

# **THE TILLEY AWARD**

**CATEGORY - CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION**

**PROJECT - DALBEATTIE YOUTH INITIATIVE**

**OooOooO**

P.O.P. OPERATOR - Constable Butcher, Dalbeattie Police Office  
P.O.P. MANAGER - Sergeant Kelly, Dalbeattie Police Office

## PROJECT TITLE - DALBEATTIE YOUTH INITIATIVE

During the summer of 2000 the town of Dalbeattie experienced numerous problems, most of which related to incidences of youth disorder, anti-social behaviour and thefts.

The problems varied from under-age drinking to vandalism and disturbances of the peace to thefts of vehicles.

Large groups of youths would hang about the main streets creating an atmosphere of intimidation towards others whilst a certain element turned their attention to crime.

This behaviour affected both locals and visitors alike and a bad impression of the town was created. This was highlighted in local newspaper and television articles.

On ascertaining that a problem existed it was necessary to analyse it with evidence from several sources so that an appropriate response could be initiated. The analysis was carried out on the Incident Management System used by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary together with the Force Crime Statistics.

In addition to this, consultation with both the public and other concerned agencies was carried out so as to ensure that all relevant persons contributed to the analysis.

Having analysed the problem, it was concluded that at the core of the problem, was the fact that there were insufficient youth resources and activities in the town. This had led to persons becoming bored and disillusioned and resorting to the behaviour previously outlined.

In providing a response to the problems it was clear that short, medium and long term solutions had to be developed and that it was not only a "Police Problem".

The use of a co-ordinated response from a number of agencies/groups resulted in targeting the problem from all angles and a feeling from all involved that the problem was being addressed.

In the short term the incidents of youth disorder, anti-social behaviour and thefts were targeted by enforcement. The response in the medium term was addressed by providing additional resources and activities in the town or by providing the means to attend such activities outwith the town so that persons had a better quality of life and did not resort to such behaviour. In the long term the response is to provide resources and activities in the town which will be utilised by all age groups and prevent any recurrence.

Lastly analysis and assessment has taken place so the impact the response has had on the problems to date can be measured. This again was carried out, on the Force Management/Statistical Systems.

# **THE TILLEY AWARD**

**CATEGORY - CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION**

**PROJECT - DALBEATTIE YOUTH INITIATIVE**

**OooOooO**

P.O.P. OPERATOR - Constable Butcher, balbeattie Police Office

P.O.P. MANAGER - Sergeant Kelly, balbeattie Police Office

balbeattie is a town situated in the Stewartry District of Dumfries and Galloway Region in the Southwest of Scotland.

The town has a population of approximately 5,000 people, making it the fourth largest town in the whole of Dumfries and Galloway. The local High School has a total of 400 pupils, the majority of whom live in the town itself.

The Police Station in Dalbeattie is located in one of the main streets and is staffed by a Police Sergeant, 7 Police Constables, 1 Community Police Constable and 1 Civilian Support Staff.

In the past the area's employment bases have been in agriculture, forestry, tourism and local industry.

Recently the industrial base has decreased dramatically with two of the three main employers in the town moving their operations elsewhere. The local quarry has also just announced that it is to close with the loss of further jobs. Because of this, unemployment in the area has risen to twice the national average.

The high rate of unemployment in the town is a great concern for the residents, be they young or old, and a general air of depression has been created because of this.

During the summer months of 2000 the town of balbeattie experienced numerous problems, most of which related to incidences of youth disorder, anti-social behaviour and thefts. This ranged from under-age drinking to vandalism and disturbances of the peace to thefts of vehicles. Large groups of youths would hang about the main streets of the town creating an atmosphere of intimidation towards others whilst a certain element turned their attention to committing crimes.

This behaviour affected both locals and visitors alike and created a bad impression of the town. These problems were also highlighted in the local newspapers and on Border Television, one reporter asking the question - "Is this the town with attitude?" - implying that the wrong attitude was prevalent in the town of balbeattie.

The Police in the town, because of this upsurge in unruly behaviour, noted an unhealthy increase in both the number of crimes and the number of incidents reported to them.

