



## Home Office

### Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

#### Tilley Awards 2008 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 [tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008**. 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.

#### **Section A: Application basics**

1. Title of the project: **Operation Abingdon**
2. Key issue that the project is addressing e.g. Alcohol related violence: **Alcohol related violence**

#### **Author contact details**

3. Name of application author: Police Sergeant Richard Hurt
4. Organisation submitting the application: Lancashire Police
5. Full postal address: OSS Dept, Lancashire Police Headquarters, Saunders Lane, Hutton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 5SB
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7. Telephone number: 01772 410558

#### **Secondary project contact details**

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Detective Chief Inspector Tim Leeson
9. Secondary contact email address: tim.leeson@lancashire.pnn.police.uk
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01772 209071

**Endorsing representative contact details**

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation: Supt Peter O'Dwyer

12. Endorsing representative's email address: Peter.O'Dwyer@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government your organisation is covered by e.g. GO East Midlands: Government Office North West

**14. Please mark this box with an X 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):

**Section B: Summary of application - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).***

**Scanning:**

Alcohol plays an important part in today's society and in the economy of most towns and cities throughout the UK. Alcohol is used recreationally by a large proportion (90%) of the adult population.

There is however a significant downside to excessive alcohol consumption, not only through the impact it has upon the health service but also in relation to the theft of property, physical assaults and criminal damage.

Lancashire Constabulary's Western Division (Blackpool and The Fylde Coast) and the Queen Street area of the town centre is a hot spot area for such incidents, which are centered around the late night economy.

**Analysis:**

In 2005 and 2006, the main centre for crime and disorder centered on the Walkabout Bar which is owned and operated by Regent Inns PLC. The premises were specifically designed and marketed to target the 18 - 24 year old age group that have a reputation of drinking to excess and becoming involved in criminal activity. At night the music played in the venue is extremely loud and patrons are encouraged to stand and purchase large amounts of alcohol.

Between 23/11/05 and 07/11/06 it accounted for over 1.2% of all violent crime within the division (which equated to 65 violent crimes). This figure is approx 5 times higher than the next most prolific premise in the town of a similar size.

**Response:**

Local engagement with the licence holder and staff was positive, but changing the premises operating practices and design was difficult due to pressure from the National perspective. As the premises formed part of a national brand they had to follow ideas by set by senior management.

- Covert visits to the premises to gather evidence of licensing breaches and other offences.
- Engagement with senior management from Regent Inns.
- Co-operation from partner agencies including Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Blackpool Borough Council Licensing Department, Health and Safety, Immigration Dept.
- Collating crime statistics and evidence in relation to behaviour of door staff and management when dealing with problems inside.
- Increase number of pro-active high profile Police visits to premises.
- Submission of premises licence review to Blackpool Borough Council

Operation Abingdon

**Assessment:**

Crime figures from 2006 and 2007 results obtained –

	<u>01/01/06 to 31/12/06</u>	<u>01/01/07 to 31/12/07</u>	Increase / Decrease
All Crimes	159	66	<b>-58%</b>
Violent Crimes	82	28	<b>- 66%</b>
Thefts	71	28	<b>- 60%</b>
Incidents attended	362	185	<b>- 49%</b>

**State number of words: 397**

**Section C: Description of project - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.**

**Scanning:**

**Nationally:**

Alcohol plays an important part in UK culture, with approx 90% of the adult population consuming it. Revenue generated through alcohol sales is currently estimated to generate approx £7 billion pounds.

The majority of people that consume alcohol do so responsibly. However, there are a growing number of people who drink alcohol to excess and regularly consume it to such an extent that they put themselves at significant risk or danger or put other people in danger of being subject to physical assaults.

Estimates put the cost to the UK economy at approx £20 billion pounds to deal with the issues generated through excessive alcohol consumption.

**Locally:**

Blackpool is the UK's largest holiday destination, attracting approximately 11 million visitors a year. Within Blackpool Policing district, there are approx 3500 licensed premises catering for visitors to the town, including the many hen and stag parties.

Within the town centre of Blackpool, there are approximately 100 premises which can cater for 60,000 people at any one time. The majority consume alcohol stood up (VDS – Vertical Drinking Spaces), which research has indicated increases the 'round culture' and quantity and speed of alcohol consumed.

Competition between the drinks companies is fierce as most try to target the same group of people through aggressive marketing and offers such as drink discounting. The specific groups targeted are aged between 18 and 24 years old, who have considerable disposable income.

Research of the crime data base within Lancashire has identified that this age group are both the main offenders and aggrieved parties to crime; although the public perception (taken during surveys both locally and regionally) indicates that the fear of crime is more prolific in the older population.

