

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

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

Operation Claremont Angels

Name of force/agency/CDRP:

Lancashire Constabulary

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors):

PCSO Andrea Morris

Email address:

Andrea.Morris@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

Full postal address:

**Lancashire Constabulary Western Division
Bonny Street,
Blackpool
FY1 5RL**

Telephone number:

01253 604011

Fax number

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,
Hutton,
Preston,
PR4 5SB**

2. Summary of application

Two years ago Police Community Support Officers Andrea Morris and Katie Pasqualino were posted to Claremont ward, Blackpool. It soon became apparent to them that the local community was disheartened by the police service and that their quality of life was diminished by local children causing problems.

The children predominately caused problems at the St Pauls Worship Centre where they climbed the roof and threw stones and eggs, which disrupted the church service.

The PCSOs quickly realised that the area offered little youth provision and furthermore the officers themselves were subjected to ridicule by the youths. Many incidents remained unreported, as the community had lost faith in their police service.

In order to address these issues the PCSOs decide to work towards diverting children from anti social behaviour. They formed a partnership with Barnardos during the summer of 2003. Together they formulated a programme of activities for the summer holidays utilising Claremont Park. These activities included arts, crafts and outdoor games.

The summer programme was such a success that the PCSOs and Barnardos formed the Kids Club. This operated once a week using the initial victims location – St Pauls Worship Centre. The number of children attending the club increased weekly. Volunteers were recruited from the community to assist with the activities that included inputs from the fire service and road safety.

Barriers have clearly broken down. There is now an active community working closely with the PCSOs. The children now identify with these officers and call them by their christian names. A further club has emerged as the demand has been so high.

The local vicar has said that her church is no longer subjected to anti social behaviour as the children are now welcomed and take part in organised activities.

The PCSOs now run their own surgeries with the children at Claremont Junior School and many of the children confide in the officers.

3. Description of project

Scanning The Problem

The main problem encountered was youths targeting St Pauls Worship Centre, Egerton Rd in Blackpool. St Pauls Worship Centre is situated in an area known as Claremont West.

Not many people realise that one mile north of the famous landmark of Blackpool Tower lies a ward so poor that it falls within the top 10% deprived areas in the country. Its community is made up of a mainly transient population.

The Ward has over 3491 properties of which 401 of these are houses of multiple occupancy. 48% of the community are unemployed, 6% of those have never worked and a massive 44% have no qualifications to their name.

The residents had no faith in the police and all sense of community had been lost. In the words from Jan Shaw, Vicar of St Pauls; *"Why wait 20 minutes on the end of a phone only to be told by a Communications Operator that unfortunately there are no patrols to deploy or the job isn't deemed worthy of a visit."* The problems were therefore left unreported to the police.

Most of the information of youth nuisance came in via key figures within the community. These mainly being the local councillors Ivan and Sylvia Taylor. They both held weekly surgeries on the ward and people dropped in to verbally complain about youth nuisance issues. It would also come to the PCSOs attention via North Shore Area forums and community meetings that there was a lack of youth provisions on the area.

Analysis Identification of the problem

Victim

The PCSOs on the ward were both previously traffic wardens for 14 years and were used to abuse and confrontational situations from members of the public. Two years ago they were among the first six PCSOs to be posted in Western Division.

Many thought their previous role would prepare them for their new job – however this could not of been further from the truth. No one knew who they were or what they did. People seemed to want to ridicule them at every opportunity. It took months to try and break down these barriers but the name calling seemed to follow them everywhere.

Many residents were suffering quality of life issues such as damage to their gardens, been sworn at in the streets and a general lack of respect from the youths congregating in the area.

The vicar Jan Shaw had terrible problems at St Pauls Worship Centre. Youths were constantly throwing eggs at the door and inside the vestry. The parishioners were alarmed and disgusted that this could be happening during a church service and to their church.

The youths were also pulling slates and tiles off the church roof leaving open holes for the rain to pour in.

After regular foot patrol the officers soon identified who the local ringleaders were and the youths responsible for the damage. Again the same problem was apparent. The youths had nothing to do,



nowhere to go and no building that wanted them in.

Location

Many residents felt that the church was the hub of a disheartened community. It is situated in the area that is known as Claremont West. This is a renewal area. The area is in decline but has an increasing amount of regeneration work ongoing.

The Claremont area is made up of rows of terraced houses. There is a labyrinth of rear alleyways, which the youths often use as their concealment or escape routes. The peak times of trouble were identified as being Wednesday afternoon and Sunday morning both peak times for church worship, and after school when the children were on their way home.

