

<u>PROJECT TITLE</u>	A CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE TARGET HARDENING AGAINST DWELLING BURGLARIES IN RURAL AREAS AND TO DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT TO THIS ACTION.
<u>CATEGORY</u>	CRIME REDUCTION
<u>PRIORITY AREA</u>	DWELLING BURGLARY
<u>FORCE</u>	ESSEX POLICE
<u>SPONSOR</u>	ACC(0) MR. J. A. BROUGHTON MA.
<u>NAME OF CONTACT</u>	ACTING INSPECTOR S. O'CALLAGHAN <b>POLICE STATION, HIGH STREET, EPPING</b> CM16 4AG Tel. 01992 561212 Fax. 01279 <b>625440</b> Email <a href="mailto:Sean.o'callaghan@essex.police.uk">Sean.o'callaghan@essex.police.uk</a>  MR. A. ELLIS <b>CRIME REDUCTION OFFICER</b> <b>POLICE STATION, HIGH STREET, EPPING</b> <b>CM16 4AG</b> <b>Tel. 01992 625525</b> <b>Fax. 01279 625440</b> <b>Email <a href="mailto:tony.ellis@essex.police.uk">tony.ellis@essex.police.uk</a></b>

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5. A photograph showing Mr Ellis delivering a burglary advice leaflet to a vulnerable premises, followed by a photograph of that same premises a week later.
6. Photograph of Mr. Ellis's car displaying magnetic 'Crime Reduction' identification markings.



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John Broughton  
Assistant Chief Constable

Ms Tricia Perkins  
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SW1H 9HD

27<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Dear Ms Perkins,

### **The Tilley Award's 2002**

In response to your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2002, I am pleased to be able forward the following entry for consideration in the 'Tilley Awards 2002'.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office for any further information you may require.

Please ask for the staff office, where Police Sergeant Trevor Roe is the force coordinator for all the Tilley Award submissions.

Yours sincerely

**John Broughton**  
Assistant Chief Constable



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3 May 2002

Sergeant T ROE  
Executive Support  
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Dear Trevor

Please find attached a nomination for the 'Tilley' Award as requested in your email of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002.

I believe the initiative identified by Inspector MAYES fits the criteria for the award. We have received very positive feedback on both the leaflets and the 'marking' of Mr ELLIS's car.

This suggestion is relatively cheap and allow us to advise the public about local crime prevention issues and to have a presence in the 'harder' to reach areas.

I ask that the proposal be entered into the award.

Yours sincerely

**Ian LEARMONTH**  
**Chief Superintendent**  
**Divisional Commander**

**DATE OF REPORT: 27<sup>k</sup> MAY 2002**

**SUBMITTED BY: AIINSPECTOR S. O'CALLAGHAN**

**SUBJECT: CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE  
TARGET HARDENING AGAINST DWELLING  
BURGLARIES IN RURAL AREAS AND TO  
DEMONSTRATE POLICE COMMITMENT TO THIS  
ACTION.**

**SPONSOR: ACC(0) MR. J. A. BROUGHTON M.A. \_\_\_\_\_**

### BACKGROUND

The Epping Police section, which is located in the Harlow division, covers an area of approximately 110 square miles and is a predominantly rural in nature. The section encompasses the towns of Waltham Abbey, Epping and Chipping Ongar, which generate most crime and accordingly receive the majority of policing available to the section. However, there are also many outlying villages and hamlets containing valuable residential properties which are of great interest to the burglar. Many of these premises are occupied by residents who commute every day leaving their houses unoccupied and vulnerable. Although these types of premises are regularly targeted by the criminal, their widespread locations make crime patterns difficult to predict. In addition, these burglaries, although very impactful on rural communities, are normally not sufficient in number to attract crime reduction funding of any significant amount. We are, therefore, constantly searching for best value solutions which are low-cost, resource friendly and demonstrate proactive rather than reactive approaches to the problem.

Rural communities have traditionally enjoyed the advantage of living in low crime areas. They are not used to having to implement their own crime reduction measures. Although these areas have now become a favoured target of the dwelling burglar, many residents are still reluctant to identify even the simplest actions which will protect their own houses.

### THE PURPOSE

In response to rural dwelling burglaries and in order to promote the fact that we care about our rural communities, our Crime Reduction Officer, Mr. Tony Ellis, has instigated two initiatives which, running in tandem, will be a simple yet effective way of making an impact on these problems.

