

**Tilley Award 2005**

**Application form**

The following form must be completed in full. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

Please send completed application forms to Tricia Perkins at [patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

All entries must be received by noon on the 29 April 2005. Entries received after that date will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262.

**1. Details of application**

Title of the project  
**“ OPEN ALL HOURS “**

Name of force/agency/CDRP:  
**Lancashire Constabulary**

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s)  
**Julia Hodson**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)  
**Acting Deputy Chief Constable**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)  
**Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters  
PO Box 77  
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## 2. Summary of application

Following relocation of the police station to Town Green Railway Station in the heart of the village, Aughton resident's highlighted issues relating to accessibility. The community wanted to have the Station open on a daily basis, enabling members of the community to report and raise problems regarding local matters and allow them access to the full range of Police services.

A survey identified that the volume of callers could not justify the appointment of a Public Enquiry Assistant. To do nothing was not an option; our analysis indicated we would lose valuable public confidence and satisfaction in the service we provide. Additionally we would miss the opportunity to effectively engage & communicate with the community and be detrimental to the effectiveness of the community beat manager & police community support officer.

The creation of “ **OPEN ALL HOURS** “, a volunteer scheme enabled the station to be open daily providing the service the community desired.

Volunteers were drawn from the local community, (retired persons, working professionals and students) who wished to be part of the scheme.

The volunteers were recruited using local media, engaging all levels of the community, notice boards, shops, polling day, OAP groups/clubs, post offices, Parish council, doctors, dentist, schools, reaching people with a vast range of skills and experience. Once identified they attended informal meetings on issues of expectations of the role, welfare, training, health & safety and the appointment of a volunteer co-ordinator. All were issued with corporate identification.

The initiative was Launched August 2003 through Media (television, papers, Local and national radio).

A general evaluation of "**OPEN ALL HOURS**," has identified that over a 20month period we have established and retained a volunteer base of 26. Aughton police station is open 7 days a week 9am to 8pm, Sat and Sun 10am to 2pm; providing the community with the service they desired. There is a significant increase in Intelligence, reassurance, and community engagement with a reduction in crime and Anti- social behaviour, evidenced through feedback from the local community, Parish council meetings, community groups, schools and police crime recording systems and positive media coverage.

The acceptance of the volunteers by the community has resulted in them being involved in other local initiatives and regular school visits to the station has achieved better community contact with young and old.

Following the launch of the “ **OPEN ALL HOURS**” Lancashire Constabulary has a countywide volunteer scheme.

### 3. Description of project

#### Scanning

The Borough of West Lancashire within the North West area of England is predominantly rural, with the flat landscape devoted to intensive farming. The two principal towns are Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. The 2001 Census states that the population of West Lancashire is 108,378 (43,586 households) and covers 34,688 hectares.

Aughton is an affluent semi rural village located between the market town of Ormskirk and the geographic boundary of Merseyside. The population of Aughton is 9549.

Aughton is easily accessed by the main arterial route, A59, and Merseyrail's Northern line which results in the village being a desirable location for persons working in the city of Liverpool whilst living in a rural situation. The village has grown, particularly over the last twenty years into a thriving community, however it still retains its village centre and sense of community. Residents are predominantly affluent professional people with a high expectation of all public services.

For several years the community had petitioned the police to relocate the old police station that was at that time was 1 mile from the centre of the village to a more central location in the heart of the community. Public expectation was that the station would be open on a day-to-day basis in order to enable all members of the community to access our police services. The stakeholders, Community leaders, and residents groups stated that the relocation would be enhanced if complemented with the return of the village bobby. Both the community and the police recognised that there had been an erosion of community engagement that had directly impacted on reassurance, local intelligence, anti-social behaviour issues, and criminality in the area.

#### Analysis

The issues raised within the community were subsequently evidenced in various ways. These included attendance at the local parish AGM and additional parish council meetings, Community groups, local business, neighbourhood watch, schools and churches.

The property development in the area had by natural progression resulted in the existing police station becoming more isolated being situated on the extremity of the geographic area. This in turn had created a situation whereby local residents felt discouraged to contact their local police station because it was "Too Far Away" and "Never Open."

Police data covered by Crime Recording System, Incident recording system (CRS) logs, which included data of incidents reported in and around the community (specifically the times of incidents), together with other sources of data which were drawn from the Sleuth database were analysed and subsequently highlighted missed opportunities to develop community information and intelligence. ***The Sleuth database package developed by Lancashire Constabulary for tracking police contact with offenders also has a mapping facility (based on recorded offence, time/date and location data) and enables the briefing of police units to tackle specific offenders and tasks.***

In conclusion the analysis served to prove that not only was the police station in the wrong place and therefore to simply move its location would not address all the issues. It was also accepted that to staff the new police station could only be achieved with the local community in partnership with the police.

Utilising the problem solving process and P.A.T. format *{Problem Analysis Triangle}* and after many hours of deliberation it was concluded that the only achievable way to address all the problems which would involve both the police and the community would be the creation of a joint venture in the format of a volunteer scheme.

The introduction of such a scheme would provide the community of Aughton with the service they wanted and create a closer working partnership with their local police, thus resulting in the resolution of local issues in a quicker, effective and more dynamic way.

