



Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2007

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. ***By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.*** Please complete the following form in full, **within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB.** Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should **be e-mailed to tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project: **Corporation Avenue Alley Reclaim scheme**

Name of force/agency/CDRP/**CSP**: **Hounslow Police Borough Operational Command Unit**

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors): **Police Sergeant Rob Bryan (Hounslow West Safer Neighbourhood Team)**

Email address: **Robert.Bryan@met.police.uk**

Full postal address: **Hounslow Police Station, 5 Montague Road, Hounslow, TW3 1LB**

Telephone number: **02082476189**

Fax number: **02082476666**

If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc:

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Superintendent Simon Phipps**

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Metropolitan Police Service – Hounslow, Community and Partnership**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Hounslow Police Station, 5 Montague Road, Hounslow, TW3 1LB**

Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):



In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).

Corporation Avenue Alley Reclaim Scheme – Summary Report

Problem

This report summarises a problem-solving project designed to tackle anti-social and criminal behaviour in alleyways leading off Corporation Avenue, Dukes Avenue and Charter Crescent.

Residents had been suffering from criminal behaviour in their alleys and as a consequence they had withdrawn from using the alleys leading them to become run down. This in turn was leading to further misuse by undesirables.

The complaints raised by the residents created a demand on:

Hounslow West Safer Neighbourhood Team (Police), Hounslow Homes (Housing), London Borough of Hounslow (Local Authority).

Solutions to these complaints created a demand on:

Residents Association, Groundwork Thames Valley (Regeneration Charity), CIP (Local Authority wardens), Street Management (Local Authority), TFL (Transport for London).

The residents and partners agreed upon a goal: Reclaim the alleys from the lawless minority, and in doing so reduce burglary by 70% in twelve months (a target set by residents as achievable after reviewing Home Office statistics).

Research / Analysis

The partners started off by considering:

- What did the police think was going on?
- What did the residents know was really going on?

From this starting point, their research identified a location (the alleys) that was acting as a magnet to the following crimes:

- Residential burglaries.
- Graffiti and criminal damage.
- Drug misuse.
- Prostitution.
- Fly-tipping.
- Anti-social behaviour by loitering youths.

The analysis concluded that residents were scared to use their own alleyways thus leading to their current misuse.

Response

The local police team held a public meeting with the residents and a number of interventions were identified to reclaim the alleys:

- Formation of a Residents Association.
- Formation of an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme.
- Reassurance Letter Drops.
- Targeted enforcements of identified wrongdoers.
- Increased police presence.
- Positive media policy.
- Clean-Up Day.
- Alley-gate scheme.

These responses were about making the residents feel safe in their alleys, and not simply an alley-gate scheme. Gating was one option that was utilised to change the mindset of the community.

Evaluation

A review of the success measures revealed:

Burglary was reduced by 74% in twelve months (target 70%).

Problems of anti-social behaviour decreased by 76% in six months (target 50%).

Public feelings of safety in the alleyways increased by 40% in six months (Target 50%).

Section 3: Description of project

Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information *in particular Section 7 - judging criteria*).

Corporation Avenue Alley Reclaim Scheme

For years the alleyways connecting Corporation Avenue, Charter Crescent and Dukes Avenue had been unused by residents due to feelings of fear towards the alleyways. How this fear started is not documented. These unused areas were subsequently taken over by a group of local youths who gathered there. This increased resident's fear of the area further. Calls to police were infrequent, and rarely dealt with. Most of the time, residents failed to report wrongdoing, and grew to live with the situation. Police were unaware of any large-scale problems.

Matters came to a head in early 2006. The Corporation Avenue area is next to another small estate (Tivoli Road estate). Residents of this estate had been working with the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to deal with the issue of youths causing anti-social behaviour (ASB). Between September 2005 and March 2006, this had culminated in a dispersal zone being implemented in Tivoli Road. The power was an apparent success, with youths moving away from the estate. During this initiative, police had not investigated where the youths had been dispersed to, and a lack of complaints from surrounding areas (including Corporation Avenue) led them to believe the problem had been resolved. Because of this, the power was not renewed.