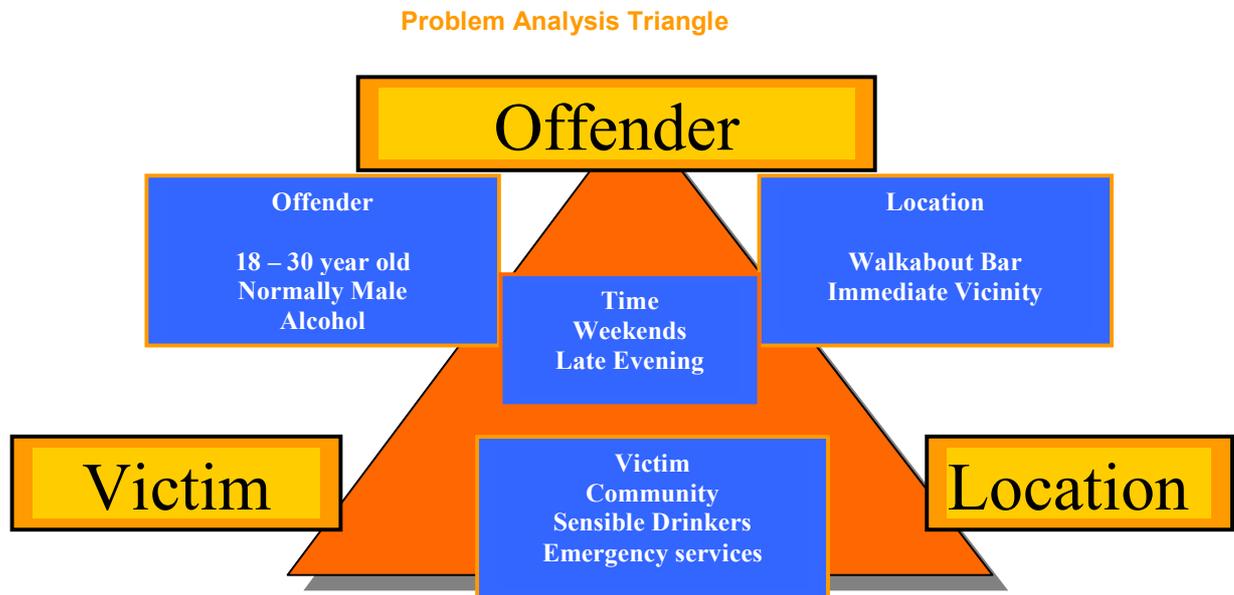
Research conducted by the Police (operational activity) and other partner agencies indicated that a venue called 'The Walkabout' was responsible for a large amount of incidents and crimes.

Concerns were also highlighted by the local Community Safety Partnership (CDRP) who identified the premises as posing a significant drain on both the Police and Local Authority resources. They also indicated that crime generated from the premises was having a significant impact on the town's PSA1 crime figures.

Issues were also raised through local shop watches and town centre BID offices (Business Improvement Districts). These centered over the amount of problems they faced when opening their own premises the next day i.e. urine in shops, criminal damage and litter.

The area is mainly commercial and none residential. Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT), through PACT (Police and Communities Together meetings) also received feedback from other agencies i.e. taxi operators that the premises were having a detrimental impact upon the town's reputation due to the behavior of the customers and staff.

**Analysis:**



Experience of people frequenting these premises and through enquiries using both crime and incident data collected by the Police, revealed that both local residents and visitors to the town were both victims and offenders of criminal activity both within and in the immediate vicinity of the premises.

This therefore provided a clear steer to the Police that by looking closely at the premises and its location could help in reducing the criminal activity.

