

# COACT Case Studies of the Christian Community impacting Crime Reduction

## **Barnstaple & Ilfracombe, Devon- Street Pastors & Prayer contributing to crime reduction**

Inspector Roger Bartlett, Devon & Cornwall Police writes (2012):

I have seen many direct answers to prayer in the work place - far too many to mention here. Recently a lady stood up in our church and shared her life story about how she had suffered from suicidal depression but how she was now, not only free from that, but how, every weekend as Street Pastor in North Devon, she 'sees answers to prayer every time she steps out onto the street' including many volatile and violent incidents that dissipate into nothing in front of her eyes as she prays. Devon & Cornwall currently has 400 Street Pastors and in Ilfracombe have impacted a reduction from 28% down to 6% in calls to police concerning anti social behaviour on Saturday nights 2200-0400hrs in the last 18 months.

For the last 6 years or so, I have reported to quarterly meetings of Christians from different churches in Barnstaple who want to pray for local policing issues. I have seen a number of specific answers to their prayers - like the unprecedented 'Halloween' night in the town when the police did not have to attend a single incident of disorder or the prolific serial dwelling burglar who, after a significant series of offences, was apprehended in very unusual circumstances within 3 days of that group praying that he would trip up and be caught.

In 2007, I asked the group to pray for the local detection rate, particularly in the Barnstaple Sector, which was at about 26% of total crime and one of the poorest in the force area. This meant that justice, in too many cases, was not being done.

Every quarter since that time, there has been an increase in that figure, despite reductions in the overall crime rate to the point that Barnstaple currently has a detection rate of just over 40% of total crime which is one of the highest in the country.

Of course that is down to some fantastic local policing, but the prayers I hear from Christians are for officers to be good at their job and implement practices that will lead to offenders being brought to account and victims seeing justice done. Clearly many who do not have the faith I have would say that this is just coincidence, but the increase in that figure is so marked that it is indeed 'some coincidence'. From my experience, the more I pray, the more 'coincidences' I seem to see.

Probably the most significant answer to prayer came following a request I made for prayer in April 2008. I presented to the group about a significant rise in Northern Devon of the number of casualties killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the roads and asked them to pray for this number to come down. The figures available for the previous years were: 91 - 85 - 66 - 71 and then in 2007/08 - 97.

At the end of 08/09 the KSi figure for the same area was 32 . Not only was this a 67% reduction on the previous year and a far greater fall than any other area of the force, it was also more than 50% lower than the next lowest annual figure locally (66). On this occasion, I am not sure we can make the same link between this reduction and just 'good police work' as the figure is well beyond the control of even the best traffic officers that I know! Is this another coincidence?

In any event, as the last BCU Commander for Plymouth (and a non-Christian) said after visiting such a prayer meeting 'Even if you don't personally believe, I was really moved that members of the public gave their own time to consciously support the police by praying specifically for the issues of concern to us as well as consider how else they might respond'.

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## Barnstaple & Ilfracombe, Devon- Street Pastors & Prayer contributing to crime reduction contd.

However, one final example I would give, I believe proves beyond any doubt that the Christian faith and prayer does have a direct impact on policing in 2010. It concerns a local pastor and friend of mine in Barnstaple who helps to run a well respected 'drop in' centre for those with chaotic lives [www.freedomtrust.org.uk](http://www.freedomtrust.org.uk) Some time back, that pastor committed himself to pray for the three most problematic visitors to the centre. All were heroin addicts and dealers and two of the highest harm causers in the area. Two of them had more than 130 convictions each for theft, burglary and other offences including firearms.

Now, the lives of those two have changed beyond recognition. One is employed by the local statutory drug support agency (EDP) as a harm reduction officer having been interviewed for the job by police officers. He has since married, has two young children and has become a trusted friend of mine. The other last year appeared on the ITV's 'Pride of Britain awards' where he was presented with the Prince's Trust young achiever award. This man now runs a local drug rehabilitation centre [www.houseofheroes.co.uk](http://www.houseofheroes.co.uk) which has a very high long term success rate where dozens of men have seen their lives transformed and an end to their offending. He too is now married with children and is also a trusted friend of mine. He and his wife are volunteer presenters of a course aimed at equipping parents to steer their kids away from the harmful use of drugs and I have presented with him to 300 school children about the dangers of drug use and consequences of a criminal lifestyle.