The withdrawal of this power led to increased worry by the Tivoli Road residents. Also, graffiti in the area increased massively. The SNT began a Problem-Solving Process to target this concern. Whilst undertaking an Environmental Visual Audit (EVA) of the location they came into close contact with the residents of the Corporation Avenue area and the true scale of their problems became clear.

A public meeting was held, and police reviewed crime statistics for the area. An identified problem was that residents were under reporting incidents of crime and disorder, and police had failed to identify patterns of crime developing in the area. The following is a brief breakdown of information established at that meeting or following it:

The alleys affected 169 houses.

- 50 in Corporation Avenue
- 42 in Charter Crescent
- 33 in Dukes Avenue
- 17 in Martindale Road (221-249)
- 27 in Barrack Road (52-104)

In a 15-month period, the following crimes in that area were reported to police.

- 29 burglaries (in all 29 offences, entry was gained via the rear alleys)
- 8 break-ins or damage to cars
- 7 persons charged with drug possession
- 8 incidents of violence / disorder leading to police intervention
- 4 robberies

During an EVA of the alleys, the following levels of unreported incidents were recorded.

- Over 300 instances of graffiti
- Over 550 instances of litter
- Over 100 instances of fly-tipping

Through surveys residents also raised other concerns.

- Two instances of prostitution or illicit sex in the alleys (anecdotal)
- Instances of youths loitering in alleyways (all unreported or unrecorded)
- 34 out of 36 respondents felt unsafe in the alleys

The major concern of the residents was: **Our alleys are being used for illegal and anti-social purposes.** This impacted on other groups:

Hounslow West Safer Neighbourhood Team – now fully aware of the problem, the residents expected the SNT to stop the crime and disorder. The residents believed the problems had increased recently due to displacement from the dispersal zone, which had been put in place by the police, so they were deemed partly responsible for the current issues and capable of solving the problem.

The SNT created a problem-solving project involving the residents and partners with the aim of reclaiming the alleys.

Hounslow Homes (Housing) – only owning a handful of houses in the area, they still had a historical responsibility for the alleyways. They were receiving calls from residents asking for the alleys to be kept clean, but were unsure of their current responsibilities due to many houses being bought privately.

London Borough of Hounslow – the local authority had been receiving complaints about rats in the alleys due to rubbish being dumped. Their response was to pass the matter to Hounslow Homes who they believed had responsibility for the alleys.

As part of an initial response, other partners were impacted upon:

CIP (Park Wardens), Transport for London and British Transport Police, Hounslow Council Street Management Department and Groundwork Thames Valley (Regeneration Charity).

First public consultation (April 2006)

The SNT and about 100 residents attended this meeting. At this meeting the police were made aware of the true extent of crime and disorder in the alleys.

The meeting came to the conclusion that the joint goal was: **Reclaim the alleys from the lawless minority.**

A four-stage plan was agreed upon:

- A. Community Cohesion.
- B. Police intervention.
- C. Clean Up.
- D. Reclaim.

The primary success measure was agreed upon:

Reduce burglary by 70% in twelve months (A target set by residents after analysing Home Office statistics relating to the success of alley gates).

Further secondary success measures were also established:

Reduce anti-social behaviour in the alleyways by 50% in six months (As well as crime, youth disorder in the alley was high on the agenda).

Increase public feelings of safety in the alleyways by 50% in six months (It was agreed that there was no point in reducing crime if the alleys were not considered safe again).

The first goal would be measured via reported crime statistics for the local area and the last two goals would be measured by satisfaction surveys.

What did the police think was going on?

Victim: The SNT had been working on the ward for two years. In that time, they had targeted immediate areas of concern, which did not include the Corporation Avenue area. They had no idea that the area was suffering ASB due to a lack of reporting and a lack of meaningful contact by the local police. The police profile of victims in this area was no different to any other area.

Offender: The SNT was aware of one youth who lived in the area, and had dealt with him previously for ASB. Most police interactions with him had taken place in Tivoli Road, so his actions were never tied back to the Corporation Avenue area.

Location: The local police patrolled the alleys on an ad hoc basis. The alleys were overgrown and full of rubbish. There was no evidence that the alleys were being used, in fact one three-way alley was completely blocked with fly-tipped waste to such an extent that the SNT were unaware that they actually joined.

What did the residents know was really going on?

