

# **The Tilley Awa**

**Problem Oriented Policing**

# **The Tatton Community Project**

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# **Tatton Community Project**

## **Abstract**

**As with most urban areas, juvenile nuisance and lack of tolerance by other groups added to social decay in the eastern area of Chorley and was identified as a nuisance and crime "Hot Spot". The recreation ground had become a haunt for juveniles taking drugs, sniffing glue, smoking and drinking alcohol, committing damage, leaving litter, etc. and was also used for other more serious crimes as an escape route and opportunity for hiding.**

**There was a high level of vandalism in the area culminating in the burning down of the community centre in 1994. Improved security and the activities of the Tatton users had significantly reduced the incidence of damage but it was still costing in the region of £2000 per year for removal of graffiti, repairs to playground equipment, bowling greens, lights, etc. Therefore the actual cost has been somewhere in the region of £100,000 excluding the hidden costs of staff time, loss of facility, effects on community, etc.**

**In 1996 Inspector Chris Gradwell formed a partnership with the local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and the Community Centre Manger to develop the facilities and involve the youth in the process to ensure that they accepted responsibility and felt a degree of ownership. The Tatton Community Group was established with the aim to promote understanding**

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of the principles of community safety and seek to improve the quality of life for all.

The group has initiated the following projects:

Skate park for in line skaters, skate boarders and BMX riders.

Children's playground

Path lighting

Picnic tables and benches

Litter and dog waste bins

5-a-side pitch

Roller Hockey Pitch

Basketball court

Safer Cycling circuit

The value of the improvements so far total in excess of £100,000

The usage of the recreation ground has grown tenfold since the improvements and local residents feel safer due to the higher numbers of children, parents and elderly who now use the facilities regularly. It was rare to see above a dozen or so people prior to the project and hardly anyone ventured onto the recreation ground in the dark. Now in excess of one hundred people of all ages are regularly seen on the centre in the evenings and at weekends playing and talking together.

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## **Scanning**

**Mr. Tatton of Cuerden Hall donated Tatton Recreation Ground to the people of Chorley in 1915. The ground was provided as it was thought critical to the well being of the residents that they had recreational facilities in order to satisfy basic needs. Chorley Borough Council installed equipment and drainage costing £2000. This represented a significant input to the area even by today's, standards. This principal still applies and Chorley Borough Council built the Community centre in 1976 to provide more facilities.**

**The Recreation Ground has a popular bowling green, and a floodlit all-weather pitch, which, for a number of reasons, had fallen into a poor state of repair and was only rarely used by a small number of people playing football or riding bicycles. Outline plans for major upgrading were drawn up but were dependent upon the Council being in a position to provide match funding for a lottery application. The funds were not available and there was little hope of any major developments taking place.**

**As with most urban areas juvenile nuisance and lack of tolerance by other groups led to social decay. The recreation ground had become a haunt for juveniles taking drugs, sniffing glue, smoking and drinking alcohol,**

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**committing damage, leaving litter, etc. and was also used for other more serious crimes as an escape route and opportunity for hiding. A youth club was running but its members were subject to intimidation from older youth.**

**There was a high level of vandalism in the area culminating in the burning down of the community centre in 1994. The cost of repair and rebuilding work was in the region of £60,000 and together with the loss of the centre for nearly a year put the real costs far higher than that. It also caused considerable difficulties for those who valued the facility.**

**The centre was rebuilt and provided many varied services to the community. The staff and people connected with the centre were actively seeking to improve the services to local youth. Improved security and the efforts of the Tatton Users and Neighbourhood Watch had significantly reduced the incidence of damage but this was still in the region of £2000 per year for removal of graffiti, repairs to playground equipment, bowling greens, lights, etc. Therefore the actual cost has been somewhere in the region of £100,000 in the last five years plus the hidden costs of staff time, loss of facility, effects on the community, etc.**

# **Talton Community Project**

**During the period 1996 - 1997 I was responsible for setting up the Chorley and District Neighbourhood Watch Association. During my discussions with the group I became aware of problems in the Tatton area of east Chorley. The youth of the area were subject of regular complaints when congregating on street corners etc. and the standard reply "There's nowhere to go" was repeated over and over again. As is the case with most other recreation grounds, Tatton is a popular meeting place for young people who believe that improved leisure facilities in the area would relieve the boredom which often leads to anti-social behaviour.**

