

Crime falls

Crime in Exeter has fallen by 3% from last year, with drug-related crime also going down, thanks to the close work being undertaken with offenders suffering from drug problems.

Theft from motor vehicles in the city has also reduced, along with people's fear of crime.

The reduction in drug-related crime shows the success of the focussed work undertaken by the various action teams of the Exeter Community Safety Partnership, under its 2002 - 2005 strategy. The Prolific Offender Unit and the agencies working with the Drug Action Team have contributed to this change in offending behaviour. Treating offenders with drug problems leads to a reduced need to commit crime in order to fund the habit.

Burglary figures have slightly increased, largely

due to a new individual who was not known to the local police coming into Exeter to commit crime.

Violent crime figures also show an increase. This is due in part to the change in recording policy introduced last year. It is also due to the increase in the early reporting of domestic violence.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) shows nationally that the risk of becoming a victim of crime has fallen from 40% in 1995 to 25%, the lowest level recorded since the BCS began in 1981.

According to the BCS, the proportion of people believing that crime has increased over the past two years, both in their local area and in the country as a whole, has fallen compared with the previous year. Levels of worry about the main crime types have fallen, as has the level of perceived anti-social

behaviour. Levels of confidence in most aspects of the criminal justice system have improved.

The 2004/5 Exeter crime figures provide a good starting point for the new Community Safety Strategy. This new three-year strategy builds on the work begun under the 2002/05 strategy, and includes the following themes :

- Alcohol and alcohol-related crime**
- Anti-social behaviour**
- Domestic violence**
- Drugs and drug-related crime**
- Prolific and other priority offenders**
- Vulnerable victims**

Action Teams will again be developing work plans to tackle these issues, to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for people in Exeter. The city remains one of the safest in the country.

Snap to it!

Get snapping! The City Council has launched its latest photographic competition.

The search is on once again to find the city's top photographers. Winning entrants will receive £100 of photographic vouchers or an exciting photographic assignment. Budding photographers have until 30 September to get their entries in.

The theme for this year's competition is "Exeter people at work and at play". Council Leader Roy Slack, said: "This time we're looking for images that capture the energy of Exeter through those who work or play in the city.

Again, there will be two main prizes. One for the judges' favourite photo and the other will be voted for by people visiting the City Council's website and readers of the Citizen. Both

winners will receive £100 worth of photographic vouchers to buy new equipment, film or spend on processing.

There will also be a junior prize for the best photo submitted by an under 18 and this winner will get the chance to do a photoshoot for the Exeter Citizen under the watchful eyes of one of Apex's professional photographers.

The shortlisted photographs will all be printed in the December edition of the Exeter Citizen. And the winners will be announced in the March 2006 edition.



People can submit colour or black and white photos in print, slide or digital formats. All photos need to be taken in Exeter between October 2004 and September 2005. The name of the photographer, the location and the date need to be marked on the reverse of the photo.

For a full set of the rules call 01392 265319 or visit our website www.exeter.gov.uk/photography.



Ferry good crossings



Cllr Barry McNamara, Lead Councillor for Environment & Leisure, pulls his weight on the new ferry

The ability to cross the River Exe by ferry has been assured for some years to come, thanks to the purchase of a new boat by the City Council at the Quay and the appointment of a new ferryman at Topsham.

The new 27ft aluminium Butts ferry boat, which shuttles passengers from the Quay to Haven Banks, should last for another 50 years. The ancient crossing dates back to medieval times. It was only named Butts ferry in 1972, after a Mr George W Butt assured its future operation, taking

visitors across the river to the old Maritime Museum. Butts Ferry is technically a "floating bridge" in that it is pulled along a wire fixed on either bank. There are only five such floating bridges in the country used for pedestrians.

At the Topsham Passage Ferry, Mike Stevens is the Council's new operator. He is there to offer a range of boating services, as well as ferry people from Topsham to Turf Lock.

Topsham Passage Ferry dates back to the middle

ages when the Port of Topsham was flourishing. Passenger numbers reduced during the Second World War when the local council took over its operation.

The Topsham Passage ferry runs from Easter to 30 September, daily from 11am to 5pm, except Tuesday, and from October on weekends and Bank Holidays only. A one way fare costs 60p for adults and 30p for juniors or a bicycle. There is a 10p charge for dogs. For more information contact 07801 203338.

To enter, people need to complete the attached form and submit their entries by 30 September to:

Exeter Citizen Photographic Competition 2005
 Freepost EX523
 Exeter City Council
 Civic Centre
 Paris Street
 Exeter EX1 1AZ

Please tick box if under 18

Name _____
 Address _____

 Postcode _____
 Telephone No. _____
 Email _____

Reaching out...

People whose voices are less likely to be heard are the focus of a number of consultation initiatives from the Council this year.

"We do have lots of ways to listen to people's views such as our Wavelength, citizens' panel, the community forums as well as surveys and focus groups," said Council Leader Roy Slack. "However, we know we need to try that bit harder. We really want to make sure that our services are easy to access irrespective of age, disability or ethnicity."

The City Council is working in partnership with health, police and Devon County Council to explore the views of black and minority ethnic people on a variety of topics.

These include the housing benefits service, grants, equalities, customer service and the move to choice based lettings. The feedback received so far has helped identify where extra training is needed and where people need more support. Other areas will include support for businesses, working for the organisations, crime reporting and health issues. The project will run until the autumn.

Work is also underway with people with disabilities. The Council is seeking the views from people with a range of disabilities on how to make its new customer service centre as easy to use as possible. In addition the Council, along with the county council, fire service and Connexions and a

range of other agencies supported the Sign Vision (British Sign Language recognition) conference for deaf people in March.

And older people have not been left out, with the Council joining social services and Exeter PCT in the spring at the Isca Centre for an older people's consultation day, focusing on the needs of the more frail elderly. One of the issues was providing more information on services for older people and this edition of the Citizen has an article on Page 5 on just that.

For more information visit www.exeter.gov.uk/consultation or contact Mandy Pearse, Communications Manager, on 01392 265319