



# PRESS RELEASE

3 July 2014

## Tackling graffiti in Christchurch

Following an outbreak of graffiti in Christchurch, the council has teamed up with local police to devise and produce an anti-graffiti film to be shown at schools in the borough.

The film includes interviews with people who have been affected by graffiti. A resident in an older persons housing complex tells how people there are frightened when they see graffiti near their homes as they feel it could lead to more anti-social behaviour. She says: “The people that are doing this must have nannies and granddads. Surely they don’t want them to feel like we all feel? There’s a lot in their 90s round here that are very, very frightened of people coming up and down their alleyway and on their back fences and spraying.”

Also included is an emotional interview from the mother of a young man who was arrested for graffiti spraying. She talks of how she accompanied her son to the police station where he was shown photographs of graffiti which he admitted to spraying. He then had his fingerprints taken. She says: “When I was watching him getting fingerprinted I was devastated – I was so upset. When he saw me that upset it really put something in his heart to think ‘well, I’ve upset my mother this much, it’s just not worth it.’

“The policeman explained to him that the graffiti really affects people coming into the area as they associate that with drugs and crime and so on.”

David Barnes, Strategic Director at Christchurch Council, is interviewed about the cost of clearing up graffiti which is around £10,000 a year for Christchurch. A manager from Waitrose in Christchurch also explains how graffiti daubed on their roof had cost them £1,500 to clean off as a specialist firm had to be engaged.

PCSO Mark Lane from Christchurch Police tells what happens when offenders are found and arrested and how they could go through restorative justice whereby they have to confront the people who their actions have affected to explain their motives.

Cllr Bernie Davis, portfolio holder for Community at Christchurch Council said: “We hope that this film will show youngsters who may be thinking of spraying graffiti the consequences of their actions.

“Graffiti not only makes the areas where it happens look awful but it makes some of more vulnerable residents fearful that more anti-social behaviour will happen. We are working with the police to find the offenders of the latest spate of graffiti.”