On analysing these increases on the Force Crime Statistics and the Incident Management System used by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, it could be seen that -

Reported Crime had risen to a peak of 50 complaints in August 2000 - GROUP 1 - 6 CRIMES - Appendix A

Reported Thefts and Attempts had risen to a peak of 27 complaints in August 2000 - GROUP 3 CRIMES - Appendix B

Reports of Incidents of Street Disorder had risen to 212 complaints during the period May 2000 until August 2000 (inclusive) - IMAGE - Appendix C

The attached appendices show how these figures relate to the normal reports received at Dalbeattie Police *Office*.

Because these rises were very noticeable to the public as well as the Police in a town of this size, many residents became very concerned at what was happening and expressed their feelings to both the Police and their local Community Councillors. Other agencies also brought their experiences to the Police - further identifying the problems the Police had found as a result of their analysis.

On analysing the information gleaned from the systems used by the Police, the reports made by members of the public and the problems encountered by other agencies, a full picture of the situation began to be built up. This showed that the main problems were -

- (a) Youth Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour - this consisted of youths gathering in the streets of the town in large groups, causing members of the public to be intimidated and fearful of them. Whilst in these groups the youths would behave in an unruly manner, commit breaches of the peace and assaults.

- (b) Under-Age Drinking - youths would obtain alcohol **from** licensed premises in the town and after **consuming** it they would behave in an unacceptable manner, causing annoyance and disturbance to responsible members of the public.
- (c) Thefts - these thefts were of and from vehicles and properties in the town. The articles stolen ranged from vehicles to money and household goods to garden equipment.
- (d) Litter - this occurred in all areas of the town but was particularly prevalent in Colliston Park and the High Street.
- (e) Boy Racers - these **youths would** drive about the town in an irresponsible manner, causing local residents to be fearful that they would be involved in or cause an accident. Their manner of driving also caused annoyance to any responsible person who was in the area at that time.
- (f) Vandalism - this occurred in all areas of the town.

As can be seen the problems were wide ranging and affected *many* different types of people in the community. The analysis was also able to show that the majority of the crimes/incidents took place between 7 p.m. and the early hours of the morning and occurred generally at weekends.

As well as interrogating the Force Crime Statistics and the Incident Management System, the Community Police Constable - Constable Butcher, sought the views and experiences of the other Police Officers working in the town. They expanded on the already known information, giving thoughts and insights that computer systems could not convey.

Constable Butcher, who, having identified the areas in the town where the majority of incidents had taken place, visited residents there in order to glean any further useful information.

This was done, not only as a means of getting extra information to analyse the problems, but also to get a more rounded picture of what was happening in the town. These further enquiries revealed that on some occasions incidents were ,not even being reported.

A large-scale inter-agency public meeting was held in the Town Hall. This meeting was called to discuss the problems the town was experiencing and possible remedies to the situation. The meeting was attended by representatives from Youth Groups/Clubs, the Rotary Club, local High School, Community Council and Regional Council, Police, Social Work and members of the public.

In the open forum of the meeting all the relevant issues were discussed and opinions given as to the cause of the problems and to possible solutions.

There were many interesting comments made at the meeting but one clear factor became obvious and this was the fact that there were not enough facilities provided for the youth as regards leisure and other activities that could occupy their time. In essence the youth were becoming bored and disillusioned and resorted to the types of unacceptable behaviour previously described to occupy/entertain themselves. This factor was particularly highlighted by the youth at the meeting.

The occurrence of the problems at this particular juncture 'is believed to be directly related to the rise in unemployment in the town. The resultant effect of the job losses meant that many families had limited disposable income and as money became tighter, so pocket money decreased. The youth; unable to fund visits to nearby towns where there are entertainment and leisure activities, remained in balbeattie with nothing to do and, to .relieve their boredom, adopted modes of unacceptable behaviour.

Further analysis consisted of speaking to accused persons as to the reasons why they were committing crime. This also proved fruitful. Many of those spoken to talked of carrying out these crimes because of boredom and indeed the instances of car theft were carried out just for thrills with the thieves having no intention of keeping the vehicles.

