

A Lancashire Constabulary Western Division Problem Oriented Policing Initiative

Contact:

PC Angela Horton
Lytham Police Station,
Bannister Street,
Lytham St Armes,
Lancashire. FY8 5HP
Tel: 01253 **604828**
Fax: 01253 604822

Lytham Illegal Parking Initiative

Summary

The nature of the problem

- **Illegal parking on footpaths**
- Vehicles contravening parking restrictions and causing unnecessary obstruction, including commercial vehicles whilst delivering to retail outlets
- Failure of motorists to use off street parking and pay and display car park
- No consistency in relation to the co-ordination and focus of traffic warden activity
- Inadequate and poorly maintained signage

Evidence used to define the problem

- Letters of complaint from residents, local Councillors and retailers highlighted a problem with illegal parking on the footpath, vehicles contravening parking restrictions and causing unnecessary obstruction.
- Problems experienced by traffic wardens with enforcement as a result of poorly maintained and inadequate signage

Response to the problem

- Campaign Day launched on 16 July 1999
- Media launch
- High visibility patrolling by traffic wardens and police officers
- Warning notices for minor infringements

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- Poster and leaflet campaigns
 - Positive action taken for more serious breaches
 - Assistance from Lancashire County Council Area Surveyor in identifying engineering problems

Impact of response

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- Warning notices issue to offending vehicles for such offences as "no waiting in contravention" (51), "limited waiting parked in contravention" (7), "parking on a taxi rank" (1), "unnecessary obstruction" (9), "no vehicle excise license" (8)
 - Improvement to engineering problems identified eg. re-painting of obscured double yellow lines, re-erection of signs, installation of disabled bay, reduction of H-Bar for pedestrian access
 - Reduction in the number of complaints from public, councillors and retailers
 - Implementation of specific tasking and monitoring problems
 - Increased focus and direction of traffic warden activity
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Scanning

Lytham Town Centre is predominantly one main street with retail premises lining each side.

Minor roads lead off the street, some of which are home to smaller commercial premises.

There is some "on street" parking permitted although restrictions apply e.g. limited waiting. However, there is a pay and display car park located just off the main street with a capacity for 150 vehicles.

The town centre is a very popular and busy thoroughfare with good shopping facilities, which attract visitors from out of the area. However, many visitors abandon their vehicles in dangerous positions and in contravention of parking restrictions.

This very fact has caused dissatisfaction amongst residents, pedestrians and road users alike.

During the Summer of 1999 a volume of complaints were received from members of the public, local retailers and local councillors regarding the high number of offending vehicles which were responsible for illegally parking in Lytham town centre.

Analysis

With a high percentage of elderly residents and visitors to the town and disabled persons, it was felt that the illegal parking problems, particularly in relation to parking on the pavement, were becoming a dangerous habit formed by motorists.

It was noted from complaints received that not only were motorists parking on the pavement but were ignoring the "no waiting" restriction in certain areas. In summary the main problems identified were: -

- Vehicles parking illegally on the footpath, parking in contravention of prohibitive parking restrictions and causing unnecessary obstruction, and causing a subsequent danger to pedestrians and other road users
- Visitors to Lytham town centre were failing to use the off-street parking facilities, thus causing damage to footpaths and a danger to pedestrians
- Commercial vehicles were contributing to the problem whilst delivering to retail outlets
- Traffic Wardens were experiencing problems with enforcement as a result of inadequate and poorly maintained road signage
- There was no consistency in relation to the co-ordination and focussing of Traffic Warden activity

Offender

Visitors to Lytham town centre, failing to use the off-street parking and pay and display car park

Victim

The public, residents, Highways Authority and local retailers and businesses

Location

The main arterial road through the middle of Lytham Town Centre.

Response

A Campaign Day was launched on Friday 16th July 1999 with the aim of targeting offending vehicles and owners.

The strategy was to use a high profile approach to educate the motorist as opposed to a heavy-handed prosecution approach.

