

Neighbourhood wardens. Who we are and what we do.

Horsham District Council Neighbourhood Wardens are accredited by Sussex Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). Wardens work in a similar yet distinctive manner as PCSOs the most major difference between us is that Wardens are usually employed through the local authority and have a wider remit. Wardens operate in a specific geographical area, which can range from being a single parish, a cluster of parishes or even in a district wide manner. Obviously this changes how the job roles work and we're here today to talk to you about how wardens work in a single parish. Wardens are a great service to have; we work in conjunction with the Parish Council, Police and other services as part of a multi-agency team. There are four main aspects to the warden role these are: Enforcement, Elderly/vulnerable, Youth and Community development.

We provide a uniformed, visible presence in the community and we have the ability to deal with low level anti-social behaviour and environmental issues (dog fouling and littering); through either existing local authority powers or as part of our accreditation with CSAS which gives us a range of powers that can be used with the permission of the Chief Constable. Most of the powers we can use come from the Police Reform act (2002) Schedule 5, section 41. These include: Power to issue fixed penalty notices, power to require giving name and address, power to require name and address of person acting in an anti-social manner, power to confiscate alcohol and tobacco for example This is in conjunction with our partnership working where we have found that our local knowledge has allowed for a steady stream of intelligence to be passed along to the relevant agencies. In addition to this we also maintain routine uniformed patrols in the area either by

ourselves or with the police this we have found has been a great way to tackle people's fear of crime, as it helps to provide a reassuring uniformed presence in the area. In addition to this we also act as professional witnesses.

Following on from this would be our work with the elderly/vulnerable residents in the area.

One of our primary goals is to stop elderly vulnerable people from being isolated; this is achieved through several means. The first is that we provide quick and efficient checks on elderly/vulnerable people that sign up for the service this can range from a quick visit to ensure that they've managed to get to get food to checking community link alarms, fire alarms etc. We also provide a range of clubs and activities in the local area, for example in Ashington we are involved in the running of the once a month lunch club, which has on average 35 attendees all elderly/vulnerable. We've found that our work with the elderly/vulnerable has effects that range out into the wider community, the most obvious being that they become more involved with activities and events that occur in the community. It has also had an influence on some of the youth in our area who are now some of our most relied upon volunteers with these clubs and activities allowing for inter-generational friendships and more links to form in the community.

Our work with the youth is varied, it ranges from being enforcement to giving the advice and mentoring. Our recent work with the youth in Ashington has been the inception of a Monday night youth 'Drop in' session, in these session it allows us to engage with the youth to find out about things that are happening the local area, to find out what is going on with the youth and it allows us to signpost youth with any issues to the relevant services if need be.

Community Development is another major aspect of our roles, we work as community leaders helping to promote social cohesion and encouraging people to take ownership of their local community. A major part of this is helping to develop new services and activities in the community for all residents; in addition to this we are also a valuable source of knowledge for local residents allowing for them to come to us with issues to signpost them towards the relevant agencies.

In addition to these duties we also work with the emergency planning department in the Horsham district, the most notable of these is that we work as rest centre managers in case of an emergency in the district and also due to extreme weather such as heavy snow, we can deliver food parcels to the elderly vulnerable. We do basic work with the volunteers in the community to clear snow and to try and make services and day to day life in these extreme weather events as regular as possible.

As you have heard the service that we provide is very varied, and at times it makes it hard for the wardens to be seen in the community. As such we are answerable to the parish council in Ashington through both a steering group, which gives the parish council a chance to discuss our roles and what priorities and aims they would like us to work towards and also by delivering a report unto the parish council which is given into the public domain.

One of the most common issues we have is that people think that we are a substitute for the police, and this frankly is not true. We work with the police and can deal with low level anti-social behaviour but we are not an emergency service and we aren't available twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. We work a 40 hour week and this is split into shifts ranging from early mornings to late in the evening. The greatest strength we have is

partnership working, utilizing all the resources that we can to achieve a better future for our communities.

Thank you for your time

Does anyone have any questions?