**This area was fortunate in that there was an existing and well run community centre with an all weather flood lit playing area, bowling green and basic children's play area. The community centre is well used by a variety of groups, seven days a week. Groups include Tiny Tots, Karate, Tap Dancing, Youth Band, Samba, Bingo, Bowls, Senior Citizens, and many others.**

**The centre catered for many interests but there was a void in matters of interest to many young people. We discussed the possibility of using Tatton Community Centre to develop a "cradle to the grave" community facility with all groups being involved, represented and catered for. I saw that this**

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**was an ideal opportunity to develop a community involvement project with the Community Centre as a focal point.**

**The members of the community groups were keen to develop the centre and cater for the youth of the area who were not using the existing facilities to the full. I therefore took action to assess the potential for developing additional facilities aimed directly at the younger groups.**

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## **AniErsis**

**I interrogated and analysed crime and nuisance statistical information and considered a needs survey of the area which had been conducted by Chorley Youth and Community Services some years previously. I also consulted with various groups to assess the current problems and possible solutions by arranging some preliminary meetings from within the following groups.**

- Tatton Users Group**
- National and Local Neighbourhood Watch**
- Chorley Borough Council**
- Chorley Partnership**
- East Chorley Renewal Area**
- Talton Seniors**
- Tiny Tots pre school**
- Groundwork Trust**
- School and Church Representatives**
- Homeless Society**
- District Youth Workers**
- Probation Office**
- Council for Voluntary Services**
- Residents and local youth.**



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**From those meetings an "Open Evening" was held in January 1997 to seek the views of the residents and young people who were gathering in various locations around the area. This meeting provided a forum for discussion about the problems that the community faced and how solutions may be reached. The groups prepared reasoned cases for many extra facilities and equipment and this was prioritised with the consent of the groups to concentrate on achievable objectives.**

**The "wish list" that was made included Roller blade / skateboard I BMX ramps, Hockey pitch, new playground equipment, 5-a-side pitch, seating and path improvements, lighting, basketball court.**

**The enthusiasm of the groups was evident and it was felt that a project should commence to enhance the facilities in the area and improve the quality of life for all.**

**Incident logs were checked historically to assess the range of problems in the area that may be affected by an improvement in facilities for youth and the consequent acceptance of social responsibility that would be engendered by the Project strategy. Statistics clearly showed that the increase in related incidents having dramatically increased over the last year and**

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obviously action had to be taken. The area was a divisional "Hot Spot" for nuisance, vandalism and crime.

**Location** - consists of varied housing stock ranging from small terraced privately owned homes, local authority and housing association property, flats, private estates including four bed detached residences. There was basic playground equipment on Tatton Recreation Ground but very few other facilities. There was no focal point where young people could legitimately congregate and have access to equipment and relevant recreational opportunities.

**Victims** - Apart from the effects of damage to the centre and grounds, victims included:

- + all age groups attending the centre
- residents in the immediate area of the grounds
- businesses who also suffered from vandalism and general nuisance
- shopkeepers who were harassed by groups "hanging round"
- visitors who were deterred from coming again
- The residents of Chorley due to the demands placed on the police and provide a disproportionate amount of time and resources to the area.
- . There was no particular group targeted.

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**Offenders - Offending groups varied from 8 - 12 years olds generally being cheeky and committing acts of minor vandalism, 12 - 16 year olds becoming more confident and starting to intimidate residents and passers by and commit more serious offences. This latter group was also starting to partake of drinking and taking drugs such as cannabis and some of the more easily obtained "soft drugs". The next group included elements that were now really in to alcohol, hard drugs and more rowdy behaviour. Some were active thieves and burglars and frequented the area as a means of escape from several surrounding areas. Apart from the above there were many well-behaved children who were just simply bored and in need of some stimulus to play and recreation.**

**The main cause of the difficulties appeared to be the location and the lack of a focal point for activity and socialisation by the target groups.**

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## **Response**

I could see that there were a number of interested parties and all had ideas with a common aim to develop the centre. However, there was a need to consider the wider picture and I initially led the meetings and co-ordinated the views and opinions of those present. These, together with my own vision of a "Cradle to the grave" community facility, developed in to the very active and productive "Tatton Community Group", which leads activity towards our goals. The Tatton Community Group (TCG) included representatives from the youth group, Chorley Borough Council, residents, Neighbourhood Watch, Police, Chorley Partnership, Voluntary Service, Youth Service, Churches and schools.