In late April this year, our crime analysis showed that the village of Willingale was recording more dwelling burglaries than normal. Willingale is a small village with no

major roads close by. It lies in countryside between the towns of Chelmsford and Harlow and is conveniently located for commuting along the M.11 and M.25 into London. Houses in the village are detached and often unoverlooked. They are mainly occupied by wealthy owners who leave them unoccupied during the day. Our crime figures showed that 8 of these houses had been burgled during the months of February, March and April whereas perhaps one burglary over a longer period is normal. Crime patterns also showed that these houses had been entered during the daytime when unoccupied. Follow-up visits to these premises by Mr. Ellis revealed poor security and either no alarm or that an inadequate alarm system was installed. A research of the information recorded with regard to these crimes clearly revealed a lack of both security measures by the occupant an absence of a police presence on a regular basis.

In response to these issues, Mr. Ellis designed a burglary advice leaflet. He regularly visits rural villages throughout the section as part of his duties. When he does so, he takes the time to view especially vulnerable premises in and around the area he is working. The theory behind the initiative is simple. If he can identify the signs that a house is unoccupied and unprotected then the burglar can do the same. He looks for tell-tale signs such as milk or produce left on the doorstep, garage doors left open with no vehicles on the premises, newspapers left in the letterbox or mail lying on the porch floor. If any of these or other indicators are present, he issues a personalised leaflet to the occupant pointing out the security issues. The leaflet also offers a personal invitation to discuss crime prevention measures should the occupant wish to do so.

In order to deliver the burglary advice leaflets, Mr. Ellis, who is a support staff employee, travels throughout the area in his own private vehicle. He found that when stopping to view houses in these often remote locations, he regularly attracted the attention of neighbouring residents who were obviously suspicious of his actions. Rather than ignore these attentions, which would have undoubtedly led to a suspect call to the police, he was obliged to stop to explain who he was and what he was doing. During these conversations a common theme emerged which was the perception of a lack of high visibility police presence in the more rural areas. This perception is probably a reality when you consider that most rural areas do not present themselves as 'hot spots' of crime and disorder. On a more positive note, these conversations helped to allay fears and gather information about previous offences which would have otherwise been lost.

In an attempt to address this issue, Mr. Ellis applied to the divisional Command Team for permission to display magnetic signs on his private vehicle showing the Essex Police crest and the words 'Crime Reduction' below it. Permission was granted and the signs were purchased.

The signs are designed so that they can be quickly attached to all sides of his vehicle. They have been tested to ensure that they do not detach themselves from the bodywork at speed. They can easily be stored in the boot of the car without damage to them.

The signs are only attached when Mr. Ellis leaves a police station to work in a rural area. They are never left displayed on the vehicle when it is unattended. Care was taken to make sure that Mr. Ellis was insured to drive his vehicle for police business. Mr. Ellis always carries a mobile telephone with him when he is working. In the event that he is approached by a member of the public regarding an operational police issue, he will advise that person that he is not a police officer but then deal with the situation by contacting the appropriate police department by telephone.

## RESOURCES

As mentioned previously in this report, the Epping police section, by comparison to other areas even in our own division, could not be regarded as a high crime area. That fact has inevitably to be reflected in the resources available to the section. We have to bear this in mind when we consider any new initiatives to ensure that they are not only SMART but deliver best value.

These two initiatives achieve both these objectives. The only resource we have used to date is the Crime Reduction Officer and his own vehicle. He has been able to identify times that he can put aside to target specific areas but he also builds in time around other appointments in rural areas to carry out these security checks in the vicinity of that appointment. The travel costs have proved to be minimal because Mr. Ellis has found that it is more productive to carry out these checks on foot once he has reached an area.

Due to the success of the burglary advice leaflets and the feedback we have received from the public, I am considering the merits of allocating further resources based on future crime analysis. If any area is identified as being the subject of an abnormal increase in dwelling burglaries, I will consider using Community Policing Team officers to target those areas with burglary advice leaflets to encourage target hardening and to prevent further offences in that area.

## COST

Once again, the cost of these two simple yet effective ideas has been minimal. Mr. Ellis develops both initiatives during the normal course of his duty so there is no additional expense as far as manpower is concerned. The fact that he uses his own vehicle has some minor mileage cost implications but this has to be balanced against the alternative cost of supplying an additional marked police vehicle to carry out this work.

