



Cheshire Probation – improving your local community



CHESHIRE

PRESS RELEASE

Date 8 November 2007

OFFENDERS CLEAN UP CHESTER ROWS

Cheshire Probation Area's Unpaid Work team is working jointly with the Chester Community Safety Partnership to improve the City of Chester by cleaning up a section of the historic Chester Rows which has long been the subject of vandalism.

During the weekend of 3rd and 4th November, offenders sentenced to Unpaid Work by the Court were busy removing graffiti and repainting a section of the famous Chester Rows. The paint was donated by Robinson and Neal, a Chester Wallpaper and Paint Merchant. A civic launch of the project took place at 2pm on Saturday 3rd November when His Worship the Sheriff of Chester, Councillor Andrew Storrar, visited the site and saw first hand the work being undertaken. The Sheriff was accompanied by Councillors Neil Richie, Executive Member for Environment and John Price, Chair of Chester Community Safety Partnership. The Cheshire Probation Area was represented by Ron Howarth, Board Member and Steve Collett, Chief Officer.

Offenders working on the project were proud to play their part. One said "I really feel like I'm making a useful contribution to the community, it's definitely brightened up the place". Another added "the smell around here used to be awful – this will make a big difference".

The request for this work came from the Chester Community Safety Partnership and is fully supported by the Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Jim Latham, as part of the Probation Service's Mayoral project. This national initiative invites local authority Lord Mayors and Mayors to promote the visibility of Unpaid Work during their year's term of office.

Tackling criminal damage and vandalism is a priority for Chester Community Safety Partnership due to the impact it has on the quality of life of residents and visitors to Chester. Graffiti, damage to vehicles and buildings etc. not only cost huge amounts of money to fix and repair but can create negative perceptions of our city centre and increase fear of crime.

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Whilst the Community Safety Partnership knows there is a lot to do to tackle vandalism, this project is a key part of the work being undertaken to make Chester city centre a safe and enjoyable place to live and visit. Other activities taking place to address this challenging problem include the recent launch of Chester City Council's "Clean Chester" campaign, high visibility Police patrols, the involvement of retailers through the Chester against Business Crime and the targeting of individuals involved in vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

In relation to the Rows project, His Worship the Sheriff of Chester, Councillor Andrew Storrar said "The efforts of those engaged in renovating the Rows gives a sense of achievement in helping the community, and pride in improving their surroundings".

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Notes for Editors:

1. Further information regarding the Civic Project can be obtained from Liz Gaughran (details as above).
2. The Chester Community Safety Partnership is a joint initiative involving various local agencies including Chester City Council and Cheshire Constabulary and is aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in Chester.
3. During 2006, 24,118 hours of Unpaid Work were successfully completed for the benefit of the local West Cheshire community.
4. Photographs of the "before and after" of one wall of the Rows are included with this release. The area painted was the section of the Rows above Beresford Adams Estate Agents, Bridge Street.

Photo caption for group photograph:

Left to right: Councillor John Price, the Sheriff's Lady, Councillor Jeanne Storrar, His Worship the Sheriff of Chester, Councillor Andrew Storrar, Ron Howarth, Board Member, Cheshire Probation Area and Steve Collett, Chief Officer, Cheshire Probation Area