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Cathedral Green

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan

May 2024.

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CATHEDRAL GREEN ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) ACTION PLAN MAY 2024.

Introduction

Cathedral Green is the historic heart of Exeter, drawing thousands of visitors annually to the Cathedral. It is highly regarded locally as one of the best places in the city centre to enjoy green space, great food, and independent shops. Exeter Cathedral School, located within this historic precinct, caters to pupils aged 7-13 years old who use the Green as main thoroughfare.

However, it is widely acknowledged that antisocial behaviour is a significant challenge here. This is heightened during the summer months as Cathedral Green sees greater use over longer hours.

This plan has been produced following two meetings between local businesses, the police, the Exeter City Council, InExeter - the business improvement district (BID), and homeless charity St Petrock's. The aim is to develop a shared understanding of the issues, improve communication between those impacted and to have a coordinated response so that everyone feels safe whether they live, work, study or are visiting Cathedral Green.

Survey data

Stakeholders were invited to complete a short survey to establish a baseline on perceptions of safety on Cathedral Green. This was sent via email and received in April 2024 and 10 responses were received.

70% of respondents felt Cathedral Green was generally safe or very safe during the daytime. However, during the evening only one respondent reported that Cathedral Green felt safe with 44% reporting it feels either unsafe or very unsafe. When asked to describe the main challenges on Cathedral Green, respondents reported street drinking, drug use and dealing, rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour, violent and aggressive behaviour and defecation and urination as major challenges. This was true for both daytime and evening.

100% of respondents reported feeling concerned for the safety of their colleagues or customers in the last 12 months with 50% either very or quite worried. 66% of respondents haven't seen any improvements in terms of levels of ASB on Cathedral Green in the last 12 months to May 2024.

Businesses are already taking some action to address crime and antisocial behaviour on Cathedral Green with 85% saying that they have reported crime in the last 12 months and 57% providing training or awareness raising with staff. Other actions include installing burglar alarms, updating risk assessments and increasing security patrols.

Suggestions for improving community safety on Cathedral Green included increased

police presence (90%) or community safety officer patrols (70%). 50% felt that stakeholder meetings between police and business would continue to be advantageous.

Our threshold of acceptable behaviour

Cathedral Green, though privately owned, is publicly accessible and we want it to be an inclusive and welcoming place for all where people feel safe to socialise, relax and enjoy the historic and cultural heart of our city.

A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act was introduced by Exeter City Council on 20 June 2022 and is currently in place until June 2025. The PSPO prohibits:

- The consumption, possession or intended use of intoxicating substances
- Aggressive begging
- Urinating or defecating
- Behaving in a manner which has caused or is likely to cause a member of the public to suffer harassment alarm, distress

People who breach these prohibitions, shall when ordered to do so by an authorised person, leave the area either immediately or by such time as may be specified. An authorised person shall be a Police Constable, Police Community Support Officer or Exeter City Council Enforcement Officer who must be able to present their authority upon request.

Exeter Business Against Crime (EBAC)

EBAC is a proactive partnership dedicated to combating business crime and anti-social behaviour. It provides a communication network to increase awareness of offenders and criminal activity in the city. This is achieved using a two-way digital radio network and the Exeter's CCTV system.

The EBAC DISC system is a secure intranet which allows us to share up to date images and incident reports of those who commit shoplifting or anti- social behaviour offences. DISC allows us to gather and share intelligence between members and with the Police as determined by data exchange protocols.

The following Cathedral Green businesses are currently members of EBAC: Exeter Cathedral, Michael Spiers, The Ivy, The Ship Inn, Taste of South Street.
InExeter subsidise EBAC membership for independent businesses and charities.

Find further details here:

Exeter Business Against Crime (EBAC) Partnership - Exeter City Council

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CCTV coverage

Following investment in 2023, there are now 11 cameras covering Cathedral Green. There is a pan, tilt, zoom (PTZ) camera and four new statics on the corner of the St Petrock's building. A single PTZ above the rear entrance to what was Waterstones and a new PTZ and four statics directly outside Eat on the Green. With the addition of the new cameras, the CCTV control room now has excellent coverage of the Cathedral green in its entirety.

Observations on design and use:

The Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) from the Devon & Cornwall Police makes the following observations and recommendations:

- From a designing out crime perspective, **the Green is well designed**. Overall, it is open with good lines of sight and opportunities for natural surveillance, supported by lighting. CCTV coverage appears sufficient and has a monitoring capability. There is a clear demarcation boundary defining the wider space and at times, parts of the Green have designated, legitimate use.

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- Whilst some design changes may help, eradicating the issues completely will prove difficult and **a multi-agency approach** is required to ensure undesirable behaviour is dealt with and removed efficiently.

- **Reclaiming the space for positive uses should be a** focus. Regular legitimate use will help to deter unwanted behaviours and misuse. For example, more markets, exhibitions, community groups, theatre groups, art groups etc activating the space. Consultation with residents and local businesses may also prove worthwhile to gauge what the community would like to see the space used for.

