devising initiatives to improve the quality of life of local residents, through crime reduction and the reduction in youth annoyance incidents, plans had to be put in place to ensure such improvements would be sustained.**

The 'Youthworks' project has now been running for a full year and continues to develop in ways that will ensure that local young people are provided with a variety of activities to help discourage them from committing acts of crime and annoyance. A 'Groundwork's' project has also been introduced into the estate, which involves local youngsters becoming involved in environmental developments within the area. This has included regeneration of disused areas of land, the provision of additional play areas and the planting of shrubs in such a way and at such locations, that it will discourage any inappropriate use of those areas.

This programme is in its infancy and will continue within Wildmill to help ensure the long term goals of the Wildmill project are met and to provide the youth of the area with a voice about how the area develops.

### **Police Community Support Officers. (PCSO)**

In September 2003, the Bridgend sector was allocated five P.C.S.O.'s. Such was the importance placed upon the Wildmill project that three of those officers were posted to work within that community. Each PCSO was placed to work alongside a community beat officer, so that they could gain experience in working with the community and gain knowledge of the problems encountered in the area. After an initial training period, each PCSO began working closely with various groups in the area, ensuring closer liaison is maintained between the police and the Wildmill community and with almost immediate effect, incidents of youth annoyance began to fall.

The Wildmill community has sponsored the purchase of mobile phones for each PCSO, so that the residents group can maintain close contact with each officer. A flow of valuable information has been received via the P.C.S.O.'s, which has been included into the processes contained within the National Intelligence Model. This additional information has helped build up a clearer picture of the criminal activity within Wildmill.

Those P.C.S.O.'s have been put in place, as a long-term commitment to ensure that gains experienced within the community are sustained and built upon in the future.

### **Evaluation**

Its fair to say that through the intervention that has taken place in Wildmill, the quality of life for residents of the area has improved considerably. A commitment made in 2002, by all members of the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, both in relation to initiating a 'Youthworks' project together with a considerable increase in police resources, targeted in a problem orientated style of policing, has resulted in a significant reduction in crime and youth annoyance.

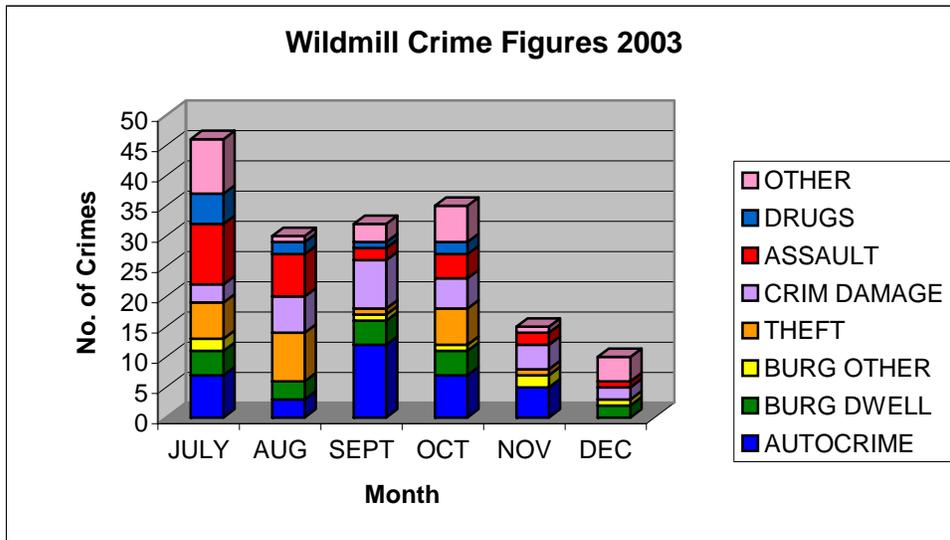
The full benefits of undertaking this project became evident in the latter part of 2003, as can be seen below.

The table below shows the breakdown of the crimes for the Wildmill Area from July to December 2003