**Data collection**

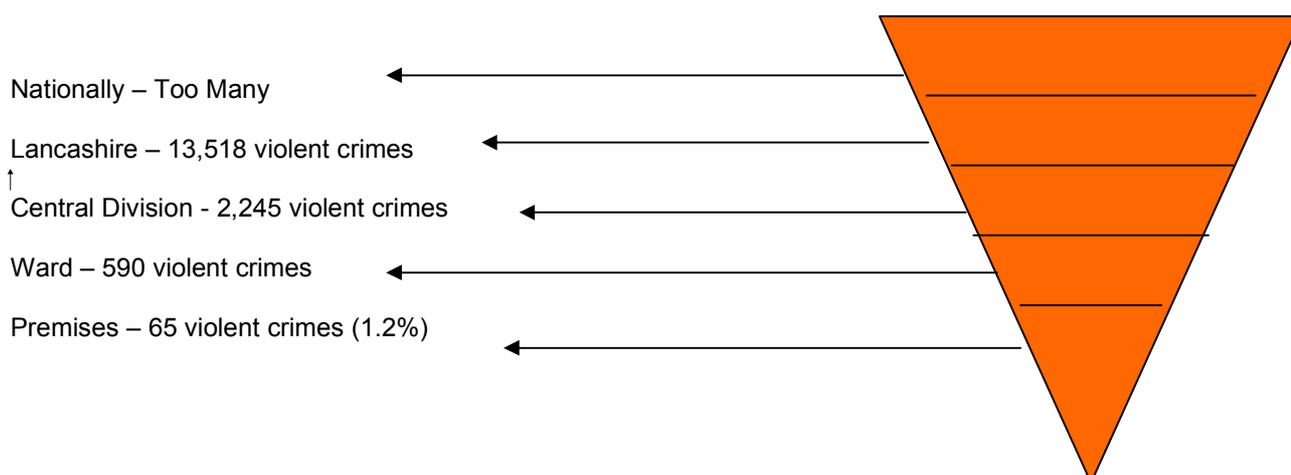
All data used was obtained from Lancashire Constabulary's crime database. Whilst most of the data used during the research was using a full 12 month data set, some as below was taken from other reports and did not use a full 12 month.

The following illustrates the level of problem at the premises and was taken from an analytical report produced by Lancashire Constabulary specifically looking at the impact of crime at the Walkabout:

***Over the last year (between 23/11/2005 and 07/11/2006) there have been 2,245 violent offences reported on Central section. 407 of these offences (18%) have a licensed premises recorded as the offence location***

***Of these 407 'licensed premises' offences, 80 have the Walkabout bar on Queen Street recorded as the offence location. A closer look at these offences shows that 15 of these offences simply happened outside the premises and had nothing to do with either the staff of Walkabout, or the customers of the bar. This means that there have been 65 violent crime offences between 23/11/2005 and 07/11/2006 whereby staff and/or customers of Walkabout were involved.***

**Figures based on 23/11/05 to 07/11/06 (using Lancashire Constabulary Crime Data)**



**Results from Analysis**

Data from the Polices crime recoding system - 65 violent crime offences have been recorded as occurring within Walkabout between 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006. These breakdown as follows:

**Table 1: Violent offences in Walkabout (23/11/05 – 07/11/06) – Breakdown by category**

Home Office Class	No. Of Offences	Percentage (%)
Other Wounding	38	58
Harassment	16	25
Common Assault	11	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost 60% of violent offences have been 'Other Wounding' offences, which means the aggrieved has received some kind of physical injury.

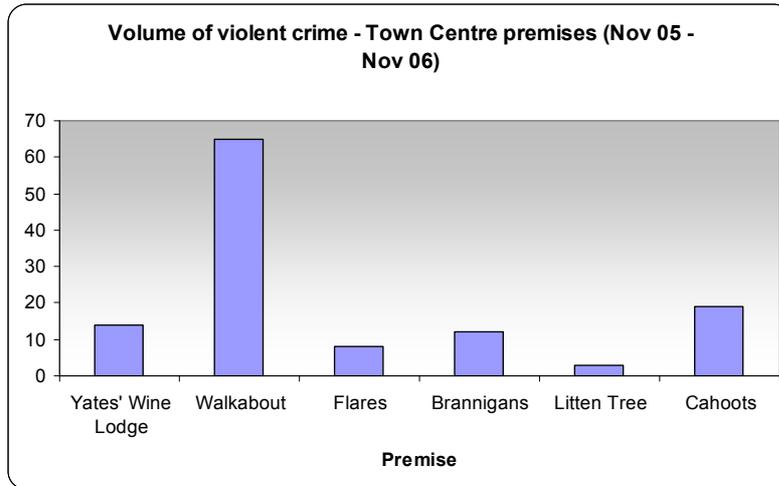
Majority of offences (n=38, 58%) involved the offender hitting, punching, slapping or head-butting the aggrieved. There were also 10 offences (15%) whereby the aggrieved was hit over the head or in the face with a glass bottle or pint glass. Glass related injuries (non crime related was also seen as an issue within the premises as people attending the local hospitals were reporting that they had either stood on or fallen on broken glass. No numerical data is available as the Primary Car Trust does not record specific details.

Figures indicate that at least 46% (30 crimes) were committed whilst one or both parties were intoxicated. A closer look at the remaining 35 offences shows that the violence in many cases has come about because the offender had been or was in the process of, being ejected – it is likely the offenders were being ejected for rowdy and/or drunken behavior.