Victim: Whilst the residents later formed a strong and effective community, at the initial stages they were fragmented. They reported crimes that involved break-in to their houses or cars. However, many of the residents had also been subject to shed break-ins and damage to garden furniture, and these had all gone unreported. (In a later survey, 9 people out of 36 respondents said they had been a victim of crime in their house but had not reported it). Generally, they felt resigned to the fact that undesirable elements would gather in the alleys and this would inevitably lead to damage to their property. They did not believe police would have a solution to their problems, so had stopped reporting these instances.

Offender: Residents felt that two youths who lived in the area, along with a small gang were responsible for the current terror felt by them. One youth was known to police already. The other was not. Residents suspected that these youths and their gang were responsible for the graffiti and damage in the alleys (this was anecdotal). They also stated that some residents lived in fear of these youths to the extent that they would not contact police for fear of reprisals.

Location: A few residents were still making some use of the alleys during the days mainly to walk dogs. Only a small minority made any effort to clean the alleys, and this only extended to areas directly behind their own properties. During a later survey, 34 out of 36 respondents felt unsafe in the alleys.

The Information Gap.

After initial contact with the residents, it became clear to the local police that there was a big information gap. The SNT had neglected the area with patrols and had made little effort to engage the community due to other perceived greater concerns elsewhere and this had fed into the cycle of non-reporting.

To close this gap, research and analysis was carried out:

Hounslow West Safer Neighbourhood Team –

- Interrogation of the criminal intelligence system (CRIMINT)
- Interrogation of the Crime Reporting statistics (CRIS)
- Completing EVAs
- Undertaking residents surveys
- Letter Drop campaign

Residents Committee –

- Gathering of crime fear / alley gate petition
- Holding public consultation meetings

Hounslow Homes –

- Regular walk-around of alleys

Analysis

The Hounslow Police analyst and the SNT first looked at the crime and disorder issues raised by the residents:

Residential Burglary – In a 15-month period between 1.1.05 and 31.3.06 there were 29 burglaries reported to police. Analysis of these crimes showed 100% involved entry via the rear alleys.

The figures were broken down into two six-month periods up to 31.3.06.

Number of Residential Burglaries committed:

Date Range	Corporation Ave area	Hounslow West Ward	Hounslow Borough
1.4.05 - 30.9.05	10	46	844
1.10.05 - 31.3.06	13	61	999
1.4.05 - 31.3.06 (Total)	23	107	1843

Burglaries per 1000 Population:

Date Range	Corporation Ave area	Hounslow West Ward	Hounslow Borough
1.4.05 - 30.9.05	17.8	4.4	3.9
1.10.05 - 31.3.06	23.2	5.9	4.7

Seasonality in crime suggests burglaries increase during winter months, which is reflected across the board in these statistics.

The MPS had only just started to use per 1000 statistics. Reviewing September 2006 figures, residential burglary in the MPS was 8.5 per 1000 and residential burglary in Hounslow Borough was 8.4 per 1000. Clearly at a variance with the above statistics and again suggesting that not too much weight should be placed on the Per 1000 results.

The analysis, even if inaccurate, showed that levels of burglary via the rear alleys were unacceptably high.

Graffiti and criminal damage - In a 15-month period between 1.1.05 and 31.3.06 there were 8 reported instances of damage to cars or properties. Graffiti was not reported to police. In July the SNT undertook an EVA listing all instances of graffiti, littering and fly-tipping. 316 separate instances of graffiti were identified.

Drug misuse - In a 15-month period between 1.1.05 and 31.3.06 police dealt with 7 people for drug possession in the alleyways. This number establishes the existence of drug misuse but also demonstrated that police interventions were few and far between.

