

Tilley Award 2005

Application form

The following form must be completed in full. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

Please send completed application forms to Tricia Perkins at patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on the 29 April 2005. Entries received after that date will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262.

1. Details of application

Title of the project:

Operation Deter

Name of force/agency/CDRP:

Lancashire Constabulary

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors):

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Julia Hodson

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Acting Deputy Chief Constable

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

**Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters
PO Box 77,
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2. Summary of application

Summary

Beacon Fell is a visitor attraction owned by Lancashire County Council and was designated a country park in 1969. It is situated in the Parish of Goosnargh; 15 miles from Preston and 8 miles from Longridge. The area consists of 271sq acres of wooded land with public rights of way. An information centre, café and toilet block offer a service to over 320,000 visitors per year.

Access to the Fell is gained via narrow country lanes and a circular, single-track, one-way road encircles the Fell. This road has a curfew on it that prevents vehicles using it between 10pm and 6am every night. Eleven car parks are situated on the Fell and a Ranger covers the area. Due to its isolation and its layout, the Fell is very vulnerable.

Beacon Fell has historically been used as a 'car cruise' location where groups of vehicles meet to hold parties. It has been advertised on the internet as a site to race vehicles and also to meet other persons for 'Dogging' sexual encounters. Many of the illegal visitors were found to have drugs in their possession. The car parks are secluded and unlit and vehicles were regularly being broken into or being found burnt out after being stolen from other parts of the County. The buildings on the Fell were being targeted; burglaries and damage to them was a regular occurrence. Most of these offences were being committed during the curfew hours.

Operation Deter became a partnership approach to achieve:

- A reduction of the incidence and cost of criminal damage and burglary at the amenities,
- Improved road user behaviour and a reduction in the number of vehicle curfew offenders,
- A reduction in vehicle crime,
- Reassurance to visitors, by installing crime prevention and security measures,
- A reduction of poor media campaigns highlighting 'dogging' sex offences.

This enabled:

- The agencies to provide each other with support and provide high visibility patrols reducing the number of offenders,
- Community engagement and the opportunities to consult with residents of local villages, agencies and visitors,
- Attracted funding for security lighting, signage, shutters, barriers and CCTV,
- A partnership approach to permanently close negative publicity Internet sites.

Operation Deter created partnerships that reduced crime, improved the security to buildings and car parks, reduced curfew offenders, increased public satisfaction, closed down internet sites and highlighted Beacon Fells' positive qualities.

3. Description of project

Operation Deter

SCANNING – Identification of the Problem

Data was gathered from several sources to identify the problems of crime and anti social behaviour on Beacon Fell.

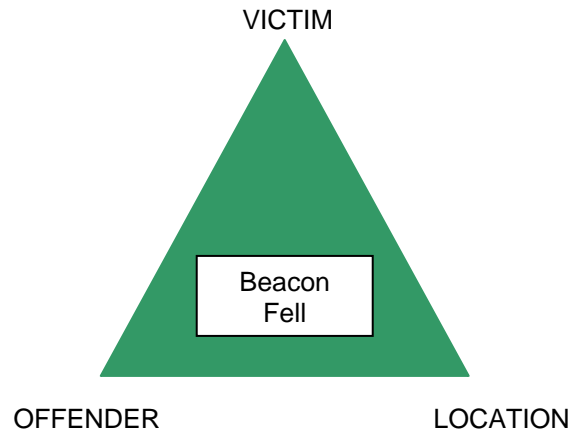
- Local Police surgeries and Neighbourhood Watch meetings were held to collect important verbal concerns from local residents,
- Letters from residents to the Police and the Lancashire County Council outlining the problems were assembled,
- Visitors comments logged in a book at the Visitors Centre were examined,
- Police SLEUTH and INTL systems were interrogated plus Community Beat Officers identified problems whilst out on patrol,
- Preston City Council Cleansing Department gave information about the time that they spent on the Fell removing burnt out vehicles, litter and fly tipping,
- A consultation paper funded by the Countryside Agency was distributed to each of the 910 households in the Parish,
- Reports from Wildlife Agencies on endangered species, poaching and the Biological Heritage Site were scrutinised, and
- Internet sites advertising 'dogging', 'swinging' and 'race track' events were explored.

