

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

10 November 2020

Report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

This report will provide an update of some of the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership.

1.1 Impact of COVID-19 on the work of the Community Safety Partnership

- 1.1.1 The COVID-19 epidemic has obviously had a major impact on the lives of everyone in the UK and it has also had an impact on crime levels both nationally and within the Borough. Crime data to the end of August 2020 (the latest data available) shows that there was a reduction in victim based crime of 7.8% (655 offences). We continue to see reductions in violent crime (-5.2%), burglaries (-15.1%) and vehicle crime (-18.1%). There has been an increase in drug offences (112 offences) but this could be due to there being less people around making it easier for the police to spot/catch drug dealers.
- 1.1.2 In relation to domestic abuse, the organisations who work in the borough are starting to see an increase in reports to their services as more people are able to access the support they need. DAVSS (the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Service) has seen 1,618 calls to its helpline (536 from Tonbridge & Malling residents) between June to September 2020. This is compared to 1,095 calls during the same period last year (361 from Tonbridge & Malling residents). There has also been an increase of 140 reports to the Police compared to the same period last year.
- 1.1.3 The Borough Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer has also seen an increase in the reporting of anti-social behaviour and this appears to be linked to more people being at home and increased complaints of noise, neighbour disputes etc. He is now able to start visiting people (ensuring that he is complying with social distancing guidance) and since August has dealt with 81 complaints. These vary from complaints around noise, garden boundary disputes, parking and abusive behaviour. Actions taken can vary from speaking to the people involved, involving Mediation to help resolve the issues or as a last resort issuing Community

Protection Warning Notices. These state the behaviour that the people should or should not do and provide an effective tool to help resolve an issue.

1.2 White Ribbon campaign

1.2.1 White Ribbon UK is a charity that is aiming to end male violence against women by engaging with men and boys to make a stand against violence. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.

1.2.2 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is signing up to become a White Ribbon Organisation and we are looking for men within our organisation (both staff and Members) who can become White Ribbon Ambassadors. These Ambassadors are male volunteers who engage with other men and boys to call out abusive and sexist behaviour among their friends, colleagues and communities to promote a culture of equality and respect.

1.2.3 As an Ambassador you would:

- act as a positive role model for other men and boys,
- actively reflect on your own behaviour and actions.
- promote the White Ribbon Campaign amongst your friends, colleagues and communities.
- work towards encouraging other people, especially men, to make the White Ribbon Promise.

1.2.4 Anyone interested in becoming an Ambassador would need to make the White Ribbon promise (available online) and there will also be some online training available which would also need to be completed once this is available.

1.2.5 Although the White Ribbon campaign aims to get men to sign up as Ambassadors, women can also be involved as White Ribbon Champions and their role is to encourage men and boys to take an active role in preventing male violence against women.

1.2.6 If any Members are interested in signing up as Ambassadors or Champions please let me know or alternatively I can provide further information if required. Further information is also available at

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/ambassadors-and-champions>

1.3 Funding for ACE programme

1.3.1 The Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership was recently successful in receiving funding from the Violence Reduction Unit to run an ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Programme in Tonbridge & Malling.

- 1.3.2 Adverse Childhood Experiences is a term to describe some of the most intense and frequently experienced sources of stress, such as abuse, neglect and other household dysfunction that children may suffer. These alter the development and functioning of the infant brain and can have a long-lasting and injurious impact, leading to negative health and social outcomes throughout a person's life. Understanding such mental and emotional trauma is key to understanding the behaviour of the children and families who we work with.
- 1.3.3 We will be working with the Angel Lane Community Interest Company to run the programme which will involve 16 professionals from a variety of organisations who work across the Borough. The programme, which will start in November, will provide three half day sessions, coaching and consultation with the aim of developing a local, multi-skilled delivery team dedicated to cascading knowledge and an awareness of the interrelated nature of crisis-led and prevention-focused work such as that around ACEs and trauma.
- 1.3.4 We hope that once the programme has been completed those who have attended will have a greater knowledge of the impact of ACEs on the people they are working with and that they will also be able to cascade this throughout their organisations.

1.4 Funding for knife campaign

- 1.4.1 We also received some funding from the Violence Reduction Unit to run a knife campaign across August and into September. Although knife crime is low in Tonbridge & Malling this was a county wide project and all areas were given funding to tackle the issue.
- 1.4.2 We worked with the Police on our campaign and agreed to run two 'days of action' in Snodland and Tonbridge whereby the Police did some knife sweeps (nothing was found), high visibility patrolling and in Tonbridge the Police linked in with British Transport Police at Tonbridge Railway Station. We were able to use the fund to purchase two sturdy pavement signs which we were able to use to advertise the work that was being carried out. We were also able to purchase keyrings and leaflets which were distributed during the two days. Although no knives were found, the campaign was useful to raise awareness with the public around the issue and the police did carry out a number of stop and searches.
- 1.4.3 We will continue to work with the Violence Reduction Unit to tackle violent crime and hope to keep figures in Tonbridge & Malling low.

1.5 Friends Against Scams

- 1.5.1 Friends Against Scams (FAS) is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative, which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams. The initiative has been running for four years and over half a million people have already completed a free scams awareness session.

1.5.2 If communities become more aware about scams they can potentially save a family member, or member of the community, an average of £3,000. Just by stopping someone from falling for scams.

1.5.3 Nationally:

- 53% of people over 65 have been targeted by scams
- Only 5% of scams are reported
- Friends Against Scams statistics indicate that the average scam victim has lost over £3,000
- Home Office research states vulnerable older adults defrauded in their own home are 2 ½ times more likely to either die or go into residential care within two years.

1.5.4 Friends Against Scams run free online training which they are encouraging people to sign up to so that they can spread information about scams to other, more vulnerable people within their communities. The training, which take approximately 15 minutes, is available at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/elearning/kent

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 None

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 Any funding requirements are provided through the Community Safety Partnership.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 All risk assessments are under taken as appropriate.

1.9 Policy Considerations

1.9.1 Community Safety

Background papers:

Nil

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