Preliminary meetings were held with staff and interested parties to obtain agreement in principle for our vision. Options included high visibility patrols to discourage youth from using the recreation area. It was felt that it was critical to the life of the community to encourage young people to become involved in the development of the facilities at the centre and become part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

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**A group of In-Line Skaters had emerged as a number of teenagers who would be willing to contribute to their future rather than expect others to provide for it. They had been tasked with identifying the type of equipment they wanted and with help from an adult fan checked out costs and manufacturers. They were invited together with many others from the area to the meeting at the Community Centre in January 1997 chaired by Chorley Partnership to assess the needs of the youth in the area.**

**Many issues were raised and needs listed. A survey was conducted and requests included better facilities at the Community Centre. The young people formed a group and carried out their own research and made proposals to initially provide a roller blade I BMX facility.**

**The Tatton Community Group decided to tackle all of the issues raised and the Tatton Community Project was born.**

**Following meetings with the youth and other community members, projects were identified which would enhance the facilities at Tatton and encourage a community spirit amongst young people. The groups did all the necessary development work and the following projects have been completed.**

# **Tattoo Community Project**

**The approximate value and details of sponsors included: -**

**Roller blade ! BMX facility in enclosed safe area launched 4th July 1998 -  
£35,000**

**It is interesting to note that the original suppliers of the skate ramp failed to keep promises and deadlines and a new manufacturer had to be found. The young skaters were extremely patient and persistent and the project took almost two years to come to fruition.**

***Partners -- Chorley Borough Council, Northern Propshafts, MG Distribution, Flying F Skates, Chorley Youth Service, Halfords, B & Q, Stan Wilson Auto Parts, Marsden Haulage and Crane Hire, Lancashire Partnership Against Crime, Lancashire Juvenile Association.***

**Spray Can Art Day to decorate the ramps and deter graffiti - £450**

***Partners — District Youth and Community Service, Tetracil Car Paints  
Chorley Borough Council, local youth***

**Children's Play Area with "soft pour" impact absorbing surface - £30,000**

***Partners - Lancashire Urban Regeneration, Groundwork Trust, Charley Borough Council***

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**5 Picnic tables 2 disabled access tables, 9 benches and 3 trainer's benches - £5,000. A further 5 benches valued at £450 have recently been supplied.**

***Partners - Mayors Timber, Wymott Prison, Groundwork Trust, Grahams Builders Merchants, B&Q, Chorley Borough Council***

**5 a side and roller hockey pitches and basketball court together with nets, hockey sticks, safety pads, safety helmets bats and balls - £5,000**

***Partners - Chorley Borough Council, Lancashire Juvenile Association, Prince's Trust, Flying F Skates.***

**Landscaping, path and lighting improvements - £15,000**

***Partners - Urban Regeneration, Groundwork Trust, Chorley Borough Council, Ruttle Plant Hire,***

**Road Safety Project launched by the Chief Constable on 3<sup>m</sup> July 1999, to provide a safe road layout to enable pedal cyclists to practice in a safe area.**

**Formal training sessions will also be provided under the "Passport to Safer**

**Cycling" scheme. Two members of the Tatton Community Group have**

**been trained as Instructors and local primary schools are to be given the**

**opportunity to utilise the circuit. Motor cycle users are also to be targeted**

**and offered Compulsory Basic Training as well as safety events at the**

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**facility - £5,500. Other people using the circuit include radio-controlled cars and children's sit and ride toys. The Tatton Community Group has also been approached to host time trials for people with disabilities on motorised scooters and to assist Dr. Barnado's staff to stimulate children with special needs and provide a safe environment to learn basic life saving road skills.**

