

POLICE NOTEBOOK

A RECENT REPORT says that crime has risen by 74 per cent over the last ten years, but the proportion solved has dropped from 37 to 26 per cent. Although figures can be interpreted in different ways, it would appear that police forces need to take the initiative from the criminals, perhaps switch tactics and stay one step ahead. Perhaps the police force should make more use of informants, or use more uniformed police officers to solve minor crimes freeing detectives to tackle serious crimes.

How much of a deterrent is the uniformed officer on the beat? How can it be measured? Are we trying to do too many jobs? Sixty per cent of an officers's shift is used up by traffic duties, routine paper work and keeping public order. The rest is spent fighting crime, with only one per cent allocated for preventing it. Over the last ten years, the variety of work covered by police forces throughout the country has increased dramatically. The volume of road vehicles and traffic legislation has risen sharply and at times almost needs a separate force to police it.

The police input at primary and secondary schools has also increased, unfortunately results are not immediately noticed. Although our society improves materially, extra stress is placed on individuals and families. We now receive many more domestic telephone calls, of which many concern violence. Should we just concentrate all our efforts on



Thames
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Police

preventing and detecting crime, leaving other organisations to respond to other problems? If the police is used in this way, then surely the contact between police and public will dramatically change and we may be seen as a force to fear rather than trust.

CRIME BUSTERS REVIEW

Witney Police area has started a COUNTRYWATCH scheme which forms a partnership between police, people, local government, industry, environmental and conservation agencies. Their aim is to reduce rural crime, public disorders and the illegal activities of New Age Travellers. Although the scheme is relatively new, over 500 farms have already joined and several landowners within my area have expressed interest.

Thames Valley Police have appointed Pc Hale of Carterton Police station as a liason officer who will explain the watch in more detail.

He can be contacted on 0235 776409 or 776410. This scheme does not replace or compete with existing Neighbourhood Watches.

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