Analysis of the locations where these incidents/crimes occurred was also seen to be important in ascertaining if any of the features of the various locations contributed to the problem. Referring to the areas previously mentioned, site visits were carried out by both Constable Butcher and



Crime Prevention Officers in order that they were fully aware of all the features at each location.

Their main findings were -

- (a) The area of the High Street was found to have various entrances whereby persons could hang about in doorways, protected from sight. One particular case being the alleyway at the side of the Crown Hotel where groups congregating would carry out acts of vandalism and leave smashed glass bottles.
- (b) The area of Birchgrove, a secure housing accommodation development for old age pensioners, sits adjacent to a children's play park which again attracts young persons to that area. The area is not well lit and is secluded to the extent that vandalism can take place without the culprits being seen.
- (c) The location of Colliston Park again suffers from a distinct lack of lighting. This allows under-age drinking to take place unseen and also allows the dropping of bottles and litter. The park has multiple exits and wide open spaces which allow the offenders to watch the Police arriving and then make their escape before they are intercepted. A caravan park adjoins the main Colliston Park and during the holiday period many of the tourists have been disturbed by the yobbish behaviour of the local youths who have caused annoyance to them and disturbed their peace.
- (d) David Road is a residential street in Dalbeattie with council owned housing. The lighting in the area is poor and there are numerous alleys running off the street. Children congregate in the street because it is a 'no through' road but because there is nothing for them to do *they* carry out acts of vandalism, become mischievous and cause annoyance and disturbance to the residents.

The analysis also showed that the incidences of theft of both cars and their contents, the thefts from sheds and garages had taken place when many of the vehicles and properties *were* left insecure.

Previously such an increase in crime and disorder would have been dealt with purely by increasing the number of patrols in the areas without looking at the cause of the problems or for a longer term solution.

However, having previously developed Problem Orientated Policing' plans in areas of the town that had individual problems, it was felt that such a plan could have a more measured effect on the crimes and incidents occurring in the whole town. The plan would also hopefully provide solutions to the problems thereby preventing their recurrence.

The need existing in balbeattie was therefore to not only reduce the incidences of crime and disorder in the town but also to provide young people with activities and resources that would take them away from this trend of unacceptable behaviour.

Having identified and defined the problems of balbeattie it was clear that a response to the problems had to take into account various different aspects.

A limited response which just addressed the crime and disorder element of the problem and not its root causes would not be effective in the long term and the underlying problems would still remain.

Realising that a short, medium and long term response was needed provided everyone with a starting point.

In the short term the response carried out by the Police was -

- (a) High profile street patrols were implemented in the various target areas of the town, namely, High Street, Colliston Park, Birchgrove and bavid Road, together with other areas. It was felt that part of the response was to make the public feel safer and by seeing Police Officers in their neighbourhood, the fear of crime would be reduced. A patrol log was implemented for each area encouraging officers to, visit these locations at particular times to

ascertain if any problems were occurring and also, on returning to the station, recording the times of the visits and any problems encountered. This was useful for evaluation at later stages of the plan and keeping officers updated.

Offenders detected committing offences by the Police, or behaving in an unacceptable manner, were either reported for the relevant offences or warned regarding their behaviour.

Where such a person was found to be under 16 years of age they were either reported to the Children's Reporter or a Juvenile Warning Letter was sent to their parents advising them of the incident. This issuing of a Juvenile Warning Letter often made parents aware of their child's unruly behaviour, enabling them to take more responsibility for the child's actions before they deteriorated further.

- (b) The use of the CCTV system recently fitted in the town of Balbeattie increased. The system was already used to good effect but its use was further extended to target offenders and identify those responsible for petty crimes committed, and for identifying those responsible for incidences of disorder. At problem times Civilian Support Staff manned the controls of the CCTV system when otherwise the station would be unmanned. The movement of these cameras indicated that the streets were being monitored and because of this the youth of the town became aware of this fact and this deterred them from committing any of the aforesaid criminal acts.
- (c) In relation to the incidents which occurred in Coniston Park, Balbeattie, the Divisional Mobile Police Office, at varying times, parked up within the confines of the park and maintained a high profile Police presence. This presence deterred any outbreaks of unruly behaviour in the area, prevented any acts of vandalism and litter being dropped and gave responsible members of the public frequenting the park a degree of reassurance.

