

Lancashire Constabulary



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Operation Caretaker

The Lancashire Constabulary Air Support Unit introduced operation Caretaker, in 2001, in an effort to combat the historically high levels of juvenile nuisance and reported crime during the summer months at school premises. Careful analysis of crime patterns by the ASU, Divisional Analyst's and School Liaison officers showed a growing trend in already high crime figures and many man hours being wasted on juvenile nuisance. Each division identified key targets. The ASU undertook to provide high visibility and pro-active patrolling, to assist section.

In 2001, the ASU worked closely with PC Lawrensen, the Ferngore Beat Officer at Accrington, to reduce problems at three schools, by the implementation of Caretaker. Due to the success of the Operation that year, it was decided to again run Caretaker at the same schools in 2002 but to extend the initiative a little further this year.

The three schools concerned were St Oswalds Primary School, St Peters Primary School and Mount Carmel RC High School on the local authority housing estate of Ferngore, Accrington. The reported nuisance and crime figures were remaining at or just below average on the County's statistics for this year and it was hoped the progress made last year was still acting as a deterrent. However the change in the weather as the school holidays approached had schools reporting the emergence of the gangs around the schools, which caused staff and parents a heightened degree of intimidation. It was a collective idea from the Head teachers, Parents, and Police to extend the initiative this year, as the proven partnership from last year was a tried and tested formula that reduced and prevented continuing problems. This was very much a community issue and very 'in house' as all victims and offenders were from the estate. From previous results the initiative was sustainable and measurable.

The schools became subject of the targeted patrols. To this, Pc Lawrensen and PC Jeffrey co-ordinated an education package for presentation at the three schools. This included a visit to the Unit, presentations at all 3 schools including ASU capabilities, basic crime prevention measures, education on cost implications of causing damage and identification and prosecution using the Helicopters cameras.

This was backed up with local media coverage at the schools and at the ASU air base. From this publicity, the Local council and County councils commissioned new signs at the Schools and on the Estate. Funds were secured from LANPAC to produce and promote the Poster campaign throughout the County. Close work with the parents and Governors instigated a letter drop throughout the estate and utilised the Neighbourhood Watch scheme specifically for this Operation.

Throughout the designated time frame the Unit carried out targeted patrol flights on 14 occasions. This amounted to a total flying time of 1.35 hours. Incidents at the schools were reported to be 15% lower than 2001, on top of the 42% reduction achieved that year

OPERATION CARETAKER 2002

SCANNING

Across the County, between the months of June, July and August the lighter nights bring juveniles out onto the streets and into the public eye. Dip samples of any evening throughout these months sees upward trends in reported nuisance to the police by residents complaining about unruly, drunken and disrespectful children. Schools experience trespass and damage that budgets just cant cope with. This prompted the introduction of Operation Caretaker in 2001.

In Eastern Division, between June and August 2001, 750 incidents plus of juvenile nuisance were recorded. Concerning specific crimes at schools, 146 offences of damage and burglary were recorded for the same period.

The initiation of Caretaker reduced incidents on Ferngore, Accrington, by 42%, down to 85, recorded incidents on the estate in comparison with the 121 of 2000.

In view of this successful application of Caretaker to the estate at Ferngore Accrington in 2001, a meeting of Head Teachers, local beat officer and the ASU, decided to continue the initiative and try to extend it a little further in 2002.

ANALYSIS

FEATURE OF PLACE:

The local authority estate of Ferngore, Accrington is a relatively under resourced area, being targeted for regeneration. There are 3 schools on the estate. St Oswalds RC Primary School, Hartley Street, St Peters C of E Primary School, Cartmel Avenue, and Mount Carmel RC High School, Wordsworth Road.

The schools are surrounded by housing and act as a magnet to the juveniles for places to congregate out of sight of prying eyes, for elicit drinking, for example, or to run wild in the vast playing field areas. Silent approaches by Police or authorities are impossible without the juveniles being alerted and making good their escape.

VICTIMS

Head teachers
County Council
Local Residents

FEATURES OF OFFENDER/SOURCE OF PROBLEM

The juveniles from the estate are the root cause of the problem. This is very much a community issue and very 'in house' as all victims and offenders are all from the estate and often the same homes.

A lack of recreational facilities doesn't help this issue, and an inherent disregard or appreciation of property and community spirit from the youngsters makes the input through the presentations essential.

RESPONSE

The Partnership Team

Lancashire Constabulary

PC 2218 Lawrensen – Ferngore Beat Officer

PC 6329 Jeffrey – Air Support Unit

Air Support Unit

Head Teachers

Mr Bird – St Peters

Mrs Foredyce – St Oswalds

Miss Ryan – Mount Carmel

Lancashire County Council

LANPAC

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Parents and Local Residents

Operation Caretaker 2002 went County wide on 1st June 2002 with a press release led by the BBC and Granada TV. Most local papers carried the Press release from the Unit on our aims.

Planning for the Initiative at Ferngore began back in April with a series of meetings between Police and the schools to discuss advancement of this years plan. Time scale and dates were put in place to get into the schools.

Aerial photographs were taken and a video was prepared of the 3 schools to demonstrate the capabilities of the camera and in particular to show how identification of alleged offenders could be achieved. It wouldn't hurt to try and create a 'no hiding place' syndrome amongst the children was the general consensus.

PC Lawrensen and PC Jeffrey carried the Presentations out at all 3 schools, taking into account the different age groups involved, jointly. With the pitch and angle altered for the older children, the talks included ASU capabilities, identification and prosecution of offenders using the helicopters cameras, basic crime prevention measures and education

on cost implications of causing damage. Throughout the visits, the officers tried to instil a little pride in the schools and encourage the children to take responsibility for protecting their schools.

The local Press, at the request of the Education Authority, to keep the operation in the forefront of everyone's mind attended these presentations and printed articles emphasising the work being done.

The planned visit to the Unit was a huge success, with all 3 schools arranging competitions to select the representatives to visit.

The letter drop to parents and residents on the Estate was successfully carried out with a positive feedback from all concerned. The neighbourhood watch scheme was extended and briefed fully on the Operation being run at the schools.

The County Council and Local Authority, as promised, replaced and updated signs at the schools and on the estate.

The posters paid for by LANPAC were distributed to the schools and strategically placed on the approaches to the schools.

Throughout the time frame of the project the Air Support Unit used high visibility patrolling of the schools and the estate in order to deter and prevent crime and nuisance previously unmanageable. There were no cost implications, as patrols were included in return transits from other deployments.

This continuance of a successful plan has forged strong and close ties between the local police and the schools, in particular the children. If this can be maintained this initiative will remain sustainable and measurable.

ASSESSMENT

Operation Caretaker resulted in the three schools being the focus of targeted patrolling by the Lancashire Police Helicopter on 14 occasions, between the 1st June and 31st August 2002. This amounted to a total flying time of 1.35 hours.

Incidents recorded throughout this time frame fell from 85 to 72, a 15% reduction on last year's figures.

The hard work put in by all concerned to maintain a united front has worked to make Operation Caretaker at Ferngore, a truly successful community project.

Example

Copy of Paster

Original - A3. Colour and laminated

Courtesy of LANPAC

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