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St Neots businesses join the fight against crime and anti social behaviour

At a recent launch held at the Priory Centre, many St Neots businesses opted to join the Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime (HBAC) scheme in a bid to reduce business crime and anti-social behaviour within the town.

As a result of the success of Huntingdon's HBAC programme, which launched in March 2004, St Neots shops and businesses recognised the benefits of the scheme and will be proactively tackling crime that has been displaced from Huntingdon.

During 2004/5, shop theft in Huntingdon dropped by 27% whilst the percentage of shoplifting arrests significantly increased, thanks to partnership working. The scheme is also proving successful in St Ives and by launching HBAC in St Neots, the aim is to achieve similar results and to help make the town a safer place for people to live, work and shop.

Alison Taylor, Group Store Manager for Boots, St Neots, said, "As an existing member of HBAC in Huntingdon and St Ives, we have seen the reduction in crime and stock losses, increased staff morale and businesses brought closer together within the three towns."

St Neots will continue to benefit from ShopSafe radio technology – two-way radios linking to members, police, and CCTV with the added benefit of allowing immediate information and real-time back up in an emergency situation. Over 40 photographs of known offenders will be shared with HBAC members, giving them an immediate opportunity to stop retail crime and anti-social behaviour. One of the main weapons in the HBAC arsenal is a sophisticated crime database, used to record crime and anti-social behaviour. Currently, there are over 500 incidents and 190 offenders on the database. Persistent prolific offenders are excluded from all HBAC members' premises.

A new website has also been launched, which gives a comprehensive insight into all the benefits of the scheme – www.hbac.org.uk

HBAC has proved that partnership working, along with the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, brings significant results in the battle to reduce crime and anti social behaviour.

As an initiative of Huntingdon Town Centre Partnership, HBAC has been upheld as a scheme of 'best practice' both regionally and nationally.