***Partners - Lancashire County Council, Zebraflex, Norman Smith Road Markings,. Chorley Borough Council, Lancashire Constabulary.***

**Camcorder and Video Recorder presented by myself as a result of being presented with the George Herbert Redman Award for community work. - £900. Any of the users of the Tatton Community Centre has access to the equipment to make a record of their activities. The opportunity for creative video recording and editing is available to develop any artistic skills that become apparent.**

**Other events include:**

- Supporting a successful bid to the Home Office by Chorley Borough Council and partners for a unique mobile CCTV surveillance equipment costing £42,000. The group pledged £500 and this prompted other groups and organisations to follow suit. Of 32 successful national bids this was the only one from Lancashire.**



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- **Visits to an In Line Skating Festival at Blackpool.**
- **2 groups visited The Police Air Support Unit Helicopter**
- **Host to. Schools Community Action Teams annual presentations**

**In addition the annual running costs for all the projects will be met by the activities of the members of the Community Project assisted by the goodwill of Chorley Borough Council who are providing the premises, grounds, maintenance, public liability insurance and Community Centre Staff time.**

**Tatton Gala day also provides funds to develop the facilities at the centre.**

**In 1998 over £800 was raised and the skate park and playground initiatives were formally opened.**

**In 1999 the Gala Day became a Gala weekend and over £1200 was raised.**

**The Safer Cycling and Compulsory Basic Training circuit was opened by Pauline Clare, the Chief Constable of Lancashire.**

**The Chairman of the Talton Community Group and the Director of Zebraflex were presented with framed certificates by the Chief Constable for the commitment to the "Together We Can Make The Difference" Lancashire-County Council roads safety strategy.**

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**The gala weekend saw the first Roller Hockey tournament which attracted teams from as far as Liverpool to compete. There was also a 5-a-side tournament and funfair, displays by police dogs, dance, band, karate and samba groups. There was an ostrich race which caused some concerns to animal lovers until the contestants donned their upside down wash baskets covered with paper feathers!**

**The area Sergeant and constables are in the process of contacting the various youth groups and encouraging a positive contribution and greater social responsibility. A Problem Information Log assists with the communication of information to other officers and states the type of action required.**

**Several initiatives are planned including: -**

- Drugs Awareness Day in partnership with Community Drugs Team;**
- Provision of an adventure style playground for the older teenagers in partnership with Territorial Army;**
- Partnership with local schools to provide homework facilities alongside the use of the leisure equipment to encourage a balanced approach;**
- The potential to send some young people on annual cultural awareness weeks in Romania is being explored dependent on a sponsor funding the development of a hostel in the Transylvania mountains;**

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- **Summer play scheme based on the skate park providing supervised sessions and development of a Hockey team. It is hoped that this will be part funded from the Prince's Trust.**
- **Fitness Trail**
- **Adventure play area / assault type course for older youth**
- **Mountain Biking trips to Lake District with Youth and Community Service**
- **Water Sports days / weekends at North West Water facilities**
- **Cyber Cafe / Internet facility in partnership with the Youth Service and a local youth centre.**
- **Video recording and editing unit with IT support**
- **Sports day with bar-b-q**
- **"Promise Auction" fundraising event**
- **Sponsored Walks which have been requested by the children themselves to raise funds**
- **An outdoor music festival or show of some kind.**

**Other Projects not confined to Tatton Area but evolving from suggestions and problems identified by the Tatton Community Group embodying community safety and POP principles: -**

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- **A feasibility study is being carried out to assess whether a Youth Council could be formed to mirror the infrastructure of the Borough Council and enable the youth of the Borough to have a say in matters affecting them.**
- > **A successful Drugs Rehabilitation Unit has been visited in Merseyside and meetings are being held to get together partners to develop a similar facility in Chorley.**

# *Tatton Community Project*

## *Assessment*

**Initially there was a decrease in nuisance type calls for the general area with an increase in the calls to Tatton. This worked in the favour of the police as it enabled us to deal with the social issues at one point of contact and effectively hit the target audience with information, help and advice. The feedback obtained is assisting the police and the Community Project Group to respond to requests and provide further facilities with the help of representatives from *the* youth groups.**