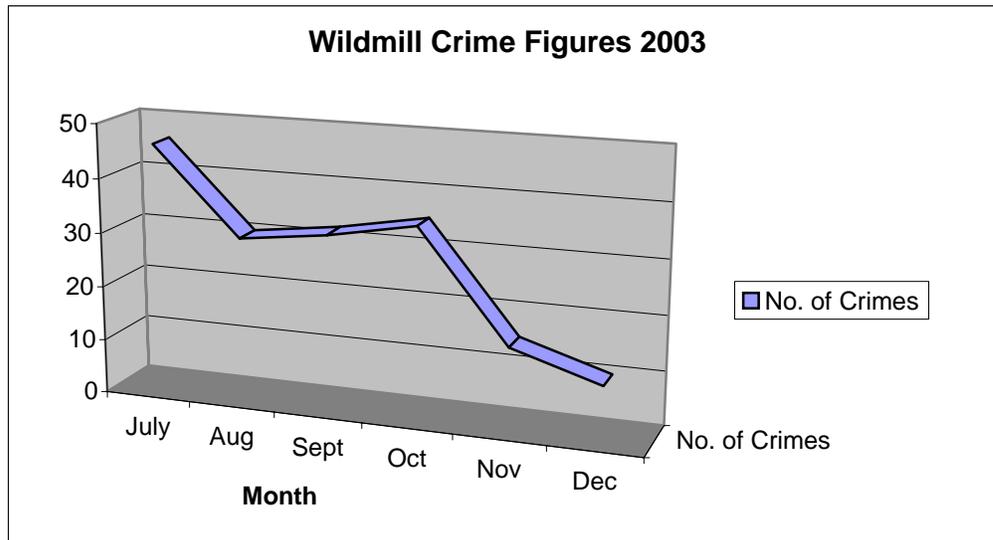
	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
AUTOCRIME	7	3	12	7	5	0
BURG DWELL	4	3	4	4	0	2
BURG OTHER	2	0	1	1	2	1
THEFT	6	8	1	6	1	0
CRIM DAMAGE	3	6	8	5	4	2
ASSAULT	10	7	2	4	2	1
DRUGS	5	2	1	2	0	0
OTHER	9	1	3	6	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

The following graph is included to give a clear picture of the type of crimes experienced in Wildmill in the latter part of 2003. Over the same period, autocrime has been reduced considerably; this reduction is aligned directly to a significant increase in visible police resources being present in Wildmill. (The commencement of PCSO training with local CBO's)

The following graph indicates the make-up of crimes for the Wildmill Area for the months shown



The line graph below shows how the crime figures for the Wildmill Area decreased over the period between July and December 2003.



NOTE: Introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) into the area was in mid - September 2003.

Crime figures for another estate within the Bridgend sector (Brackla), have been produced <sup>(3)</sup> and comparisons have been made between Brackla and Wildmill.

Between June and December 2002, 357 crimes were recorded in Brackla.

Over the same period in 2003, 435 crimes have been recorded. These figures clearly show that in another estate within the same sector, crime had increased whereas in Wildmill, a considerable decrease in crime had been experienced.

Youth annoyance figures for all areas of Wildmill, Bridgend in 2002.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
MAESYFELIN	6	1	4	7	5	10	8	9	6	7	3	4	<b>70</b>
TAIRFELIN	3	4	8	5	9	10	2	3	5	7	2	8	<b>66</b>
TREMGARTH	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
GLANFFORNWAG	1	1	4	1	3	1	2	1	6	1	2	0	<b>23</b>
WILDMILL LANE	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	<b>5</b>
WILDMILL PRECINCT	1	1	4	6	10	6	4	1	6	4	4	0	<b>47</b>
													<b>214</b>

Youth annoyance figures for all areas of Wildmill, Bridgend in 2003

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
MAESYFELIN	7	4	2	3	6	6	2	1	4	3	3	1	<b>42</b>
TAIRFELIN	5	3	1	4	1	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	<b>21</b>
TREMGARTH	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	<b>9</b>
GLANFFORNWAG	2	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	0	2	2	0	<b>19</b>
WILDMILL LANE	0	3	0	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>10</b>
WILDMILL PRECINCT	0	2	0	1	0	3	1	3	5	3	1	0	<b>19</b>
													<b>120</b>

Interrogation of police IT systems, indicate that youth annoyance incidents experienced in other areas had stayed fairly static and in some cases had actually increased over the same period as indicated above.

## Conclusion

Perhaps one of the most significant ways in which success or otherwise can be measured, is by gauging public feeling; as at the very beginning of this project, actually listening to what the residents had to say about their community is deemed vital.

In March 2004, further public consultation will take place at the next public meeting to be held in Wildmill and the ongoing process of scanning, analysis, response and assessment will continue, to ensure that any problems identified are addressed at an early stage.

The chairperson of the Wildmill Tenants and Residents Association has recently described the community as having "*an air of confidence and safety throughout Wildmill*".

The experiences gained in undertaking this project will be built upon and utilised in addressing similar problems in other areas of Bridgend. A firm commitment to community based policing and working in partnership, has been given by the BCU commander and by maintaining the commitment shown over the past year, the officers in the Bridgend BCU and the members of the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership will strive to ensure that the residents of Wildmill are able to enjoy that air of confidence for yet another year.

Table of research referred to within this document.

(1) Jane Webb Research,  
21 Alfred Street,  
Grantham,  
Lincs.  
Tel/fax 01474 577661 (1)

(2) 'Crime Concern'

(3) Crime Information System, South Wales Police.