

# SAFER HOLIDAY

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE A SAFER HOLIDAY ENVIRONMENT

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY, PORTISHEAD, ENGLAND, 1999

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### **SUMMARY:**

The Butlins Family Entertainment Resort, Minehead is a holiday complex standing on a site of 165 acre. It is home to 20 alcohol outlets operating under the umbrella of one Residential On-Licence and over a number of years transposed from a family holiday venue to one that catered for a diverse market. In essence it is a small town without the norms, values and relationships of a traditional community. Every night is a PARTY NIGHT!

At the beginning of 1997 there was a coincidental change of local management at both Butlins and the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Forming an alliance there was a recognition that positive action had to be taken to address the crime problem that existed at the resort predominantly in the categories of burglary, theft, criminal damage, assault, theft of and from motor vehicles and the misuse of drugs. A new beat was created that was co-terminus with the boundaries of the resort and a beat officer selected who possessed the necessary qualities to tackle a long term project and forge ahead if confronted with difficulties.

He was empowered and assured the support of the Constabulary in his interaction with Butlins at both operational and strategic levels. Over a period of two years the Constabulary and Butlins worked closely together addressing environmental factors, policies, practices and staff training at the resort that collectively contributed to a 71.5% reduction in crime over that period. Throughout, the SARA model for problem solving was utilised and regularly revisited to generate a series of creative responses that were introduced into the resort. They included:

- Accommodation upgraded with substantial windows / doors and 5 lever high security dead locks.
  - No single sex group bookings accepted.
  - Repairs to damage quickly affected.
  - Fast track Data Protection checks on employment applications.
  - Staff discipline and dismissal procedures tightened and rigorously enforced.
  - Rigorous 'Drugs Misuse' policy introduced.
  - Increase in levels of security staff and improvements to their image, status and training.
  - State of the art CCTV coverage of the whole resort
  - Innovative conditions attached to the Residential On-Licence to ensure appropriate managerial control and self policing measures at alcohol outlets.
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## INTRODUCTION

The Butlins Family Entertainment Resort, Minehead, formally known as Somerwest World or simply Butlins nestles in a corner of the seaside town of Minehead, Somerset. Established by William Edward Butlin in 1962 as a holiday camp to bring cheap, cheerful family holidays to the masses Butlins, Minehead was another milestone in his expanding empire of camps, the first of which he opened at Skegness in 1936.

At its peak in 1972 when it merged with the Rank Organisation the Butlins empire accepted 1,000,000 holiday bookings. Throughout the 1980's and 90's Butlins struggled to maintain an ever decreasing share of the family holiday market. The competition of cheap package deals, sophisticated theme parks and a new concept in holiday resorts from the continent conspired to steal away increasing numbers of families.

In order to retain market share Butlins increasingly diversified, offering rock bottom cut price breaks, accepting bookings from single sex parties, organising themed breaks, adult events etc. often mixing the family groups loyal to Butlins with the younger almost riotous element.

Today only three resorts remain open under the Butlins logo; Bognor Regis, Skegness and of course Minehead. Butlins, Minehead standing on a site of 165 acres, provides all year around holiday accommodation for 12,230 people with a twice weekly change of clients, accommodation for 804 staff members out of a total staff establishment of 1,403 and can accommodate up to 3,000 day visitors. It is home to 20 alcohol outlets operating under the umbrella of one Residential On-Licence. Resident staff are predominantly young seasonal employees using their employment there as an early stepping stone to a career in the leisure, entertainment and catering industries. In essence it is a small town without the norms, values and relationships of a traditional community. Every night is a PARTY NIGHT!!!!

It is unclear when it started but over the years, as the resort accepted a more diverse customer base, the crime increased at a disproportionate rate to the surrounding communities. The picture is unclear because, conscious of its public image, the resort dealt with many issues in-house without informing the police.