**Over the last two years there has been an overall reduction of 26% in nuisance calls in the section. There has been a significant increase in a neighbouring area which accounts for half of the towns nuisance statistics. It appears that there has been some displacement and the reduction in the Tatton area is therefore likely to be much better.**

**The number of calls has reduced significantly and the usage of the recreation Ground has grown tenfold since the installation of lighting and facilities. The local residents feel safe and the "vandals" have deserted the ground due to the higher numbers of children, parents and elderly who now use the facilities regularly. In excess of one hundred people are regularly seen on the centre in the evenings and at weekends playing and talking**

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**together. Families come for the day on fine weekends and can be seen having picnics. They are no longer intimidated by the groups of youths who still frequent the area as everyone is more tolerant of others.**

**It was rare to see above a dozen or so people prior to the project and hardly anyone ventured onto the recreation ground in the dark. A survey of users revealed that they all felt safer and more secure and were prepared to let their children come to Tatton on their own.**

**The incidence of graffiti / damage has reduced significantly. The outside walls of the centre were painted each year due to graffiti and damage. The centre has not been repainted since the project commenced four years ago. The caretaker deals with ally minor incidents that occur. There has been some displacement into surrounding areas of the hard core nuisances and steps are in hand to widen the influence of the centre and develop further links with those communities now affected**

**The following account of a recent incident exemplifies how the project has succeeded in gaining the hearts and minds of the local youth. Earlier this year a series of slogans and comments were daubed on the centre and a few days later the youth who use the facilities were invited to a meeting to**

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**discuss the reason for what was the first act of vandalism in many months.**

**They were asked what could be done to prevent further abuse to their centre and a lengthy discussion followed with the blame being given to "unknown" offenders. A few minutes after the meeting dispersed a young girl approached the local community beat officer and owned up to the damage. She realised that it was a childish and thoughtless act and was sincerely sorry for jeopardising the further development of the project. Given that there was no evidence to connect her with the damage and no likelihood of discovery this was a show of trust and responsibility for her actions and took a great deal of courage.**

**The project is mentioned at Community Forums, Council meetings, Police Headquarters, and many other community type events and meetings. It has been visited by representatives from Merseyside Community Development, Isle of Man local authority and an Assistant Police Commissioner from the Pacific Islands. It is held up as a blue print for developing community initiatives with the community as opposed to *or* the community. The Tatton Community Group is frequently requested to give presentations and advice to other community groups wishing to develop their own projects. The group has also facilitated a workshop for Lancashire Local Action Global Agenda training seminar.**

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**Chorley Borough held a week long Mid-Summer Festival and Tatton's annual Gala Day was selected to be the lead opening event on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1999. The project also appears on the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime promotional Video.**

**Granada TV "Crimefile" has featured the project in 1998 at the launch of the skate ramps as a strategy for distraction of youth from crime and nuisance. They have also screened a follow up on <sup>lat</sup> July 1999 just prior to the Gala Weekend . The feature pointed out the significant improvements to the quality of life of the members of the Tatton community to the benefit of all who may use the facilities.**

**This project is far greater than a specific item, event or facility; it is an all encompassing community project with benefits for all to encourage greater commitment and levels of involvement from all sections of the community starting with the estranged youth groups. The intention is to build on this "foundation" facility and further develop existing courses and opportunities within the centre and to provide new ones such as food co-op, credit union, job search and other recreational and support schemes.**

**The full effect of the responses will only be seen over a longer period as the project develops and community ties are reinforced. The extensive and**



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**enthusiastic support for the project by County Councilors, Borough Councilors, the Member of Parliament, individual council officers and most importantly the core members of the Tatton Community Group is the key to its sustainability and its potential for further success.**

**In line with the Lancashire Constabulary objectives the people of Tatton and Chorley East are very much safe, involved and reassured by the activities of the Tatton Community Group.**

# **Tatton Community Project**

## **Appendices**

**Plan of Area**

**"Together We Can Make The Difference" pledge document**

**Plan of Safer Cycling circuit**

**Photographs**

**Press Articles**