

## COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

27 MARCH 2013

### COMMUNITY VIEWS

#### CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

##### From vox pop interviews in Rotherhithe

- I speak very little English, but my husband is fluent and we are raising our child here in Rotherhithe. We moved to London one year ago, and though my English is improving, I do not feel comfortable to travel to places like Camberwell or Peckham, preferring to stay in Bermondsey, Rotherhithe or Surrey Quays, and do my shopping in Oxford Street and West London, where it is more international. I feel very safe here.
- As an elderly man, I have been attacked several times when out at night, for instance coming back from church, and I have had valuables such as camera equipment stolen... I have to say it's not a particular type of person, such as poor, or black, who does this. Sometimes I feel they just want to be seen...
- In every area, there has to be enough for young people to do...in this shopping centre the table tennis area has been a brilliant idea, to give a sense of focus for young people. The government should give more opportunities like to young people who have no employment, so they have lost hope and confidence.
- To help prevent anti-social behaviour, I try to interact with young people, but I take the risk of being called a paedophile! I try to give advice, as there are some young people who talk back to me, and call me "papa", because they have more confidence and are more outgoing. It depends on where they are coming from; they may just want to keep in with their peer group. Faith and going to church used to be a key feature of giving a sense of right and wrong.
- I came to study at the university here – I feel very safe sticking to the main areas, as a young woman. None of my friends have experienced crime or anti-social behaviour. My personal response to anti-social behaviour to prevent it is to be aware at all times, and keep mobile phones and heavy equipment secure and hidden. Keep zips closed and in sight at all times, so people can't open them and steal what's inside.
- I think that Southwark compares badly against Redhill, where I live. There is a lot of crime in and around this shopping centre, but I do see a lot of PCSOs around and they're doing the best that they can. Elsewhere in Southwark seems alright, it's a bit rundown, being so close to the city it should be more developed, but it could be worse. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, I think that they could increase the price of alcohol.
- I'm a year nine student, and I don't think that Southwark is a safe place for me, although it's not as bad as some places. Sometimes you're scared to walk the

road alone. Most of the time I avoid trouble by just minding my own business. If I'm going to a different area, I'll go with my friend.

- I think that Southwark is a really nice, safe area – I would give it 8 out of 10. I've grown up in Southwark, and I think that when I was growing up (I'm 34 now) there was a lot less to do. Now you have outdoor activities and youth clubs, and mentoring when they go wrong. More programs would deter youngsters from doing wrong, but I don't know what I myself could do to stop anti-social behaviour. If I had the resources I would help the families. Give the young people some confidence and encouragement by giving them some time to listen to them as well.
- I would say that Rotherhithe is quite a safe area, from working in the area 1 year, and my friend thinks so as well, who lives locally. The people who live here are pleasant and of a certain character. To help prevent anti-social behaviour I would raise an issue with the police, if I see or hear anything suspicious. Like joining Neighbourhood Watch.

#### **From the SE1 Forum:**

- I've lived in Southwark for 5 ½ years and never felt unsafe in the area. I lived in North London prior to that, and again never felt unsafe there but was once 'mugged' late at night, although (it was) partly my own fault having had one too many and being a bit naive.
- I am aware of two young girls who work at More London who have been struck in the face whilst having their mobiles snatched and of a young man being attacked from behind at London Bridge and phone taken. I have stopped someone stealing my bike in Bermondsey Street and was threatened. These incidents have occurred in the last 3 months.

No it is not safer and most certainly becoming more dangerous and there is insufficient Police action to crimes being committed. I have been in the SE1 area since 1987 and have noted and experienced a surge in crime over the past 12 – months.

- I have just returned home and was informed that there was an attempted mobile snatching by two young men on a moped...similar young men on a moped also attempted to steal a bicycle in the area earlier in the week. The attempted theft was reported but Police unable to attend. I am informed that the culprits were still present when (the) telephone call was made. It is this type of inaction that makes residents feel unsafe, when Police fail to respond to reported crimes, no matter how insignificant they are deemed to be by the Police.
- After reporting the theft of my bicycles, I was informed that an investigating officer would contact me, but 9 days have passed and nothing. I searched for 1 - 2 hours every day last week and eventually on Saturday I found one of my bikes for sale. I immediately telephoned the Police on 101 and was put through to Southwark Police answer phone. I searched and found two Police officers on their beat, explained the situation and they accompanied me to the shop and

asked the shop owner to remove the bike from the shop floor. I then obtained the crime report references and reported the incident to Borough Police Station and was informed that the bike would be kept in storage and that the investigating officer would contact me. Five days have passed and not a word. I don't know if the bike has been collected from the shop and what action is being taken. So in answer to your question I don't feel safe at all in Southwark and I am very concerned for my children and my partner's safety.