By the same token the as the crime statistics were kept artificially low local police managers either did not know or failed to respond with sufficient vigour to the true picture. As a consequence of prolonged absences, except when responding to significant incidents, the police were treated with suspicion and mistrust whenever they ventured onto the resort. Nevertheless in 1996 there were 675 calls, of one description or another, requesting police attendance at the resort of which 176 calls were clearly alcohol related.

### Catalyst for change

1997 marked the beginning of change. In the first six months of that year there were 151 burglaries at holiday chalets and 39 assaults reported to the police. Others offences included drugs, theft of and from motor vehicles, criminal damage and other thefts.

During the same period there were coincidental changes of key managers and managerial structures both within Butlins and the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. At Butlins a new General Manager and Security Manager were appointed and there was an emerging commitment from the Rank Organisation to bring the Butlins resorts up to date and reaffirm their position in the family holiday market.

The Constabulary had completed a restructuring and the Somerset West District was established under the leadership of Superintendent Mike Nelson. He firmly endorsed and enforced a sector based geographic structure ensuring local accountability through a Sector Inspector and promoted the ethos of problem orientated policing.

The ensuing two years has seen a real commitment for change from both sides. Although, not always holding the same perception

of the problem, talking the same time scales, or having the same concern for the impact of financial expenditure dialogue was always maintained involving the same key players from both organisations to ensure effective, meaningful solutions were reached.

## How change was affected

The sector commander, Inspector Rod Price, upon inheriting his new sector knew he had a problem at Butlins, the crime statistics were quite clear in that respect.

What they did not explain was:

- The true extent of the problem.
- What Butlins themselves were doing to effectively challenge the problem.
- The underlying causes of the problem.

The initial response was to regain a police foothold in the resort and establish a mutual trust between the two organisations at all levels through which common characteristics and underlying causes could be identified and ultimately tackled. For the first time a dedicated beat officer was appointed whose beat was coterminous with the boundaries of the holiday resort.

Uniquely, as the whole of the 165 acre resort enjoyed the umbrella of a single Residential On-Licence that officer was to spend the whole of his patrol time on the same licensed premises. The unique position required the selection of a unique officer and none came more unique than Constable Tim Poat.

A gregarious individual with over twenty years service in deprived inner city estates, rural areas, youth project work and as a resident of the town he was suitably experienced and committed to forge ahead if confronted with difficulties. His opening brief was quite simple - 'Get involved with the resort, its staff and clients, identify the problems, their causes and develop solutions for action that will drive down the true incidences of crime.' He was empowered and assured the support of the

Constabulary in his interaction with Butlins at both operational and strategic levels. Inspector Rod Price and General Manager Bryan Leaker alternatively hosted monthly strategy meetings to establish the priorities emerging from the liaison and direct involvement of Constable Poat with the resort.

## SCANNING

Using the SARA Model Constable Poat scanned the resort to identify the problems. As his presence became increasingly accepted he was allowed substantially more and after several months almost unrestricted access 'back stage'.

More was revealed to him about the precise nature of the problems and he was given access to a variety of data and anecdotal evidence to complement the limited use of the police crime statistics.

Prompted by the resorts willingness to share information such as their own records of incidents, circumstances for the dismissal of staff and ejection's of guests, Constable Poat also profiled victims of crime and detainee's from incidents within and adjacent to the resort.

He also explored the resort for environmental and design factors that contributed to crime and disorder.

## ANALYSIS

Each of the problems identified were then subjected to an individual analysis, jointly by Constable Poat and the Security Manager Richard Labanc, of the common characteristics of victims, offenders known and suspected, location and other factors thought to be associated. The types of problem behaviour analysed included:

- Chalet Burglaries
- Disorder
- Drugs

- Nuisance/false 999 calls
- Assaults
- Theft of/from vehicles
- Criminal Damage
- Trespass
- Theft-other

## RESPONSE

Having engaged the problem solving model with the focus on Butlins as a generic problem the scanning process, over several months, allowed for the clear identification of the individual problems within. In December 1997 the resort was closed for Stage 1 of a refurbishment and redevelopment programme. By that time the initial analysis had identified the causation of each problem and an outline agreement was reached at strategic level to tackle the causation factors.