On consultation with these agencies and groups it became apparent that there were numerous issues that needed consideration with a view to reducing several types of crime and anti social behaviour. The main problem areas at this stage were considered to be:

- Size and layout of the site
- Rural location making the Fell both isolated and vulnerable
- Lack of security measures
- Funding for initiatives
- Historically known as an area that was left alone by the Police and therefore used as a meeting place for car cruises
- Public rights of way around and across the Fell
- Visitors Centre
- Secluded car parks
- 24 hour toilet block

ANALYSIS

Using the information from the previously mentioned sources and utilising the Problem Analysis Triangle, it was established that all three-core areas could be improved and closer exploration was undertaken.



Location

- The Fell is open to pedestrians 24 hours per day, every day of the year. Even though the curfew prevents vehicular access between 10 pm and 6am there are no physical barriers to prevent this; signs leading up to the Fell are the only form of prevention.
- The Visitor Centre was opened in 1995 and is open during the day. There are no security measures at all making it vulnerable. Cash is handled on the premises and often there is only one member of staff working alone in an isolated location.
- The toilets are open 24 hours per day and secluded; hidden by trees.
- The road has a National speed limit on it but is only a single track, has sharp bends with steep sides into forests, and is a one-way system.
- The 11 car parks are open air and secluded. They are linked to the circular road, have no lighting and no barriers and are accessible at all times.
- The site is rich in wildlife and a Biological Heritage Site exists on the Fell, both of which are vulnerable to human impact

Victim

- The Ranger who lives and works on the site is vulnerable as often the vehicles have groups on board and meet up with others. The Fell has no lighting and Health and Safety issues are a concern.
- Local village residents complain about speeding, noisy vehicles passing their properties and in the Parish Plan consultation 86% felt that the fear of crime affected their daily lives. The amount of traffic travelling through the villages during the hours of darkness caused the most concern. It also revealed that the existing travel calming measures and enforcement were inadequate especially overnight.
- Local farmers fear for the safety of their property and livestock.
- The site has over 150 protected species on it and these are also victims when abused by users.
- Preston City Council provide cleansing staff that put themselves at risk when removing burnt out vehicles.
- Car owners leaving their vehicles whilst using the Fell in the day to return to find that they had been broken into and the owners of vehicles from outside the area who are having their vehicles stolen.
- The taxpayers having to pay for resources and repairs.
- On speaking to visitors the majority were unaware of the problems on the Fell. Only 12% of the 100 visitors spoken to stated they had witnessed any form of crime occurring on the Fell. Of these, 10 of the persons stated they visited the Fell at least once per week. School groups visiting the Fell should be learning how to look after their environment but are instead seeing eyesores and following poor role model examples.
- The emergency services spend time getting to incidents and dealing with them; often alone and occasionally in unmarked vehicles. In 2003 the Police dealt with 80 incidents on the Fell. Local Officers dealt with 50% of these incidents but the remaining times Officers were being sent to the Fell from Fulwood, some 30 minutes away from the area.

Offender

- Vehicle curfew offenders are counted by a ticker counter that shows the number of vehicles breaching the curfew on an hourly basis. In 2003 an average of 23 vehicles breached the curfew each Saturday night.
- Persons involved in sexual activities being promoted on Internet sites about Beacon Fell. 'Dogging' and 'Swinging' were becoming popular leisure pursuits for persons of both sexes and all age groups and this unpleasant information was having an effect on the reduction in local visitors.
- Vehicle crime offenders. During 2003 Beacon Fell visitors suffered from 10 stealing from motor vehicle offences; 86% of the offences were being committed on the main car parks and all offences were committed during daylight hours. Overnight vehicles stolen from other parts of the County were being burnt out and in 2003 the Council removed 24 burnt out vehicles from the Fell.



