



BOARD MEETING

2pm - 13th JUNE 2016

Findings of survey on anti-social behaviour in the town centre

TCM was commissioned by the Community Safety team at Hastings Borough Council to undertake a survey on the extent and impact of anti-social behaviour in the town centre

50 questionnaires were distributed to businesses in Albert Road, Castle Street, Wellington Place, Station Road, Robertson Street, Trinity Street Priory Square, the lower part of Queens Road and Queens Avenue (Arcade)

A 100% response would have represented an 11% sample survey. The actual response rate (47 or 94%) represents a 10.6% sample.

In addition,

- a) The Chairman of the Town Centre Market company responded on behalf of 15 regular stall holders
- b) The staff at the Creative Media Centre responded on behalf of their tenants in Robertson Street and Havelock Road and offered copies of previous correspondence outlining examples of how ASB has impacted on their inward investment objectives
- c) The Chairman of the BID Steering Group responded on behalf of that group
- d) The attendants at the Harold Place public toilets recorded their comments
- e) Commercial Agent, Dyer & Hobbis has made comments via e-mail

A representative spread of responses

–By location/economy

| | Day Economy Only | Day & Evening Economy | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Albert Road | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Castle Street | 1 | | 1 |
| Queens Arcade | 2 | | 2 |
| Queens Road | 7 | | 7 |
| Robertson Street | 14 | 2 | 16 |
| Station Road | 3 | | 3 |
| Trinity Street | 1 | | 1 |
| Wellington Place | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| | 39 | 8 | 47 |

By business classification

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Retail | 21 |
| Charity | 4 |
| Office | 12 |
| Market Trades | 1 |
| Catering | 3 |
| Catering/Retail | 2 |
| Leisure | 3 |
| Service | 1 |

The findings were as follows

1) What type of ASB is most noticeable? (NB figures are percentages)

| | Rank | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | n/a |
| Graffiti | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 13 | 51 | 17 |
| Damage to Street Furniture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 9 | 40 | 11 | 15 |
| Dog Fouling | 2 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 2 | 17 | 32 | 6 | 4 | 11 |
| Litter | 2 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 23 | 19 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| Street Drinking and Drunken Behaviour | 57 | 19 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Drug Use/ Dealing | 9 | 34 | 9 | 17 | 13 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Verbal Intimidation/Swearing | 9 | 17 | 36 | 15 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Aggressive Begging | 11 | 17 | 13 | 26 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| Criminal Damage | 2 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 21 | 15 | 21 | 9 | 9 | 13 |
| Group of teenagers (additional optional cat) | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Cyclists/Skateboarders (additional optional cat) | 2 | | | | | | | | | |

Businesses were asked to rank their responses (1 being most noticeable and 9 least noticeable)

The responses reveal the following trends

- 1) Environmental ASB (litter/graffiti etc) is least noticeable. 51% felt that graffiti was ranked as the least noticeable type of ASB

- 2) By contrast, street drinking/drunken behaviour is overwhelmingly the most noticeable for most businesses 57% ranked this as the most noticeable type of ASB. 85% ranked it as the first second or third most noticeable behaviour.
- 3) Verbal intimidation/swearing features highly but only as the third most noticeable type of ASB after drug dealing/running/use which is ranked second
- 4) Aggressive begging is ranked fourth but further analysis reveals that reports of begging tend to be located predominantly in Station Rd which is not subject to the more noticeable forms of ASB encountered in Wellington Place or Queens Road for example
- 5) A number of businesses have asked that we should consider “groups of teenagers” and “cyclists/skateboarders” as 2 distinct ASB categories.
- 6) The businesses affected by teenage gangs are mainly located in Wellington Place near the subway. They are mostly catering/day and evening economy businesses, affected detrimentally by large groups of often aggressive, threatening young people congregating, usually in the late afternoon until late in the evening. Businesses report that some work is being done with the Police to address these issues.
- 7) The businesses affected mainly by Cyclists/skateboarders are mainly located in Robertson Street/Cambridge Road

NB This data supports the findings and responses to later questions (eg Q9) which asks which groups create most harassment, alarm and distress for businesses.

2) What type of ASB is most damaging to businesses?