This has all happened in the last 5 years and the common factor in the story of both men is that THEY SAY their lives changed following a personal encounter with the living Jesus. Whether you believe their story or not, the simple fact is since that time, their offending has ceased. They are no longer creating more victims of crime, but making a positive contribution to life in Barnstaple.

Christianity was never forced on them. One tells how he sank to his knees in prison after hearing of the death of his best friend. The other prayed 'God, I don't even know if you are there, but if you are, you have to take this addiction away from me' and when he stood up he said he knew his addiction had gone. Whether you believe Christianity or not, the simple fact is that our communities would be SO much safer if the story of these two individuals was repeated.

## Appendix C1

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## Case Study Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Policing Team and a local church

In Cambridgeshire there is a fantastic example of how one church has embraced Co-Act in linking with their local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). This is what they have done:

- Church team and Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) team have met for discussions.
  - NPT teams have visited the various groups run by the church such as Pulse (the youth group)
  - NPT teams have been diarised to attend other church group events
  - Church members have been encouraged to sign up to "e-cops" (email system used by Cambs Constabulary to inform users of crime issues etc.)
  - NPT to prepare a monthly news insert for the church newsletter
  - Church are committed to prayer for the NPT and community
  - Church to make space available on internal notice boards for NT use
  - Church to allow the running of a NPT Neighbourhood panel meeting in the building
  - Church committed to maintaining the underpass, litter etc. in the South Bretton area
  - Church and NPT to work with council on sourcing "legal" graffiti space
  - Church to be involved in the "Street watch" initiative
  - NPT to contact local media regarding Co-act
- (Contact in Cambs: Beverley Makin [Cambridgeshire@CPAuk.net](mailto:Cambridgeshire@CPAuk.net) )

## Appendix C2

## **Northern Ireland- Active Listening Support Team**

### **Background**

In the early months of 2006, the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) in Cookstown, PSNI became aware that numerous vulnerable persons were repetitively featuring in police calls. A study was conducted that revealed a substantial amount of police time was being applied to assisting in cases of attempted suicide, domestic violence, self-harm and alcoholism. A further study was conducted to identify the availability of outside agencies to assist in dealing with these issues. In the vast majority of these agencies it was identified that demands placed upon them were such that they were already inundated with calls. Further, many only operated via appointments/referrals from general practitioners, which could take up to 3 months to be addressed. Following receipt of a call, it was not uncommon for the NPT to spend up to 3 hours at a time with a vulnerable person, this in itself having a significant impact upon everyday neighbourhood duties. Additionally, members of the NPT were conscious of raising unrealistic expectations of professional help that was outside of their remit to provide. A common theme identified in each of the instances quoted was: *'The people just wanted someone to listen to their problems'*.

### **Formation of Active Listening Teams**

An initial approach was made by the NPT to the District Policing Partnership (DPP), the members of whom expressed a desire to see the community working with the police to assist in their communities. The DPP highlighted a growing concern around suicide and the perceived lack of support available. This led to members of Cookstown NPT meeting with leaders of church and local community groups. It was quickly established that all involved were very keen to assist the police in dealing with vulnerable people. A request was subsequently made to the leaders of these groups to nominate an individual from their respective group who might be suitable to assist the police. Police interviews were subsequently arranged with these individuals, who also provided supporting references from church or community leaders. Each individual was vetted and provided with identification.

Although members were active within local churches, the team itself was non-denominational per se with all denominations represented. The Active Listening team for Cookstown comprises 18 members, with one member acting as co-ordinator/administrator. The scheme is supported by all local political groups and all local christian churches as well as the DPP. Support is also voiced by ACPO Neighbourhood Policing Lead Chief Constable Matt Baggott, CBE and at District Command level within the PSNI.