The cost of producing the leaflets is also negligible as they are produced in-house and copied in the same way. The printing has to be in colour but our research to date has not shown any cost impact on our current administrative budget.

The signs for Mr. Ellis's car were designed by the force Graphic Design Department to be in the corporate image. There was no cost for this service. The signs were produced by a private company but ordered through the force Fleet Management Department to keep costs to a minimum. The cost of producing four 10x10 inch signs and one larger sign for the bonnet of the car was £100.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The development of Mr. Ellis's idea is in its early stages. The problem only identified itself in the first part of this year and we have only recently begun to address it by introducing these initiatives. However, the initial figures are encouraging.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> April, Mr. Ellis visited the Willingale area where he identified 9 premises that were likely to be attractive to a dwelling burglar. Having issued burglary advice leaflets to all those premises, he returned one week later to find that 7 of the nine had taken steps to rectify the security problems that Mr. Ellis identified. One has requested a personal meeting to discuss the installation of a burglar alarm. Bearing in mind that there had been 8 burglaries over the previous 90 days, since carrying out this action only one further offence has been reported and additional information regarding previous offences has been gathered.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May, Mr. Ellis carried out a similar action in the village of Sheering which had unusually suffered 4 dwelling burglaries in the two months preceding that date. 10 Leaflets were issued and 7 residents took action based on that advice. Since that date no further offences have been reported.

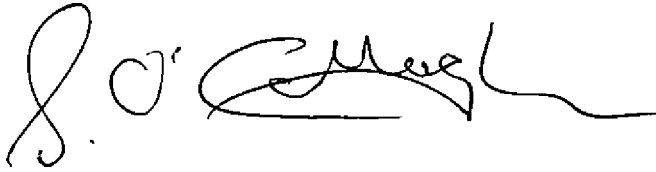
It is my suggestion that the signs displayed on Mr. Ellis's vehicle when he is working in our more remote communities serve three purposes;

- They act to advise other concerned residents that he is carrying out police business.
- Although Mr. Ellis is not a police officer, the sight of the police crest on his car reassures residents and demonstrates that Essex Police is working in the rural areas to reduce crime and the fear of crime
- There is most likely to be the odd occasion when a criminal intent on committing a crime in a rural area, sees Mr. Ellis's vehicle and is dissuaded from pursuing that intention.

In conclusion, the burglary advice leaflet is proving to be a personalised method of encouraging individual residents to target harden their own properties. At the same time, the `Crime Reduction' signs displayed on Mr. Ellis's car provides reassurance, information and the possibility of being a direct deterrent.



I submit that these initiatives are a simple way of delivering an extremely low-cost and low-resource target hardening information to the public. They also provide reassurance regarding the fear of crime to our ever concerned rural communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. O'Callaghan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr. S. O'Callaghan  
Acting Section Inspector  
Epping Police Section

**YOU COULD HAVE BEEN COMING HOME TO  
AN EMPTY HOUSE!**

To the occupier *of... 'Four Acres', High Street, Willingale.....*

**You reside in a very affluent area. The problem is that burglars and criminals are also aware of that fact. They know that many residents from this area commute to work every day leaving their homes unoccupied.**

**But the burglar does not see every home as a target. He or she looks for vulnerable premises and the tell tale signs that say nobody is home.**

**When we passed your house today, we noticed the following points that told us that your house might be vulnerable.**

*.....*  
*We checked your house at 12.30pm today. The newspaper was protruding from the letter box. There was a delivery of :*  
*: eggs and orange juice left on the doorstep. Your garage :*  
*: door was open to the roadway showing items on display :*  
*: that could be stolen and that your car was missing. :*  
*All these are signs to a burglar that your house is :*  
*• unoccupied.*  
*.....*

**I am sure you will agree that this/these points can be easily rectified.**

***REMEMBER, IF I CAN SPOT THEM SO CAN THE BURGLAR!***

**It is your responsibility to consider your own security but if you need help or advice your Community Policing Team and I are always available to assist you. You can contact us direct on 01279 625525.**

*Please don't make yourself an easy victim of crime*

***Tony Ellis, Crime Reduction Officer, Epping Police***

**Crime Reduction Officer inspecting rural property and issuing burglary advice leaflet.**



**..... one week later.**



**Magnetic crime reduction markings attached to Crime Reduction Officer's vehicle.**



**Close up of markings on front of Crime Reduction Officer's vehicle.**