- Careless and inconsiderate drivers using the road around the Fell and its car parks. Again an internet site advertised the Fell as a 'race track' plus historically, for 30 years, it had been known as a car cruise meeting point, a place to camp out and to hold parties. Several villages have to be driven through en

route to the Fell and the speed of the vehicles with loud music affected hundreds of residents.

- 7 incidents of criminal damage were reported to the Police in 2003. The offenders were targeting the Visitors Centre and on one occasion smashed every window resulting in a cost of over £5000.
- Groups of young people congregating to meet others. In 2004, 85% of the people on the Fell overnight were males aged between 17 and 25. Many of the groups leaving litter as they left.
- 4 burglaries were committed on the toilet block where offenders unnecessarily caused damage after breaking into them.
- Drug users were found on the secluded car parks and drug dealers were meeting to supply them.
- Poachers, trespassers on land and offenders stealing animals and their eggs. Recently two males were arrested when a lamb was found in the boot of a stolen vehicle.

Although comparatively low with other inner city areas of Preston, the crime figures on the fell represented approx 70% of the rural crime in this area.

Aims and Objectives

After the analysis process it became apparent that a number of objectives were needed to proceed the initiative

further. It was decided that these should be to:

- Reduce criminal damage,
- Reduce vehicle crime,
- Reduce the number of curfew offenders,
- Reduce anti social behaviour,
- Remove the internet sites that advertise undesirable activities,
- Increase crime prevention measures,
- Target wildlife offenders,
- Increase drug detection and educate the offenders, and
- Create and maintain partnerships in the rural location .

The project aims were to:

- Promote education for road users causing anti social behaviour through the villages en route to the Fell using positive media campaigns,
- Increase the security measures by finding funding to supply better signage, increased lighting, barriers on the car parks, security shutters on the information centre and also CCTV
- Reduce the number of vehicles and their passengers using the fell overnight,
- Discourage those visiting the Fell to meet others for sexual meetings,
- Provide a positive media campaign and close down internet sites,
- Reduce the number of stealing from motor vehicles during the day,
- Work with other agencies and local residents to promote the project, and
- Increase public satisfaction and confidence in the service provided.

These aims and objectives also encourage the Lancashire Constabulary's axiom of 'Helping to make the people of Lancashire feel safe, involved and reassured' and follows the local Police Divisions aims by:

- Reducing the incidence, severity and cost to the community of criminal damage,
- Reducing anti social behaviour,
- Improving road user behaviour, and
- Providing safer roads.

RESPONSE

A partnership approach...

Using the data gathered at the analysis stage it was decided that a partnership approach to the problems was necessary. An active working partnership between the following agencies was formed:

Police including Specials and Police Community Support Officers, whose role was to provide a high visibility presence on Beacon Fell, support the other agencies, reassure members of public and deal with incidents occurring on the Fell.

Greater Manchester Wildlife Officer who gave information and advice on legislation regarding protected species, wildlife and environmental issues.

LCC Ranger Service who chair meetings, provide site management, undertake joint visible patrols and reassure visitors.

LANPAC who have provided funds for barriers to secure the car parks.

Countryside Service who advised Police on issues that had an impact on the environment and also helped to provide funding for the long-term measures.

CPS who recommended the way in which curfew offenders were dealt with, the stops that were being carried out and the prosecution of offenders.

Environment Agency who assisted the project with fly tipping issues.

RSPCA/RSPB who advised the multi agency group on the type of wildlife in this particular area and legislation affecting them.

PCC Cleansing Department who were responsible for removing burnt out vehicles that had been abandoned.

LCC Highways who gave information on the road, its curfew and then improved the approach roads and the curfew signage on the Fell.

Community Volunteers who gave up valuable time to offer their views on the Fell but also became volunteer Rangers to help with the visible patrols and staffing of the information centre.

Residents, who attended meetings, completed incident report forms and contacted Police with information.