- (d) In relation to the incidences of irresponsible driving, speeding and the committing of other driving offences in the town, assistance was obtained for the local officers from the Mobile Support Group. The Mobile Support Group carried out patrols in both marked and unmarked Police patrol cars and these officers targeted the various areas of the town where analysis had shown that the majority of these offences were being committed.
- (e) With the noticeable increase in crime in Dalbeattie it was decided that the crimes should all be collated and investigated by an experienced **officer from** the town assisted by an **officer** from the Crime Management Services. This ensured that the crimes were all fully investigated and the best possible result for the Police was obtained in relation to each crime enquiry. This action was decided upon when initial enquiries had shown that the majority of the crimes had been committed by a small group of offenders.
- (f) In relation to under-age drinking, high visibility patrols were carried out in all of the licensed premises within the town in an **effort to** deter the youth from visiting these premises or persuading older youths to purchase alcohol for them. Further to this each off-sales premises was targeted by the Police because they were suspected of being the main source from which under-age persons were obtaining alcohol. Following these Police visits many of these premises set up a minimum age limit of 21 years for persons purchasing alcohol so that staff were entirely sure that no under-age persons were served. A 'Proof of Age Card' scheme has also been discussed to assist licensees in their efforts to confirm the ages of youths purchasing alcohol.

In relation to other agencies involved in the short term response the following occurred -

- (a) The local District Council erected new signs in Colliston Park highlighting the fact that no drinking of alcohol was allowed within its confines.

- (b) Following on the lead of the other main towns in the region the local Councillors were approached by the Police with a view to them commencing discussions which would lead to an application being made for a local by-law to prevent drinking in public within the area of the town.
- (c) To address the problems of litter and the gathering of unruly groups within the Colliston Park area, the Birchgrove and the David Road areas, the Council were approached by the Police to provide more waste bins in the park and increased lighting in all areas including the caravan park. The park caretaker was also liaised with so that any incidents were reported directly to the Police as soon as they had occurred. Although increased lighting could not be provided in all of the areas highlighted by the Police new lighting was provided in the caravan park as part of its redevelopment.
- (d) The media published crime prevention messages in the local newspaper regarding residents of the town leaving their vehicles and properties insecure in an effort to publicise this unacceptable trend. They also assisted greatly by running a feature in the local newspaper picturing and describing items of property which were recovered by the Police, suspected of being stolen, but could not be identified. This input proved to be of great assistance to the officers investigating the incidences of crime in the town.

The above actions had an immediate effect on the problem and resulted in -

- (a) A hard core of eight youths in the town being reported for numerous crimes relating to thefts and attempted thefts of vehicles, thefts from vehicles, thefts from sheds and garage premises, wilful fireraising, Police assault, resist arrest, obstruction, attempt to pervert the course of justice, breach of the peace, drugs, firearm, bail and road traffic offences.

- (b) A number of other residents of the town being reported for breach of the peace, assault, Police assault, resist arrest, obstruction, attempt to pervert the course of justice and drugs offences.
- (c) A quantity of alcohol being seized under the Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Act 1997 - Confiscation of Alcohol and a number of persons were warned regarding drinking alcohol in Colliston Park, breach of the peace and disorderly conduct.
- (d) 'Boy racers' being reported for instances of reckless and careless driving, speeding offences, lighting offences and offences under the Vehicle Excise Act.

These detections were highlighted in the local Press to ensure that the public were fully aware that the Police action was addressing their concerns and after a short period of time the local **officers** were **stopped** by responsible members of the community and thanked for their efforts to date.

Whilst this course of action had an immediate effect, and produced instant results, the level of Police activity in the town to achieve it was high.

In order that a response for the medium and long term. could be discussed, a further meeting was held at Dalbeattie Police Office and this was attended by local Community **Councillors**, staff from the local High School, Community Resources, Police and the media.

At this meeting it was realised that an initiative needed to be started in the town to promote the best interests of Dalbeattie and address the lack of activities and facilities for the youth.

It was realised at an early stage that to be successful the initiative needed to be comprised of representatives of groups in the town combined with a strong contingent of young people from both the local High School and the youth of the town who have left the school.