### **Case Histories**

There are many examples of incidents where Active Listeners have been able to support the police and thereby free up the time for officers to deal with other policing matters:

One such example concerned an emergency call where police found a young foreign national who had taken an overdose of heroin. It was ascertained that his girlfriend had left him and who had no accommodation, resulting in an attempted suicide. The man accepted the offer to be put in contact with the Active Listening Team. On their arrival he was still emotional and shaking but told them his story and said what a relief it was to be able to do so and for someone to spend the time listening to him. He expressed gratitude and was smiling when the Team left. 2 days later he had found himself a place to stay and had restored contact with his girlfriend.

Other similar references include: (see overleaf)

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Other similar references include:

- contact with a woman whose son had been killed in an RTC, where repeat visits and support have been provided
- liaison with a family coping with the effects of the anti-social behaviour of neighbours and culminating in a 14 year old son losing their hair through the stress. The family said they *'didn't have the strength to cope on their own'*
- supporting an alcoholic woman with five children suffering from depression and who lost the will to get out of bed in a morning. Arrangements were subsequently made for the children to be fed and for a crisis loan to be implemented
- attendance to a suicidal man on medication and alcohol where the Active Listeners were able to provide support by listening for three hours. On a follow-up visit it was ascertained that the man had found accommodation, had stopped drinking and had resumed painting

## Results and Analysis

Following an initial 6 month pilot advantages were seen and the perception of local officers was of an effective scheme. A sample of callers was reviewed by a police analyst that evidenced a large reduction in repeat calls from those concerned. In Cookstown alone and following more than 130 relevant calls, over 64 people have taken the opportunity to have contact with members of the Active Listening scheme.

It is estimated that 40 of the 64 were regular callers to the police, some making 3 calls for service per week. One caller (a gambler with suicidal tendencies) had previously made 25 calls to police, each taking approximately 1.5 to 2 hours for police to resolve. Since being referred to Active Listeners police have received no calls from the individual.

Following the successful implementation in Cookstown a similar team was established in Dungannon and this is already identified as achieving similar results.

## Summary

The Active Listening scheme has resulted in an extremely successful scheme where:

- vulnerable people have expressed gratitude for being put in contact with people who are able to take the time to listen in depth to their concerns
- local volunteers are able to fulfill their desire to put something back into the community by demonstrably showing care for those in need
- calls to police have been reduced but where received, police are able to refer callers to trained volunteers and thereby free officer time to deal with more crime-related issues

## Further Details

activelisting@hotmail.co.uk

# Appendix C3

## **Manchester – gun crime**

### **'Gunchester'**

David Ottewell

Manchester Evening News Headlines 29/ 1/2009

"MANCHESTER is on the brink of shedding its 'Gunchester' image for good after the astonishing success of a crackdown on the city's gangs.

Only THREE shots were fired by gangsters between Valentine's Day in February and December 31 last year compared to more than 10 times as many in 2007.

It is the first time since the height of Manchester's bloody street warfare in the early 1990s that entire months have passed in places like Moss Side without the sound of gunfire.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith will today travel to Manchester to hail the city's progress as an example to the rest of Britain - and pledge extra cash so the work can continue.

It comes exactly a year since the last fatal gang-related shooting in Greater Manchester - which prompted police to launch the crackdown, called Operation Cougar.

The total number of gunshots in the Metropolitan and Trafford divisions - the heart of gangland - fell from 62 in Feb-Dec 2007 to 19 in Feb-Dec 2008. The number that were gang-related dropped from 38 to three."

## **Halifax–Street Angels**

The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, Sir Norman Bettison, explains why 8,000 volunteers each year are joining Halifax's Street Angels to demonstrate God's kingdom as reality on the street:

'Street Angels is an initiative of Churches Together in Halifax and Halifax YMCA working on Friday and Saturday between 9pm and 3am. Based at the Fair-trade café on Crossley Street, volunteers wander the town and ensure the safety and protection of those who become vulnerable in any way. Halifax has seen a 42% reduction in violent crime over 2006. Street angels launched in Halifax in November 2005 in response by the church in the town to the problems on Friday and Saturday nights. Street Angels have assisted 2000 people. Following the success in Halifax, churches and police have formed partnerships launching Street Angels in Wakefield, Huddersfield, Manchester, and Harrogate with Bradford, Pontefract and Wetherby starting soon.'