Bowland Visitor Centre User Group who attended meetings and gave up their time to support the Consultation stage of the Parish Plan.

The group decided that, over a 2-year period, a 3-stage plan to improve the area and work towards the aims and objectives would be agreed on.

Short Term Response

- High visibility Police foot and cycle patrols during the day concentrating on the car parks to increase public reassurance. Rangers using high visibility vehicles to cover a wider area.
- Police and Ranger patrols overnight providing a visible presence and targeting curfew offenders,
- CPS advice to be taken re. Prosecution and Anti social behaviour,
- Ranger Service to cut back trees and to clear sight lines so that the curfew signs were clearly visible to motorists,
- Introduction of a local resident reporting scheme in prominent positions and mobile phone giving access to Police for local residents,
- Positive media campaign to promote the area and to inform newspapers in the offenders home towns,
- Crime prevention posters erected on all car parks to warn all users,
- Targeting of offending vehicles following INTL and reporting scheme submission,
- Funding sources investigated as the area is situated in an affluent part of the Division, and
- Work with Preston City Council Cleansing Department to reduce the time that burnt out vehicles were left in situ on the Fell.

Medium Term Response

- Partnership meeting organised over a 12 month period to ensure agency availability,
- Frequent day time patrols by Police on bikes and on foot,
- Continuing joint agency evening patrols targeting offenders,
- Enquiries into the closure of the internet sites,
- Funding applications submitted for shutters, lighting and CCTV to be put up at the Centre and barriers to be erected at 9 car parks,
- Increased curfew signage with illuminated strips and the relocation of some,
- Toilet blocks to be secured at night time with RADAR installed for disabled persons, and
- Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued to curfew offenders.

Long Term Response

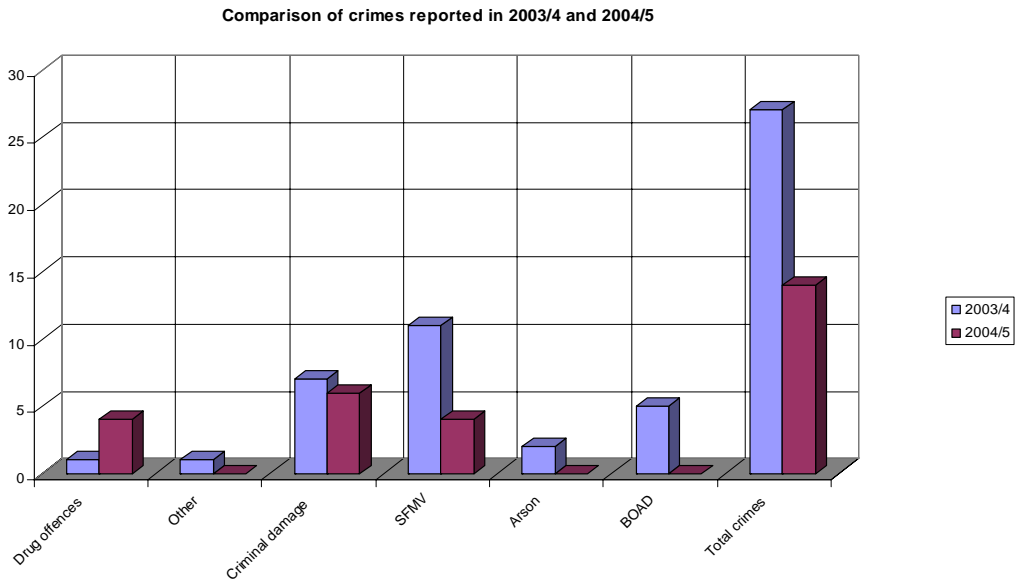
- Continuous partnership support but meeting reduced to bi monthly,
- Consistent Police and Ranger patrols both day and night,
- Security Information Boards to be erected,
- Improved maintenance of the site,
- Shutters to be installed at all windows and doors to the Visitor Centre,
- Lighting to be installed at both the centre and the toilet block,
- Barriers to be installed at the car park entrances,
- CCTV to be installed for the safety and security of users at the Centre with coverage of the toilet block and 2 main car parks.

