Crime and ASB drop thanks to NAG

BY LAUREN EVERITT

A GROUP set up to help slash crime in the area has been hailed as a success.

The Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) for Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale was launched in January and has made progress in the three main priorities identified: burglaries, anti-social behaviour, speeding and parking.

David Hilton, NAG chairman and Royal Borough councillor, said: "The group has achieved a lot in a relatively short space of time and we are continuing to make good progress.

"In a bid to crack down on these problems, the group handed out thousands of home security advice leaflets, and police officers have made their presence felt to act as a deterrent."

There has been a steady decrease in the number of burglaries in the area but the NAG will continue to encourage residents not to become complacent.

Ascot Sergeant Colin Pike said: "We live in a very rich and affluent area and residents don't think they will be a victim of crime. I think the spate of burglaries has come as a bit of a shock to people."

He said the majority of burglaries have been in the Sunninghill area.

Police recently arrested two men on burglary charges and the number of crimes has since decreased.

Reports have shown that in a number of cases, burglars entered people's homes through unlocked doors and windows.

Tackling anti-social behaviour has been one of the group's biggest successes due to the launch of Kotch, a youth club run by Ascot Racecourse operations director Ronnie Wilkie where young people can get together rather than hang out in parks or on the streets.

Kotch, street talk for cool, came about as a result of police, the racecourse, the Royal Borough's community and youth services and community wardens working together with volunteers.

It meets every Friday, when anti-social behaviour was at its peak. Figures recently released by the Royal Borough show incidents of anti-social behaviour in Ascot decreased by 33% – from 63 in September 2007 to 42 in September 2008.

The NAG is also creating a website www.ascotnag.com in order to send out important messages to people in the community and give them the opportunity to communicate back.