At this time the partnership could have been in danger of dissolving as the financial commitment to the refurbishment of Butlins was already substantial and they could not react to all of the police expectations. Although some factors could be readily tackled by addressing policy issues and others were already planned as part of, or at little or no additional cost to the Stage 1 redevelopment many major issues were not to be achievable for 1998.

### Main actions implemented for the 1998 season

- 400 chalets upgraded with substantial windows / doors and 5 lever high security dead locks.
- No single sex group bookings accepted - the policy was introduced but due to advance bookings for the season it was known that the effect would not be felt until 1999.

- Repairs affected and major facilities redeveloped in many areas of the resort but not the main bar and entertainment venue area which was scheduled for redevelopment and opening for the 1999 season.
- Fast track Data Protection checks on successful applications for employment introduced.
- Existing staff discipline and dismissal procedures tightened and rigorously enforced.
- Development of a Rigorous 'Drugs Misuse' policy for all staff.
- Voluntary increase in security patrols and door staff.

The improvement in chalet security was a natural and expected response to the incidents of burglary and had an immediate positive effect on the crime statistics. It also had a positive effect on the number of 'over stay' trespassers on site for who undetected access to vacant, renovated chalets was virtually impossible.

Not wholly quantifiable but the improvement and repair to the leisure facilities and street furniture began to engender a less hostile, more relaxed atmosphere across the resort. Each applicant for employment was required to complete a declaration under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and routed through Butlins Human Resources Department, an application under the Data Protection Act 1984 for disclosure of criminal convictions from the Police National Computer.

In this manner applicants who disclose inappropriate criminal convictions are screened out on receipt of their application. Those who fail to disclose relevant convictions and are then identified as having done so upon return of the Data Protection Act application are not offered employment and Constable Poat is alerted to consider criminal proceedings.

The processing time of such applications by the Data Protection Unit of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary is normally 42 days. The nature of the employment market, in some segments on the support side of the leisure industry, gives rise to a rapid turn over of staff. The normal 42 day processing of applications was identified as a major contributory factor in the short term retention of unsuitable staff.

A 'fast track' system to deal with applications routed through Butlins Human Resources Department was introduced within the Data Protection Unit at Police Headquarters to complete those applications with a faxed result within 48 hours.

During the 1997 and throughout the 1998 season, after seasonal staff members were charged under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 Butlins worked with external and internal organisations including the Police, Health, Unions and Contractors to introduce a robust 'Drug Misuse' policy for all staff.

In spite of the damaging and mischievous press coverage of Butlins desire to address a social problem that was no more prevalent amongst young adults on the resort than beyond they forged ahead in developing the policy which was fully introduced for the 1999 season.

It includes:

- Drugs awareness and education programme for all staff including contractors.
- Individual drug testing: Pre-employment as a condition of acceptance; At random; Post incident (i.e. accident); For cause (i.e. unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism, general behaviour).
- The requirement to submit to a test is a condition of employment and failure to do so instigates the immediate dismissal procedure.
- Commitment to report all intelligence or incidences of drug abuse immediately to the police.

Butlins voluntarily increased the levels of security patrols and 'Doorsafe' trained door staff at bars and entertainment venues throughout the resort to a level that they considered to be both financially viable and able to discharge their function of effectively addressing alcohol related criminality and disorder.

## ASSESSMENT

When the resort re-opened in April 1998 Constable Poat and the Security Manager Richard Labanc worked together to assess the effect of the changes already implemented and establish the priorities for other changes.

The 1998 season finished in November 1998 to prepare for Stage 2 of the resort redevelopment. The work completed up to that date was clearly reflected in the crime statistics prepared by Butlins. Whilst Butlins classification of an offence is not necessarily the same as that used by the police for Home Office classification what they demonstrate is far more comprehensive than the Home Office data originating through crimes reported to the police. See Appendix 1 and 2.