ASSESMENT

In order to evaluate whether our responses were having a positive effect, a process of assessment was carried

out with a number of results:

Crime



The graph shows the crimes committed on the Fell in 2004 compared with those in 2003. This impacted on the number of victims that there were on the Fell and also the time that Police, Scenes of Crime Officers, LCC Repairs Department and PCC Cleansing Department spent on the Fell dealing with those victims of crime.

Stealing from motor vehicles reduced by 60%

Criminal Damage reduced by 28%

Burglary reduced by 100%

Arson reduced by 100%

Possession of drugs increased by 50%

A total crime reduction 50%

Of this total reduction, 25% were for drugs possession that was offences generated by Police when carrying out searches.

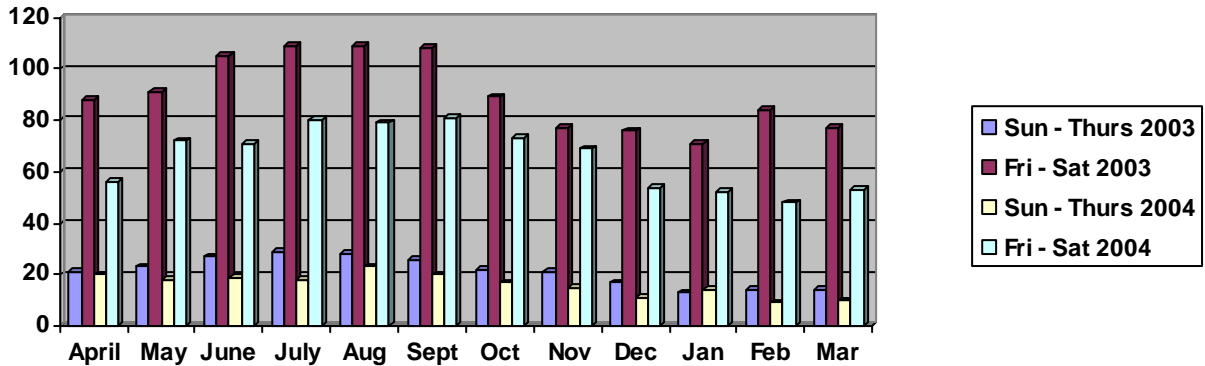
There has only been one crime reported on the Fell between November 2004 and March 2005, and this is detected.

Curfew Offenders

Six months into the project we acknowledged that a small number of persons found breaching the curfew were returning and so a publicity campaign was launched. Following CPS advice, 87 Fixed Penalty Notices were

issued to those breaching the curfew resulting in revenue of £2600. Research has shown that these persons have not returned to the Fell.

Continuous monitoring of the ticker counter allowed resources to be used at specific times on certain days of the week.



In order to assess which area our media campaign was to target, we stopped and spoke to 80 persons who were breaching the curfew over one weekend in March 2004 and completed a questionnaire. The results made us aware of whom we were dealing with and where they were travelling from.

- 89% of those stopped were male.
- 98% of them were aged between 17 and 25.

From the information gathered we were able to specifically define the area of our media campaign and used the Blackpool Gazette, Lancashire Evening Post and Longridge News to highlight the initiative.

Area	Preston	Penwortham	Leyland/Chorley	Fylde Coast	Blackburn	Other Lancs	Out of County
No.	12	5	15	30	6	8	4

The questionnaire also gave us reasons for offenders being on the Fell:

Reason	No.
Meeting others	30
Party/Camp out	14
Admire the view	8
Sexual Encounter	16
No reason given	12

Crime Prevention Measures

- Posters are regularly updated around the site. They are clearly visible on the car parks and on the security information board at the Visitors Centre.