**Other Licensed Premises in the area**

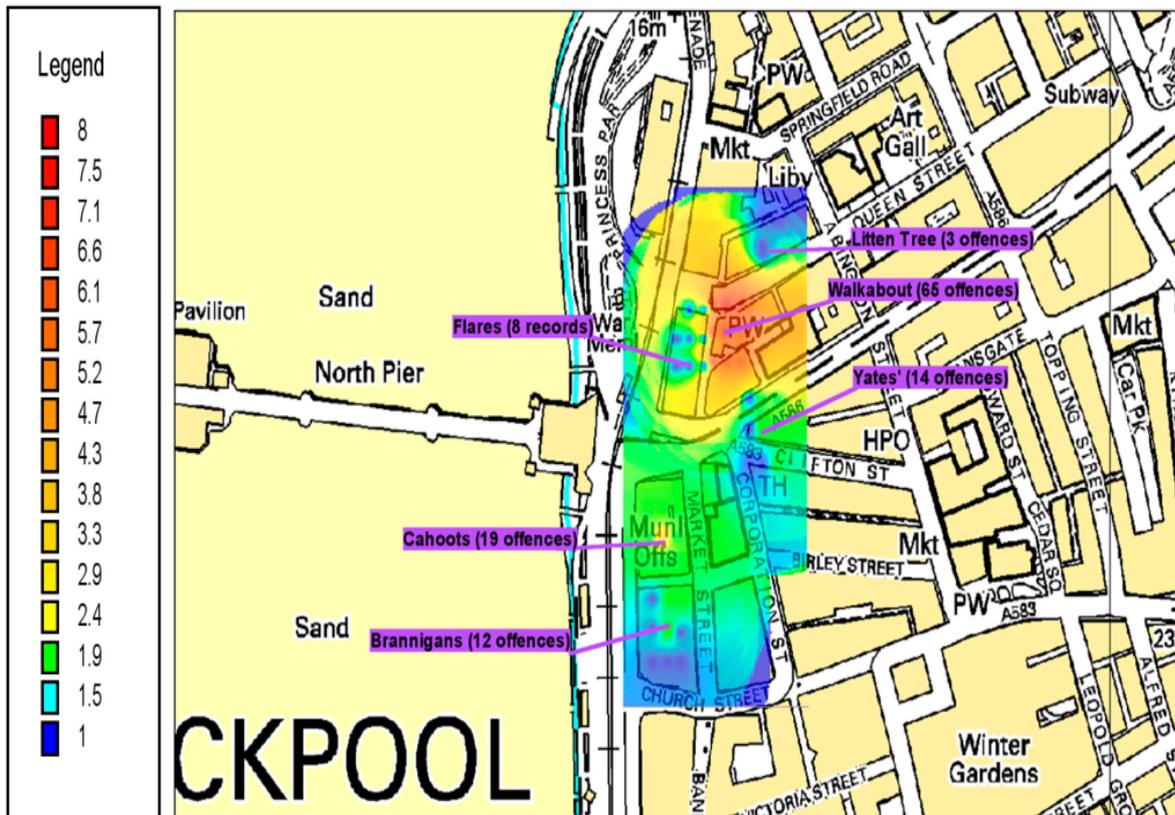
There are a number of other 'similar' licensed premises around the area of Walkabout – in other words 'public houses' or 'bars' that have a late licence. The graph shows a comparison over the last year between these other premises and the Walkabout.

Fig 3: Comparison with other licensed premises in the Town Centre (23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 05 – 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 06)



The graph shows that comparatively, the Walkabout is the most problematic licensed premises in the area. This is further demonstrated with the hotspot map below. The map is based on the number of violent offences and thefts within these premises over the last year

Map 1: Violent Crime and Thefts – Blackpool Town Centre licensed premises (23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 05 – 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 06)



In conclusion, analysis shows that compared to 'like' premises in the area, Walkabout is the most prolific licensed premises for violent offences within the town. Crimes are predominantly 'Other Wounding' offences where the

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aggravated is left with some kind of physical injury. In 15% of cases an object such as a glass bottle or a pint glass has caused the injury. Furthermore, offences have largely been alcohol related and have taken place primarily during the peak 'drinking' times – 66% offences occurring on a weekend (Friday to Sunday) and 80% (n=52) taking place between 2300 and 0300 hours.

### Location

The Walkabout Bar had been trading in its current location since 2001, when it took over existing licensed premises.

