

PACT

Partners and Communities together

Operational guidelines for PACTs in Tonbridge and Malling

Setting up a new PACT

The Tonbridge and Malling Community Safety Partnership (CSP) wishes to encourage the formation of PACTs as it believes that they can make a significant contribution to tackling community safety issues in local neighbourhoods and are an excellent means by which members of the local community can get involved in discussions about the improvements needed in their local area.

The CSP needs to ensure, however, that PACTs are set up in the right locations, cover the right areas and, most importantly have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure they operate effectively and are able to respond effectively to issues arising in that neighbourhood. A proposal for a new PACT in the Borough will therefore need to be endorsed by the Community Safety Partnership at one of its monthly Tasking and Co-ordinating Sub Group meetings prior to any formal PACT meeting taking place.

To endorse the setting up of a new PACT, the CSP will need to be assured that:

- there is a need in the area, backed up by local crime, ASB and other data and feedback from the local community on problems and issues
- the area of coverage is clearly defined
- there is community support for the PACT in the area
- the local Parish Council and/or local Borough Council members are involved/informed
- there are appropriate secretarial arrangements in place to organise and take minutes of meetings.

If an individual wishes to establish a PACT for their area, they must first contact their local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) or neighbourhood Police Officer to discuss arrangements for the PACT. A short submission covering the above details should then be sent to Chief Inspector Tony Thomas so that this can be considered by the CSP at the next monthly tasking meeting.

Running a PACT

If the CSP has agreed to the PACT being established, appropriate arrangements must be put in place to ensure they operate effectively. A full guide on how to operate a PACT has been prepared following a pilot process covering Borough Green, Wrotham and Platt. All PACTs are encouraged to be aware of and follow the guidance. This can be downloaded from the PACT pages on the CSP's website – www.tmcriderection.org.uk

It is important that a suitable chairman for the PACT is selected. He or she should have some experience of chairing meetings and be able to handle differing opinions and views and should be able to agree actions clearly and concisely. A poorly chaired PACT meeting will often result in a lack of clear outcomes and no clear ownership of the agreed actions.

Each PACT will need to nominate a secretary for the group who has responsibility for setting up meetings, taking notes of those meetings and recording actions and progress. That contact person must be made known to the Community Safety Partnership. All members of the PACT should be sent agendas, minutes and action plans to ensure they are all aware of the work to be undertaken and the issues that need to be addressed. Minutes and action plans should be circulated to PACT members as soon as possible after each meeting.

Focusing on the Key Issues

The PACT process usually involves an initial walk-about around the neighbourhood (sometimes called an 'Environmental Visual Audit' or 'EVA') along with consultation with residents and businesses in the area over issues of concern. It is for individual PACTs to decide how best these processes are organised locally. However, community engagement and consultation along with a visual inspection of an area may throw up a large number of issues of concern. A PACT panel cannot be expected to deal with each and every one of these at once and should avoid raising community expectations that cannot then be fulfilled. As part of PACT operations in Tonbridge and Malling, the CSP will expect each PACT to select 3 key issues it wishes to focus on initially. Over time, as those issues are addressed, other lower priority issues can then be dealt with.

Letting The Right People Know

It is essential that both the participants, the wider community and other agencies are kept up to date with the work of a PACT and that information relating to the work they do and the meetings they hold are made public and accessible to a wide audience. A standard newsletter template is available to all PACTs and these must be completed after each meeting and circulated both to partners and the local community. In addition, PACTs might also wish to make use of local newsletters already in use locally, articles in a parish magazine or using a local website.

The CSP has established a PACT section on its website and will expect agendas, minutes, action plans and general updates to be posted on the site to ensure all have open access to PACT work. The secretary of each PACT should take responsibility for e-mailing agendas, minutes etc to Alison Finch, Crime Reduction Co-ordinator, at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to enable these to be uploaded (alison.finch@tmbc.gov.uk).

Taking Forward Agreed Actions

PACTs need to be aware of the right agencies that deal with which specific issues. The involvement of Borough or parish councillors in a PACT can help as such people have a good knowledge about contacts and responsibilities. When actions are agreed, a lead agency responsible for that action must be assigned to it. Ideally, all appropriate agencies should be represented on a PACT to ensure actions can be taken forward effectively.

The Chairman should take responsibility for monitoring progress against the agreed actions. If an action falls within the remit of an agency not represented on the PACT itself, then it is strongly recommended that the Chairman or a nominated member of the PACT is delegated to discuss the issue with that agency prior to any commitment to action being made and the results of that discussion brought to the next PACT meeting for further consideration. PACTs should aim to work in partnership with all key agencies in their area and not seek to impose unrealistic actions on them without the benefit of full and proper discussion.

Checklist

- * Make sure the Borough's Community Safety Partnership has agreed to your PACT being established

- * Ensure an effective chairman is appointed

- * Ensure your PACT has a nominated secretary to issue agendas, organise meetings, take minutes, and compile/update action plans

- * Ensure all the right people are kept informed and up to date about the working of your PACT

- * Focus on a small number of key actions, draw up a clear action plan and assign responsibilities to each action

- * Ensure all relevant agencies attend your PACT meetings