The most dramatic fall in recorded crime was clearly through 1997 following the introduction of Constable Poat, Richard Labanc and Bryan Leaker into the resort and their combined commitment to challenge attitudes and behaviour of the delinquent element of guests and staff ahead of major environmental and policy changes.

Within the 1998 data four categories were observed to increase in reported incidences namely:

- Assaults by staff.
- Criminal damage to Butlins property.
- Criminal damage to other property.
- Vehicle crime.

## Further analysis and response

Analysis of that data revealed causes from which strategies would be developed if it were considered that the proposed measures planned for implementation during the redevelopment period would not address the problems.

- **Assaults by staff:** Analysis revealed that the increase was accounted for by increased reports of assaults on staff by staff. Anecdotally the problem appeared to be less acute than in previous year's i.e. assaults were less serious. Security staff who had been retained for several years highlighted that as a consequence of firm briefings by Richard Labanc and Bryan Leaker they now recorded all incidents of assault whereas in previous years minor incidents were not reflected in the occurrence book.

- Response: i) Continue to monitor situation through 1999; ii) Security to pro-actively patrol staff quarters and staff bar; iii) Staff discipline procedures to be rigorously enforced against offenders.

- **Criminal damage to Butlins property:** Following the redevelopment employees were more aware and caring towards their environment and therefore actively reported damage previously ignored. Any identified damage was being recorded in the occurrence book and thus entered Butlins crime statistics even though damage may have been accidental.

- Response: Continue to record all incidents and map locations for direction of security patrols.

- **Criminal damage to other property:** No discernible pattern to the incidents identified. All reported incidents were recorded in the occurrence book and thus it is not able to distinguish criminal causes from accidental and false claims for compensation. Security more visible and

accessible than in previous years which may have contributed to a higher incidence of reporting. 1998 statistics actually demonstrate a 33% reduction on 1996, were there some rogue recording practices taking place in 1997?

- Response: Monitor situation through 1999 and ensure recording practices adhered to.

- **Vehicle crime:** 61 of the 103 incidents were recorded in the last two months of the season. Trespassers were still able to access the resort by breaching perimeter fence. Security patrols were not concentrating efforts on car parks over that period. Car park lighting good but no CCTV coverage.

- Response: i) At the close of season a trespasser was arrested and admitted 50 offences; ii) Perimeter security to be addressed during redevelopment prior to 1999; iii) Police to review needs of the car park to achieve Secured Car Park award; iv) Butlins willing to address levels of security patrols but felt unable to commit the resources at that time.

## Licensing strategy

Since its earliest days Butlins operated under the umbrella of a single Residents On-Licence to cover all 20 of its alcohol outlets. In practical terms that allowed Butlins, if they so desired, to serve alcohol to the residential element of its guests and staff 24 hours a day with no discernible means of distinguishing resident from non-resident. There was no effective mechanism in place to deny day visitors and trespassers access to bars and entertainment venues late into the evening.

A number of the bars did not require a Public Entertainment Licence (PEL) and therefore locally applicable conditions set by the Licensing Authority, such as the provision of 'Doorsafe' trained door staff could not be enforced upon Butlins at those bars. With 20

alcohol outlets spread over an area of 165 acres it was an unrealistic proposition to expect the three jointly named licensees to exercise meaningful day-to-day control over each of those outlets.

Butlins were put on notice that serious consideration was being given to a police challenge to the Liquor Licence requiring them to move to separate Liquor Licences for each outlet with Section 77 extensions and a PEL as required. Butlins were alarmed at that prospect as the requirements of Section 77 extensions would have severely distorted the viability of franchised food outlets on the resort and therefore affected their corporate approach to marketing.

Through 1998 Chief Inspector Lawrie Lewis was leading countywide groups of Licensing Magistrates, District Councils and Night Club owners, through various forums, to embrace an alternative means of tackling alcohol related criminality with a coordinated and creative approach to the legislation. The response was positive, particularly with the Magistrates who indicated their willingness to progress both acknowledged best practice and new ideas through their courts.