This initiative was **formed** and was known as the "Dalbeattie Youth Initiative" and as a result of their work, the work of the agencies concerned at addressing the problems in the town and efforts made by members of the public who volunteered their services, the following was achieved in the medium term -

- (a) Under 18 discos were held in the Town Hall. To ensure that such events had sufficient financial backing they were supported by the local Rotary Club and to keep overhead costs to a minimum they were stewarded by volunteers and off-duty Police Officers.
- (b) The local Rotary Club offered to arrange bus trips to activity centres outwith the town.
- (c) A part-time youth worker was appointed and a Youth Club/Drop-In Centre is now held two nights a week in the Lesser Town Hall. Donations of equipment such as a pool table have been made to the club by members of the public keen to see it be a success.

The Police, recognising the fact that the problem required to be fully addressed in the medium term contributed in the following ways -

- (a) Organised a Motorsport Night - this evening was organised to break down the barriers between the 'boy racers' and the Police and show that they have a common interest in motoring.

A number of Police Officers in the area actually compete in motorsport events and the evening comprised of a motorsport quiz, a talk on motorsport and how to get involved in it, a competition which allowed the boy racers in attendance to compete on a simulated rally stage, a display of motorsport paraphernalia and details of motorsport events and activities in which they could participate.

Prizes of discounted karting vouchers were awarded to the winners of the quiz and the simulated rally stage and these vouchers were used by the winners at a karting event

organised by the Police in November 2000. This event again proved to be useful in forging links between the 'boy racers' and the Police because it was the sharing of a common interest and totally different from the circumstances in which they normally meet.

- (b) Constable Butcher carried out school talks on the subject - "Unhealthy Lifestyles Through Under-Age Drinking" - in an effort to educate the youth and prevent them from participating in such behaviour.
- (c) A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme was set up in the David Road area of the town and this gave the people in this area a greater feeling of "community".
- (d) Because the Dalbeattie Youth Initiative/Youth Club had no funding/finances whatsoever, an application was made by the Police to the Stewartry Area Committee in relation to the "Allocation of Policy Headroom Funding" in order that the youth could further their aims. As a result of this application £2,000 was obtained for the Initiative/Club.
- (e) The Police obtained a refurbished computer for the Dalbeattie Youth Initiative/Club and this was donated to them so that it could be used for research. At an early stage it was identified that some of the youth had a total lack of knowledge/information as to what was available to them and at the earlier meetings the creation of an index giving such information was discussed. With now having the use of this computer the youth can access the Regional Council Database for information on local clubs and activities, clubs and activities elsewhere in the region and obtain information on clubs and activities outwith the area via the Internet.

On the part of the Dalbeattie Youth Initiative/Youth Club, how they progress and develop will be dependent on what finance they can raise through funding bids, sponsorship and fund raising events or what assistance they obtain through their local councils. Should *they* be



successful in their efforts the youth have discussed making the following their main objectives -

- (a) A Youth Centre/Drop-In Cafe. This would be in their own premises as opposed to the present arrangement in the Lesser Town Hall which limits their access to certain times/days and does not allow them to "make it their own", and,
- (b) Construct a BMX/Skateboard Park.

Also in the long term there is a **proposed** development of a community/school project. This **development** would take place at the local High School and result in the construction of a new games/sports hall, which incorporates a viewing gallery, a gym/weight training area, a climbing wall, aerobics studio and a cafeteria. Because the town suffers so badly from a total lack of facilities the development is receiving widespread support from, persons associated with the town, including the Police. Should this project reach fruition it is felt that it will become a focus for the whole community and be a regular meeting place. With the different age groups/social backgrounds of the people using the facility it would only lead to better relationships and links being forged between them.