- **Restricting / controlling access to specific areas** e.g., the slightly more concealed space near the school should be considered. Enclosing a space here, controlling access to it and designating it as a garden or something with an intended use should be considered as it may deter unwanted loitering / congregation. Again, if this was implemented, the space must be seen to be used regularly, well maintained and 'policed'.

- Clear and open up the area closer to the Cathedral.
  It is currently an overgrown, concealed space enabling unwanted behaviour. Tree canopies should be trimmed and ground shrubs reduced and where necessary removed to enable clear sight into and through the space.
  Consideration could be given to supplementing it with a railing boundary to control access to it.
  Any work will need to supplement the current hoarding and ongoing development here, being mindful not to create further hidden or concealed space.

- Ensure an approximate 2 – 2.5 metre surveillance gap is maintained from the ground to the lowest hanging tree branch is recommended to improve surveillance and reduce potential areas of concealment.

- If spaces directly under trees are being used to congregate / shelter, consider creating small garden areas around the base of the trees supplemented with low level railings (1 – 1.2m) to prevent / deter access to such space.

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- **Remove this recess.**
  Railings (min 1 – 1.2m) should be erected to restrict access and the space should be filled with robust, substantial defensive planting.

- Install signage relating to rule setting, consequences of unacceptable behaviour, fines, CCTV etc. Such signage may deter some unwanted behaviour and establish clear rules although will not alone, reduce ASB.

Action Plan

As a community, we pledge to all:

- Report criminal activity using 999 when an immediate response is needed,101 in non-emergency situations or online Report a crime | Devon & Cornwall Police (devon-cornwall.police.uk)
- Challenge drinking of alcohol and antisocial behaviour e.g. excessively loud use of portable speakers if safe and appropriate to do so.
- Share this ASB Action Plan with colleagues encouraging staff to challenge ASB if safe and appropriate to do so.
- Signup for Bystander Intervention training Bystander Intervention Campaign - Exeter City Council
- Share information and communicate with other members of Cathedral Green's business community to address ASB.

Key stakeholders pledge to:

	People	Place	Partnership
Police	Increase presence and robustness in enforcing PSPO and no alcohol zone. Increased visibility through hotspot policing for late afternoon / evenings	Target key areas of concern as opposed to general patrols. Deploy Design Out Crime Officer to suggest any physical interventions that could mitigate impacts of ASB.	Support St Petrock's when requested to challenge ASB and criminal activity. Provide reports and updates to stakeholders. Communicate with Exeter College and University as large percentage of green users (no alcohol zone, no drugs etc education and information).

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	People	Place	Partnership
Exeter City Council	With InExeter, deploy Community Safety Officers with enforcement powers.	Maintain coverage of CCTV and notify stakeholders of any issues. Propose additional measures and solutions.	Manage EBAC system and ensure users receive radios and training.
InExeter BID	With Exeter City Council deploy Community Safety Officers with enforcement powers. 7-day week responsive street cleansing for BID members. Request a service - InExeter	Work with food and beverage businesses and Exeter Cathedral to reclaim the outdoor space/pavement areas. Understand and inform how each stakeholder could extend further out from their perimeter and cover wider communal space.	Monthly e-newsletter to include policing updates. Subscribe here: InExeter Ltd (list-manage.com) Administer area WhatsApp groups as a communications channel for businesses. Text 07396 721 325 to be added to Cathedral Green WhatsApp group.
St Petrock's	Morning outreach to engage with rough sleepers, encouraging these to move from business premises doorways. Food distributed away from the Green or inside St Petrock's only, rather than on the Green. Influence clients to behave in appropriate manner and make them aware of the Green's standards of behaviour. Withhold their services to individuals or wider group if behaviour not acceptable in line with current practice. Encourage peer-on-peer policing of behaviour by clients. Engage (if safe/ appropriate) with any individuals behaving in antisocial manner.	Walk around wider Green areas and doorways to engage with rough sleepers outside businesses etc	Seek to support other businesses on the Green who encounter difficulties with rough sleepers, when requested. Provide advice to businesses on how to engage non-confrontationally with rough sleepers and street attached, as requested.

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	People	Place	Partnership
Exeter Cathedral	Deliver a programme of activation on The Green to increase positive uses. E.g. Independent Market, Book Market, Young Traders Market etc.	Litter pick once a day, continue or increase this as required. Maintain the Green and ensure surveillance gaps between planting and trees. Clean up overgrown concealed area identified by DOCO. Install signage setting out rules and consequences of unacceptable behaviour.	Engage with other green community on how to reclaim contested space. For example, fencing which abides by the regulations (non-permanent) for Cathedral School etc or encouraging tables and chairs outside cafes etc
Young Devon	Work closely with young people around their behaviour and the things behind this.		
Exeter Cathedral School			Work with Exeter Cathedral to create defensible space along the boundary near the school.

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Action Plan

- Date: May 2024
- Review Date: October 2024