

Brief Lines

A bridge between business and the local community

About CSP

Welcome to the latest edition of the Brief Lines newsletter, published by Community Safety Partnerships Ltd (CSP) which helps to bring business and community together. Specialising in personal and community safety issues, CSP is focused on supporting organisations wishing to take forward their work in this key area, as well as offering post crisis-support and communications expertise. CSP is headed by Sue Nelson who in recent years has specialised in developing and delivering community safety messages and campaigns to combat crime and anti-social behaviour on Britain's rail network.

£3 million cable theft headache

Theft of copper cable from rail lines has risen 50% in a year, giving the rail industry a £3 million headache, say police. British Transport Police says there were almost 1,000 reported thefts of signalling cable from warehouses or alongside railway tracks this year - up by half on those committed in 2005. BTP Assistant Chief Constable Paul Robb said thieves were putting their own lives at risk as well as causing severe disruption to thousands of passengers. Although cable theft costs huge inconvenience there is no risk to passengers as fail safe systems put signals at red if cabling is interfered with.

ASBOs work, says study

A new study claims that ASBOs work well when used as part of a multi-faceted approach to fight anti-social behaviour. A study by the National Audit Office found that anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) are being used more every year, and are proving to be a valuable weapon in the police arsenal to fight low-level crime. Since they were first introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the number of ASBOs given out has increased every year, as police and local authorities use them to stop aggressive thugs and vandals who can make the lives of the law-abiding majority a misery. A total of 1,336 ASBOs were issued in 2003; 3,440 in 2004 and 4,060 in 2005. Despite a widespread belief that ASBOs are used mainly against youths, most ASBOs (56%) are issued to adults, while 41% go to those under 18 years of age. Home Office Minister Tony McNulty said the study showed that the orders are having an impact. ASBOs, he said, are 'an effective way to stop bad behaviour and to hand local neighbourhoods back to the law-abiding majority.' He pointed out that, of the cases sampled in the National Audit Office report, the vast majority of offenders stopped behaving anti-socially after one legal notice. Meanwhile, the study highlighted Corby in Northamptonshire as the "yob" capital of England, with almost half - 48.8% - of adults living there saying anti-social behaviour was a problem. Next was Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, with 44.4% of adults saying bad behaviour was a problem in their town, while Hackney in London was third with 42.7%. Bristol was named as the place with the fewest perceived anti-social problems with only 5.7% of residents describing it as a big or fairly big issue. In second-best place was Staffordshire Moorlands, the area around Leek, and third was Basingstoke and Deane. Go to www.homeoffice.gov.uk for more details or read the National Audit Office report in full at www.nao.org.uk

Crime victim pilot scheme

A pilot project has been set up to look after the needs of crime victims. The £1 million project for Victim Support has set up three victim care units in Nottingham, Salford and York to pilot better services and provide a quick point of contact. Victims are generally referred by the police but they can also refer themselves if they have been victims of crimes such as burglary, assault, theft, sexual assault, hate crime or homicide. The unit aims to contact victims of crime by phone within 24 hours of the crime. The victim will then agree to the services provided such as childcare, transport assistance, help with securing property and special support for victims of certain crimes like domestic violence. The purpose of the pilot scheme is to identify new ways to help victims and not simply to duplicate what Victim Support already does.



Research into passenger safety

An Australian research project is investigating commuters' perceptions of safety to identify trends and help determine future strategy.

The work has shown that lone female train passengers will generally be more worried about a lone man in the carriage than a group of them, yet a lone man will be more fearful of the group. Victoria Police's Transit Safety Division (TSD) reports perceptions of crime and safety among train commuters vary according to the individual and the time of the day, and do not always reflect real crime levels.

While statistics of reported incidents guide policing activities and safety programs, few methods are in practice to capture and take into account the community's perception of crime.

In an Australian first, Victoria Police conducted a detailed survey of perceptions of crime and safety on Melbourne's rail network, with a view to engaging related government and non-government agencies, interest groups and community members to address the perceptions.

The survey is being conducted as part of a partnership between Victoria Police and the Australian National University which aims to introduce frameworks to improve the way police work with other agencies and groups in delivering community safety. Go to

www.police.vic.gov.au for more information.

Youngsters relish attention

More than 100 teenagers relished an evening eating beef burgers and doing skateboard stunts, thanks to the local police.

A neighbourhood policing team in York organised the event to keep teenagers out of trouble on Mischief Night - and was overwhelmed by the response. It worked "really, really well," said officers. Youngsters were invited to bring along their skateboards, rollerblades and BMXs and try out some stunts. There was no trouble - in contrast to other parts of the city. In one incident teenagers hurled fireworks at firefighters tackling a vehicle blaze. The skateboard event was such a success police want to do the same next year.

What a lot of lolly...

Drinkers in West Oxfordshire who get out of hand in the run-up to Christmas are being foiled - by a lollipop. Up to 5,000 lollipops are being given out to revellers by door staff at 60 licensed premises in a bid to stop fights.

Campaigners say the sugar rush bought on by the lollipops will calm people down. The West Oxfordshire Community Safety has organised and funded the scheme, costing £1,175.

West Oxfordshire Local Area Commander, Chief Insp Dennis Evernden said: "Research shows the sugar content helps to stabilise

the behaviour of those who have consumed alcohol. This should, in turn, reduce the chance of disorder and crime that often occurs in public places following excessive drinking. We hope it will lower aggressive behaviour and also reduce the noise from people shouting and swearing.

Crime cut by 35%

Six new police community support officers (PCSOs) riding the rails in South Wales have helped cut crime on rail services by 35% says British Transport Police.

The officers, based at a new police station at Pontypridd railway station, have conducted almost 1,000 patrols in the past six months. At the beginning of the year, rail watchdog Passenger Focus said passengers were more concerned about station safety in Wales than anywhere else in the UK. And rail union, RMT warned that violence on the railways was reaching "civil unrest" proportions.

The community support officers have been at Pontypridd since May and are part of a network of 21 recruited to work on rail services across Wales. The officers and the new police station at Pontypridd are part of a £600,000 initiative jointly funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, Arriva Trains Wales and British Transport Police.