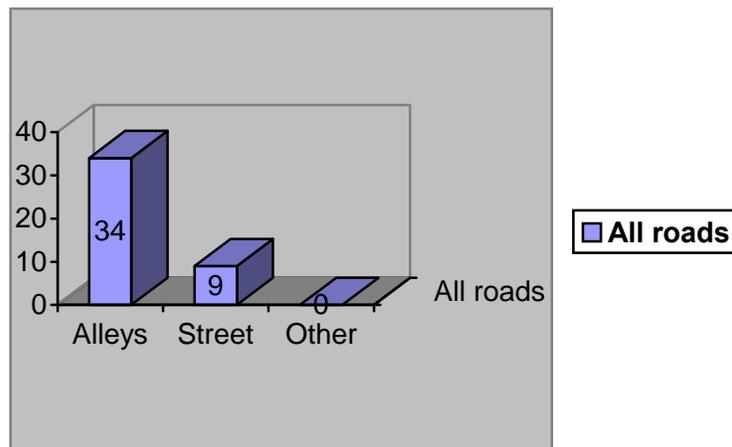
Prostitution – During public consultation with the residents, anecdotal evidence of prostitution in the alleys was raised. When further questioned, residents could only recall two specific instances. A used condom was found in a back garden in one instance. Systematic use of the alleys by prostitutes was not uncovered, and no evidence of sexual intercourse was discovered during the EVA.

Fly tipping – Hounslow Council could provide no instances where fly tipping had been reported to them in 2005. Analysis of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system by police also showed no reported incidents of fly tipping in the 15-month period between 1.1.05 and 31.3.06. However, during the EVA, over 550 pieces of litter were found in the alleys, and 106 separate piles of fly tipped waste were identified.

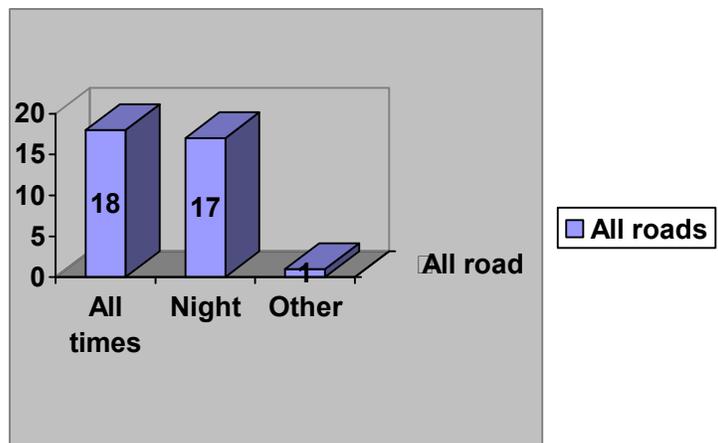
Youth anti-social behaviour – The SNT had established that the alleys had been under policed and that residents were under-reporting so it was decided not to spend time analysing reported cases of ASB. It was also agreed with the residents that ASB was a subjective view and hard to quantify. It was agreed that ASB impacted on levels of fear, so a survey was undertaken in July to identify how high levels of fear were.

42 random households were asked to complete a survey about crime and fear of crime in the area. 36 respondents replied. The analysis of their replies to several questions demonstrated very high levels of fear.

They were asked: “Where do you feel unsafe?” 34 out of 36 replies stated they felt unsafe in the alleys.



They were asked: "When do you feel unsafe?" 18 out of 36 replies stated they felt unsafe both day and night.



Responses

Within the 4-point plan (**A**. Community Cohesion, **B**. Police Intervention, **C**. Clean Up and **D**. Reclaim) a number of responses were undertaken to reclaim the alleys.

Residents Association / Neighbourhood Watch (**A**) – The residents identified that without a cohesive community, positive action to reclaim the alleys would be hard. Several vocal members set up a Residents Association for the Corporation Avenue area. Residents flocked to this group very quickly, which led to the formation of a separate Neighbourhood Watch scheme in each road affected by the alleys (six in total). The Police Borough Liaison Officer pushed through council permission for NHW signs to be erected in the area, and this led to people getting to know their neighbours and feeling safer in their homes.

Street Surgery (**A**) – The Community Bus was parked in the area, and police presence there was widely circulated. Local councillors and representatives from Hounslow Homes attended to hear the concerns of the residents. Sixty residents turned out to explain why they felt unsafe in their alleys. This powerful message meant partners remained focused on the need to resolve the problem.

Youth Engagement (**A**, **B**) – To ensure the local youths were aware of the changes, and able to make informed decisions about their future contact, the local police began to stop and chat with them on a regular basis. They were educated about how residents were fearful of people gathering in the alleys, and were told that action would be taken against those who didn't moderate their behaviour.