Strategic level negotiations were opened in November 1998 between Butlins and the police to establish a means of applying effective managerial controls and self policing measures at a level appropriate for each outlet set as binding conditions of a singular or separate licences.

After extensive debate and confirmation of the legal viability of proposals put forward by the police Butlins volunteered the surrender of their Liquor Licence and applied for a new Residential On-Licence with special binding conditions attached.

The cost was substantial but it ensured that Butlins would be able to retain their corporate approach and the police would achieve the legally enforceable controls and self policing measures at bars and entertainment venues they felt were essential.

The application progressed through the West Somerset Licensing Court unchallenged by the police. The licence, giving blanket coverage to the whole resort included the following binding conditions:

- Only existing named outlets to operate.
- Each of the 20 outlets has a separate, suitably qualified licensee listed in a schedule to the licence
- Opening hours of each outlet stipulated in the licence with none operating later than 2.00am
- Only residents and other specified groups to be admitted to or served in an outlet after 8.00pm
- Shatterproof glasses to be used throughout all outlets
- The whole resort to be covered by a monitored 26 unit CCTV network to police specification
- `Doorsafe' door staff to a specified ratio in specified outlets after 8.00pm
- `Doorsafe' door staff to a specified ratio at the entrance to each specified outlet after 8.00pm
- Additionally, security patrols through the remainder of the resort to an agreed sliding scale throughout the 24 hour period (Note: Whole resort remained a singular licensed premise)

### Main actions implemented for the 1999 season

The resort re-opened in April 1999 with a very different image and approach to crime reduction, detection and public safety. The extensive redevelopment of Stage 2 provided an aesthetic environment with most bars and entertainment

venues linked under one huge covered area known as the Skyline Pavilion.

With the redevelopment and other extensive measures implemented to compliment those introduced in 1998 the resort was poised to expect a further significant reduction in crime and kindred incidents. The additional measures introduced at the start of the 1999 season were:

- Quality of facilities and entertainment substantially improved for all ages.
- Positive action taken to immediately repair any damage.
- `Drugs Misuse' policy now fully operational.
- No single sex parties policy now fully effective.
- All measures required under the new Residential On-Licence complied with.
- Physical perimeter security improved.
- 80% of chalets fitted with high security deadlocks.
- Key room moved to secure location and permanently staffed to ensure accurate control of chalet key issues.
- Status, image and effectiveness of all security staff raised by;
- Training to `Doorsafe' status.
- Training in basics of criminal law.
- Training in first aid.
- Training in crime scene preservation.
- Supervisors qualified to use `Speed Cuff.

- Softer `sporting look' uniform to compliment the traditional Butlins `Redcoats' introduced for all security staff.
- By virtue of the Residential On-Licence conditions the numbers of security personnel substantially increased and supported by high specification CCTV network coverage of the whole resort.
- Security officers on patrol
- Coded passes issued to all residents allowing access to the resort during week(s) of residence only;
- Colour coded differently for adults and children.
- Colours and code change weekly.
- Must be presented on access to the resort.
- After 8:00pm must be presented for access to bars and entertainment venues.
- In any event must be presented when purchasing alcohol if suspected of being under the age of 18 years.

### 1999 Season up and running

The season opened with the hopes of Butlins and the police running high in the expectation of a further reduction in crime over that which was achieved in the preceding years. After the first three months of the 1999 season it was clear that neither were to be disappointed.

Using the Butlins generated statistics there does prove to be, since April 1997 when the problem orientated approach to policing was introduced to the resort, a year on year reduction in reported crime for the period April to June inclusive.

Total crimes for the three month period in 1996 was 753, falling to 216 incidents in 1999, representing 537 fewer victims of crime, this is

an impressive 71.5% reduction in total crime in just three years. (see Appendix 2).

