

## Dorchester and District Crime Prevention Panel

The latest meeting of the DDCPP was held at Dorchester Police Station on 19th May 2004. This was also the AGM.

Mr Wally Gundry was re-elected unopposed as Chairman, and Councillor Alan Beard was elected as Vice-Chairman. Inspector Les Fry continues as Secretary.

The overall detection rate for our area has been 25.3%, compared to 32.2% for the Western Division as a whole. This low score was seen as an artifact of a large number of car crimes, since stemmed by two arrests made out-of-area. Violent crimes of all sorts are down in number, and Crossways is seen as a 'quiet area' in the Division. This quietude is in no small measure the result of excellent policing by our local Bobbie, PC Withers, and by intermittent patrols by his colleagues, very much welcomed by all law-abiding residents.

In other areas of Western Division, there have been several blatant examples of walk-in burglary, with one victim asleep in her front room as her purse was snatched in the middle of the night. DDCPP advice is for everyone to ensure their premises are secure before retiring for the night, as these burglars merely walk down a street trying doors until one opens for them.

Car crime in beauty spots is particularly prevalent, with thefts of valuables from vehicles occurring even where the goods have been secured in the boot. Police intelligence reports that these thieves sit and watch areas such as Puddletown Forest and Hardy's Monument, and observe people moving valuables to their boots. Our strong advice is, if you don't need it (camera/wallet/phone/etc) on the walk, then don't take it with you. It is not safe to assume that your car is a safe place for your property when parked in these remote beauty spots.

Speeding is one crime most people have been guilty of at one time or another, and there has been a lot of negative press coverage about safety traffic cameras, leading to the assumption that they are not welcomed in our area. The Dorset Safety Camera Partnership has issued comparison casualty figures which show a reduction in fatal accidents of 9.6%, in serious injuries of 10.4% and in slightly injured of 8.8% for the period January to December 2003 compared to the same period in 2002. In addition, Newsquest carried out 500 short attitude surveys across Dorset and found that 85% agreed cameras helped to reduce casualties, and 75% agreed that their primary aim was to save lives by encouraging drivers to stick to speed limits, whereas only 18% said they thought there were too many safety cameras in the area. These two reports show that the vast majority of people welcome the effect these cameras are having in controlling drivers' speeds and reducing casualties.

Other news is the rise in anti-social behaviour. To clarify matters, the definition of this is: 'A person is said to act in an anti-social manner if their actions cause, or are likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people who are not part of the same household as them' (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

For the future, it is planned to hold a post code marking session in Crossways, where you can get your garden equipment and implements, as well as other valuables like bikes engraved with your post code for free. Dorset Police advice is that theft of valuable gardening equipment is prevalent in the Western Division and that having your post code engraved onto these items allows them to be returned when discovered. The date and venue will be advertised in the Bridge and on the CPC noticeboards well in advance of the event.

We now have about 500 of the new Crime Prevention magazine and we will be posting them in a selection of households in the area. We will also put some in the library, the Tree Stores, the Surgery, and the Post Office for people to read and keep.

The next DDCPP meeting will be on 14th July 2004.