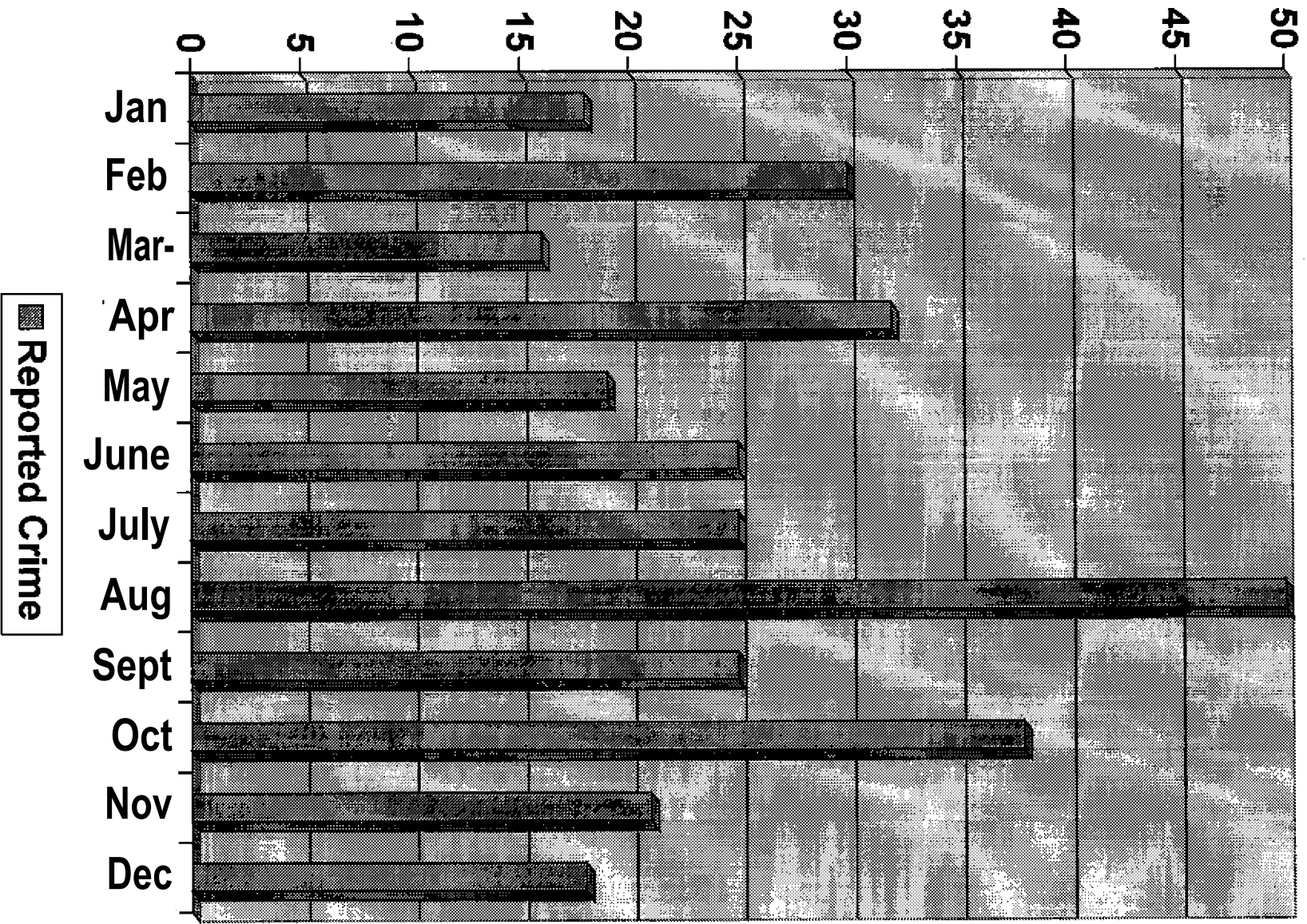
With the work carried out by the Police and other agencies in the short and medium term the incidents of crime and disorder in the town of Dalbeattie have dropped significantly. This reduction can be seen in the statistics contained in the attached appendices and returns the figures to a more acceptable and normal level.

In conclusion, during the summer months of 2000 the residents of Dalbeattie suffered because of the criminal activities and the unruly/anti-social behaviour of a certain minority of its youth. By addressing this issue through a "Problem Orientated Policing" plan not only have these problems been addressed, but with the implementation of the plans currently being progressed, it is hoped that such problems will never recur.

