

Visit to the CCTV control room at Stroud Police Station 2nd July 2009

Linda Cherry representing Vale Vision accompanied Councillor Ronnie Harding for an official visit to the CCTV control room at Stroud Police Station. A demonstration of Dursley's 4 CCTV camera's was given by Caroline Banyard who is the civilian CCTV supervisor for Stroud Police.

The digital cameras are permanently fixed to cover the swimming pool car park and the adjacent part of Castle Street, the traffic light junction area of Parsonage St., Castle St. and May lane, the bottom of Parsonage St., top of Silver St and Market Place and the Castle St. end of Long Street.

There is a mobile camera used for trouble 'hot spots' but only placed where it would be usefully needed for a few months at a time due to the costs involved.

The control room is manned throughout the daytime but night time cover is only on weekends. The control room operators are supported by volunteers but radio contact with Police Officers can only be made by staff members so the cost of running the CCTV control room is limited to the weekend evenings. The cameras are constantly working and when something attracts the operators attention they can hover and zoom in as required, such action has to be logged in an official log with an explanation for the extra attention, also when a Police Officer is contacted to attend a suspicious scene. The log is audited which should alleviate any concerns of victimisation of members of the public and can be produced as evidence in court along with a DVD of the CCTV film. The cameras are not seen as a motoring crime detection device but serious concerns of motorists behaviour would not be passed on.

If everyone who has been tempted to commit crime had the opportunity to see that the clarity of the digital cameras is so very clear crime would surely stop overnight! Unfortunately people say that the cameras are invariably looking the other way when something happens!

Running the CCTV system is very costly but can act successfully as a crime deterrent and improve safety, in addition to CCTV Traders and Business people can join a crime surveillance initiative involving radio surveillance. 22 traders in Stroud have joined the scheme 'Storenet' with the Police. The radio/phones have to be paid for by the trader on a monthly basis but some traders benefit by sharing the cost with a neighbouring business and also sharing the staff time in operating the scheme. The cost of a radio is £7 per week. Observation of suspicious persons and incidents is vital, besides the gender, height, colour, age, accent of a person additional observation of type of clothing, footwear, gloves, tattoos, facial piercings, earrings, facial hair, spectacles, hat and vehicle information if applicable.

Caroline Banyard would welcome a group of traders and business people to visit her team working in the CCTV room to promote safety and security in Dursley or discuss the practicalities of developing 'Storenet' in Dursley. Email contact: Caroline.Banyard@Gloucestershire.Police.uk

Linda Cherry

Vale Vision & Vale Business Forum