The premises are situated on a busy thoroughfare, frequented by visitors and locals attracted to the town to enjoy the night time economy. It is a large town centre public house with a capacity of over 1,250 people, spread over two floors.

Patrons enter and exit the premises through one small entrance and this is the same area where queues are held. The same door is also used as the main ejection point for troublesome individuals by the door staff. This area was recognised as the main area for flash point for disorder.

The majority of the patrons frequenting the premises during the evening have to stand up and are subjected to loud high beat music. The premise encourages patrons to drink in groups other and as the body is vertical rather than the stomach being squashed when seated; it encourages the person to consume greater quantities of alcohol. High beat music has been shown to increase the patron's heartbeat and thus makes them more susceptible to acting on adrenalin rushes and when coupled with the close proximity of other patrons.

The premises have no designated dance floor as the entire ground floor is wooden and very little seating is provided.

Although there is a facility for patrons and staff to store property in a cloakroom, it is under used. Coupled with the admission policy utilised by the premises (very little control over dress code) resulted in the premises being frequented by known criminals who targeted handbags and mobile phones. As such the amount of thefts committed within the premises was disproportionate compared with similar size premises in the same locality – Walkabout 71 thefts committed between 01/01/06 and 31/12/06 compared to 13 in the other premise.

### Victim

Enquiries with Lancashire Constabularies crime recording system (01/01/06 to 31/12/06) indicated that the vast majority of the victims of thefts (71 crimes) are females who leave property unattended on tables whilst dancing or visiting bars.

In relation to physical assaults, the main victims are males between the ages of 18 to 24 who have been drinking to excess and due to their behaviour have to be removed from the premises, normally with the assistance of the door staff.

These premises are popular with both locals and visitors to the town but analysis of the crimes have revealed that although the majority of the victims live away there are a number who are local.

The premises are very popular and on Friday and Saturday's they are full to capacity and have large queues. The proportion of the patrons attending the premises who were subject to a criminal act was small but accounted for over 1.2% of all violent crimes within a Policing division which was unacceptable. (65 between 23/11/05 to 07/11/06 and 82 between 01/01/06 and 31/12/06)

### Offender

Using custody data (Lancashire Police) has indicted that the majority of the offenders who are arrested for the low level criminality are visitors to the town who have drunk to excess.

However, offenders who are arrested for the more serious offences tend to be local to the town.

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A significant number of the reports of violent crime involved the door staff from the premises that are often called upon to eject drunken individuals from within who have caused problems. All the door staff employed at the premises are trained to the national Security Industries Act level (S.I.A) and are employed by an external door staff supplier.

There was no evidence to suggest that there was any motivation other than excessive alcohol consumption as the main cause of the violent crime and thefts.

### Root Cause

In relation to the thefts - the premises were believed to be targeted by known local thieves.

Whilst very few people are arrested, the main M.O. indicated that the thefts were opportunist and only involved small items such as jackets, mobile phones and wallets / purses.

The main reason for the disorder and subsequent ejections relate to the large capacity (largest in the immediate vicinity targeting the 18-24 age group), vertical drinking and loud music.



### Response:

**Lancashire Polices policy is to work in partnership with licensed premises with a view to resolving problems within the premises without the need for formal action.**

**In relation to the Walkabout this was performed not only during the regular high profile licensing inspections by the Police and partner agencies but also at senior Police level with the local and National Management of the brewery.**

Throughout 2005 and 2006, regular engagement was held locally and nationally with a view to resolving the problems associated with the premises. The formal meetings were conducted at the Police Station every 3 months. During the course of the formally recorded conversations, ideas and suggestions were presented to the management and formal action plans were developed. Suggestions put to the premises included :

- Introducing dress Codes for premises.
- Increased number of door staff and fixed points of patrol to deter thefts etc
- Increased lighting and seating in the premises.
- Reduction in the number of patrons frequenting the premises.

However the premises were subject to large number of visits where general help and assistance was given on an informal basis.

The data collected during the analysis stage, was used do drive the response aspect of the project and was

used during the formal meetings with the senior management to highlight issues.

Neither the informal or formal advice given by the Police and partners was acted upon by the management. This was mainly due to the premises operating extremely efficiently from a profit point of view.

In late 2005, as a result of the activity conducted during previous year with the premises, no reduction in criminal activity had been seen. Subsequently, the National Director of Regent Inns was invited into Blackpool Police station to discuss the growing concerns of the Police and partners. Again, criminal activity and incidents were presented along with a number of suggestions as to how the situation needed to improve. The Director left that meeting with a clear view that if the premises did not reduce the amount of criminal activity connected with the premises, then formal action would be initiated.

