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**LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY SUBMISSION TO THE 2009
HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN
PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING**

PARK View 4 U

Submitted By

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Park View 4 U

Western Division Lancashire Constabulary



Herman Goldstein Award 2009

SUMMARY

Scanning:

Anti-social behaviour involving youths dominated the Lytham communities/ police meetings (P.A.C.T). Lack of provision for youths in the Lytham area was at the heart of the problem. The only play area was Park View playing fields a water-logged open space containing four swings and a slide. Lytham was not deemed a deprived area as designated by the indices of deprivation thus restricting funding. Local shopkeepers were affected by youths gathering outside shops intimidating customers and causing damage. Local residents were concerned with youths drinking in bus shelters, climbing on roofs and damaging bins. It was decided to take a multi agency approach incorporating Police, Lancashire County Council (L.C.C.), Fylde Borough Council and Fylde Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) addressing Juvenile Nuisance.

Analysis:

Park View Playing Fields, one of the largest green spaces in Lytham was so underutilised that it led to juveniles hanging around on street corners with nothing to do. Its suitability as a venue was nil due to poor drainage and a lack of facilities.

Informants came from a variety of age groups recording anti social behaviour attending PACT and local community meetings. Limited youth provision concentrated on deprived areas of the Borough. The offenders were youths of varying ages forming gangs.

Response:

The most effective intervention, other than dispersing the youth anti social behaviour to other hotspots lay in improving recreational provision for youths giving them somewhere to go and something to do. Thus designing out the problem.

A community group – Park View 4 U – has been set up to tackle the infrastructure of the site working with partner agencies and local businesses. Interaction carried out with the youths identified what they wanted in the park. The Park View 4 U committee raised funds utilising grants available, lottery funding and donations

from local businesses. It was agreed that they would maintain the park on completion, in partnership with the Borough Council.

Assessment:

In 2003 the police and the Park View 4 U group were formed. Over the next 4 years the Infrastructure of the site was addressed: access, car park and 2 Cycle paths were added, the land drained and four football pitches added, a Multi Use Games Area, BMX track, skate park, teen Zone 9 and equipment for senior citizens making this the first three generational park in the United Kingdom. The timescales for these activities were between November 2003 and 2008.

DESCRIPTION

Scanning:

See Appendix A for a graph showing the number of anti social behavior complaints received from 2000 to 2008 across all wards of the Lytham area.

It can clearly be seen that there was a major escalation in Anti Social behavior between 2001 and 2005; this revolved around four specific areas interspersed with occasional hot spots. The four areas were Lytham square, The Green, Fairhaven Lake and Lowther Gardens.

Anti-social behavior issues involving youths also dominated the Lytham PACT meetings. Complaints ranged in nature from youths hanging around the town centre to large numbers intimidating shoppers. This led to associated damage to street furniture, noise nuisance, drinking and damage on residential streets. Fylde Borough Council also expressed concern with regards to damage to Council owned property.

There was a strong feeling from the community that a lack provision for youths in the Lytham area was at the heart of the problem and that something needed to be done about it before matters further escalated. In 2003 to combat this problem a number of local residents including police formed a group called Park View 4U to lobby and progress improvements to local youth facilities. This group identified an existing park as a suitable venue

In 2003, the population of Lytham was 10000 with many new families having moved to the area due to large residential developments taking place at the time. Apart from Lytham Green (a large open space) the only other play area was Park View playing fields, which was a water-logged park containing four swings and a slide. The lack of facilities was partly due to the fact that Lytham wasn't perceived to be a deprived area which put constraints on funding the local council could attract for facilities for youths. The chair of the group, Cath Powell, approached Fylde Borough Council to see what, if anything could be done to address the situation. This led to a public meeting being held on 20th November 2003 where there was an outcry from the community over the lack of facilities for youths in the area and the negative impact this was having in terms of youth related anti-social behavior. From this initial meeting, Park View 4U was formed including

representatives from Lancashire Constabulary, local councilors and a cross section of the community. The aim of the group was to improve provision for the youths of Lytham and they went under the name of the Park View 4 U Community Group.

