



Practice Note 34

Maryhill Neighbourhood Watch

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Topic Areas: Community Engagement, Partnership Working, Public Space Safety, Environment Safety

Project Background and Aims

Historically, Maryhill has experienced relatively high levels of multiple deprivation. More recently, the 2009 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) shows that four of the 20 most deprived datazones in Scotland are located in Maryhill¹. Community safety issues raised by residents have focused on drug misuse, vandalism, antisocial behaviour and youth disorder.

In 2002 Maryhill Housing Association (MHA), in partnership with three registered Tenants Organisations, formed Parkhill Phase 1, Parkhill Phase 2 and Shakespeare, Amisfield and Stratford (SAS) Neighbourhood Watch schemes. For each scheme a Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator were appointed and registered with Strathclyde Police. The Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators worked with the Community Development Officer at MHA to operate the schemes. However, whilst initially successful, within a few years tenant enthusiasm had dwindled and with it the number of Neighbourhood Watch meetings had reduced.

At the end of 2009, as part of the MHA Neighbourliness Project, tenants and residents of the three areas were surveyed to gain their views on local community safety issues. 50 per cent of respondents stated that they had been affected by a community safety issue, with vandalism and drug misuse noted as local concerns. The survey found overwhelming support for establishing a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to keep the streets safe for local families.

¹ <http://simd.scotland.gov.uk/PC/Glasgow-Maryhill/SIMD2009/SIMD/MostDeprived/RedToBlue>

The three Neighbourhood Watches were officially relaunched in February 2010, with the assistance of the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches (AoSNW). The aim of the scheme is to encourage local people to work together in order to keep their communities safe, developing and adapting to fit the current needs of the area. The schemes each have a Coordinator, with support provided by the MHA Community Development Officer.

Outcomes

National 9: 'We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger', and 11: 'We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others'.

Resources

Funding: Maryhill Housing Association.

Partners: Maryhill Housing Association, Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches, Strathclyde Police, Burgh Hall Village Residents Association, Eastpark Residents Association, Parkhill Residents Association.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The three Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators provide feedback at Resident Association meetings. Further details on the Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Maryhill can be obtained from the MHA Community Development Officer.

In addition, AoSNW maintains a database of all membership Neighbourhood Watches through out Scotland. There are approximately 1,500 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across Scotland and, since 2006, the schemes have been supported by AoSNW.

Activities

The community safety survey carried out in 2009 came about following discussion between the MHA Community Development Officer and the three registered tenants' organisations. It was agreed that the sample would capture all members of the Burgh Hall/Village, Eastpark and Parkhill Residents Associations. All residents on Shakespeare Street and Hazlitt Street would also be surveyed.

A total of 150 residents were sampled, with a response rate of 24 per cent, or 38 completed questionnaires. The questionnaires were completed either through postal returns or by door-to-door visits carried out by the Community Development Officer and a Modern Apprentice. 50 per cent of respondents indicated that they were affected by community safety issues within their local area, whilst every respondent indicated they would support a Neighbourhood Watch in their area.

Three Neighbourhood Watches were subsequently set up to match the boundaries of the Burgh Hall/Village, Eastpark and Parkhill Residents Associations and registered

with AoSNW. A coordinator was appointed for each area to work with the Community Development Officer.

The Neighbour Watches have been integrated within the main workings of the Residents Associations. Thus, the schemes are on the agenda when local residents come together to discuss the issues facing their communities and how best residents can work together and in association with the police or local community police officers, to tackle any problems.

In addition, the Resident Association meetings provide a platform where partner agencies can communicate with communities and residents. The Community Development Officer, for example, represents the Neighbourhood Watches at the Maryhill Crime Prevention Panel and reports back at Residents Association meetings. All three coordinators and the Community Development officer are invited to attend annual AoSNW meetings.

Impact

MHA has significant levels of housing stock within the Burgh Hall/Village, Eastpark and Parkhill areas, with 850 properties. Since the relaunch of the Neighbourhood Watch schemes residents have noted a positive difference in the areas and fewer complaints – notably of vandalism and drug misuse - have been made to MHA. Residents have noted that the Neighbourhood Watches contributed to increased public reassurance in the areas.

Community solidarity has been strengthened by other local initiatives. For example, the Maryhill Burgh Hall Trust has successfully renovated the formerly vacant halls and adjacent police station since purchasing the properties in 2009.

The Neighbourhood Watches were established and then re-established during a period of social change within the wider, ongoing regeneration of Maryhill. All three areas contain or are near substantial new build private housing developments, particularly near the canal, which cuts through the northern part of Maryhill. Moreover, the surplus of vacant housing stock which was frequently vandalised was pulled down between 1994 and 1998. The condition of all remaining housing stock and the surrounding environment has been improved markedly.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The original Parkhill Phase 1, Parkhill Phase 2 and SAS Neighbourhood Watches introduced in 2002 had gradually fallen away as communities became complacent and instead reported any community safety issues to the MHA Community Development Officer. A key difference following the 2009 relaunch is that Neighbourhood Watch is now embedded within Resident Association meetings, with no need for separate meetings. In effect, this removed an organisational obstacle and Neighbourhood Watch has become mainstreamed within the workings of the key community groups.

A key challenge for the Neighbourhood Watches in Maryhill is to keep the momentum going. Doing so requires the facilitation of three key tasks: the reporting of crime and vandalism at meetings of Residents Associations, the involvement Strathclyde Police Officers in attending meetings to feed back on crime statistics and the engagement of the local community in reporting back on crime and vandalism.

Summary

Neighbourhood Watch was relaunched in Maryhill in 2009 following a survey of local residents carried out by Maryhill Housing Association. Neighbourhood Watch has since become embedded within the workings of the Burgh Hall Village, Eastpark and Parkhill Resident Associations.

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