When incidents occurred the vicar was lucky to receive a visit from a section patrol let alone their local Community Beat Manager (CBM). There had been no continuity in community policing in the area. Initially one part time CBM officer was in post, and then there was a very quick turnover of CBM staffing. Residents had the opinion that the police did not have any time for them.

Offender

The PCSOs discovered that unfortunately the offender appeared to be the local children. Many of the children come from dysfunctional families, or what we now term as 'blended' families, with parents bringing many step siblings into the house and it is not uncommon to have anything from eight to ten children under the one roof. Essentially this leads to a lack of quality time between parent and individual children.

Many of the children within the community did not have role models. Their brothers and sisters were known to the police and the Youth Offending Team or even the truancy officer. Often the father figure was missing and the children had a rather distorted view of normal family life, or at least normal as society perceives it.

When the new PCSOs first arrived on the Claremont area there were a couple of uniformed groups, such as guides and scouts, but the children that were found to be playing on the streets wouldn't join such groups due to peer pressure from their friends.

There is a park on Claremont but at the time it had extremely dilapidated provisions. Claremont also has a large proportion of latch key kids. They let themselves in and literally wait for a parent or sibling to feed them or put them to bed.

Project Aims and Objectives

From the analysis undertaken a number of project objectives were formulated.

To work with the local community

It was important to embrace the community and approach its members to assist with the PCSOs vision of providing a service to the local community. They wanted to work in harmony to share the same goals and to make sure that all members had shared objectives.

Building Bridges

It was felt that this would be an ideal opportunity to integrate the young and old working together to establish a mutual respect for each other.



Work in partnership

The intention was to encompass members of the community and partners to head in the same direction of addressing youth nuisance.

Increase Trust

The aim was to prove to both the young and old that the PCSOs were approachable, fair and above all committed to the Claremont Community and its needs.

Diversionary Tactics

The idea was to attract the impressionable youngsters with a view to giving them a solid foundation regarding attitudes and beliefs especially in relation to their behaviour.

Involve the children

The aim was to make the children proud of their environment, to take ownership and respect of the church building, surrounding area and above all respect for themselves.

Police Response

It was identified for the initiative to be a success then the residents and partners would have to work together to tackle the issues identified.

Link into Barnardos Activity

Barnardos were doing one session a week of activities on the local park at the time. The PCSOs approached them with a view to holding arts and crafts sessions on the park throughout the summer holidays.

Formed Kids Club at St Pauls Worship Centre

When the summer holidays finished the sessions were so popular and the PCSOs had built up such a good rapport with the local residents and children, that they felt it would be a shame to lose all their hard work. The PCSOs approached Barnardos and the vicar of St Pauls Worship Centre with a view to taking the club in doors for the Winter. They hoped that a multi-agency approach would help this vision to be achieved.

Introduction of a further club

The St Pauls Club has been such a massive success and has impacted on the community to such an extent, that a further club has been formed at the new community centre. This caters for 10 – 13 year olds and follows on from the St Pauls Club which caters for 5 – 9 year olds.

Volunteers from the community

The PCSOs have noticed that the volunteers they have recruited have played a key role to the success of the club. The children have responded to them and the initial vision of young and old working together has been rewarding. The volunteers themselves have formed great friendships and the PCSOs believed this has given them confidence to get involved in further community events.

Engage with vulnerable families

During their tour of duty and through Kids Club the PCSOs have engaged with many vulnerable families. Many have had learning difficulties and life skills issues. When necessary a partnership approach has been taken and families have been referred to relevant agencies.

Junior Police and Communities Together (PACT) meeting

This is a very exciting initiative to emerge from the club. The



PCSOs hold regular surgeries in their local primary school working under the PACT guidelines. This has helped them to win further confidences with local children and key figureheads. Pat Wills, Head Teacher of Claremont Primary School said: *"The children now know the officers by name and vica versa. It has become a warm and comfortable relationship. Junior PACT has been very positive."*

Partner Response

Partner Agencies

Following liaison between the police and the partners the following helped deliver the initiative.

Barnardos – They were a major influence in forming the club and providing activities for the children by working in partnership with the PCSOs. They have also done presentations on Education, Road Awareness and Life Skills to name a few to the children and their parents

Community Voluntary Services – This organisation deserves a mention, as without the loan of their equipment the initial sessions on Claremont Park could not have taken place.

