



in safe hands

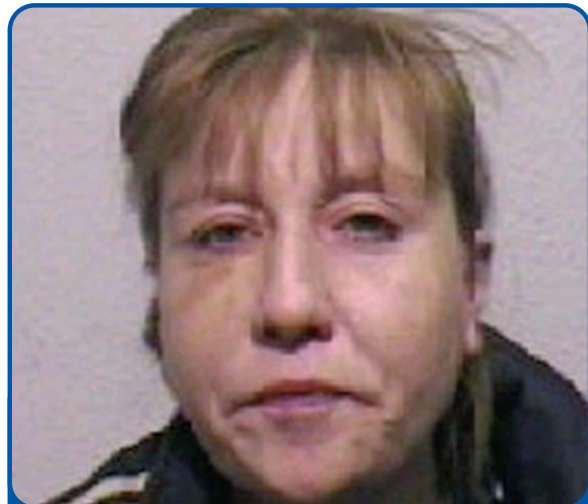
Issue No.1

Working to reduce crime and disorder in the district

Action to curb street drinkers

As with many cities and towns in the country, St. Albans has a problem with street drinking and begging.

But the problem can be tackled with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. An order was served on one of the district's main offenders, Michelle Taylor, from Sandridge, on 29 March.



Michelle Taylor - banned from the city centre

The prosecution followed many complaints from the public and an investigation led by the St. Albans City and District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit working with the Police.

The evidence put before the court was mainly gathered from the Council's CCTV cameras. It showed numerous instances of aggressive begging in St. Albans city centre, most of which were directed at teenagers and the elderly. This was accompanied by street drinking, general aggressive behaviour and urinating in public.

More than 100 incidents were submitted as evidence, with seven three-hour videotapes exhibited.

This evidence was not disputed, the only debate being over the terms of the order, in particular the proposal that Michelle Taylor be banned from the whole of the city centre, an area now subject to alcohol control.

The order covers the whole of the St. Albans City and District Council area. Under the order Michelle Taylor cannot:

1. Enter the alcohol exclusion zone covering St. Albans city centre
2. Cause alarm, distress or harass people or incite others to do so

3. Abuse or insult people or behave in a threatening way or encourage others to do so
4. Approach people to beg
5. Drink alcohol in a public place, except in licensed premises
6. Be drunk in a public place

All these conditions will remain in place for two years.

On 18 April, three weeks after the order was given, Michelle Taylor was arrested in St. Peter's Street, St. Albans, for an alleged breach of the terms of the order.

Neil Kieran, of the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Unit, said: "We are very pleased with this order; we hope it will help Michelle Taylor deal with her alcohol problems by removing her from the temptation posed by other street drinkers. The order sends out a message that street drinking and anti-social behaviour in the city centre will not be tolerated. Businesses, residents of – and visitors to – St. Albans do not have to put up with this unacceptable behaviour."

Any incidents involving Michelle Taylor should be reported to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. Any other incidents of disorderly behaviour should also be reported to the Unit on 01727 819416.

Who we are...

St. Albans Community Safety Partnership is a group of agencies involved in the reduction of crime and disorder in the district. Key members are: St. Albans City & District Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Police Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and St. Albans & Harpenden Primary Care Trust. The Community Safety Partnership also works with a range of community organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch and Victim Support.

The Community Safety Partnership's website, www.stalbanscsp.org.uk, provides additional information and links.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative. We will be interested in any comments that you have on any of the articles, your concerns, or any information that you can provide to help us tackle crime and disorder in the district. Either write to the Community Safety Unit, St. Albans City & District Council, St. Peter's Street, St. Albans, AL1 3JE, or e-mail community.safety@stalbens.gov.uk.

A fresh start for Katie

Katie, a former St. Albans resident, is one of the success stories of the Hertfordshire Drug Interventions Programme.

She received five months of intensive support from drug workers, Police officers, housing support workers, clinicians and the Probation service, and is now living in her own flat and working part-time.

Hertfordshire Drug Interventions Programme gives drug misusing offenders the chance to make real changes to their lives. Katie joined the programme in June 2005.