During a planned Clean Up Day all local children were invited to take part. The Local Authority provided t-shirts for them, and they were encouraged to be part of the larger reclaim project.

Groundwork Thames Valley, a local regeneration charity, also ensured that children engaging in the change process were also included in consultation about future youth projects. For example, where to site a new local public football pitch.

Graffiti Database (**B**) – To collate evidence about graffiti tags the SNT, British Transport Police and Transport for London worked together to devise a database of the local tags that was then cross-referenced with the London-wide database.

Graffiti / Burglary Enforcement (**B**) – To stop further graffiti, it was considered appropriate to target offenders and use the criminal justice system to punish their behaviour. Other agencies were asked to assist in the gathering of evidence. Hounslow Homes and CIP wardens (Park Wardens) were asked to identify new graffiti and offenders. CIP were able to identify a member of the public who had video evidence of a crime in progress and Hounslow Homes wardens were able to name several other suspects. Targeted arrests of four named suspects for graffiti were made. All were dealt with through charges or reprimands. As part of the process, the Youth Offending Team involved the youths in restorative justice. This involved painting walls that had been covered in graffiti. As most graffiti artists are young, this enforcement tactic had the advantage of disrupting youth disorder at the same time.

It was clear that burglary was a serious concern. The SNT analysed movements of local persons with burglary convictions, and monitored all local break-ins for forensic evidence. The SOCO was able to obtain a DNA sample from a burglary in Hounslow West that matched one of the persons being monitored. A pre-planned police operation was executed, and two men were arrested and charged for a number of burglaries in the Hounslow West area. This led to an immediate, and so far, long lasting reduction in burglaries.

High Visibility Patrols (**B**) – A simple but effective tool to reduce the fear of crime was to ensure police patrolled the alleys frequently. Hounslow Homes wardens, who patrolled the nearby Tivoli estate, amended their patrol strategy to include the alleys. Part of the project was also to include the local media at every step so that if residents didn't see police in the alleys, they were at least made aware of it via the local paper.

Letter Drops (**A, B**) –The local police became aware that some residents were subject to ongoing harassment by youths but were too scared to report it. To increase reassurance and seek out these victims, the police letter dropped targeted areas. This gave a clear message to both victims and suspects that ongoing ASB would not be tolerated, and reported crime would be dealt with vigorously. Immediate results were forthcoming, with two hard-to-reach victims coming forward and reporting crime (in one case, lasting over a period of several years). Police took action against the two offenders, who were the local ringleaders of the youth gang, both being arrested and dealt with for a number of racially aggravated offences. The youths were subsequently moved out of the area by their families to make a fresh start.

Clean Up Day (**C, D**) – The SNT, local residents and Groundwork Charity organised a clean up of the alleys which involved many partners. Street Management provided skips and other equipment, and soldiers from the local barracks were asked to come and help. Everyone got stuck in and several tons of rubbish from the alleys was removed. This event demonstrated the willingness of residents to take an active part in reclaiming the alleys, and not just leaving it as a problem for partner agencies to solve.

Alley Gate Project (**D**) – It was always acknowledged that it would take small steps to slowly reclaim the alleys for the residents. However, it was also realised that a final goal was necessary, as a motivator and reassurance tool. Alley gating was chosen as this goal. The SNT used Home Office statistics from previous schemes to present a case to Hounslow Homes and the Local Authority. In parallel, the Residents Association put a 143 signatory petition together to highlight their enthusiasm for the project. This was sent to key opinion makers and purse string holders. Together, this approach rose funding of £31,000 from Hounslow Homes and Hounslow Council. The local police and Groundwork charity also added funding of £4,000 and £1,500 respectively, thereby ensuring sufficient monies for the alley gates to proceed.

The gates were finally erected in April 2007. This end result will have a reassurance effect and act as a physical barrier to future crime and disorder. However, it must still be considered in perspective with all the other interventions that have had the real effect on disorder in the area.

Process Evaluation

The Reclaim Project ran to schedule with effective progression steps being made throughout. The measures implemented during the first six months worked well with partner agencies and residents playing their part.