## **Response**

The first response was to research and locate any other like schemes within the UK that could be used as a foundation. However this proved unsuccessful.

The volunteer scheme was given the title "**OPEN ALL HOURS**".

The POP aimed to identify and recruit members of the local community who wished to be part of a forward thinking group of people. At the time this was considered a revolutionary concept in the way Lancashire Constabulary engaged, involved and communicated with its community.

We then identified areas of personal skills and abilities that we believed would benefit and contribute greatly to the initiative. They should also be people who want to be actively involved in opening of their police station.

We then moved forward to our recruitment phase which was achieved by engaging with the community in various ways this included local media adverts (press) a poster campaign, leaflet drops and actively canvassing persons at locations such as schools, churches, shops, doctors/ dentist surgeries, resident groups, leisure facilities and finally attending local meetings with all community groups. This activity raised the profile of the scheme within the whole community and realised a total of 48 people expressing an interest in becoming involved. Each of these persons was spoken to individually and given an overview of the initiative this then resulted in 30 persons confirming their interest and wanting to take it further.

With agreement of the key stakeholders including the Police Divisional Commander a series of informal meetings were held at the newly opened and relocated police station. This was to profile the role of the volunteer from both the police and community perspective. It also acted as a forum to exchange and share good practice, ideas, concerns and expectations from all sides. It also served to introduce the new police station to community and potential volunteers. As a result of the meetings all 30 confirmed their commitment to the scheme and its aims.

The process of formal application was undertaken over a short period of time and included Police vetting and security checks, health and Safety, basic familiarisation of the station its systems, passes and access codes, keys etc. All 30 candidates were successful such was the calibre of the applicants. The entire process took a period of 6 weeks from promoting the scheme to establishing a volunteer base.

It was agreed by all that the station should be opened immediately and not be delayed by any issues that could not be addressed by training whilst the station was open. The Community Beat Manager, Public Enquiry Assistants and other police officers delivered training. This resulted in the scheme opening on the 1st of August 2003. The "OPEN ALL HOURS" launch generated much media interest resulting in the scheme featuring on the BBCs regional news and radio, local press and radio coverage and most importantly major interest from the community.

From Launch to this date, the police station achieves opening times of Monday - Friday 9am till 8pm / Saturday & Sunday 10am till 2pm. It was the volunteers who decided upon the opening times, which happily far exceeded Police expectation. This immediately allowed the community of Aughton access to the police station and the services it provides. During the initial period of opening it was identified that a need for a volunteer co-ordinator was essential. The volunteers recruited this person from the volunteer base. The co-ordinator acted as a focal point for the volunteers and arranged duties, rotas, training and acted as a liaison between the local officer and the volunteers. This position proved to be invaluable, as without it, the management of the volunteers would have proved difficult and labour intensive for the local officer whose presence was required within the community. As the volunteers became familiar, comfortable and confident in the police environment they in turn identified room for further development within the role that they wished to undertake. These training needs were addressed and delivered.

## **Assessment**

The success of "OPEN ALL HOURS" is not easily measured however if we start with public accessibility to the police station and its services. This can be measured firstly by the relocation of the station to a more central position within the village. Giving the whole Community easy accessibility to the police station and the newly introduced Community Beat Manager who is complemented with a Police and Community Support Officer. The Police Station is now open 7 days a week Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm Saturday to Sunday from 10am to 2pm.

"OPEN ALL HOURS" has allowed the Community Beat Bobby to spend 90% of his working duty out in the community where the public can engage and appraise him of issues that happen on a day to day basis. This has resulted in the Community Beat Officer being able to specifically target and resolve issues within the community that

impact on the quality life of all who live within that Community.

The volunteer scheme has assisted the CBM and PCSO to maintain a high visibility role within the village this has only been achieved and maintained as a result of the initiative; support from the volunteers includes leaflet drops, public consultation, community events such as joint initiative with local schools and Police Emergency services day and other events. The public now visit the station and produce vehicle documentation, reporting of crime, suspicious incidents, lost and found property, directions, local information and as equally as important for a chat which is especially important for Aughtons large elderly community all these things are dealt with by the volunteers and the public have no issues with engaging with the volunteers as they have been accepted as part of the wider policing family. This can be evidenced through standard police recording systems.

This additional communication with the public has resulted in an increase of quality intelligence both in relation to crimes and issues which could impact on the community *{this includes issues of a political, religious and economic nature}* this intelligence now comes via both Volunteers and through greater accessibility to the Community Beat Manager this can be proven through monthly intelligence reports submitted by the CBM.

The station being open within consistent and realistic time scales has now led to greater communication link between the public and the police without the officers having to be present at the police station. This can be proved by documentation collated, showing the number of callers by telephone and in person to the station within the first quarter period this showed some 375 contacts. Pre the scheme this contact was less than 10. Another positive aspect of the scheme in conjunction with its location is that anti-social behaviour and related crime involving juveniles in the locality has been reduced by 18%.

The scheme has now been running for a period of 20 months and has maintained its volunteer base proving longevity and sustainability. The station has now been accepted as an integral and important part of the community and continues to evolve this can be additionally measured by youth, community and school groups visiting the station.