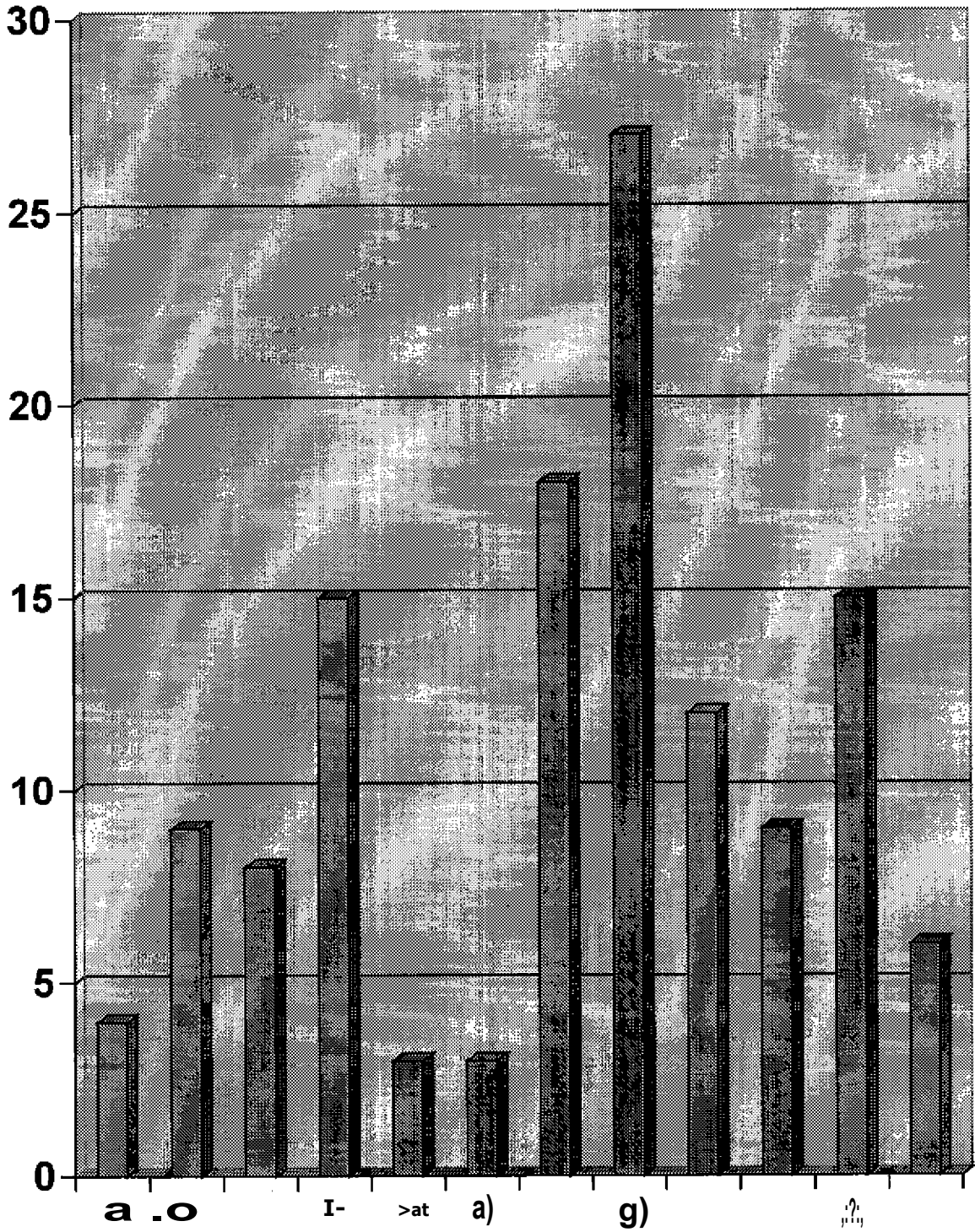
As previously mentioned in this report, before solutions had been sought to address Dalbeattie's **problems**, a reporter described the town - (in a derogatory fashion) - as "the town with attitude".

With all the **good** work being done in Dalbeattie by all **of** the community it is hoped that the **town** can **now** be **known** as "the **town** with attitude - the right attitude".