At the beginning of 2006, due to the significant impact the premises had upon crime figures and reports of anti-social behavior, the lack of co-operation from the company, a decision was made to progress the problem using a multi-agency response.

**The sole aim of operation Abingdon was to reduce the amount of crime and disorder related to the premises**

Although the vast majority of the activity was the responsibility of the Police, Blackpool Council licensing department and Lancashire Fire and rescue were instrumental in gathering evidence against the premises. Evidence in relation to breaches of fire safety legislation, health and safety and licence conditions were detected. The Local authority also conducted a number of test purchase operations using underage youths at the premises, one of which proved successful when alcohol was sold to two 15 year old males.

**Planned Police Response (Summary)**

- Through partnership work, the Police engaged with local management of the premises in an attempt to resolve the issues of crime and disorder.
- Quarterly review process was put in place to track progress and compliance.
- Local mediation was unsuccessful and crime and disorder did not reduce. Mediation was performed at a senior level with the premises owner / company. Consultation involved the levels of crime, the target groups attracted to the premises, noise issues and general anti-social behaviour associated with the premises.
- Crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour failed to reduce, so the design of the premises and local area was considered.
- The door staff employed by the premises was engaged with, to address training needs.
- Local officers were tasked with providing a high profile presence within the premises.
- Training was provided to the local officers who patrolled the geographic area in relation to breach of licence conditions.

Despite interventions and assistance, provided by the Police and partners, there was no reduction in crime and disorder connected with the premises during 2005 and 2006. As a result, senior management from Lancashire Police initiated a review of the premises licence in November 2006.

Grounds for submitting the review consisted of:

- Unacceptable levels of crime and disorder committed within the premises
- Unacceptable levels of incidents directly linked to the premises which have required Police attendance.
- Level of children frequenting the premises and being subject to crime and disorder.

- Despite numerous warnings over numerous issues, premises have done nothing to resolve the long term issues in line with recommendations and within agreed timescales.

Upon submitting the formal premises licence review, senior management from the brewery along with their legal representative attended Blackpool Police Station to discuss the concerns of the statutory authorities. Using the data collected during 2005 and 2006, senior management who had typically been hostile and not willing to take on board ideas, changed their approach and were willing to address the problems head on. This was due to the fact that the brewery identified that the premises licence was at significant risk of being removed.

On this type of premise, a premises licence could considerably influence the cost of the premises should the company decide to sell the building.

After a number of letters and meetings a number of recommendations were placed to the management including the following:-

1. No admission or re-admission to the premises after 01:00; - **Nothing previously done by the premises.**
2. Licensable activities to terminate at 03:00 and the premises to close 30 minutes thereafter; **(compared to 4am)**
3. Between 02:30 and 03:00 only one alcoholic drink may be purchased per customer, at any one time; - **Nothing previously done by the premises.**
4. With the exception of bottled beers (but subject to 5 below) all alcoholic drinks to be served in polycarbonate or other appropriate non-glass vessels throughout the trading period; - **Polycarbonates not previously used by the premises and requested to reduce the amount of glass related injuries.**
5. On Fridays and Saturdays all alcoholic drinks to be sold in plastic (or similar) containers only; - **Polycarbonates / PET (plastic bottles) not previously used by the premises and requested to reduce the amount of glass related injuries. .**
6. Overall capacity of the premises to reduce from 1,250 persons to 950 persons (calculated as to 550 on the ground floor and 400 on the first floor); **To increase public safety.**
7. Club Scan to be used at each point of entry; - **device which scans and records ID presented by patrons attending. Also checks for forged identification. Introduction requested to reduce the amount of underage people gaining access to the premises.**
8. The operator to employ an in-house Security Manager; - **to ensure door staff behave in a responsible manner**
9. Operator to install lockers; - **In public areas and for them to be free of charge**
10. External lighting of the premises to be increased to the satisfaction of the Police Crime Prevention Officer; - **Increased lighting was to assist the visibility of offences**
11. CCTV camera locations to be re-inspected and re-sited to the satisfaction of the Police Crime Prevention Officer;
12. Dance floor area to have a balustrade constructed around it, to physically separate it from the remainder of the floor space;
13. Provide a fixed-seating provision for up to 60% of the available floor space overall; - **no previous requirement to provide seating.**
14. Subject to Planning Permission (and wherein Regents Inns will use its best endeavors to obtain the same):-
  - a. Re-site the exit on The Strand to a location away from the lobby adjacent to the male W/Cs; - **To reduce a possible flash point disorder.**
  - b. Reconfigure and enlarge the main entrance to provide two separate doors thereby creating a separate means of access and egress (on the Queens Street elevation). - **Removes possible flash point disorder area and provided a greater area for door staff to remove problematic individuals**

