



Date February 2008

Embargo

Reference AW270208

Defaulters face enforcement

People who have failed to pay their court fines and issued with court fines warrants from Warrington were targeted in a joint operation involving warrant officers from HMCS (Her Majesty's Courts Service) and Police officers from Warrington Central Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) demonstrating how the non-payment of court fines or not attending court is not an option across the County.

The operation, involving 6 patrols of 1 PC and 1 HMCS warrants officer, was carried out on 23rd and 24th January 2008. The officers actively targeted the area over the 2 day period:

- Over 60 individuals were either dealt with by the fines support officers or by the courts
- Of the 60 plus persons that were dealt with 187 outstanding fines accounts were dealt with equating to £60,000.00 in outstanding fines
- A total of 21 persons were arrested and taken to the courts
- 20 of these arranged the payment of their outstanding fines and one male was sentenced to 45 days custodial sentence

Peter Fahy, Chair of the Cheshire Criminal Justice Board said:

"Some people who do not pay their fines and do not attend court think that they can get away with not paying money they owe to the courts. This is not acceptable. The joint working of the Police officers and court enforcement officers and intelligence from other agencies shows that we will actively pursue any non-payers which will result in enforcement officers and police turning up at their home address, or work place and face arrest and another court appearance where a harsher sentence may be passed down".

Stephen Darlington, court enforcement officer at HMCS in Warrington said:

"This great result is to be followed up by similar joint operations on a regular basis in the near future. If anyone has any outstanding fines the advice is that they will not go away and for you to contact the central payments department to arrange payment as soon as possible. If this isn't done they risk arrest and possible custodial sentences."

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

- Enforcement officers are based at all courts in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington to ensure that the fines that are issued by the court for a range of offences are paid.
- Joint operations to enforce unpaid fines, breaches of community sentences and maintenance are run regularly between HMCS and the Police and will be more frequent
- The central payments department can be contacted on 0870 1626 261 to arrange payment for fines as soon as possible. If any person has any knowledge or information in relation to persons who have not paid courts fines they should contact Sgt Robinson

of the Warrington Central NPU on 0845 458 6379 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

- The Cheshire Criminal Justice Board was set up in April 2003 to manage the Criminal Justice System at a local level. The board aims to improve co-operation between criminal justice agencies to improve the way justice works in Cheshire. One of the Board's targets is to increase the payment rate of fines.
- The board is made up of the Chief Officers from Cheshire's Criminal Justice Agencies: Peter Fahy, Chief Constable, Cheshire Constabulary (Chair); Steve Collett, Chief Officer, Cheshire Probation Service; Shaun McNally, Area Director, Her Majesty's Courts Service, Cheshire and Merseyside; Pat Hagan, Acting Manager, Youth Offending Team – Cheshire; Gareth Jones, Manager, Youth Offending Team – Halton and Warrington; Bob McColm, Governor, HMP Risley; Ian Rushton, Chief Crown Prosecutor, Cheshire Crown Prosecution Service; Vivienne Horton, Chief Executive, Macclesfield Borough Council (representing all Local Authorities in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington); Carolyn Schofield, Policy and Legal Manager, Legal Services Commission.

For further information please contact:

Alison Weldon

Cheshire Criminal Justice Board Communications Coordinator

Tel: 01244 408678

E-mail: alison.weldon@cps.gsi.gov.uk

<http://lcjb.cjsonline.gov.uk/Cheshire>