Close circuit TV will help beat town centre crime, say police

By Naomi Barrett

Dyfed-Powys police are planning to introduce close circuit television (CCTV) into Cardigan town centre.

The announcement was made by Community Affairs Officer, Sgt Jeremy John at a Home Watch and Farm Watch meeting in The Black Lion, Cardigan, last week.

The decision followed budget news last week that more grants were being made available to help the fight against crime.

Speaking after the meeting, Sgt John said, "We do not want Cardigan to become the only town in the area not to have the system, it might attract more criminals and Cardigan may become a "soft target"."

"Two cameras may be sufficient - we are looking into putting one on the Guildhall and we have yet to decide about the other one."

"Cardigan would be following in the footsteps of Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock and Carmarthen, where the cameras have been hailed a great success."

"There is no logical argument against the cameras," said Sgt John.

"Most of the Cardigan traders I have spoken to seem very supportive of the idea."

Police will have to go through a long process before the cameras are installed, but they hope to have things arranged for the New Year.

"We will have to get planning permission as some of the buildings may be listed. This will obviously take time."

"The new grants will provide 50% of the funding for the project, so we will have to look to Cyngor Dosbarth Ceredigion, Cardigan Town Council and possibly local traders for help."

Supporters of CCTV say it will make a safer environment for shoppers in the daytime and the evening, whilst opponents say it is yet another invasion of privacy.

"We are trying to deter a "doughnut" effect in Cardigan," said Sgt John.

"That is when out of town developments create a "ghetto" area in the town centres and people are afraid to go into the town after 5pm."

"It is very important to make people feel safe and with CCTV town traders are going to feel more confident. It will give the town a boost."

Shops such as Currys and Cardigan Sports which have been broken into more than once this year are very supportive of the idea.

"It's a good idea," said Tony Sabiston of Cardigan Sports.

"Unfortunately, it's a sign of the times. Burglaries are on the increase, despite what the police say, so anything that reduces the chance of crime, I support it."

A 25-year-old man and a 13-year-old boy from the Pontypidd area have been charged in connection with two alleged smash and grab incidents at Currys electrical shop in Cardigan High Street on November 20 and 30.