



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2008 Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. ***By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.*** Please complete the following form in full, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25th April 2008**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811.

Section A: Application basics

1. Title of the project: Fire Watch
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: Reducing arson, small Fires and hoax calls

Author contact details

3. Name of application author: Martin Trevillion
4. Organisation submitting the application: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
5. Full postal address: Basildon & Castle Point Community Command, 9 Argent Court, (First Floor), Sylvan Way, Southfields Business Park, Basildon, SS15 6TH
6. Email address: martin.trevillion@essex-fire.gov.uk
7. Telephone number: 01268 548804

Secondary project contact details

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Ray Williams Community Safety Officer, Basildon Police Station, Great Oaks, Basildon, SS14 1EJ
9. Secondary contact email address: ray.williams@essex.pnn.police.uk
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01268 244023

Endorsing representative contact details

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: ACFO Mark Hardingham

12. Endorsing representative's email address: mark.hardingham@essex-fire.gov.uk

13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government your organisation is covered by e.g. GO East Midlands:

CLG

14. Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

Section B: Summary of application - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).*

The Firewatch project is an example of multi-agency working within the heart of a community, for benefit of that community. Through engagement, intervention and pro-active support work, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service is supporting both Basildon District Council and Essex Police in reducing anti-social behaviour.

The project attacks the issue from a new angle – rather than tagging arson as a crime and police issues it uses the positive profile of firefighters in the community to front the campaign, while the 'enforcement' role of the police is effectively shielded. By working hand in hand with a structured process for dealing with young people outside of the punishment framework, the community is the winner.

The Basildon Firewatch initiative was introduced into the Basildon and Castle Point Community Command as part of community safety risk profiling work, which took the community safety officer for Basildon to newly-established Community Panel Meetings for intelligence gathering and to provide fire safety advice. The meetings, chaired by Basildon District Council, are made up of members of the community, who are elected to the panel by their neighbours in the ward.

It became clear that these neighbourhood groups were a key intelligence source relating to the young people responsible for setting the small fires and causing a nuisance where they lived. People were reluctant to report their neighbours to the police but saw the fire service as a more approachable alternative because it has no enforcement powers and firefighters are seen as a good community role model.

In partnership with Essex Police, a confidential telephone line was established and the Firewatch campaign launched in October 2006.

Through the line, intelligence is gathered which ends up with Essex' police's newly-established community policing teams who will investigate formally. If young people are involved, the police will contact the fire service and arrangements will be made for counsellors from Essex Fire's Juvenile Firesetters scheme to get involved.

This scheme takes the fire service beyond its traditional role within the community and is an excellent example of the Service's pro-active fire prevention strategies. It gave the local community panels a quick win and proved to community representatives on panel that their participation, intervention and engagement could assist in reducing crime.

Through the whole remit of scheme and follow-up, ECFRS has a role of education, informing children and young people of the dangers of fire, as well as its potential in challenging fire related offending behaviour.

State number of words: 400 wds

Section C: Description of project - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.

The Basildon Firewatch initiative was introduced into the Basildon & Castle Point Community Command in October 2006 as part of the Community Safety Risk Profiling initiative.

As part of the Risk Profiling Initiative, the Community Safety Officer for Basildon attended the new Community Panel Meetings. These meetings take place in each of the wards around the district of Basildon and are chaired by Basildon District Council. The panel are made up of members of the community who are elected on to the panel by fellow members of the community of that ward. The role of the fire service at these meetings was to give fire safety advice and update attendees of changes in the role of the Fire Service in Community Safety work.

As part of regular discussions, an issue was raised about youth's responsible for firesetting in the area. The Fire Service had informed various meetings that it was ECFRS' aim to reduce hoax calls, arson and small fires and in order to be successful, the community's co-operation was required. This is a major strategic objective for Essex Fire because of the high financial cost of attendance and the community risk in that fire appliances and crews engaged in hoax and deliberate work might not be available to provide operational cover in a real emergency.

A common questions was:

How can we report to you the names of youngsters who are setting small fires and causing a nuisance around where we live?

The members of the communities made it clear that they knew the names of the youth's responsible but felt that by giving the names of the youngsters to the police, a police officer would come to their home, making it obvious to those responsible who had informed on them. So they asked if they could report information confidentially to Essex Fire.