- It strikes me that in just the 5 years I have lived here it has seen a big change in more luxury flats, big business spreading south of the river, and more of the young professional city type crowd. Perhaps this is encouraging more crime?
- I suspect the change in demographic (luxury flats, big business spreading south of the river, more young professionals) has led to more reports of crime being made to the Police and to a more vocal population, the increase in gang culture among the youth also has a role to play, but that occurs throughout big cities.
- There has always been crime in the area since I've been here and back in the late 1980s/ early – mid 90s in my experience, it was predominantly car crime, burglary and stealing from offices, but I was always under the impression the Police were dealing with it and the culprits would often disappear for 12 months or more. It was usually the same old faces. I don't think the affluence or increased number of people living/ working in the area has anything to do with it. In my opinion crime is on the increase because (of) a lack of commitment (or maybe resources/ manpower) from the Police to deal with it. The criminals believe they are untouchable, as currently being witnessed in Tooley Street, where the thieves are so brazen they continue to snatch phones on almost a daily basis. Others have quite rightly commented that it wouldn't take much for an undercover team to nab the gang.
- I have lived at the Elephant for nearly fourteen years and have never once felt unsafe, even after I was burgled. In contrast, I worked in the posh part of Fulham and often felt very unsafe. It is all to do with one's own perceptions and experience....give me the scruffy old Elephant any day. No matter whether its day or night, there are always loads of people around.
- My car was stolen once and taken for a joyride; I picked it up smashed up and covered in fingerprint powder from the police depot. The police caught the guy who took the car (he was seen washing it in his estate – an expensive car) but he had a very flimsy excuse and wasn't prosecuted. He was well known as a burglar/ car thief. Apart from that I've never felt unsafe walking the streets, but I am pretty careful. I think it's a fairly high crime area in reality. I never see police in the streets.
- My perception is that there is an increase in mobile phone thefts because the way they are used has changed – more people are walking along the street looking at their phones – they are prominently on display whereas before smart phones you would keep it in a pocket or bag when not actually taking a phone call. Holding it your hand reading the screen means you are not as aware of your surroundings and thieves will take advantage of this.

- I've lived in this area for 5 years and I don't feel unsafe here. I think crime is a big issue all over London, and the proposed closure of the Police Station on Borough High Street worries me, along with the reduction of Police Officers on the beat. I'm also concerned about the proposed changes to the Neighbourhood Policing teams.

With the number an of late night venue on the increase, the area is bound to attract an element of undesirables, and there are certain areas I avoid at night, such as the Elephant & Castle shopping centre.

Educating people in common sense is one way to prevent them becoming a victim of crime. I still see so many people who chat on their mobile phones, so engrossed in conversation they're unaware of what's going on around them, or ladies in bars with their handbags over the back of the chair etc. Add alcohol into the equation and people open themselves up to becoming a target fro the criminals. No one is ever completely safe, but a bit of common sense and awareness can certainly keep you safer.

- It's easy to become complacent and just make that quick phone call or send that quick text whilst out on foot....I don't think it would hurt for the police and/ or local media to draw attention to these facts, running a little campaign to make people a little more aware of how much their belongings are actually worth, and how easy it is for them to be snatched. I don't mean a scare-campaign, but an awareness campaign....It's not just a problem in SE1, and is London/ country wide. That said, it is a concern for me that our police resources are going to be reduced. As a basic example – is the ongoing saga of the mysterious window-smasher around here ...if it can't be solved with the resources that we have (and the incredibly astute residents in the area, aiding the police), what will it be like when that police resources is slimmed down? Same for the couple of couple of youths who seem to be dominating this snatch-and-run spate of phone thefts.