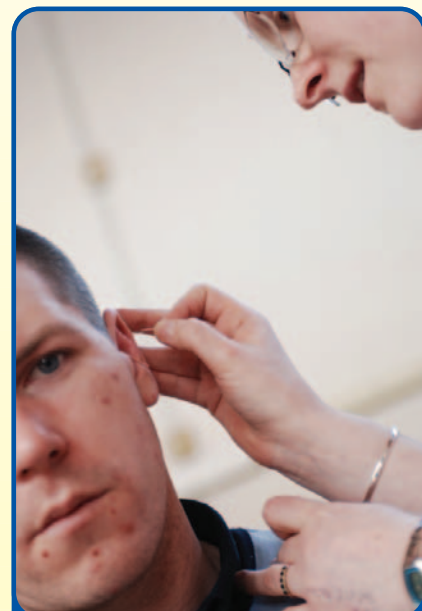
In the words of the drugs worker who greeted her: "She arrived at the first clinic in a very dishevelled state, very dirty and very scared."

On top of her Class A drug use and offending, she had housing problems and was fleeing domestic violence. The Drug Interventions Team succeeded in getting her re-housed several miles away from where she was originally living. This gave her the space she needed to begin addressing her drug misuse and offending away from the influence of other drug users.

Katie was assigned a drugs worker and police officer who were on hand to help with any issues she had with her drug use and offending behaviour. Gradually, at weekly clinics, where Katie was offered a range of treatments, including acupuncture, she began to test clean for opiates. Her offending stopped, as she no longer needed to feed her heroin habit. Katie is currently working to reduce her crack cocaine use.

Katie was transferred from the clinical element of the programme in October 2005 and received additional support from a local community drug team where she still receives a small dose of methadone. She regularly attends the Drug Interventions Programme clinics where she receives continued support from her police officer and drugs worker.

Katie's story is not unusual; the programme works with drug misusing offenders to help them address the wider issues that stop them from changing their lives, such as prostitution, and problems with housing, employment, and childcare.



Drug worker carrying out acupuncture, part of the treatment Katie received to reduce cravings, promote detox and relaxation

Residents take a stand

Fed up with being held hostage to drug dealers and crack houses, residents in Telford Court are taking a stand.

Three years ago an event at Telford Court, a block of flats in Alma Road, St. Albans, marked the start of a process that has radically improved the lives of its residents.

Following the death of Shumin Hussain in September 2003, co-ordinated action between St. Albans City & District Council, the Police and Telford Court Residents' Association - a group formed shortly after this tragic incident - has ensured that drug dealing and prostitution have been stamped out.

Sheila Papa (63), of the residents' association, said: "People turned round and said enough was enough. We were hostage to the drugs and the crack houses and it seemed like no one could do anything about it. It is like paradise here compared to how it was a year ago. A few years ago I was attacked and was afraid to go out, even in broad daylight - now I don't mind going out at night."

The work of the residents' association and agencies of the St. Albans Community Safety Partnership has since been recognized in a number of ways.

Last year the residents' association was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the St. Albans Civic Society for its contribution to regenerating the area.

This was complemented by the residents' recent award of £1,000 from the Home Office 'Taking A Stand Award' fund. These are national awards given to a limited number of entrants who have stood up to anti-social behaviour and crime in their area. Telford Court Residents' Association won it for their brave stance in tackling Class A drug dealing.

In 2004, St. Albans City & District Council allocated £445,000 to improve Telford Court and its grounds. Work completed includes a secure door entry system with CCTV in communal areas. The communal garden is about to be given a makeover and future work is planned to improve the structure and appearance of the building; this will be done in consultation with the residents.



Residents of Telford Court: united in their determination to take a stand

Just the ticket

OK. It's the evening. You're sitting on a bench, on a railway station platform, waiting for your train. Perhaps you're reading a newspaper to pass the time. Then the peace is shattered by a noisy, drunken group spilling onto the platform. The rowdy and unpredictable behaviour of this group is upsetting and threatening. You notice that several members of the group are carrying bottles of drink. This is not a pleasant situation and you wonder what can be done as the members of this group are not making direct threats against anyone on the platform, or damaging railway property.

So what can be done?

