

## A Year On ....

The Community Justice Court for Riverside has been operational for over a year now. A great deal has been achieved and there has been tangible benefits for local residents and communities.

As one of the only 13 Community Justice projects in the country, Riverside has experienced such innovations as:

- A specific court held once a week for offences committed only in Riverside.
- Improvements in efficiencies in the court itself – speeding up cases and reducing the number that are adjourned.
- Specially trained community justice magistrates who are aware of local problems and how those affect residents of Riverside.
- Magistrates attending community meetings to hear directly from residents issues that concern them.
- Residents can suggest local projects where offenders can carry out unpaid work for the benefit of the community.
- Specific attention is paid by the court to the affect of crimes on victims.
- Help given to offenders to stop them committing more offences in Riverside.
- A new Community Justice Court Forum where community representatives, magistrates, and other justice agencies meet to discuss local issues.

## 500 Brought to Justice

Over 500 offenders have appeared in the Community Justice Court this year.

Figures for 2008 show that most of these cases were sentenced in the Community Justice Court with the more serious cases being sent to Hull Crown Court. The Court sentenced offenders to community based orders, conditional discharges where, if they offend again, the defendant will be re-sentenced for the offence; and financial penalties including compensation and fines. A number of defendants were also sent to prison. 150 offenders were referred to the Court Coordinator and offered help and guidance to stop them re-offending.

These figures demonstrate that the Riverside Community Justice Court is tackling the issues of crime and disorder which concern the community and thereby making a difference to the quality of life for local people.



## Promoting “Payback”

“Community Payback” is one of the tangible benefits of the Community Justice Initiative. The projects and placements are devised to be both punishment and compensating the community affected by the crime.

Offenders working on Community Payback projects will have been sentenced by the Court to carry out between 40 – 300 hours of unpaid work. The work can often benefit offenders also, in that it can teach them skills to help them gain employment.

The Groves Neighbourhood of Riverside has benefited from the ‘Payback’ scheme – offenders cleared litter from local streets.

Examples of the kind of work offenders could carry out as Payback projects are:

- Cutting back shrubbery and clearing vegetation
- Litter picking from car park, parks and other sites
- Painting of playground equipment
- Removal of flytipping
- Strimming of waste ground
- Clearance of derelict sites
- Repainting works e.g. fences



As with all community sentences the safety of the public is imperative and all offenders are fully risk assessed before they begin their order. The projects are also assessed by the Probation Service before they can be included in the ‘Payback’ scheme.

### **We Need Riverside residents and community groups to nominate local schemes for Community Payback**

*If you want to nominate a project within Riverside you can get a nomination request form from David Morton (01482 480000) – Humberside Probation Service.*

## Support for Victims

Victim Support is an independent charity for people affected by crime – victims and witnesses, their families and friends. The service is free and confidential. Trained staff and volunteers offer emotional support and practical help to victims of crime in the community.

The Community Justice Court initiative is looking into ways it can assist Victim Support extend its service to the Riverside communities.

## Dates for your Diary Forum Meetings in 2009

The Community Justice Court Forum meets three times per year, in The Guildhall.

Meetings dates for 2009 are as follows:

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

All meetings start at 1.30pm in Room C1.

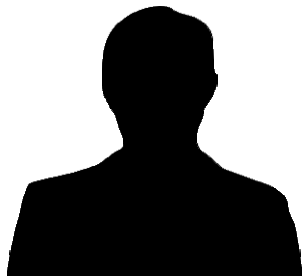
## View from the Bench

In September Sally Windeatt JP, Chairman of the Riverside Community Justice Court, visited the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre and listened to a speech given by Mr Justice Calabrese from the Red Hook Community Justice Court in New York. He gave a highly motivating speech on Community Justice in Red Hook, emphasising that the success of Community Justice was, in large, dependent on the motivation of those involved to be innovative, work in partnership and not to be precious about some of the traditional ways of how the court system operates.



New York was the first city to establish a Community Justice Court

## An Offender's Story



Back in October 2007, an 18 year old – we'll call him "Michael" appeared in the Community Justice Court charged with demanding money using threats for which he received an unpaid work order of 160 hours to be served in a local charity shop. He was also referred to the Community Justice Coordinator to provide assistance in obtaining job seekers allowances and some work related training.

Michael finished his unpaid work order with flying colours and proceeded to undertake numeracy and literacy (English) training, along with levels 1 and 2 in Information and Technology. The Coordinator worked with Michael continually to bring a very withdrawn and quiet young man into a position of self confidence. Michael attended the Community Justice Court Forum AGM this year and explained to all present, including the three magistrates who heard his case, how he was progressing. The magistrates were impressed with Michael's progress and commended him.

Some 14 months later, the Coordinator is still in contact with Michael, who is now undertaking further training in IT and is looking forward to full time employment.

Michael has not re-offended and he says he has no intention of doing so.