Local police cite it as the main reason for a 40% drop in crime in the town centre. Street Angels received Duke of York's community initiative awards in October 2007, presented by HRH Prince Andrew at an Awards event in Conisburgh, Doncaster.

There are currently approximately 60 Street Angel schemes running across the UK and is open to people of all faiths or none. [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk)

### **Lincolnshire- Prayer Watch**

The Lincolnshire CPA have launched a “Prayer Watch” where police and Christian groups get e-mails alerting them to crimes in their area, allowing congregations to focus their prayers on specific incidents such as burglaries and violent attacks.

Lincolnshire road fatalities were increasing, and despite the best of intentions by the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership these annual figures were showing no signs of decrease. Lincolnshire was at the top of the league for road deaths per capita of population.

Brian Keel, Pastor of New Life Christian Fellowship, writes:

“ A small group of concerned people met because we sensed that as believers we could not just accept the present situation, but that we were being ‘encouraged by the Holy Spirit’ to do something. “Lincs to Prayer” started in 2002 and have been building up good relationships with their local police force and seeing results.”

Inspector Andy McManus, of Lincolnshire Christian Police Association, admitted he was expecting a sceptical response. *‘I know that praying can make a difference in my work, but it’s all a question of faith,’ he said.* He claimed winter casualty rates on the roads have been cut since the Bishop of Lincoln started blessing the council's fleet of gritting lorries. *‘We pray over the gritters in the winter and the casualty reduction rate has plummeted, it really has.’*

Police published these figures –

<u>Year</u>	<u>Killed / Seriously Injured</u>	<u>Fatalities</u>
2002	739	104
2003	630	104
2004	517	77
2005	442	69
2006	403	66
2007	424	79
2008	337	51

## **Bell Farm London- Housing Estate transformed**

Bell Farm is one of the many outer London housing estates built after the second world war to accommodate former residents of the heavily bombed East End. In the centre of the estate the developers left a piece of land for a church and community centre.

In the 1990's juvenile crime began to increase significantly on the Bell Farm estate. With a population of four thousand, a group of local young people decided that the area would be "their patch" to dominate. They began harassing shopkeepers, and intimidating local residents. Finally it escalated in to violence; young people prevented cars from driving down certain roads by standing on the roundabouts and jumping out in front of vehicles. They vandalised cars, set them on fire, threw bricks through house and church building windows and even made death threats.

The church community tried to resist the oppression; the Local Authority was lobbied, and an Initiative Group aimed to find a response to the situation. But the church congregation began to recognise the spiritual battle occurring in the community, the began to pray.

Forty days of prayer and fasting were organised, and in the weeks leading up to this harassment and attacks were as strong as ever, police were frequently called. However, in the middle of the forty days, the attacks against the centre subsided. Tony Pilkington (Pastor of a congregation at Bell Farm ([www.bfcc.org.uk](http://www.bfcc.org.uk)) says, **"Whereas before we could call the police to the centre several times in one week, in the year following the prayer and fasting we only called them twice."**

"After the forty days of prayer and fasting there was a really noticeable change in atmosphere. Whenever we used to return to the estate it was like there was a knot in your stomach, the oppression was almost smothering. There's no longer that feeling now."

As a specific answer to prayer, a Christian beat officer was appointed for the Bell Farm estate! "He became a tremendous support to us, as a church, and to many of us individually," says Tony, "and this was so clearly a blessing from God. It provided a very important personal link with the local police and the officer was able to support us in so many ways. We were also able to support the police and we began to pray for them."

Prayer alongside action became a vital part of counteracting the intimidation. At one point a small group met every evening for a week to prayer walk around the road where the main gang members lived. On the final evening, four groups stood on the corners surrounding the road and prayed. As they left some young people approached them and asked what they were doing. They shared that they were praying and the young people said: "Will you pray for us?"

Bell Farm Christian Centre became recognised by representatives from other agencies as having a role to play in responding to the needs of the local community. Tony comments; "Bell Farm Church was the only community building and group functioning on the estate." It was due to the strong reputation, relationships and respect that the Bell Farm community had built up at all levels, from local people to police officers and council executives.