The new group experienced initial difficulties and it was not until late 2005 that the improved facilities were opened to the public, accurate measurement of the problems was difficult due to various changes in the Constabulary recording system, but it was apparent to local officer's that prior to the opening of the park groups of youths were continuing to assemble in the Lytham area. Commonly on a Friday and Saturday evening alcohol seizures were vast.

During early 2005 to combat the youth problem a three month dispersal order was obtained for the Ansdell area which covers Fairhaven Lake

Analysis:

Interrogation of the police incident database coupled with information obtained via PACT/other community meetings revealed the following:

In terms of the location of the "juvenile nuisance" incidents, they were very much scattered throughout the Lytham area.

Lytham Green, Fairhaven, Lowther Gardens– Numerous reports of youths gathering, drinking in the shelters, climbing on the roof of the lifeboat station and damaging the bins. Also there was a big issue with the amount of broken glass being left behind by the youths which was causing problems for younger children as well as injuring many dogs. These areas crossed all five ward areas of Lytham, but were mainly in the Clifton, Fairhaven and Ansdell wards. The existing play area of Park Vue is situated in the Clifton Ward.

Lytham square houses a local Spar shop on route to Lytham green, youths congregated outside and obtained the alcohol before walking through Bath Street to Lytham Green. Skate boarding was also popular in the square though common on numerous residential roads.

See Appendix B for a graph of days when juvenile nuisance incidents occurred.

PAT/victim

In terms of who was being affected by the youth nuisance, from analyzing the incident logs and looking at the attendees at the various community meetings, the only conclusion to draw was that it was affecting the quality of life of a vast cross section of the community. Informants came from a mixture of age groups, gender and socio-economic status. Typically they came into contact with the nuisance behavior because it was occurring on the street in which they lived, they owned a business/worked in the location where the anti-social behavior was occurring or they came across it whilst going about their daily business in Lytham.

PAT/Offender

In terms of those involved in causing the “juvenile nuisance”, they ranged in age from early to late teens. Typically they were youths from the Lytham area as opposed to youths who had traveled into the town from surrounding areas. The recurring theme when the youths were spoken to was that they didn't feel they were doing anything wrong and were hanging around in the particular location because there was no where else to go and nothing else to do. Indeed many of the incident logs supported what the youths were saying in that there was no specific behaviour that was causing a problem but the informants had felt threatened/intimidated by the youths' boisterous behaviours and large numbers.

PAT/Location

The four areas as outlined were easily accessible and intended for public use, their proximity to populated areas frequented by visitors and the elderly sections of our community led to a perception that they were not safe in these areas.

Response:

Having analysed the problem, it was felt that the most effective intervention lay in improving recreational provision for youths in the Lytham area – thus giving them somewhere to go and something to do! We could have looked at the various youth anti social behaviour hotspots and set about making interventions that would have made the locations less attractive to the youths but ultimately this would only have served to

move the problem to a different location. By tackling what was felt to be the root cause of the behaviour head on, it was hoped that a sustainable reduction to the problem would be achieved. Older people were consulted as they make up 29% of the population in the area. The general consensus of opinion was that where groups of young people are seen gathering (hanging around) in large numbers they are causing trouble and up to no good. This raises the Fear of Crime within a vulnerable group and affects the quality of life.

It was decided by the Park View 4 U Community Group that the existing Park View recreation area would be a good place for the project given its size and central location. However, it was very run down and water-logged as the below photograph illustrates: also this location appeared suitable due to a lack of residential housing in the area.

Park View just prior to the commencement of any development



The first thing the Park View 4 U Community Group therefore had to tackle was the infrastructure of the site. It was decided that road safety would be the initial priority – the youths had to be able to get to the park safely. So working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, the road layout was altered to address this issue. A locally based company, Aegon, also built a new carpark next to the park to reduce the number of vehicles that would have to park on the road.

