



AREA BOARD WESTBURY 2 DECEMBER 2010

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN WESTBURY

INTRODUCTION

Over recent years the impact of anti social behaviour on the individual and their family has been rightly recognised. For too long the activities that generally constitute anti social behaviour were described as low level. We now understand that persistent anti social behaviour can have dire consequences on the victims and have been identified as a causal factor in a number of tragic incidents across the Country. The aim of this briefing is to inform the Community Area Board about what constitutes ASB, to discuss the actual levels of ASB in Westbury, which are considerably lower than might be expected. To explain what police and the other agencies are doing in relation to ASB, and to look to the future about how we tackle the issue as a Community.

WHAT IS ASB

The type of different activities that may constitute ASB are listed in the table below, however, this is not an exhaustive list:

Abandoned Vehicles	Animal Problems	Begging and Vagrancy	Hoax Calls
Inappropriate use, sale, possession of fireworks	Littering	Malicious Communications	Noise
Nuisance Neighbours	Rowdy Inconsiderate Behaviour	Street Drinking	Trespass
Vehicle Nuisance/ Inappropriate use.			

The incidents on the above list are generally not recorded as crimes, although clearly some do breach criminal law. Another significant element that makes up ASB is Criminal Damage which is clearly a crime and is often committed in a mindless manner by people with absolutely no understanding of the impact of their actions.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN WESTBURY

Overall, Anti social behaviour in Westbury is falling. By far the largest category is that of Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour. Other areas of note are hoax calls to the emergency services, Malicious Communications, Nuisance Neighbours and Abandoned vehicles.

The below table highlights the number of recorded incidents between April 2009 and November 2009 against the same period this year.

Type of Incident	April 2009 – November 2009	April 2010 – November 2010	Variance
Total ASB in Westbury	670	545	- 18.7%
Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour	463	381	-17.7%
Hoax calls to Emergency services	44	19	-56.8%
Malicious Communications	34	30	-11.8%
Nuisance Neighbours	34	44	+ 29.4%
Abandoned Vehicles	21	16	-23.8%

In relation to Criminal damage there has been a slight rise from 221 crimes to 224 crimes an increase of 1.2 %

The Criminal Damage, on the whole, takes the form of petty malicious damage often to vehicles with wing mirrors being broken, scratches and occasionally tyres being punctured. This type of crime does not appear to be targeted towards any individual or group and is sporadic in both the time it is committed and the areas in which it is committed.

WHAT THE POLICE AND OTHER AGENCIES ARE DOING TO TACKLE THE ISSUES

Preventing Anti social behaviour will not be achieved just through enforcement. This is important, but we have to look at education of the individuals causing the anti social behaviour, and look at engineering the problem out of the community.

As previously discussed a number of the issues are not actually criminal and therefore, in order to challenge the behaviour of those involved it is vital that all the relevant agencies work closely together. The aim is to challenge the behaviour of the offender at the earliest opportunity putting in place supportive mechanisms to re-educate individuals. This is achieved through the Anti social behaviour panel and the Council anti social behaviour reduction officers who work tirelessly in reducing the instances of anti social behaviour. They have access to a number of tools and engage at the earliest opportunity with those committing offences. If individuals fail to engage then ultimately this could lead to an

ASBO which is a powerful tool. We currently have an ASBO in place in Westbury and this has had a great impact on the offending of the individual and their associates.

Westbury is also moving forward with restorative justice, this is about bringing the offender and the victim together so that the offender can understand the impact of their behaviour on the individual which is often a great deal more impactful than any sanction that will be imposed by the criminal justice system, in fact the issue is a crime.

In relation to the criminal damage that is occurring across the town the police are clearly taking primacy. Patrols have increased, we have run undercover operations, we are working with CCTV and are taking positive action where there are identifiable offenders.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Although a great deal of work is going into dealing with the offenders through both education and enforcement, clearly the best answer is to prevent the incident happen in the first place.

The sporadic nature of Anti social behaviour means that it is often difficult to prevent however, there are measures that can be taken. Crime prevention advice can be found on the Wiltshire Police Website. It is also important that the Community work together to help reduce the instances of ASB, this can be achieved through the formation of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes or just through the identification of possible vulnerable people within the community. The local people have a huge understanding and knowledge of what happens in the community and therefore, what or who is out of place.

Overall Anti- social behaviour in Westbury is reducing and by working together we can ensure that this reduction continues.

Inspector Dave Minty