What began as verbal abuse became sustained violence to people and property until ultimately the ring leaders were imprisoned and one family was evicted from the estate. The power of God through prayer has transformed this community.

## Surrey- Police challenge Churches

Redeeming Our Communities (Surrey) launched with prayer, worship and teaching on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. More than 200 people representing many churches from across the region gathered at Bookham Baptist Church to hear about plans for Hope 2008, pray for the region and hear about Redeeming Our Communities.

Assistant Chief Constable of Surrey Lynne Owens, herself a Christian – challenged churches to be more accessible and to work in partnership with the police for the benefit of all, praying for their local Neighbourhood teams and getting ‘clued up’ about crime. Lynne became North Surrey’s Divisional Commander in May 2003 and has worked within the Crime Management Division with responsibility for Criminal Justice, Major Crime Review, and project management of the Divisional Crime Investigation Teams.

Anthony Delaney writes:

*As a former police officer (10 years in GMP, plain clothes, B Division) I was brought to faith following an intense season of prayer by some guys in Salford who prayed for their local ‘nick’ every day (Cheetham Hill). At that time I became a Christian, as did my partner on the beat – he’s now a Det. Supt in GMP. I believe in prayer and that the police need prayer!*

*I want ROC Surrey to have the same kind of impact as it has had in Manchester. We are taking a local joint-church celebration and pushing it out on the streets!*

*We want to get to the stage where we have more input for prayer from Police/ civic leaders etc so we can pray with knowledge.*

*I am police chaplain for Guildford and a member of the Diversity Group. The ACC (Lynne) used to go to my previous church when in Kent. Her backing has made a big difference, though I’m finding Surrey very open now. There are some great guys in CPA here locally, and I’ve kept in touch with them over the years.*

## South Yorkshire-Cafes and Clear ups

Debra Green (ROC Director) and friend Wendy went to South Yorkshire in January 2007 at the invitation of a group of 9 churches and South Yorkshire police. Different ideas of how the church could support the police in community initiatives were presented. There was a presentation about redeeming Our Communities **and** a presentation from the police.

The police presentation by Richard Scholey, Rotherham South Safer Neighbourhood Inspector, addressed the improvements the residents of the Rother Valley would like to see in their local area. It also highlighted current problems, and how the church could get involved. Crime rates were raised as a concern, and the state of local roads. Residents expressed a desire to see the streets cleaned on a regular basis, and an increase in the activities available for teenagers in the area. Anti-social behaviour was a key concern as well as public drunkenness and the prevalence of abandoned vehicles.

The police emphasised their commitment to helping the community through mobilising partner agencies and co-ordinating activities. They were also keen to offer their problem solving expertise and to promote the church amongst the wider community.

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The churches were encouraged to contact the police and to be innovative in any new ideas as well as raising the profile of current projects. Unity and an outward perspective were also highlighted as key building blocks in the relationship between the police and the church.

Key in the South Yorkshire changes is South Yorkshire Police Special Constable Nichola Kirkham. Over the past year Nichola has worked on starting a Youth ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) Café in Dinnington which provides facilities and activities for more than 35 young people.

During the floods in June 2007 Nichola organised and helped look after children at Dinnington Comprehensive School for two days and was the first officer on a flooded Meadow Street in Dinnington. She also led a community clear-up day to transform some of the worst streets and gardens in Dinnington. More than 22 tonnes of rubbish were removed over the 5 clean-ups in total. **Nichola has now been awarded an MBE for her community work in the New Years Honours List!**

In January 2008, Richard Scholey wrote this:

*As a result of the meeting you attended we managed to pull several churches together to provide volunteers to staff a young person's cafe in Dinnington where facilities are sparse and youth problems are significant. The ROC Cafe (we borrowed the Redeeming Our Communities badge with permission!) opens each Monday evening between 7pm and 9.30pm. We are currently getting around thirty five kids in every Monday and it is beginning to have an impact on nuisance calls to the police on Monday nights.*