The key objectives were to increase public confidence and satisfaction and to reduce the number of pedestrian road casualties.

Key tactics adopted for this campaign were as follows: -

On 16th July 1999 police officers and traffic wardens patrolled the town centre in high visibility uniform, specifically targeting vehicles contravening parking regulations and causing unnecessary obstruction

- The campaign was preceded by a media launch in local newspapers
- For minor infringements a warning notice was placed in a fixed penalty envelope and affixed to the offending vehicles. This notice outlined the fact that an offence had been committed and that the vehicle driver could be liable to prosecution
- Warning posters were printed by the Force Printing Department and were affixed to boards and placed in prominent positions on lamp posts in Lytham
- Leaflets distributed informing local residents and visitors of the problems and detailing action to be taken to combat them
- The Lancashire County Council Area Surveyor accompanied the police along with a local councillor. The intention was to identify as many engineering and other long-term problems as possible
- Liaison with the Highways Authority to assess any engineering problem areas
- Positive action taken for more serious breaches
- Traffic Wardens and geographic areas to follow up the initial campaign with a period of enforcement

Assessment

On the launch day itself the following were issued: -

- 51 notices for "No Waiting in Contravention"
- 7 notices for "Limited Waiting parked in Contravention"
- 1 notice for "Parking *on* a Taxi Rank"
- 9 notices for "Unnecessary Obstruction"
- 7 Vulnerable Vehicle Scheme Notices
- 8 CLE2/6 notices for no Vehicle Excise License

On the launch day **twenty-one** engineering and long-term problem areas were identified. Surprisingly, the local Traffic Wardens and the Local **Authority had** been made aware of **the** majority of these previous to the operation.

The Area Surveyor addressed areas identified as problematic due to poor line visibility and signposts etc. Examples being: -

- The re-painting of obscured double yellow lines
- Re-erected a larger "No Entry" sign on Bath Road
- Had the disabled bay re-instated on Park Road
- Has arranged for the H-Bar on Henry Street to be reduced strictly for pedestrian access

The number of complaints has been significantly been reduced and the general feeling is that the situation has improved considerably.

To maintain the momentum of enforcement, specific tasking and monitoring processes have now been introduced. In particular, this ensures that Traffic Wardens are more focussed and directed in their activity and that this activity is concentrated on where the problems are.

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By the rotation of traffic warden duties with respect to different locations, this key resource has become significantly more effective.

What proved to be effective was to physically patrol the streets with interested parties and discuss any potential problems with the problem in front of you, thus moving away from the conventional process of writing numerous letters, holding meetings or attending the site independently.

What transpired was that the root cause of many of the problems was poorly maintained or ineffective signage, thus making enforcement difficult. Having identified this, a list of "problems" was given to the Local Authority with the responsibility of addressing the same.

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Packers face a clampdown

WE don't want to have to prosecute you.

That's the message from police who have launched a high-profile clampdown on illegal parking in Lytham town centre.

Co-ordinating officers say the campaign is educational rather than a purge on offenders, and has been put into effect following pleas for more stringent enforcement from residents.

Thoughtless drivers who flout road regulations and put pedestrians at risk will be warned of their actions and given advice on how to avoid doing it again.

Officers are highlighting offences of parking on the pavement, obstruction, and contravention of waiting restrictions.

They will also crack down on motorists who abuse orange badge parking, and ignore access only roads and one-way streets.

Acting Police Sergeant Peter Beresford said: "We don't want to prosecute people."

"We want to reduce road casualties and make Lytham town centre a safer place for motorists, shoppers and pedestrians."

PC Angela Horton, community officer for Lytham centre, said: "It would not be good for me or the other officers to be heavy-handed with this campaign."

"At the same time it is not a softly-softly approach. We can advise people in the first



instance, but if they offend again, we will act"

The campaign has been organised in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

Safety first: Pictures torn left are St Annes Road Safety officers PC Adam Lloyd, Acting sgt Peter Peresford, traffic warden Syd Fish and PC Angela Horton.