Continuing on the road safety theme, Lancashire County Council and Sustrans paid for two new cycle paths to be installed through the recreation area which meant that the youths could not only access the park more safely but it also provided an alternative, more pleasant, route to nearby schools.

Following on from this, the drainage issue was addressed. Fylde Borough Council bid for Football Foundation money which enabled the park to have a new drainage system installed so that four football pitches could be introduced onto the park.

Having tackled the infrastructure issues next came the actual design of the park. Members of the community group attended seminars to discover more about how children learn through play. Clearly it was of fundamental importance to involve the youth of Lytham from a very early stage if the park was to achieve its aim. So workshops were also held to discover how the youths wanted to “play” on their park and what kind of equipment they wanted to see installed.

Following on from this, Lancashire County Council had professional plans of the park drawn up by a landscape architect, defining the play areas, a wildflower meadow and picnic areas. Thanks to Fylde LSP, a local artist was also appointed to design the entrance to the park and children from St Bedes Secondary School at Lytham took part in a poetry competition, the winning entry of which was carved onto the entrance feature.

This was the point at which the fundraising campaign really began to gain momentum as the site was ready to receive equipment. The Lawrence House Trust funded a multi use games area and upon completion of this, a CCTV camera was installed to monitor the park and its equipment.

SITA funding provided a BMX track which is of such a high standard that regional championships are now being held at the park. The riders have also formed their own club which meets every week. Again, the youth of Lytham were very much involved at the design phase and day trips were arranged by the Community Group to various other BMX tracks around the country in order to see what was available and what the children wanted.

Next to be installed was an imaginative toddler play area. This was thanks to the generosity of a number of local businesses, groups and organisations who provided individual pieces of equipment. At this stage, it was felt by the group that the park should be for all the people of Lytham and that young children should grow up using the park.

Following on from this was a successful lottery bid. This funded a state of the art skate park which was a real draw in terms of bringing youths off the streets and into the safe environment of the park. The lottery bid also funded a Teen Zone which was designed specifically with teenage girls in mind. It was felt that perhaps the existing facilities were more appealing in general to boys and following consultation with a number of teenage girls from Lytham, the Teen Zone was created to address their needs.

Lastly, the lottery funding was used to fund equipment with senior citizens in mind. The eight pieces of equipment were based around Thai chi. This actually brought the park national and international recognition as the first three generational park in the country and more importantly, led to the three generations interacting as they “played” alongside each other – thus engendering a sense of community cohesion.

Park View 4 U had its official opening on 11/07/08 although it was very much in use by the public of Lytham prior to this.

The BMX Track at Park View



The Skate Park at Park View



In effect the whole project looked to provide attractive well maintained and easily accessible facilities for people of all age groups. However initially the main target was youth activity and by adopting that approach liaising with the youths to identify their needs providing facilities in line with there request has led to large numbers attending the scheme.

Assessment:

The outputs achieved as a result of the initiative include:

- A reduction in the number of “juvenile nuisance” reports across the Lytham area. As a result of the initiative, bored teenagers have been given a positive alternative to hanging around on street corners.
- Reduced demand on police as the number of youth nuisance related complaints decline.
- Improved quality of life for those who live, visit or work in Lytham as they are not encountering the same level of “juvenile nuisance” as they go about their daily lives/business.
- Youth Nuisance issues rarely feature at PACT/community meetings in Lytham.
- Improved relations between the police and youths of Lytham. Prior to the initiative, the majority of police contact with youths arose out of them being sent to deal with the youths as a result of a complaint from a member of the public. Thus, the interaction was usually a negative one. However, police regularly patrol the park and speak with the youths on a casual basis which has meant that both the youths and the local police have got to know each other really well and have a relationship which is based around mutual respect.
- Community cohesion – given that the park is three generational, this has led to persons of all ages interacting as they “play” alongside each other. Children and adults have got to know one another and this has helped to break down some of the stereotypes that people from one generation often hold about members of the other generations. In addition, much of the funding has been provided by

local businesses, groups and organisations which has served to integrate them more into the community.