§ 81X A - Group 1 to 6 Cr §  
Year 2000.

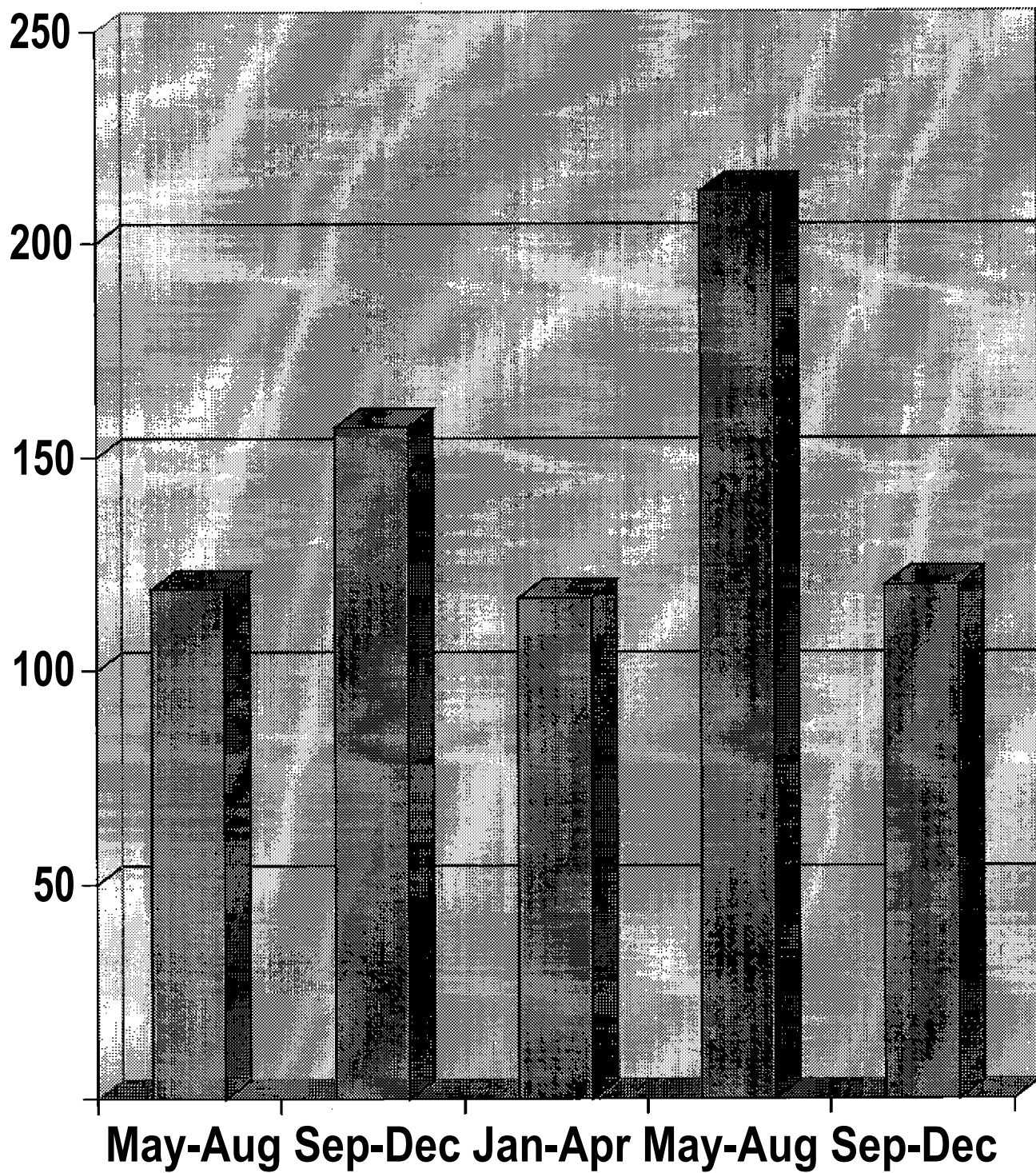


## Appendix B - Group 3 Crimes - Year 2000.



Reported Crime

## Appendix C - Incidents of Street Disorder 1999-2000.



Incidents of Street Disorder