Businesses were asked to rank their concerns (1 being of greatest threat to their business and 9, the least threat)

| | Rank | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | n/a |
| Graffiti | 0% | 2% | 4% | 0% | 6% | 0% | 6% | 11% | 53% | 17% |
| Damage to Street Furniture | 0% | 0% | 0% | 6% | 6% | 11% | 9% | 43% | 11% | 15% |
| Dog Fouling | 4% | 0% | 9% | 15% | 6% | 17% | 30% | 4% | 4% | 11% |
| Litter | 2% | 4% | 11% | 6% | 15% | 28% | 9% | 13% | 0% | 13% |
| Street Drinking and Drunken Behaviour | 55% | 17% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 0% | 6% | 13% |
| Drug Use/ Dealing | 13% | 28% | 13% | 23% | 6% | 6% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 6% |
| Verbal Intimidation/Swearing | 2% | 23% | 45% | 9% | 13% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 2% |
| Aggressive Begging | 9% | 11% | 19% | 19% | 15% | 6% | 9% | 4% | 0% | 9% |
| Criminal Damage | 2% | 4% | 2% | 17% | 19% | 13% | 15% | 2% | 15% | 11% |

The responses mimic those in Question 1

- 1) Environmental ASB is of least concern to the majority and is least damaging to business prospects
- 2) Street drinking/drunken behaviour is the greatest concern for most businesses and seen as most damaging to businesses and the town centre. Three quarters of the businesses surveyed ranked street drinking as either first, second or third highest concern
- 3) Verbal intimidation/swearing features very highly along with aggressive begging

- 4) Criminal damage is of average concern for most businesses - suggesting they do not see it as a major deterrent to a successful trading by comparison to other behaviours
- 5) Businesses report that behaviours are not exclusive to different groups. Verbal Intimidation, aggressive begging and drug taking/use can be attributed to more than one group.

3) Do businesses consider there been an escalation of ASB in the last 12 months? (NB figures are percentages)

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | N/A |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Graffiti | 4 | 36 | 47 | 11 | 2 |
| Damage To Street Furniture | 4 | 38 | 45 | 11 | 2 |
| Dog Fouling | 17 | 53 | 26 | 4 | 2 |
| Litter | 17 | 62 | 21 | 0 | 2 |
| Street Drinking & Drunken Behaviour | 83 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Drug Use/Dealing | 74 | 17 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| Verbal Intimidation/ Swearing | 70 | 23 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Aggressive Begging | 55 | 32 | 11 | 0 | 2 |
| Criminal Damage | 17 | 55 | 26 | 0 | 2 |
| Teenagers & Kids (Additional categories) | 11 | | | | |
| Cyclists & Skateboarders (additional Categories) | 2 | | | | |
| Drug addicts -Vomiting | 1 | | | | |

The clear message is that businesses feel there has been an escalation of all types of ASB over the last 12 months but the dominant statistic is the feeling relating to “non-environmental” ASB

- 94% agree that street drinking and its knock on effects has escalated,
- 91% see drug taking/abuse,(often in the open in places without CCTV cover such as York Gardens) as having escalated
- 93% agree that verbal intimidation and threatening behaviour has increased
- 87% agree that aggressive begging has escalated
- Respondee seem relatively less concerned about criminal damage at 72%

4) Do businesses feel they are adversely affected by ASB?

90% of respondees considered their business is adversely affected by ASB (two thirds strongly agreed)

| | Number | %age |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 28 | 60 |
| Agree | 14 | 30 |
| Disagree | 5 | 11 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

5) Do businesses feel that current levels of ASB affect staff morale & job retention?

85% of respondents agreed that the current levels of ASB affect their ability to retain staff (two thirds approx. strongly agreed)

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 26 | 55 |
| Agree | 14 | 30 |
| Disagree | 7 | 15 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

6) The impact of ASB on customers

91% felt that the current levels of ASB affects their customers adversely

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 23 | 49 |
| Agree | 20 | 43 |
| Disagree | 4 | 9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

7) Are large groups considered to be more intimidating than individuals or smaller groups?

It turns out not be the case that small groups or individuals are considered less intimidating than large groups. Only 13% strongly agreed that large groups presented a bigger problem. Further analysis indicates that businesses feel ASB by individuals or very small groups can be as intimidating and damaging as that emanating from the larger groups.