- Shutters have been installed at all windows and doors of the Visitors Centre ensuring that no damage can be caused to the windows.
- Infra red, environment friendly lighting has improved the security at both the Centre and the toilets.
- Locking the toilet doors has reduced the criminal damage and burglary offences. Walkers are able to use the facility during the day but after dark the Rangers ensure that the block is secured.
- Barriers have been erected on 9 car parks and are secured each evening, which has prevented the curfew offenders from using them as meeting points and/or place to commit other offences. The barriers have had an impact on the reduction of burnt out cars found abandoned and have prevented persons congregating for sexual meetings.
- CCTV has been installed at the Visitors Centre, the two main car parks and the toilet block.



Police Calls to Service

In March 2004 when the local reporting scheme was introduced the number of incidents reported to the Police from villages around Beacon Fell rose. This enabled Police to gather more intelligence and concentrate on particular vehicles. After paying attention to these known offenders the number of incidents reduced by 22% when the persistent offenders stopped abusing the Fell.

Both Rural Beat Officers who live and work in this area are responsible for planning the evening patrols and are assisted by Special Constables. The initiative is carried out on Friday and Saturday evenings between 10pm and 2am, once every 6 weeks. This is only 8 hours per Officer 8 times per year.

In 2004 the Police spent 35% less time dealing with reported incidents on Beacon Fell than in 2003 when there were 28 less incidents. A high percentage of these incidents were searching the car parks for persons reported missing to the Police from all Divisions of the County. The partnership working has benefited the Police, as Rangers are both willing and able to take an initial look around the area in such cases.

Public Reassurance

- The reporting scheme and mobile phone access have been a success with local residents, plus 'Police And Communities Together' meetings have made the community become more involved in problem

solving in their community.

- Letters of appreciation have been received with many positive visitor comments in the book.
- Encouraging verbal comments from persons spoken to whilst on visible patrol.
- Positive media publicity in newspapers highlighting the success.
- Close liaison with internet site providers resulted in the internet sites being temporarily suspended. The web site owner was given time to appeal this decision but never applied and the sites were shut down permanently.

Site Maintenance

Preston City Council Cleansing Department removed 25 burnt out vehicles from the Fell in 2003. This number was reduced by 75% in 2004.

An agreement was drawn up between the Cleansing Department, Police and Ranger Service ensuring that vehicles found burnt out or abandoned on the Fell were removed within 24 hours rather than the normal 7day period, preventing prolonged damage to the environment and less of an eyesore to visitors.

Partnerships

The multi agency partnership is a strong, active membership that covers a wide aspect of views. All of the partners are passionate about the initiative and proud of its success. The original weekly partnership meetings are now only held bi-monthly due to the success.

All partners have benefited from the initiative in reducing time spent on Beacon Fell.

Evaluation

Exit Strategy

The crime prevention measures of the project have been funded and are in place so to exit the plan would not be a problem. Rural Beat Officers will continue to provide high visible patrols with the Ranger when necessary. Should there be a change in staff, the project should be easily transferable and continuous. The scheme is being reviewed constantly.

Sustainability

- The project now runs with little Police resources. Evening patrols continue once every 6 weeks on Friday and Saturday nights.
- The Ranger manages the site by promoting crime prevention, cutting back sight lines, closing the toilet blocks daily, shutting the car park barriers and chairing the User Group meetings.
- The funding has been provided and Lancashire County Council pays for the maintenance of all the equipment.
- The scheme should continue with no problems and will hopefully continue to provide similar results over the summer.

Problems

Problems have been encountered along the way:

- At night the wildlife often turn the infra red lights on around the Visitors Centre
- Likewise, the CCTV detects movement
- Inclement weather is a risk to all users of the Fell
- Lack of lighting on the roads
- Unsuitable marked Police vehicle

Additional Benefits

Community Beat Officers live and work on their areas and are keen to maintain the reduction in crime and anti social behaviour as it leads to a more reassuring lifestyle.

Future...

The future of this project includes utilising Automatic Number Plate Recognition, speed enforcement in the surrounding villages, supervision of internet sites and arranging a management company to control the CCTV.