- A reduction in fear of crime/perceived levels of crime in the Lytham area – Fylde Borough Council for a number of years have conducted “Community Listening Day” surveys and these have revealed a reduction in peoples’ fear of crime levels which may be attributed in part to the increased sense of community cohesion referred to above.
- Successful multi-agency working. The number of agencies that have played a part in making Park View what it is today is overwhelming.
- The park has played a key part in making the children (and their parents/grandparents) more active which is currently high on the government’s agenda. It has brought them out of their homes, away from their computer games, and encouraged them to play/exercise together.
- Through play the youths have learnt a number of key skills as play not only encourages creativity but it teaches children to learn about risk and increases their sense of independence as well as learning vital social skills as they interact with one another.

This initiative originated as a POP by the Lytham Neighborhood Policing team and developed into a long term project which is continuing to mature, the team is still working together with other partnerships to improve and provide additional facilities for the residents of the area. This has had a positive effect of reducing crime and anti social behaviour.

Achievement to date:

Winner of the De Vere Hotel POP Award 2009

Runner up in the British Urban Regeneration Association 2009 Awards

Nominated for the Tilley Awards 2009

Short listed for The National Charity Awards 2009

See Appendix C for photographs and comments from local residents.

Key Partners in the Project

Park View 4 U Trustees:

Cath Powell Chair of Park View 4 U Community Group 01253 736754 c /o Lytham Police Station 23 Clifton Street, Lytham, FY85EP

Lancashire Constabulary:

Community Beat Manger PC 460 Ian Rawcliffe, PCSO 7492 Gary Hickman, PCSO 7304 Karen Ward and Volunteer 133607 Elaine Bertenshaw 01253 604810 c /o Lytham Police Station 23 Clifton Street, Lytham, FY85EP

Community Beat Manager Sgt 3740 Karen Sanderson 01253 604810 c /o Lytham Police Station 23 Clifton Street, Lytham, FY85EP

Fylde Borough Council:

Darren Bell Park Manger: 01253 658658 The Town Hall, Lytham St Annes FY8 1LW

Fylde Primary Care Trust:

Assistant Director of Public Health Deana Vernecombe: c/o 01253 658658 The Town Hall, Lytham St Annes FY8 1LW

Lancashire County Council:

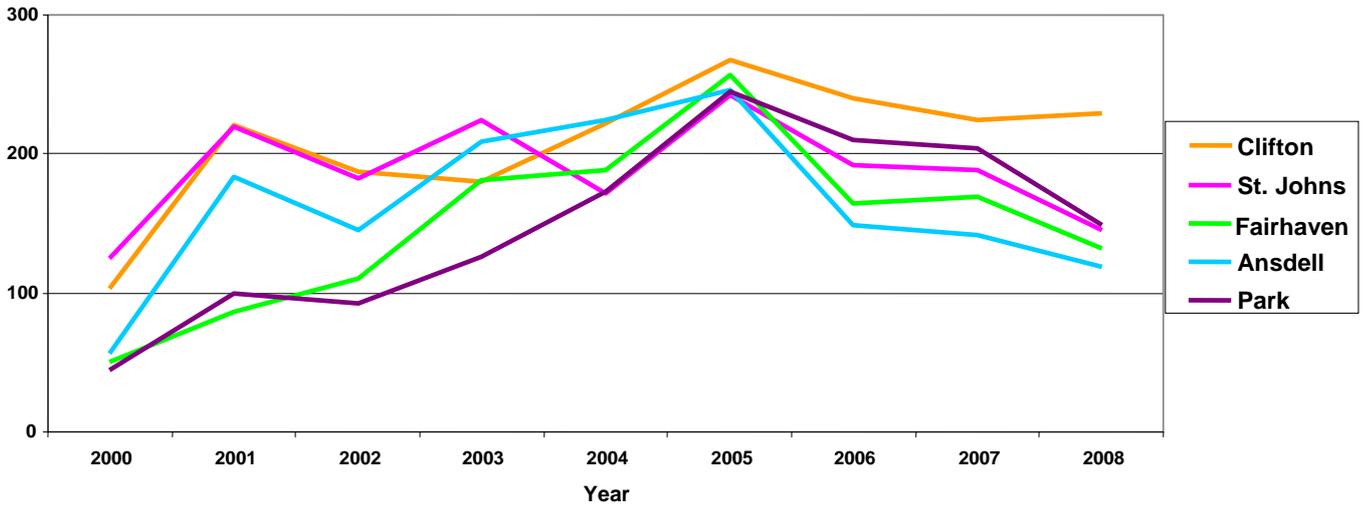
Paula Fodor LCC Partnership Officer: 01253 658658 The Town Hall, Lytham St Annes FY8 1LW