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 6 | 13 |
| Agree | 18 | 38 |
| Disagree | 17 | 36 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 | 11 |
| N/A | 1 | 2 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

8) The impact of groups continually loitering in the town centre

85% of respondees agreed or strongly agreed that groups of people continually loitering in the town centre caused them and their business harassment, alarm and distress

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 26 | 55 |
| Agree | 14 | 30 |
| Disagree | 6 | 13 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

9) Given the response to Question 8, businesses were asked which groups in their opinion, created most harassment, alarm and distress?

NB Several reported more than one group

In order :

| | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|
| Alcohol dependents | 32 | 34% |
| Drug dependents | 18 | 19% |
| Teenage gangs | 11 | 12% |
| Beggars | 9 | 10% |
| Street dwellers | 7 | 8% |
| Shoplifters | 5 | 5% |
| Buskers | 3 | 3% |
| STAR clients | 1 | 1% |
| No response | 7 | 8% |
| | 93 | |

Business' perception of the effectiveness of local enforcement/intervention agencies

1) The survey asked businesses if they agree with the statement that the enforcement agencies demonstrate concern over the effect ASB has on businesses and the town centre

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 2 | 4 |
| Agree | 16 | 34 |
| Disagree | 18 | 38 |
| Strongly Disagree | 11 | 23 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

38% of respondents feel that the enforcement agencies are concerned about protecting businesses from ASB. 62% felt they were not. 23% strongly disagreed with the statement that the enforcement agencies demonstrate concern

2) Do businesses feel they can report incidents of ASB easily to these agencies?

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 1 | 2 |
| Agree | 18 | 38 |
| Disagree | 20 | 43 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 17 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

40% of the businesses in the population felt they could report incidents easily. 60% felt they could not

3) Do businesses feel that enforcement agencies respond with a proportionate response?

| | Actual | %age |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 1 | 2 |
| Agree | 15 | 32 |
| Disagree | 18 | 38 |
| Strongly Disagree | 13 | 28 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

Only one third of respondents feel that responses are proportionate to the scale and severity of the problems encountered by businesses

4) The survey asked businesses which time of the day they were most effected

5 businesses reported that 4pm-9pm was the time they were most affected. Further analysis reveals these are mainly the evening businesses affected by the teenage gangs and already involved with existing Police interventions. The vast majority felt that ASB occurred throughout the whole day – specifically between 9am-5pm although some did report ASB starting earlier – from 7.30am

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 4:00 - 9:00 pm | 5 |
| All (9.00am to 5.00pm) | 42 |
| Total | 47 |

5) Are businesses aware of any enforcement or engagement activity in their area?

| | Actual | %age |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Yes | 11 | 23 |
| No | 36 | 77 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

77% of businesses in the survey area were not aware of any enforcement or engagement activity. A very small number (2) have questioned the reasons for lifting the ban on drinking in the area and/or the reason for not removing the signs announcing the alcohol ban if the ban is no longer current.

The business reporting the cycling ASB also commented that signs describing no cycling in the town centre are still in position in Robertson Street

6) Do businesses currently work with any agencies tackling ASB?

| | Actual | %age |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Yes | 8 | 17 |
| No | 39 | 83 |
| Total | 47 | 100 |

The vast majority of businesses (83%) do not work in partnership to tackle ASB. Of those that responded positively, 87% recorded Shopwatch as the agency they look to most for assistance.

Other Information provided to support the survey

Letter to HBC from Linda Jeffcoate dated 8/7/15 relating to impact on inward investment (App A)

E-Mail from Eric Chauval – Market trader recording safety fears (App B)

E-Mail from Colin Dormer, BID Steering group Chair – relating to the impact on the emerging BID (App C)

Tweet received from resident expressing concerns (App D)

E-Mail received from Dyer & Hobbis (App E)

