Communication key to reassure the public

REASSURING the community about the significant police activity in Penygarn, where officers executed warrants at a number of addresses, was an important part of Operation Harrier. Within some 20 minutes of the first warrants being executed, Ceredigion’s Neighbourhood Policing Teams were back on the public about the police’s work against drug dealers and users. PCs Os Russell Farley and Chris Tipper were seen collecting leaflets and talking to residents about the early-morning drug raids.

The role of the NPT has been emphasised by Detective Inspector Greg Williams during the briefing. He said: “The need to give information at neighbouring addresses is important, and also to reassure children and their parents. And we need to provide contacts for the members of the public.”

This is the hope that the community’s input will reveal information about drug dealing activities, so police can combat the supply and use of Class A drugs such as heroin and crack cocaine.

PCSO Russell Farley said: “We are doing a leaflet drop to the school and also to residents, which may help us to gather ‘community intelligence’.

“We will speak to residents, children at school, and their parents, to reassure them about the activity this morning.”

The NPT is also urging people to contact Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) or with any information about controlled drugs.

In recent days Dyfed Powys police officers have been proactively engaged in enforcement work to address issues relating to the supply and use of controlled drugs, including heroin and crack cocaine.

The majority of the operational work has been done by plain clothes officers, many from other divisions with Dyfed Powys force area.

And by the time of the first raid of the day, at 8am on Wednesday 27 February, some 11 persons had already been remanded to await trial on charges of supplying controlled drugs in Ceredigion.

The leaflet reads: “It is the intention of Dyfed Powys police to invest time and resources to tackle community issues relating to drug abuse, utilising partnership agencies to secure convictions and provide support to persons who are addicted to drugs.”

And as a result of the drugs activity on 27 and 28 February, five heroin offenders have been referred to drug intervention projects. And drug addicts, and anyone suffering from the effects of controlled drugs, is urged to contact Operation Harrier, where help will be offered in a confidential manner.

When police executed warrants under Operation Harrier last week, the Cambrian News was there. Reporter Norman Williams (right) and photographer Arwyn Parry-Jones bring you news and pictures from the drug raids...

Our reporter goes undercover with police on Operation Harrier

OPERATION Harrier has been targeting drug dealers and suppliers intent on selling Class A drugs, including heroin and crack cocaine, in Ceredigion.

So an invitation from Ceredigion police division’s Detective Inspector Greg Williams for the Cambrian News to follow a series of raids to execute warrants issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act was a ‘first’ not to be refused.

After Trojan 1 briefing by team leader Detective Sergeant Steve Davies, I followed Trojan 1 into Penygarn flat before them on 27 February, where a ground-floor flat in Gwyl Rheildol was the target.

Scarcely had I and a Cambrian News photographer followed the ‘method of entry’ team into the building before they had used a ‘ram-it’ to gain instant entry to the flat.

A very necessary piece of equipment in such circumstances, the ram is used with sufficient force to ensure the three or four-hour door is forced open.

The door of the flat in Penygarn

The door of the flat in Penygarn flats after the drug raid. DPPJM456

deadbolt, chains, and key-lock are in many premises visited by the Trojan teams could not withstand the ram.

The method of entry team quickly gave way to officers to conduct a thorough search for evidence of drugs use and intended supply.

The search was soon aided by sniffer dog Sam and his handler, PC Andy Edwards from Llanelli, representative of the many officers from outside Ceredigion police division playing an integral part in Operation Harrier.

When traces of heroin were allegedly found, one arrest was made, with Christopher Kirk led away in handcuffs by PC Paul Roberts, a member of the local NPT, to a waiting van. He was taken to the police station where designated casework and interviewing officers were waiting. A woman also in the flat was not arrested, but was to be arrested and interviewed later.

Meanwhile, in an adjacent building, another Trojan team had entered a flat in Penygarn Flats.

The door’s four bolts could not withstand the ram, and a rapid entry was gained by police.

In the aftermath of the raids, officers returned to the police station to complete painstaking but important paperwork before setting out with another warrant.

It had been an interesting start to a Wednesday morning.

A flat at Gwyl Rheildol, Penygarn, was the first target for Trojan 1. DPPJM456

Raids get off to a flying start with briefing

MY introduction to Ceredigion police division’s 42-man Operation Harrier team came at 7.30am on Wednesday 27 February, as Detective Inspector Greg Williams led a briefing to his officers, write Norman Williams.

He reminded Operation Harrier’s Trojan teams 1, 2 and 3 of the reasons behind the raids that were to start in less than 30 minutes.

Operation Harrier is targeting the trafficking and supply of Class A drugs in Ceredigion.

The operation has had significant successes already, with 16 people already arrested and 11 remanded in custody having faced trial, or awaiting trial on various drug-related offences.

This was basically another phase in the continuing operation, the DI told the briefing.

With instructions that were well and to the point, he re-affirmed the officers and PCsOs to their appropriate assignments, which included strike teams, method-of-entry teams, an intelligence cell, interview teams and casework teams.

The teams were to be briefed more specifically by their respective team leaders.

Much of the information and intelligence received about the supply of heroin and crack cocaine related to text messages and telecommunications between known suppliers, dealers and users.

A string of names and addresses were read out, and warrants issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act were to be executed that morning, or soon after.

DI Williams said: “We want to gather evidence on drug use and supply. Named individuals are to be arrested at certain addresses. We also need witness statements from some of the individuals concerned.”

“And all paperwork is to be completed before moving on to the next warrants.”

He also highlighted the need to provide contacts for the public, with the local community being informed of what was going on in the area that day.

And DI Williams concluded his briefing: “It is now 7.30am – I want the first warrants executed by 8am.”

And with cars and vans lined-up in the police station car park, the day was off to a flying start.