Fylde Local Strategic Partnership:

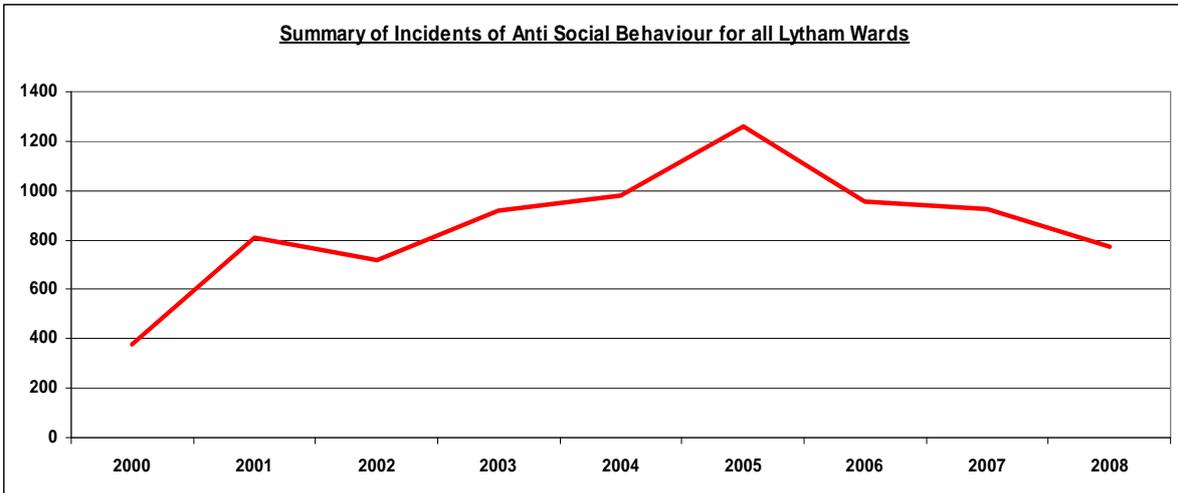
Christine Miller LSP Manager: 01253 658441 The Town Hall, Lytham St Annes FY8 1LW