Vicar of St Paul's Worship Centre – as previously mentioned any indoor club could not run without the assistance of the church. Through the generosity of the church the children were able to take ownership of the building that had opened its doors to them

Fire Service – this partner gave a very informative presentation prior to bonfire night. This led to a significant reduction in illegal bonfires in the Claremont ward and the safe use of fireworks during November.

Neighbourhood Watch – the officers identified residents who were interested in forming a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and assisted them with the formation. The residents were then keen to offer assistance with youth activities and events

Assessment

Outcomes

The main aim of the initiative was to reduce youth nuisance. The vicar from St Pauls has reported that the church is no longer targeted and no incidents or graffiti have been reported in the last twelve months. The vicar now has regular contact with the PCSOs and they have formed a strong communicative relationship.

The initiative is ongoing. It is difficult to assess on a quantitative basis due to the fact that at the beginning the police were not capturing the true picture, as residents were not reporting incidents on a day to day basis to police. Therefore there is no accurate baseline of which to compare figures.

Statistics

Statistics available show that juvenile nuisance, incidents and phone calls have been reduced by 41% on the streets around the club on Wednesday afternoons, which was one of their main service times. How accurate this is, is questionable as it has been found by laborious research of street names in the immediate surrounding area.

Increased confidence

PCSOs have worked really hard to break the barriers down and earn



the respect and increase confidence of both figureheads, residents and youths. This was achieved by delivering promises made. The PCSOs are now known to the children and their families by their first names.

Intelligence

Due to the increased confidence in the police service there is now a minimum of two pieces of intelligence inserted on the system led by young people per week.

Members

Due to the expansion of the second club the PCSOs expectations have been exceeded and there is now over 100 members on the register.

Due to the popularity of the club the children have started to feel valued and invest more into the community by helping the PCSOs with various fundraising events.

Positive Feedback

The club speaks for itself with its popularity showing in attendance. The children themselves express a love of games on a one to one and quality time spent with them. They talk openly on a personal level and have all learnt new life skills. Feedback from the parents has been extremely positive and they have recognised a difference in their children's behaviour. One young boy age 11 years said: "*I like coming to St Pauls Church because it stops me getting into trouble. Since coming here I've got more mates and its stopped me from being bad.*"

It has been proven that there has been a significant reduction in referrals to social services.

Members of the community and figureheads all state that there has been a marked improvement in the behaviour of local youths who attend the club. PCSOs sit on many community led meetings and their feedback is extremely positive. Even those who initially doubted the venture have now come round.

Evaluation

When the PCSOs first arrived on the Claremont Ward they had to find their community. They found that the community spirit had died. The main issue was previously promises had been made and quickly broken. Residents thought the PCSOs were going to be miracle workers with police powers and they thought they would be able to rid their area of all its problems. They perceived them to be super cops, which obviously they were not.

Figureheads of all local communities felt it was a competition to gain local residents respect against the PCSOs. Instead of working together as they had initially hoped for, they seemed to be working in opposite directions and achieving nothing. The figureheads thought the PCSOs should be arresting the children not working with them. At every opportunity the figureheads wanted clarification of their role and remit.

Lack of recording instances

It is difficult to measure the success of this initiative, as the recording system does not reflect the overall aim (which has since been proven with the NSIR project), which was to reduce youth nuisance incidents therefore improving quality of life issues. Two years ago the PCSOs did not have the community engagement that they have now, e.g. Police and Communities Together (PACT), Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, Residents Association

Apathy



Two years ago Claremont was in decline, going nowhere and achieving nothing. People did not interact with their neighbours – let alone the community as a whole. By slowly breaking down the barriers and instigating many community events faith and friendship was restored. Very slowly the Claremont area is becoming a safer and friendlier place to live. Volunteers have been recruited not only for the kids club but Neighbourhood Watch Schemes as well. The new community café, opened at St Pauls Worship Centre two years ago, has reached the vulnerable members of the community. There is also a new community centre, which has encouraged adult learning and self-motivation. Jan Shaw, Vicar of St Pauls said:

“When I arrived at St Pauls 4 years ago there was little going on and we suffered a lot from vandalism. The Kids Club is a valuable learning experience and it teaches them about respect and caring and working together as a team.”

What next?

As this is an ongoing initiative the plan is to train and further develop the volunteers, which will enable the activity group to become self-financing. The PCSOs plan to continue working in partnership to increase provisions for young people on the ward. Through continuous development with the community they will develop more links with the youths on the area and endeavour to divert young people from acts of anti-social behaviour.