Conclusions drawn from the survey & supplementary responses

- 1) Although they report an escalation, environmental ASB is not a prime concern for local businesses**
- 2) The overwhelming concern is the degree to which a range of anti social behaviours which businesses feel are limiting access to public spaces, impacting on business' bottom line, the perception of the town centre as a safe and welcoming place and inward investment.**
- 3) The overwhelming opinion is that the growth of street drinking, drunkenness and the knock on effects of that is the greatest threat to the town centre**
- 4) The knock on effects have been reported as loud aggressive arguments, fighting, dogs not under control, urination and defaecation in public spaces, vomiting, damage to property and shoplifting.**
- 5) The effects of street drinking are felt across the whole of the sample area and at all times of day**
- 6) Other forms of ASB which are of major concern across the town centre are drug use/dealing, aggressive begging, begging in the form of busking and verbal intimidation and harassment**
- 7) After street drinking, drug taking/dealing/use in public space is the second greatest cause of concern followed closely by an increase in verbal intimidation and harassment**
- 8) Aggressive begging is a greater concern for businesses in Station Road and Robertson Street than other forms of ASB They acknowledge that positive action has been taken by the Police against one major offender.**
- 9) Businesses report that a growing number of teenagers are congregating in the late afternoon/evening/weekend in the area around McDonalds. This group is often unruly, threatening and intimidating for visitors, business staff and customers. Some work we understand has been done to mitigate these problems but the problem remains and adds to the list of behaviours that businesses consider need to be addressed.**
- 10) McDonald's franchisee has drawn attention to the aggressive and threatening nature of this group and has quantified the impact of that group's activity on his business (App F)**
- 11) Some forms of ASB are particularly felt in certain areas. Busking, often by drunken individuals is a concern for the businesses in the Creative Media Centre in Robertson Street as is cycling and skateboarding.**
- 12) Evidence from the survey suggests there is a need to reassure businesses in the town centre. 62% felt the various enforcement agencies did not demonstrate concern; 66% felt that the response to their problems were not met with a proportionate response from the Police and other enforcement agencies**
- 13) 77% of the businesses surveyed were not aware of any ongoing enforcement activities and 83% felt that they are not encouraged to work in partnership to address the problems of ASB. The results of this survey suggest there is an opportunity for the Police and others to remedy these perceptions.**
- 14) Many businesses believe the Council is already operating an alcohol ban in public space which is not being enforced by the Council or the Police. Signs relating to an "alcohol ban" are located in various locations in the town centre – and ironically on lampposts where the majority of the street drinkers congregate.**
- 15) Businesses have reported an increase in the number of "rough sleepers" in the town centre and generally believe that help rather than enforcement is needed for this group. That said some members of this group are blamed for an increase in begging although other reports suggest that begging, especially in Station Road, is undertaken by people in accommodation and receiving benefits. The inference is that the public need to be advised that begging is not necessarily the product of homelessness.**

Appendix A

Street drinking and antisocial behaviour Town Centre issues

Vagrancy and drunken disorder is an ongoing issue for businesses based in the Town Centre. The PCSO are quick to react. However, the issue is more ingrained.

There are frequently large numbers of street drinkers sitting on benches outside the Creative Media Centre in Robertson Street. This makes it difficult to enter the Creative Media Centre but, more importantly, impacts on trade at Rye Bay Kitchen and the tables outside. More specifically:

- A client of the Centre - Martin Craven of PRMP Ltd, property investment in London and worldwide - had recommended the 5th Floor of the Creative Media Centre to one of his clients looking to expand his Tonbridge operations.

The contact visited Hastings Town Centre on a Saturday afternoon to 'check Hastings before making a recommendation to his Board'. His words on what happened are unrepeatable. Suffice to say there was a drunk person sitting on the Church Steps shouting. There were two further people having a fight in Robertson Street and begging for money. In his words 'it was like the Wild West'

- In a further incident, Medica (based on the 5th floor of Havelock Place) is a 24 hour operation. On Monday 22nd June, they reported that one member of staff had notified them that over the weekend "someone had made a home for himself outside the front door. Over the course of the weekend his friends joined him and at one point there was a group of 7 people sat outside of the front door drinking alcohol. The staff on duty found this extremely intimidating when leaving the building at any time"

This has a significant impact on our ability to attract companies to the Town Centre and create high level jobs. Councillor Peter Chowney and Councillor John Hodges were notified. As a result, we have met with Town Centre PC Nick Marriott who has been helpful in resolving the issues. However two immediate areas need action:

Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gives a local authority power to make a Public Spaces Protection Order.