APPENDIX A

Incidents of Anti Social Behaviour for all Lytham Wards

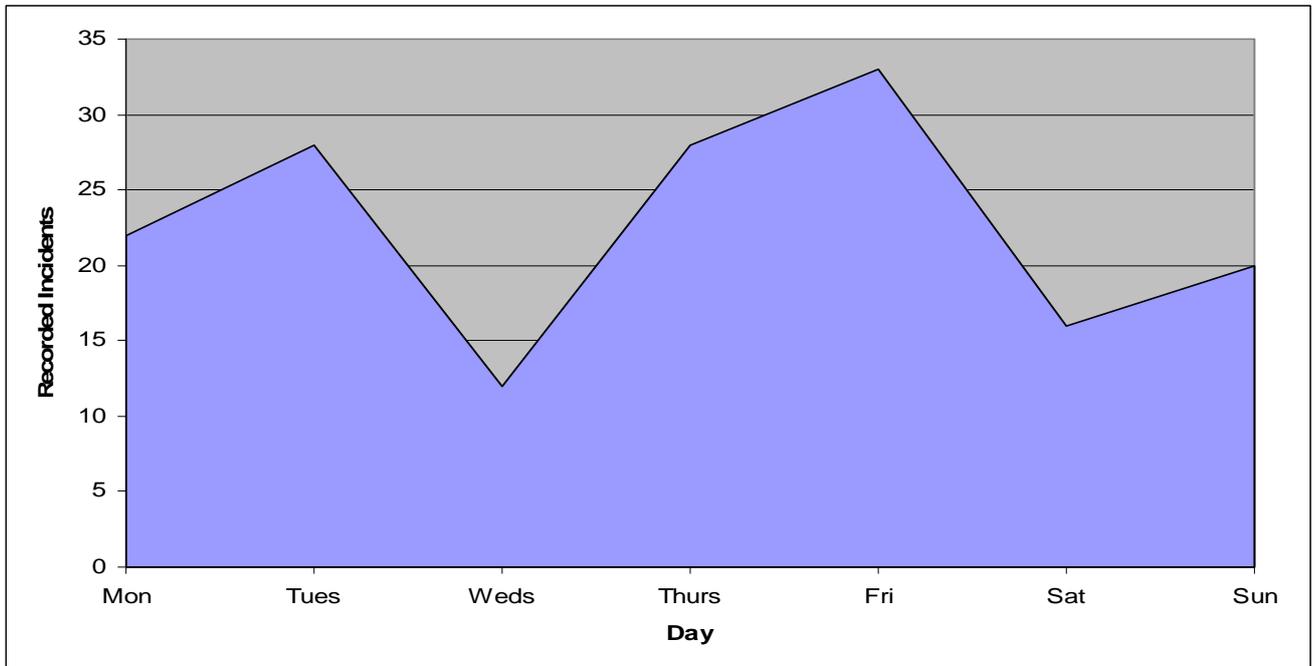


Summary of Incidents of Anti Social Behaviour for all Lytham Wards



APPENDIX B

A Graph to Show the Days of the Week Juvenile Nuisance Incidents were Committed in Lytham In 2003.



APPENDIX C

Below are a number of quotes from users of the park to show what impact it has had on them.



Doris pictured on the park comments, *“This park has given me a new lease of life. I love to come down here, it’s really wonderful!”*



Callum pictured on his way to the park comments, *“When I moved to the area I was very lonely and spent most of my time playing on my X Box in my bedroom. Someone mentioned that there were plans to put a BMX in at Park View. I went down and got involved. I am now 2 stone lighter than I used to be and I no longer get bullied at school. I entered my first competition in July 2007 at Park View. I recently entered a competition at Coppull and came second in the Novice race. I am really looking forward to the next racing season”.*



Jack and friends say, *"This park is fantastic! If it wasn't for the park we would probably be hanging around and getting into trouble but Park View has given us all something to do."*

"I have made many new friends and Gary (PCSO) is now a good friend and someone I can confide in."
Young person using the park

"The development at Park View has made a visible improvement to the area. It was good to see Park View recognised by the British Urban Regeneration Association by coming runner up in the 2009 Community Inspired Regeneration Awards held at the House of Lord in March." FBC Regeneration

"It is uplifting to see the number young people now using the park rather than hanging around the street corners." Local resident

"The multi-agency approach on this project has both improved quality of life for local residents and reduced crime. It encourages physical activity for all ages and provides a positive health output for all." LSP Manager

"The park now provides a positive diversion for young people rather than focal point for drinking and anti-social behaviour." CDRP representative.