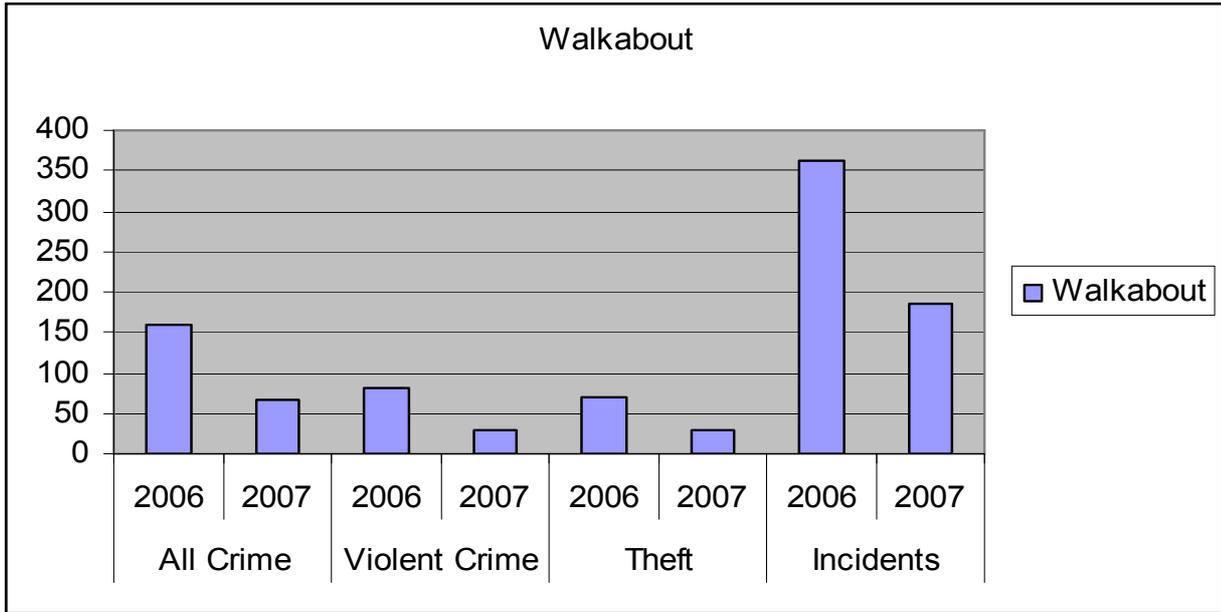
Eventually the conditions were agreed upon. The Comments in red highlighted the main concerns of the Police.

**Assessment:**

The premises started to implement the conditions, just prior to Christmas 2006 but became fully compliant at the beginning of January 2007.

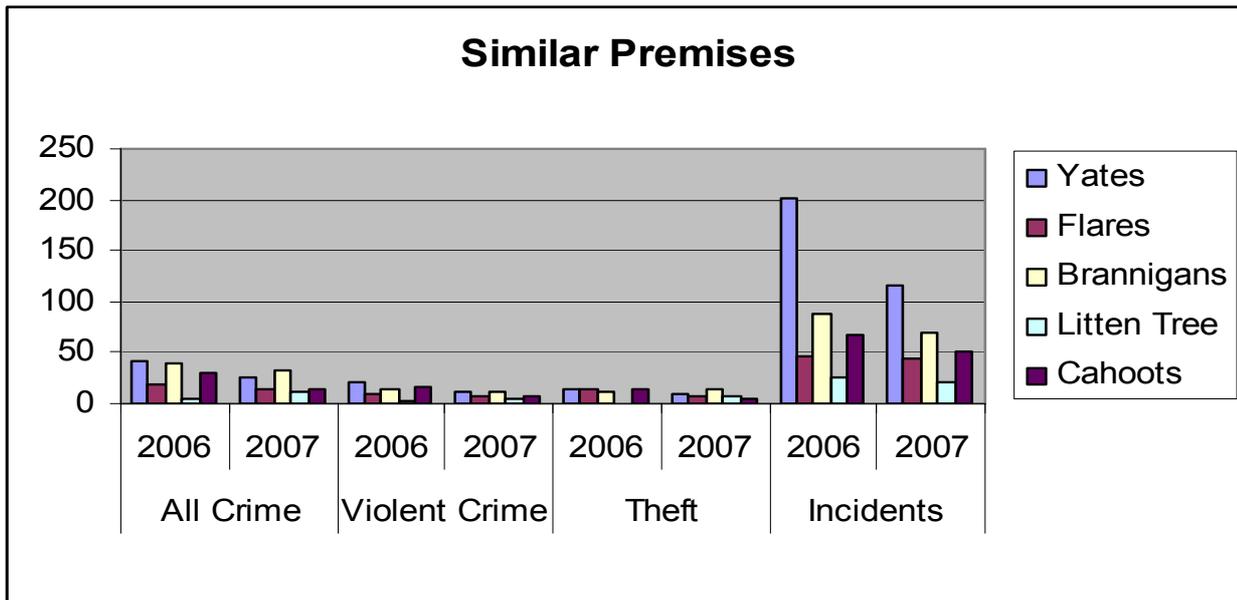
Since the introduction of the conditions and through constant monitoring, the premises have achieved the following reductions in violent crime and disorder. These crime figures relate directly to crimes and incidents directly related to the premises and not within the wider community.