Bans on drinking alcohol in public that are already in force in areas of St. Albans and Harpenden are shortly to be extended to the railway stations in both towns.

Within these areas a Police Officer, a British Transport Police Officer or a Police Community Support Officer can insist that a person stops drinking alcohol and hands over any alcohol in their possession. If they refuse they can be arrested and - if convicted in a Magistrates' Court - may be fined up to £500.

British Transport Police is committed to enforcing this legislation and will be patrolling St. Albans City and Harpenden railway stations in the evening to ensure that the travelling public are protected from drink-related anti-social behaviour.

Free kick!

Young footballers living in Sopwell are being given a chance to get off the streets and develop their football skills at Sopwell Youth Club in Cottonmill Lane.

The Kickit Goals for Kids initiative is open to players from seven to 11 years of age, and is run by professional coaches. Since it started in February 2006 the number of players has increased from four to 28.

The scheme is free and is intended to encourage healthy and active lifestyles and provide an alternative place to go other than playing on the streets.

As a result of its success it is hoped to extend the scheme throughout the St. Albans district. The aim is to ensure that young people - particularly those from deprived backgrounds - can afford to take part in the scheme and realise their potential, develop confidence and understand the role of a responsible citizen.

Sopwell has been identified as an area suffering higher deprivation than most areas in St. Albans.

Anyone who would like to get involved can call 01727 819566 for further information.

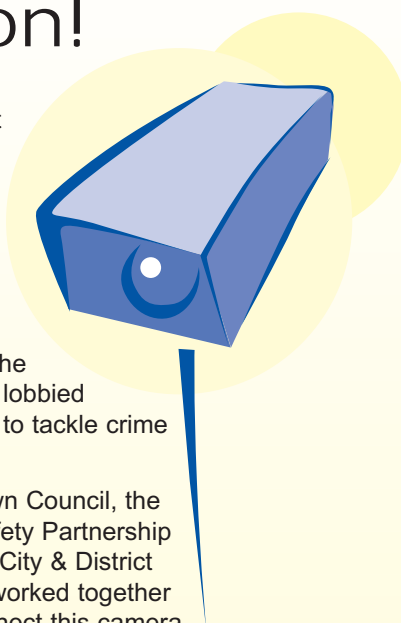
Right, camera, action!

The CCTV camera that is currently being installed in Sun Lane, Harpenden, completes the town centre coverage.

Businesses in the area have long lobbied for this camera to tackle crime in the area.

Harpenden Town Council, the Community Safety Partnership and St. Albans City & District Council, have worked together to buy and connect this camera to the existing CCTV network.

The Community Safety Partnership and Harpenden Town Council are also funding an upgrade to the CCTV camera in Rothamsted Park and improved lighting following several serious assaults over the last few months.



Useful numbers

- **Anti-social Behaviour Unit** (St. Albans City & District Council): 01727 819416/ 819566
Email: communitysafety@stalbans.gov.uk
Website: www.stalbanscsp.org.uk
- **Cleaner District Hotline** (for reporting abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, dog fouling, litter and dumped rubbish): 0845 125 8000
Email: a.cleanerdistrict@stalbans.gov.uk
Website: www.stalbans.gov.uk/acleanerdistrict
- **Crimestoppers**: 0800 555111
- **Drugs Intervention Programme** (Hertfordshire): 0800 652 3169
- **Domestic Violence Help Line**: 08088 088 088
- **Fire & Rescue Service** (Hertfordshire): 01727 818919
Email: stalbanscmdr@hertscc.gov.uk
Website: www.hertsdirect.org.uk/yrccouncil/hcc/fire
- **Frank** (national drug information line): 0800 77 66 00
Website: www.talktofrank.com
- **Police** (non-emergency): 0845 33 00 222
- **Police Crime Prevention Officer**: 01727 796020
- **Police Hate Crimes Officer**: 01727 796187
- **Police Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer**: 01727 796087
- **Primary Care Trust** (St. Albans & Harpenden): 01727 831219
- **Victim Support** (Central Area): 01707 354626
Email: vsherts.central@uk.uuimail.com
Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- **Youth Talk** (confidential counselling service): 01727 868684
Website: www.youthtalk.org.uk