



Barnet Boroughwatch Re-launch

By John Dearing

Following the resignation of Joyce Thakur, Barnet Boroughwatch has been re-launched under the watchful eye of Paul Hammond. After 30 years in the police, Paul retired from the Met. last October, having spent 18 years of his service as an observer in the helicopter unit during which time he miraculously survived an air crash. (His injuries medically grounded him in 2000.)



Paul Hammond looks forward to success.
Photo supplied by Barnet Boroughwatch.

During his time in the Air Support Unit he helped develop the emerging technologies of heli-teli- and thermal imaging. Paul also took part in many notable incidents including the Libyan Embassy siege. He said "If you ever were able to bring yourself to watch *Police Camera Action*, you've probably heard my voice already."

An independent Partner
Barnet Boroughwatch

(BBW) is the association of Neighbourhood Watches (NWs) in the Borough of Barnet. It is a charitable committee funded by grants, particularly from the Bridge House Trust, part of the Corporation of London. As such it is independent of both Barnet Council and the Police, but Paul emphasised that its role is to work in partnership with both of these bodies. He is the administrator of BBW. He forms and manages

new NWs, provides support to NWs, manages communication between the police, the Council and NW co-ordinators, which extends to visiting NWs and attending some of their meetings. There are presently 620 NWs in Barnet and applications to start up new watches are arriving all the time.

Previously, Paul helped to develop the Ringmaster system in Barnet and now uses it to send out emails and telephone messages to NW coordinators and other groups involved.

Good neighbours

He says, "Shortly coordinators will receive from me a survey on perceptions of crime, on behalf of the police and council, and I have been assured that the results will indeed affect the way in which The Borough is policed in the future." Recently, Operation Ruby, aimed at reducing burglary and street crime, led to 119 arrests, of which 20 were for burglary or robbery.

Paul sees the most important role of NWs as promoting neighbourliness, as well as spreading information and advice about crime prevention, and monitoring and reporting suspicious behaviour in the neighbourhood.

He concludes "Although I have only been in the job since the end of January, it's been obvious to me that there is such support and help out there for Boroughwatch and I am already grateful."



Photo by John Dearing.

Clean up Your Act!

If you were in Cherry Tree Wood on Thursday 17 April, you may well have seen something for which many people have long been waiting. At the time of writing, Barnet's Youth Offending Team plan to have two graffiti vandals spending most of the day cleaning their mess off the pavilion and benches in the park.

Under a new initiative approved by the council's Cabinet, young people caught for graffiti offences will be sentenced to painting over their 'handiwork'. Future projects include the use of solvent-free graffiti removal kits. In a joined-up operation, any new graffiti will be reported so that the artist's tag or signature, which is always included, can be used to identify him (it is usually a male). Coordinator Bob Russell has plenty of these tags on record.

Though this reporting

will generally be made by the police and other officials, local people can do their bit to help. If you notice a new piece of graffiti, waste no time in reporting it to Geoff Hook at the Youth Offending Team on 020 8446 9996.

The First Police Community Support Officers hit Barnet

By Femke Van Iperen

Barnet has introduced its first PCSOs, who have started patrolling the streets this March. Acting as a visible presence and the eyes and ears of the police, it is hoped that the newly trained officers will make our streets a safer place to be.

Five new officers, who have been trained for four weeks, will carry out a new community role in Barnet in town centres and housing estates as an integral part of the police community team. They will control low-level crime such as anti-social behaviour, littering, alcohol consumption in prohibited areas and vandalism.

Chief Superintendent Sue Akers, Borough Commander, said, "I welcome our new Police Community Support Officers, whom I hope are the first of many. They are all really enthusiastic and I look forward to them assisting police officer colleagues to provide a visible reassurance to the local community."

The officers, who follow the first security officers that took to the streets last September in Westminster, will be based

at Golders Green and Whetstone Police Station. The police are aiming to introduce them across London and Barnet Borough is expected to receive two additional PCSOs in the coming weeks.

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