Over the same period in 1999 there has been 6 arrests for personal possession of Class B drugs involving seasonal employees of Butlins. All of the arrests were initiated as a direct result of Butlins stringent 'Drugs Misuse' policy, working to intelligence provided by Butlins. There has only been one other incident with evidence of drug misuse found or reported across the resort, that matter was dealt with swiftly by Butlins in strict accordance with their 'Drugs Misuse' policy.

Now that crime has been reduced to manageable levels does not mean that the problem orientated approach has ceased to be applied. With significantly less crime it has proved somewhat easier to apply the problem orientated approach without the need to consider Butlins as a generic problem.

Focusing in on the three areas where statistically crimes are moving in the wrong direction, upwards, the SARA model has been once again applied.

■ **Burglaries - Not Forced:** All are at chalets fitted with the new 5 lever deadlocks. Doors are not 'slam shut'. Are guests forgetting to key lock on leaving? Are guests leaving door unlocked for children? Are there 'rogue' master keys in circulation?

- Response: i) Crime prevention advice has been prepared for inclusion in Guest Welcome Packs and chalets; ii) The Security Manager conducted an investigation to confirm the security of the key room and the circulation of master keys, it identified that the contractors who renovated the chalets had extra master keys cut that can no longer be accounted for; iii) A lock switching programme has been instigated to remove/relocate the series of locks affected.

■ **Assaults - by persons other than staff:** A significant proportion identified as domestic assaults between cohabiting partners not 'stranger' assaults as was the case in previous years. The training given to the security staff has given them the confidence to intervene whereas in previous years they might have avoided the issue this probably contributes to the rise in recorded incidents.

- Response: i) Inspector Price and Constable Poat to ensure that the constabularies domestic violence policy is adhered to by any responding officers with relevant reports being forwarded to the host force where the victim and offender normally resides for follow up action according to that constabularies policy.

■ **Vehicle Crime:** Analysis fails to identify any discernible pattern but negligence on the part of the vehicle owner plays a major contributory factor i.e. Vehicle was not locked, valuables on display. CCTV coverage, security patrols, perimeter security and lighting are all up to standard.

- Response: i) Constable Poat is pursuing the Secured Car Park award for the added crime deterrent value that such status and signing will bring; ii) Crime prevention advice has been prepared for inclusion in Guest Welcome Packs and chalets.

The process of liaison between the police and Butlins along with application of the problem orientated policing style will continue to be applied to any developing issues within the resort. The success of the initiative is endorsed by the Avon and Somerset Constabulary and supported by the management of Butlins Family Entertainment Resorts.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Butlins Crime Statistics by type, 1996 to 1998

	BURGLARIES		OTHER THEFT		ASSAULT BY		CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO		VEHICLE CRIME	TOTAL
	Forced	Not Forced	Cash	Goods	Staff	Other	Butlins Property	Other Property		
1996*	609	341	280	210	71	65	103	144	44	1867
1997*	128	326	104	247	38	66	78	24	34	1045
1998*	63	155	9	79	67	48	84	96	103	704

\* denotes only figures for April to October inclusive shown to demonstrate like for like taking account of redevelopment and refurbishment periods over winter months.

### Appendix 2: Brutlins Drug Statistics, 1996 to 1998

	SEIZURES / FINDS	ARRESTS	COMMENTS
1996*	Accurate Data Not available		
1997*	53	28	Most commonly used Class A and B drugs
1998*	29	11	Mostly Cannabis and a little Amphetamine

\* denotes only figures for April to October inclusive shown to demonstrate like for like taking account of redevelopment and refurbishment periods over winter months.

**Appendix 3: Crime incidents by type, 1996 to 1999**

	BURGLARIES		OTHER THEFT		ASSAULT BY		CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO		VEHICLE CRIME	TOTAL
	Forced	Not Forced	Cash	Goods	Staff	Other	Butlins Property	Other Property		
1996*	261	137	92	70	32	25	58	71	7	753
1997*	77	133	44	107	16	29	39	20	15	480
1998*	15	79	4	29	29	24	40	22	23	265
1999*	3	90	3	14	20	26	19	19	22	216

\* denotes April to June inclusive only.