Clearly recognizing the legal implications of receiving information which could potentially end up as evidence in criminal proceedings, the Basildon Command contacted Essex Police for advice and guidance. A new partnership was established through the local Superintendent who supported the idea wholeheartedly and thought it would be a good way of receiving intelligence on criminal activities that were taking place within the community. Essex Police were keen work with the Fire Service on this initiative on similar grounds that a great deal of time and resource was being directed towards the detection and resolution of these crimes.

In meetings with the police, it was decided that to achieve maximum engagement, a confidential telephone line should be established by the Fire Service. They would feed all the information received to the Police intelligence department, who would then action this information.

A dedicated telephone line was installed at Basildon & Castle Point Community Command with the number **01268-412272**

It was decided that this line would be linked to a separate answer machine, so as not to impose more work on the administration staff at Command. It would be checked on a daily basis and information received logged into a log book with such details as, Date, Time of Call, Information Given and Names and Contact Number if given. This was done at the request of the police and complies with data protection.

To pass this information to the police, a separate mailbox has been set up at command under the name FIREWATCH. Which only three people have access to within the Command. This is a secure mail-box.

What happens to the information given to police?

When the information is given to the police, it is entered onto a police intelligence form 61. The intelligence is gathered and passed out to the police inspectors from the location that it was received from. It is then passed onto the new community policing teams, who will make enquiries about the information received. When enough evidence is gathered the suspect will be arrested and questioned.

If young people are involved, the police will contact the Fire Service, and arrangements will be made, so that the Fire Service's Juvenile Firesetter counsellors can engage with them.

It is intended that throughout the process the Junior Firesetters counsellors will be involved. Still in its infancy, the scheme has already referred 29 young people to the scheme. Because of the confidentiality of the counseling work, it is not possible to provide specific examples. The first referral was a five year old child in Craylands with an over zealous interest in fire which was causing serious anxiety for his parents, particularly when one morning they woke to discover the child by their bedside about to set light to a bin full of paper. Without Firewatch, parents like these had absolutely no idea how to get help with early intervention and were delighted to find details of the line in their locality, comfortable that the fire service would be supportive and not judgmental.

The police will offer any young person the opportunity to engage with the fire service. Even if the young person is arrested and waiting trial.

Essex Fire has had meetings with local Youth Offending Teams, who think that the Fire Service's involvement at all the stages would be extremely important to the young person's rehabilitation.

They would like to work more closely with the Fire Service in providing counselling to all the young people on their books that have been involved in fire related incidents. They especially like the Firebreak courses, and what they can achieve. Firebreak takes teams of troubled young people out of their environment on a week-long course where based on fire service disciplines and drills, they learn life skills like communication and teamwork, how to take pride in a job well done. Most importantly they gain a sense of achievement, which is marked with a traditional fire service 'pass out' parade at the end of the week watched by parents, teachers and friends. Like the Juvenile Fire Setters scheme, Firebreak is achieving amazing results with only a handful of young people re-offending or displaying anti-social behaviour going forward. Many have turned their lives around to pass exams, seek employment, some simply to live harmoniously within their families.

Like with Firebreak, parental involvement is also encouraged through the Firewatch scheme.

It was decided that the Firewatch line should also be open to parents who need support in dealing with their children within the home, and perhaps enable the Fire Service to engage with these young people before they become known to us by other means.

So all information given out encourages them to contact us on the Firewatch line, and parents are informed that no police involvement will take place.

The Police are happy for the Fire Service to deal with these enquiries and support us on any decisions made.

It is a way for the Junior Firesetter Counsellors to engage with young people, before serious incidents take place. At the moment engagement usually takes place after the incident.

The success rate for Junior Firesetters in Essex is extremely high. 97 per cent of young people referred to JFS via concerned parents, schools police or youth offending teams, including Firewatch, are not referred again, meaning they do not commit a further fire related offence. Records are kept for seven years.

Intervention ordinarily takes the form of a home visit from trained volunteer counsellors taken from a diverse range of Essex Fire staff, both operational firefighters and support staff.

It was already evident that a response focused on punishment did not work. Research suggested that a 'no blame' approach which attempted to involve the young person in the process of amending their behaviour, in repairing the harm and encouraging accountability in a non-punitive environment was far more likely to succeed.

The team talks to the child alone, or with their parents, building trust, opening communication channels and discussing the ripple effect of their behaviour on the family and surrounding community, as well as the fire service who would be called out.

