



Northamptonshire Police

Crimestoppers grant supports educational theatre work in Northamptonshire schools



A £7,500 Crimestoppers grant is set to enable the delivery of educational theatre productions in schools as part of work to tackle arson and anti-social behaviour.

The Northamptonshire Crimestoppers committee secured the cash from the crime-fighting charity's Percy Hoskins award, established in memory of the late Daily Express crime reporter.

It will be put towards youth engagement work taking place through the Arson Task Force (ATF), a joint initiative between Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Shaun Johnson, of the ATF, said: "We've previously used educational theatre to reinforce our successful community safety programmes in Corby, Wellingborough and Irthling borough, and we recently launched Operation Unite in Daventry and Operation Keepsafe on Wellingborough's Queensway estate to tackle arson and anti-social behaviour.

"This grant will enable us to continue to work with young people in meaningful and effective ways, and we're very grateful to Crimestoppers for the opportunity to put the 2018 Percy Hoskins grant to such good use."

The funding will pay for Solomon Theatre Company to stage performances of Skin Deep, which tackles issues including gang violence and unhealthy relationships, and Last Orders, which looks at how alcohol influences behaviour, in Wellingborough secondary schools this autumn.

Solomon's Paola Campari-Moss said: "We've worked with the Arson Task Force for a while now and these productions are so well received in schools.

"It's great to see the benefits they bring to the young people we work with, and we look forward to continuing to support the brilliant work the task force does."

A community-based approach

Previous ATF operations have used activity including door-to-door visits, dedicated waste collection partnerships and educational theatre productions to improve fire safety and reduce arson and anti-social behaviour in communities.

Launched in Irthling borough last June, Operation Rebuild resulted in a 95 per cent reduction in deliberate fires and reduced anti-social behaviour in the town significantly.

It was supported by the East Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership, whose members include Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and East Northamptonshire Council.

Council leader Steven North said: "Deliberate fires can be devastating, putting lives and property at risk, but by working together we have achieved a dramatic reduction in the numbers of these fires.

"Through determination, hard work and engaging residents of the town, Irthling borough can celebrate the positive results of this campaign. Thank you to everyone who took part and we will continue to work with our partners to educate and inform people about the consequences of their actions so that we can build on this success."

Launched at the same time as Operation Rebuild, Operation Restore resulted in a 55 per cent reduction in arson incidents on Wellingborough's Hemmingwell estate.

[In December, Operation Unite was launched](#) to tackle arson in and around Daventry town centre, with [a day of community action](#) taking place on the Southbrook estate in March. [Operation Keepsafe was launched last month](#), April, to tackle the same issues on Wellingborough's Queensway estate.

For more information:

[Press Release on the Northamptonshire Police web site.](#)

[Solomon Theatre Web site.](#) 01722 340690