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Editorial

Welcome to the latest Link On! Magazine, which has safer neighbourhoods as its theme this time.

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the community wardens projects featured in this edition of Link On! are very important developments. They will help to make safer places to live and work for everyone in our county.

We all have a responsibility to improve the quality of life for residents in Suffolk. Suffolk is one of the safest counties in England, and by working together we can make sure that it stays that way.

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Making neighbourhoods safer

The local policing map of Suffolk is being re-drawn – to help provide an even better service to people across the county.

Sectors and beats are being replaced with districts and neighbourhoods in the biggest shake-up of community policing for decades. The changes are being introduced nationwide as part of the government's Neighbourhood Policing initiative.

However, policing is just one element of a drive to get service providers, agencies and local organisations to work even more closely on keeping communities safe while improving quality of life for local people.

In Suffolk, Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be created across the county which will see police officers, Police Community Support Officers and

Specials working alongside staff from other organisations including district and borough councils.

These teams mark a new and innovative approach to partnership working in Suffolk. For the first time, staff from a variety of agencies, services and organisations will be working together from shared premises in the heart of local communities. This means that they can combine their skills to solve local problems more efficiently and effectively than before.

At the moment, problems such as graffiti are dealt with by a number of different agencies and organisations working independently of each other, with their own schedules.

A Safer Neighbourhood team could deal with graffiti by using its district council staff to remove it, its police officers to prevent it through targeted patrols and a youth worker to engage with local youngsters to find out what caused it – all at the same time.

Each team will have its own fortnightly tasking meeting at which problems and issues identified by the local community will be prioritised for action. These priorities will be listed on a website which will have pages dedicated to Safer Neighbourhood teams across Suffolk. The website will allow local people to highlight issues or concerns to their particular team – and give feedback on how they think problems are being solved.

The teams will also be looking at new initiatives such as ‘street briefings’ where team members meet local people at the scene of a problem to discuss their concerns and agree an action plan to address them.

“These neighbourhoods will be the foundations of policing in Suffolk,” said Superintendent Chris Mayhew, of Suffolk Police. “There is no standard size; in urban areas, a neighbourhood may consist of a relatively small area of a town. However, in rural areas, a neighbourhood may cover a number of parishes. What will be standard, though, is each team’s ability to make a real difference at a local level.”

The teams will be up-and-running by June next year; but already there have been a number of significant developments. Chief Inspectors have been appointed at a district level and will oversee the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in their patches. And five pilot teams are up and running - three in Ipswich and one each at Kesgrave and Kessingland – to help develop good practice which can be rolled out across the county.

“From the policing point of view, Safer Neighbourhood teams will give officers the opportunity to concentrate their efforts on protecting smaller, more localised areas than they do at the moment,” said Supt Mayhew.

“They will be supported by more PCSOs, specials and, of course staff from other agencies which means that together they will be able to provide a far more visible and impactful service to local people. And they will all have the back-up of existing specialist units such as dogs, traffic and the helicopter.”

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Contact: Superintendent
Chris Mayhew, Suffolk
Police

Community wardens to hit Suffolk streets

A project to see how front line staff could help become the eyes and ears of the community is being developed by Suffolk County Council's community safety team.

Community wardens are a follow-on from the successful street wardens scheme which has been running in Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds for the last four years. This scheme is finally ending in January 2007, as the new Safer Neighbourhood Teams will have police community support officers who will take on many of the duties performed by the street wardens.

The street warden scheme was originally developed to provide reassurance as a presence on the street. There are many positive lessons learned from the scheme, particularly around the reporting of low-level crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues. The role of wardens has now evolved and the police community support officers linked with a county-wide community warden scheme will continue to provide a local presence and have a closer working partnership with the police.

Chief executives from all district and borough councils and the county council have agreed to developing the use of front line staff, whose role takes them into the community. With training they will be able to identify and report incidents, so that they can become the eyes and ears of the neighbourhood.

We don't want to change the way people operate, or the duties they perform. We just want them to go that additional mile in reporting incidents they find or are told about. Many members of front line staff already gather low-level intelligence on a daily basis but don't have either the confidence or awareness to know what to report or where to report it to.

The types of incidents that people might be expected to report are:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Low-level crime
- Racial harassment
- Environmental issues, such as abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, fly-posting, dog fouling, litter, noise
- Quality of life issues, such as defective street lighting, dangerous footpaths, illegal parking

If staff can effectively report these incidents it should contribute towards partner organisations meeting government targets, and at the same time making Suffolk a safer, cleaner, greener county.

The county council's community safety team will offer initial training to all volunteers so that a common standard may be achieved across Suffolk. We are also looking at ways that staff can record incidents, for example through a mobile phone with built-in camera and linked into the "Police Direct" mobile messaging service. A directory of who to contact about different types of incidents is also being produced. Of course, this may lead to an increase in the number of reported incidents, and organisations

Contact: Tony Fuller,
community warden
project lead officer

Phone: 07919 165092

must be prepared to act on these.

The longer term aims of the project include extending it out to other service providers such as milkmen and the postal service, who come into regular contact with the community.

