

Ping Pong Bridges the Gap with Police

Theme: community engagement

Defining the Issue

The public's relationship with and trust towards the police is argued to have declined. In order to build a better relationship with the local community, the Safer Neighbourhood Team at Hertfordshire Constabulary linked up with the Ping Pong Parlour in Jackson Square Shopping Centre, Bishops Stortford.

Background Information

Jackson Square Shopping Centre in Bishops Stortford hosted an afternoon of fun during a 'Pong with Police' event in their Ping Pong Parlour. The local community were invited to take on Hertfordshire Constabulary's Safer Neighbourhood Team in a game of ping pong.

The centre work with local police to deliver other community engagement events, including Operation Sceptre which aims to tackle knife crime and raise awareness of it's impact.

The purpose of the event was to build a better relationship between the police and the local community. The Safer Neighbourhood Team wanted to bridge the gap between young people in Bishops Stortford and the police, and show them that it's not just a uniform. The Ping Pong Parlour provided the perfect opportunity to show a more fun and relaxed side to the police.



The Event

- The event was advertised on the Bishops Stortford twitter account, along with posters inside the Ping Pong Parlour
- The Safer Neighbourhood Team visited a local youth café to promote the event
- The Safer Neighbourhood Team also visited the Parlour after school and on weekends to promote the event in person and start to build relationships with the local community who use the Parlour
- Local children and young people aged 8-16 were encouraged to drop into the event, pick up a bat and challenge the Safer Neighbourhood Team to a game of ping pong.

“Normally if we were to get a call about a group of youths with bats in their hands, it would be something we would be worried about. However, on this occasion, it’s something we encouraged!”

“Since the event I have had children that attended happily coming up to me and saying ‘hello’, something that they may have not done before”



“The response on the day was great. We had a fantastic turnout and the whole event was a joy to be part of”

Key Learnings

1. Sport and physical activity has the potential to connect communities and build relationships
2. The informal and inclusive nature of table tennis means police and public can play together with no barriers

Further Information

For more information on bringing table tennis to your community, visit www.pinginthecommunity.co.uk

For information on Ping Pong Parlours, visit www.pingpongparlour.net



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