The main obstacle was funding for the alley gates. When this was set as a final goal to aim towards, some residents saw it as the only goal. This put pressure on police to obtain a quick result as they were chasing a "Reassurance Target". Hounslow Homes, who took the lead on alley gating, were also required to fund most of it but were reticent to proceed in an area where they owned so few homes. This caused tension between the agency and the Residents Association.

The SNT acted as mediators between the two groups, but with an underlying bias, as gates would help their end results too. It is correct to acknowledge now that the SNT aided the residents whilst also acting as a neutral party to Hounslow Homes.

Outcome Evaluation

Whereas some observers would see the gates as the aim of this project, it never truly was. Short timescales for change meant that every intervention during this project was as valuable as the next.

The first change to come about was increased community cohesion. However, this is a difficult outcome to quantify but a letter of praise received by the local police from the Residents Association gave anecdotal evidence of

increased neighbourly bonds.

Challenging quantifiable targets were set at the beginning of the project to ensure visible change occurred over a short period of time:

Burglary Reduction – a reduction target of **70%** was set for the period of 1.4.06 to 31.3.07 against the preceding twelve months. During the project period, there were 6 burglaries in the Corporation Avenue area. This achieves a reduction of 74%.

The target of 70% was set based on statistics from other areas where alley gates schemes were in place. To achieve this target prior to the gates going in is a resounding success.

Date	1.4.06 - 31.3.07	1.4.05 - 31.3.06
Res. Burglaries	6	23

Reduce ASB in the alleyways – reducing anti-social incidents by **50%** in six months was set as a target. To determine this result, in October a satisfaction survey was completed by 50 residents. They were asked: 1. How big a problem was ASB in the alleys six months ago? 2. How big a problem is ASB in the alleys now?

Problems of anti-social behaviour in alleys

	Six months ago	Now
Very large	68%	12%
Fairly large	28%	8%
No strong feelings	4%	14%
Fairly small	0%	42%
Very small	0%	24%

The survey showed that 96% of respondents felt there was a large problem with ASB six months ago. This has reduced to 20% who felt a large problem persisted, a reduction of **76%**.

Feelings of safety in the alleys - an increase of **50%** in feelings of safety was set as a target. To determine this result, the same survey was utilised. The residents were asked: 1. How safe did you feel in the alleys six months ago? 2. How safe do you feel in the alleys now?

How safe do you feel in alleys?

	Six months ago	Now
Very safe	0%	12%
Fairly safe	8%	28%
Neutral	16%	24%
Fairly unsafe	10%	8%
Very unsafe	66%	28%

This survey shows that 76% of respondents felt unsafe to some degree six months ago. This has been reduced to 36% feeling unsafe now, an increase in feelings of safety of **40%**.

On the surface, these outcomes look positive, with large reductions in burglaries and anti-social behaviour. But is there evidence that the alley reclaim scheme produced these changes? Because of the work done to encourage crime reporting such as letter drops, we believe we now have an accurate picture of crime in the area. The fact that burglary has reduced, whilst other reported crimes have increased does suggest that interventions have increased the residents willingness to report offences whilst having a positive impact on crimes (residential burglary) committed directly from the alleys. If the reclaim scheme was not responsible for these changes, then trends should be in the same direction across the board of offences.

Finally, a positive side effect has occurred because of this alley reclaim scheme. Hounslow Homes have come to appreciate the effects alley gates have on the estates they maintain and have funded gating on the neighbouring Tivoli Road estate. By undertaking this work, the cycle of displacement will be stopped for good.

Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative

Please insert letter from endorsing representative:

I commend the Corporation Avenue Alley Reclaim Scheme for the Tilley Awards 2007. This project has made a real improvement to the quality of life in the area and a general feeling of public safety. It has resulted in a reduction in anti-social behaviour, burglary and an improvement in the general appearance of the area.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team worked in partnership with residents and the local authority and generated a general feeling of pride in what they were all doing. This has since led to many local residents volunteering to help in rubbish and graffiti clean-up operations in what used to be a fairly run down area.

The project has reduced crime, improved a feeling of safety and promoted community cohesion. In Hounslow it has brought a community closer together for a common purpose. The Corporation Avenue Alley Reclaim Scheme has shown local people just how much can be achieved by working together.

Simon Phipps
Superintendent

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved you application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please **email it to Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.