Hastings Borough Council previously had this in place which gave the Police powers to make an arrest. This is not now in place. This means that the Police can only suggest people move on who are drinking and making a nuisance of themselves

Actions required:

- 1. Hastings Borough Council to renew Section 59**
- 2. Move the Benches elsewhere to prevent disruption to businesses and intimidation of the public.**
- 3. Support Town Centre Policing**

Linda Jeffcoate

8th July 2015

Appendix B

Rob Woods

From: frenchmanager@gmail.com on behalf of Eric Chauvel, The French Delicatessen
<eric@thefrenchdelicatessen.co.uk>
Sent: 26 May 2016 18:29
To: Lesley Davis; Marcia Bryant; Rob Woods
Subject: Report

Hi all, I wanted to report two things:

- there are more and more homeless people, or junkies in town center, which is having a bad influence on the business, either for the market or the local businesses. I have noticed that some parents with young children do not come in town anymore.

- we have had some "action" in town this afternoon. two employees of Sports Direct were chasing a young female, which I guess has stolen something in the shop. the 2 member of staff have been stopped by some junkies to let the girl run away. She then hid in the female toilets, the 2 mens could not get in obviously, while they were waiting for support, she managed to escape, she has been caught later. What upset me, it's when the staff walked back to the shop, they have been attacked by the same group of junkies. We have asked the control to call the police many times, but their answer was "no uniform in town".

How a town of the size of Hastings can not have any police officers in town. I bet that the junkies have noticed that as well, and this is why their are more and more of them every week, it looks like they are going to have a "homeless festival" soon.

Do not get me wrong, I would not like to be homeless, but the situation is getting worse, and some traders do not feel safe at the moment. When we leave, we have to lock our vans now, as when you pass Mc Donald, and that pound shop around the corner, their are dozen of those drinking and smoking funny things there.

Does the Town Center Management or the Council have planned to do something regardind that problem?

Regards

Eric Chauvel
Director
Mob:+44(0)7817 521 312

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Appendix C

Hi Rob,

As you know I am currently Chair of the Hastings Business Improvement District Steering Group. In that capacity and as a Town Centre Trader I would very much like to understand the current position regarding Beggars and Street Drinkers in the Town Centre.

It is quite clear from my own observations and the numerous comments from customers that we are seeing a large increase in this sort of activity. It is clearly not ideal for the IMPROVEMENT of our Town Centre. We do not want a Town Centre that is seen as a soft touch for this behaviour being allowed to continue.

What is the strategy for dealing with this and is it being implemented? Can you or the authorities who deal with this assure the Town Centre Traders that action is or will be taken?

Clearly we all want a clean vibrant and attractive destination that is not marred by unsightly characters.

Best wishes,

Colin Dormer F Hinds Ltd Manager & Hastings BID Chair.

Appendix D

John leport on Twitter: "@hastingstown you have allowed our town center to become ... Page 3 of 3



Appendix E

Dear Rob

Further to our telephone conversation this morning, I write in relation to the general state of Hastings Town Centre.

It appears that the town has been inundated by street drinkers and homeless people. It is becoming obvious that there is a great social need in the town and it appears that little apparent action has been taken by the Local Authority to assist these various individuals.

Unfortunately their presence does not present the town in the best light to visitors and tourists. Whilst I am not suggesting that the issue is swept under the carpet, there certainly needs to be a concerted effort to assist these individuals with their needs which in turn would make the town centre more attractive.

There is also the issue of litter and general mess within the town centre, it also appears that there are a number of dog owners that seem unable to clean up after their pets.

A lot of litter is dropped around the town centre which does not improve the look and attractiveness of the town. The pavements also appear to be absolutely filthy and appear to be missing out on regular cleaning. It is likely that a most of the pavements will require jet-washing in order to remove the grime and dirt that has accumulated over recent months.

I would also like to raise my concern with regard to black top appearing instead of paving slabs around the town centre. Again this does not create the attractive environment we would like to see to make the area pleasant for residents, tourists and visitors.

Regards

Ollie

Oliver Dyer MRICS | Dyer and Hobbis

Hastings Office | 43a Havelock Road | Hastings | TN34 1BE | 01424 423626

Bexhill Office | 49 Marina | Bexhill on Sea | TN40 1BQ | 01424 211321

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* TEENAGERS LARGE GROUPS *
ABUSIVE THREATENED STAFF
{ GOING TO RAPE YOU } THREATS MADE
{ STAB YOU } TO FEMALE STAFF

* STREET DRINKING / BEGGING

Puts customers off coming in the
store & that part of town from
4pm onwards.

A MASSIVE ISSUE
CUSTOMERS HAVE MADE A LOT OF
COMPLAINTS & IT AFFECTS OUR
EVENING BUSINESS UP TO 10/15%

