

Award for Police Community Officers

Lothian and Borders Police have been presented with a national award for their work within the community.

The Community Engagement prize at the National Community Safety Awards was presented to the Dalkeith sector community policing team in Midlothian for their ongoing work within the local area.

Sergeant Scott Meechan was presented with the award from Safer Communities Minister Fergus Ewing at the ceremony at the Thistle Hotel in Glasgow on Monday 13th September.

As well as being honoured for their community newsletter and local radio slot on Black Diamond FM, judges were also impressed by the success of various antisocial behaviour initiatives in Pathhead.

For several months the area had suffered from anti-social behaviour, which was mainly carried out by young people from the village. This had an adverse effect on the quality of life of a large number of residents.

Through proactive community engagement with a number of local organisations, Lothian and Borders Police were able to identify key areas of concern for all sections of the community, and take measures to address them.

One of the major problems identified was a lack of facilities within the village, particularly for local youth club, who met within the run-down kitchen and recreation space in the village hall.

Sergeant Meechan and his team identified the village hall as key to improving community spirit and were to reach an

agreement was reached with IKEA to fund and resource the complete renovation of the room.

A new kitchen, double the size of the old one was installed, while the building was given a fresh coat of paint and brand new sofas, units and soft furnishings were also added.

☒ Since the renovated village hall reopened, police recorded a dramatic decrease in the number of anti social behaviour and youth calls being received to the area. The village hall space is now being utilised by a number of other groups and organisations from Pathhead and further.

Accepting the award, Sergeant Meechan thanked his team and Lothian and Borders Police's partner agencies for their assistance in refurbishing the village hall and in turn helping to tackle local antisocial behaviour.

He said: "I am delighted to receive this award which recognises the hard work and effort of everyone involved in this project.

'Although led and run by Lothian and Borders Police the success of the initiative was greatly assisted by the support provided by McSence, Midlothian Council, Black Diamond Radio, but especially IKEA, who have been fantastic throughout.

'Special thanks should also go to the people of Pathhead who came together to help make a real difference to their community. Many gave up their time to help with aspects of this project, and to have their efforts recognised nationally is a fantastic achievement for the whole community".

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams, Divisional Commander for East and Midlothian congratulated the team for their award and anticipated further success across the division.

He said: 'Winning this award is not just testament to the tremendous work by the local community policing team in

Midlothian, but represents the type of success we expect to emulate across the division under Community Commitment.

'Engagement with the public is essential for successfully detecting and preventing crime, but can also have great social benefits, as illustrated by the refurbishment at the Pathhead village hall.

'I would like to thank Sergeant Meechan and his team for all their efforts and assure the public across East and Midlothian that we intend to build on this success and look forward to further engagement that will be mutually beneficial to our policing teams and the communities we serve.'