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Young women targeted to stay Safe!

Helping to keep young women safe is the aim of Safe! - a new magazine that was launched in Suffolk this summer.

Designed along the same format as gossip magazines, Safe! contains tongue in cheek articles with a hard-hitting message behind them. It focuses on the three main themes of Nightsafe, the partnership which is behind the magazine's production:

- Don't overdo it
- Friends stick together
- Get home safe

Safe! encourages women to think about and plan their night out, be aware of the amount of alcohol they consume; understand more about the effects of alcohol (and their potential vulnerability whilst under its influence); encourages friends to stick together and look out for one another; and importantly to plan how they are going to get home safely at the end of the evening.

The magazine will be distributed around the county via pubs, clubs, licensed premises, schools and colleges, youth groups and local businesses.

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Door and bar staff benefit from new training

Door supervisors and bar staff at venues along the east coast have benefited from training funded by Suffolk Constabulary Eastern Area and the Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

Thanks to funding of £6,000 from the police and the CDRPs, 84 untrained bar staff have completed the BIIAB level 1 award in 'Responsible retailing of alcohol'. Simply Self Defense Training Services, Police and Trading Standards worked together to provide the comprehensive training package which led to bar staff achieving the Nationally Recognised BIIAB level 1 standard certificate. There was also free drug awareness training from the Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team.

Sixty door supervisors have been trained in search and seizure techniques across the Eastern Area and search and seizure boxes/body scanners have been issued to 14 venues who operate regularly with door staff.

This training was funded by the police and CDRPs and supplemented by

money given under the government AMEC4 campaign. The training was tailor made by Suffolk Constabulary and Simply Self Defense Training Services and provided door supervisors with the knowledge and confidence to ensure search procedures are conducted professionally and safely.

The aim of the training was to encourage venues to operate random search policies to discourage some customers from bringing drugs and weapons into licensed premises and to standardise procedures relating to search and seizure.

Following the success in the Eastern Area, both training packages are now being rolled out in other areas of Suffolk.

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Your RAG councillors

The Responsible Authorities Group (or RAG) has county councillor representatives on it. Over the next few issues of Link On! we'll bring you a profile of each person, including details of their involvement with community safety issues in their area.

Councillor John Goodwin – Suffolk Coastal area

Councillor John Goodwin was elected to serve the people of the Felixstowe North and Trimley Villages division at the County Council elections held in May 2005.

John says that he thought that he and his wife were in line for a life of early retirement until he was asked to stand as the Conservative candidate. Since being elected he's been on a very upward learning curve, but says that being a member of the Suffolk Coastal Crime and Disorder Partnership has proved both informative and satisfying.

He said: "It's been informative in as much as I've gained an understanding of local crime and the perception of crime. It's been satisfying because I've found that I can make a difference. I recently used part of my locality budget to fund a "Trickster" presentation for the people of my area and funded the purchase of 500 bicycle locks."

John has also held a community day to raise awareness of work being done in the Felixstowe area. Displays covered a range of council services - everything from the Fire and Rescue Service to waste recycling, to the Felixstowe Crime Reduction Panel and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team. The Heritage Housing Association and Felixstowe Police were also present, to show people what is being done for them by SCC and their partners.

John said: "I've only been a Suffolk County Councillor for a very short time, but I'm convinced that as long as everybody works together they can make a difference to allay the fear or perception of crime."

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To contact Cllr John Goodwin, you can email: john.goodwin@councillors.suffolkcc.gov.uk
Or phone: 01394 283195

Diary dates – Community Safety Forum

A Community Safety Forum event, focusing on anti-social behaviour, will be held at two venues in Suffolk this month.

- Tuesday 24th October 2006 at The Athenaeum, Bury St Edmunds
- Thursday 26th October 2006 at High Lodge, Hinton, near Darsham

Both events run from 10am to 2pm, and are a great opportunity to see first hand the key projects and initiatives that are currently going on across Suffolk to reduce anti-social behaviour.

You will have the chance to see 13 different projects as you rotate through market stalls, giving you the chance to talk to project leads and other delegates about their work.

Places for each event are limited, and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so please book your place early! More details are available from Charlotte Foster at Suffolk County Council

The following projects will be at the Forum events:

- Anti-social behaviour network / crime and disorder reduction partnership: Ipswich, Babergh, Suffolk Coastal, Waveney and Western Area
- Suffolk County Council's environment and transport team
- Suffolk fire and rescue community safety team
- Substance misuse team
- Suffolk County Council's community safety unit
- Extended schools partnership
- Youth offending service
- Trading standards
- Suffolk probation

During lunch there will also be a chance to speak with the Suffolk Criminal Justice Board representatives.

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Contact: Charlotte Foster, Community Safety Officer

Phone: 01473 265159

How to contact Link On!

This edition of Link On! was edited by Moira Bryan, corporate communications manager at Suffolk County Council. Please email any comments or copy for future editions to moira.bryan@comms.suffolkcc.gov.uk or phone 01473 264398

The next edition of Link On! is due out in December.

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