*There are plans to open on Wednesdays also, such is the success of the initiative. What's more, a second drop-in for young people is being opened this month in a neighbouring area of mine by another church group. We have also had interest from Worksop Police in Nottinghamshire who would like to provide something similar using their churches and I intend to use the model to extend the initiative to some of the other geographic areas under my command. Nichola and colleagues of hers from the Special Constabulary support the project by providing two officers for each session. This is enabling us to develop relationships with young people who are causing us a problem and to positively influence them. It also provides support and reassurance for the church volunteers.*

*Thank you so much for taking time out to address the meeting and provide inspiration for those present. I sense that there is still much more to come from this!*

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## Leicestershire- Neighbourhood Community Action

Superintendent Rob Nixon from Leicestershire Police reports;  
"In February 2008, Leicestershire Constabulary invited over 120 local prominent vicars to an event at Leicestershire Police Headquarters.

During the event we looked at two areas. Firstly, how we link in faith with everyday joint action and tasking at neighbourhood level. Effectively, each of our Districts and neighbourhoods has a Joint Action Forum attended by representatives of Police, Local Authority, Housing, Tenants Association and the vision, at that time, was to ensure that we had a faith representative starting principally with the Christian and Evangelical leaders. Since then, across the county nearly 80% of our Joint Action Groups now have a faith leader sit as part of that joint action group arrangement. How this works in principle is each of those Joint Action Groups gets information about emerging trends within the neighbourhood about hotspot locations, particular problems or, start to look at some of the seasonal challenges around things such as summer, alcohol, Halloween, bonfire, Christmas and collectively they look at which agency can do which tactic to improve confidence and tackle that problem, The faith leader will take way themes and then draw together goodwill from within their respective local church forums and volunteers will then engage with vulnerable and elderly people, taking involvement in environmental clean ups; a vast array of activities can be taken.

Throughout 2008, a series of weeks of actions where people from the Christian faith and different churches have drawn together with sponsored local community volunteers. One particular example is in Whetstone where we drew together 90 young children aged 14-16 with accompanying adults and they did a large amount of community activity such as fence painting, litter picking, environmental clean ups over one week. There was a huge amount of support from the local community.

The second area that we were looking to invest in was in the rollout of Street Pastors. The Constabulary has supplied some funding (but not all funding as this is matched funded by local churches) and effectively we now have 50 Street Pastors working in our City Centre working on a rotational basis. We have a further scheme at Westcotes. The scheme is now rolling out to Market Harborough, Melton, Ashby, Blaby and Hinckley.

We are drawing together all of the individual Street Pastor scheme leads with a view to establishing a sub-regional Street Pastors Steering Group which the Constabulary will support with some funding. The idea is that this then builds capacity."

DC Tony Gale of Leicestershire Police is Chair of the National Christian Police Association Council and is very keen to work with us on 'Redeeming Our Communities, Leicestershire'. Vic Allsop has recently been appointed as 'The County Ecumenical Development Officer' for Churches Together in Leicestershire and is also keen on 'Redeeming Our Communities' launching in Leicestershire. If you would like further information on Churches Together in Leicestershire please email Vic on [cedo@ctil.org.uk](mailto:cedo@ctil.org.uk).

Community projects are already underway in Leicester:

After the 2006 'Redeeming Our Communities' launch at the NEC in Birmingham, Nigel and Elaine Waterfield were inspired by the impact the project was having on the council estates in Manchester, so decided to start something similar on a smaller basis. They moved to Dupont Close and set up a project called the *Watering Hole*. Nigel and Elaine started by engaging with children from single parent families and took them on outings to the local zoo and park. Through doing this they started to build relationships with the children's parents and were able to support them, some of whom had problems with drugs, alcohol and debt. "As we began to engage with them and showed them the love of God they started to come to the Lord", and this continues to happen. The *Watering hole* hold street parties once or twice a year in Dupont Close, including a bouncy castle, a live Christian band, face paints and a barbeque. The main part of these street parties is for people to share there testimonies and tell others from their community how God has changed their lives. The Street parties are also used to build bridges between the community, the local police and the local council. This is just one project that is going on in our communities and it is making such a difference .

## Appendix C9