**Walkabout figures**



	<u>01/01/06 to 31/12/06</u>	<u>01/01/07 to 31/12/07</u>	Decrease
All Crimes	159	66	- 58%
Violent Crimes	82	28	- 66%
Thefts	71	28	- 60%
Incidents attended	362	185	- 49%

**Other similar size premises within the immediate vicinity (using the same time frame as above)**



There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that patrons frequenting the premises feel happier and safer, primarily due to the increase in space within the premises and the number of seats available. The increase in space also allows the door staff to monitor the patrons more closely.

This information has been forthcoming from both the premises themselves and those patrons frequenting the premises. Although no formal questionnaire have been completed, this feedback has been given to operational officers who are deployed to patrol outside on a regular basis.

One of the concerns of the Police during the review involved the accessibility of alcohol to underage people. As a result of the work, no-one under the age of 18 (criminal age to consume alcohol) has been the victim or offender of any crime connected to the premises.

The overall cleanliness of the building has significantly improved due to the reduced capacity and no-one has reported being injured in anyway by glass.

Like the analysis, the assessment has involved the use of the Police crime facility.

As a result of the positive work and significant reductions in crime at the premises, Lancashire Police have now adopted the 'WALKABOUT' principle (interventions put into practice during operation Abingdon and the conditions imposed) as best practice and is now used when addressing issues at other licensed premises.

Likewise, the premises have also identified the engagement and benefits from it. The following comments were made by Simon Kaye, Commercial Director for Regent Inns;

- Initial surprise at the events highlighted by the Police.'
- 'Initiated moves to immediately co-operate with Police and Licensing Authorities.'
- 'Reviewed, implemented and improved policies, procedures and risk assessments.'
- 'Introduced new computerised training for all levels of staff.'
- 'Worked closely with police to introduce licensing conditions that were practical, effective and commercially viable.'

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- Reviewed and updated existing computerised Risk Management systems to record and monitor incidents, crime, capacity, safety & fire.'
- 'Effect has been to improve the customer base, reduce incidents by a substantial margin and after 9 months produced a turnover equivalent to a year ago'
- 'Customers appreciate the change in atmosphere, feel safer, but still enjoy themselves to the full.'
- 'Walkabouts throughout the United Kingdom all operate within this system.'

Having spoken with the Commercial Director in relation to these quotes, it appears that he was surprised that despite the interventions, he was not fully made aware of the concerns of the Police and partners by his own management.

Investigations of the crime system during the implementation process indicated that there was a slight displacement of crime into adjacent premises, although not to such a significant extent.

In 2005 – 2006 the premises were refused entry into the Best Bar None Award scheme due to the problems taking place, this despite similar premises operated by the same brand winning in other force areas. Best Bar None recognises the work being undertaken by the drinks industry in reducing the amount of alcohol harm in licensed premises by assessing the venues policies and procedures.

After the interventions of 2006 and 2007, the premises applied again to the Best Bar None Scheme and was formally recognised by the judges (reps from the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Health Service and the Industry themselves) and received a certificate of improvement for the interventions they have implemented.

### **Learning Points**

During Operation 'Abingdon' there have been a number of learning points that have now been implemented when targeting problematic premises.

1. Ensure crime and disorder data is presented to a senior manager as soon as it comes to light and ensure that they sign up to a short term action plan (rather than engagement over 2 years).
2. Obtain the services of the ambulance service in providing call for service data so as to identify areas where they are picking injured persons up from.

**State number of words used: 3999**

**Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative** - Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.

**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 e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to [Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk). One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008.