An agreement or promise is reached to rectify the behaviour. Depending on the behaviour or offence, follow up visits may be arranged.

With children convicted of arson, the courts can put the child on an attendance order scheme and youth offending teams then use Junior Firesetters by assigning trainees to an adviser to assist them on a six week programme.

It has already been mentioned that the Firewatch initiative was introduced as part of the Risk Profiling Initiative. Basildon Fire Station crews were receiving almost daily calls to Pitsea, highlighted as one of the most deprived areas in the UK, to deal with small, deliberate fires and hoax calls. Within eight months, there had been a 33 per cent reduction in these type of calls within the command and one-third of all calls to Pitsea.

At the time of its introduction, the schools were about to break up for the six weeks holiday and the Basildon Command wanted to engage with all the schools in the Pitsea area, to try and reverse past trends of loads of small incidents, hoax calls, etc, during this time. So arrangements were made to talk to all the children in all the schools for that area that we were risk profiling.

3,000 children were reached and the Firewatch line was given a high profile during these talks.

Making it clear that if incidents take place, somebody may be watching them and report to us on the Firewatch line. This was highly unlikely, due to the fact that the line had only been introduced and its number was not widely circulated.

For the future, the Command has taken the scheme to Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership, who have included it into its action plans.

- Main CDRP group.
- Making Communities Safer.
- CDRP Youth Sub-Group.

It has been well received and also has received £1,200 funding from the group to provide free information items to highlight and promote the Firewatch number.

To date, the following partnerships are involved in Firewatch:

- Basildon & Castle Point Community Command.
- Junior Fire Setters, Community Safety, Fire Service HQ
- Essex Police Basildon
- Youth Offending Team Basildon
- CDRP Basildon.
- Basildon Eastgate Shopping Centre

Information received so far has included:

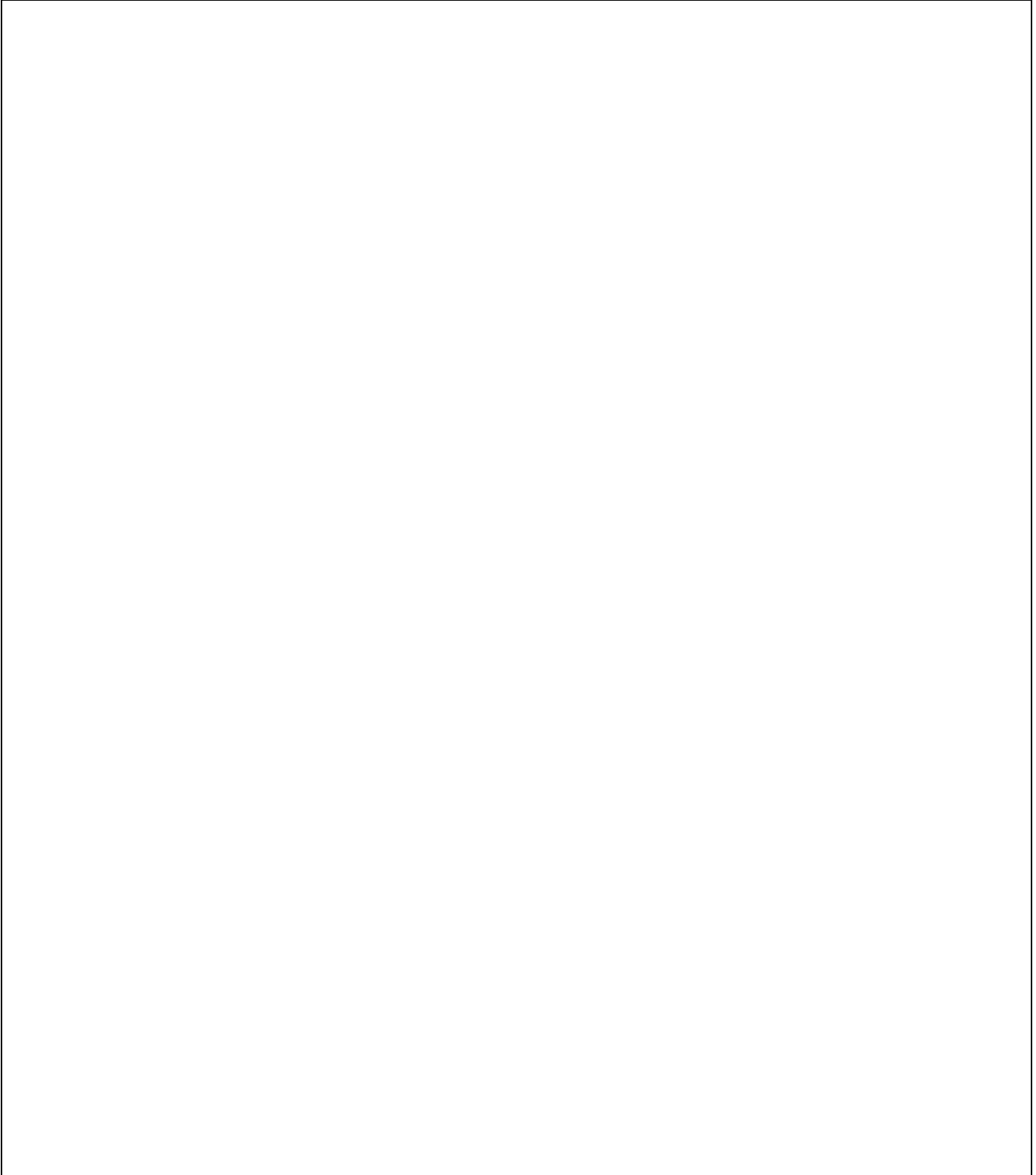
- Parent concerned with son age 6 making hoax calls.
- Parent concerned with son age 5 fire setting at home.
- Named youths setting fires at Basildon Golf Course.
- Youths fire setting at local nature reserve.
- Cars parked over fire hydrants.
- Youths setting fire to cars.
- Cars blocking fire entrance to flats.
- Information on fires in recycling bins.

All these incidents have been dealt with using the protocols for the scheme.

Firewatch is breaking the cycle of crime which is why it has enjoyed overwhelming support from community partners. Business has been extremely supportive, understanding the fire service ethos that communities have to work together to achieve results. The Basildon Eastgate Shopping Centre is one such partner that understands fully the value of the scheme. The Centre's construction in the eighties suffered a costly delay at the hands of arsonists and so its management team realises the true impact of deliberate fire setting on business and the local economy.

The Centre assisted in the public launch of the scheme by providing a prime location in its busy centre on a Saturday for the launch event and in producing marketing and promotional collateral such as posters, banners, flyers and carrier bags. The event was attended by the Government's Fire Minister Angela Smith and senior members of the Fire Service and Basildon Council, highlighting support for a relatively simple, cost-effective solution with high impact. The success of the scheme has prompted ECFRS to consider a roll-out of Firewatch to other parts of the county.

State number of words used: 3,993 words



Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative - Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.

Endorsement from Assistant Chief Fire **Officer Mark Hardingham**, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's Director for Business Excellence, says:

The modernisation of the Fire Service nationally has brought with it a whole range of new responsibilities for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for engagement and intervention in the community.

By using our position as community role models, we are now engaging with a growing band of agencies to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Basildon and Castle Point Community Command should be applauded for its pro-active approach to community fire safety. It is one of our most active Commands for making a positive contribution to the community, both through the strength of its relationships with other agencies and partners and through its consistency in creating innovative schemes to capture the imagination of our target groups, often those most vulnerable in the community.

Overall, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service is seeing tangible results in its efforts to reduce hoax calls with a year on year reduction, against an increase of hoax calls. Firewatch has undoubtedly made a contribution to this reduction. This is due, in no small part to the dedication and commitment of the Command and those employees who commit their own time to our Juvenile Firesetters Scheme.

Bala Mahendran, Chair of the Basildon CDRP and Chief Executive of Basildon District Council:

As the chair of the Basildon Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, I am delighted to support and recommend this application for consideration of a Tilley Awards.

The Basildon Firewatch is a multi agency response to reduce crime and disorder, anti social behaviour and in other ways improve the quality of life for people living in the Basildon District area.

It was launched in October 2006, to address large numbers of small fires taking place in the area by allowing the community concerned to contact a confidential telephone line, and leave the details of people that were fire setting within the community.

Since its launch, small fires have been dramatically reduced within the Basildon District and this partnership initiative has been adopted by the CDRP Group, making communities safer.

One of the positive outcomes from this initiative has been the amount of support given to concerned parents by trained Fire Service counsellors with regards to their own children fire setting in the home.

I commend this application and hope it receives your favourable consideration.

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25th April 2008.