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## CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN THE HARROGATE DISTRICT

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### MEDIA RELEASE

13 August 2004

Photo opportunity below

### SAY NO TO CRIME DAY

**HARROGATE'S** first ever 'Say No to Crime Day' is going to be held on Thursday, 26 August. The aim of the day is to demonstrate how partnership working has greatly increased and there is now an acceptance that if all elements of the community work together there is a better chance of beating crime.

They used to be known as the 'boys in blue' but our police force and other emergency services are more easily recognised these days by the 'yellow jackets' of authority. And on Harrogate's 'Say No to Crime day' there will be a sudden rush of 'Yellow Fever' in Harrogate as all sectors of North Yorkshire police – from uniformed patrol officers to the dog section and including CID – will join colleagues from the Royal Military Police, Ministry of Defence Police, British Transport Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Harrogate Borough Council's CCTV control staff and officers from the Harrogate and District Community Safety Partnership to make this special event a visible success.

'Say No to Crime' Day is planned to enhance existing partnership working and to introduce it to members of the community who might not have been involved in the past.

The police and other agencies already have very good working relationships with businesses in the town and some very good anti-crime schemes exist but Councillor Mike Gardner, Leader of Harrogate Borough Council/Chair of the Harrogate District Safer Communities Partnership and Chief Inspector Chris Chelton are asking them to go a bit further.

Councillor Gardner said: "We have a lot of support from the businesses in Harrogate from retailers to licensees but we are asking them to focus on their security measures during 'Say No to Crime Day'. We are hoping for some extra partnership working from them. For instance, if each shop is able to patrol their premises and perhaps their neighbours for just five minutes each day, then that would increase their chances of deterring criminals. We are also asking licensed premises to be extra vigilant. It is easy to spot a drunk at the bar but we are hoping that they will set up staff patrols to visit the toilets on a regular basis to deter illegal activity. And if this could be extended to car parks then security would be greatly enhanced."

Chief Inspector Chris Chelton added: "In the past year we have experienced a good reduction in reported crime with a 33% drop in burglaries and 32% drop in vehicle crime. This means that we have had 585 fewer victims of this type of crime.

"These figures are very encouraging but we must not be complacent. We recognise that there is still work to do, particularly in terms of dealing with anti-social and inconsiderate

behaviour where our communities want to see a firm stance being taken. That is why we have initiated the 'Say No to Crime' Day. We are holding this event in conjunction with our partners and hope that we can encourage all Harrogate residents to think about what they can do to help us further decrease the number of crimes in the area and improve their quality of life. If anyone feels that they would like to contribute to the efforts of the day then we would welcome a call on 01423 505541."

The idea of the day is to get everyone thinking. Posters will be displayed around the town and the police will be carrying out extra high visibility patrols and North Yorkshire's mobile police station will be at the War Memorial.

To make sure the whole town centre community can be involved letters have been sent to:

- Businesses encouraging them to be more security conscious
- Licensees reminding them of their responsibilities
- Retailers asking them to review and develop security measures
- Neighbourhood watch co-ordinators asking them to rejuvenate their schemes
- Hotels encouraging a positive approach to crime prevention

It is hoped that members of the public will talk to the emergency services and ask questions about how they could get involved.

Sergeant Martin Sweeney, who has been responsible for setting up Harrogate's first 'Say No to Crime Day', says he will consider it a success if 'we see current good practices improved and new practices identified that could be adopted for the long term future, which will be of benefit to the town as a whole'.

**PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: 12 noon, Wednesday 18 August 2004, Harrogate Police Station, North Park Road, Harrogate when Chief Inspector Chris Chelton and Councillor Mike Gardner will be helping put 'Say No to Crime Day' posters around the town centre.**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Chief Inspector Chris Chelton and Councillor Mike Gardner are available for comment on 01423 505541 and 556022 respectively.**

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Reducing and preventing crime, and the fear of crime, is the aim of the Harrogate and District Community Safety Partnership.

Made up of representatives from the Police, North Yorkshire County Council, Harrogate Borough Council and other agencies and voluntary groups from across the district, the Partnership aims to tackle crime and disorder problems through a range of local actions and initiatives.

The Partnership was born out of the Crime & Disorder Act (1998), which asks local authorities to carry out a crime audit every three years. This audit highlights people's concerns, the Partnership then draws up a strategy to help maintain, and improve, the quality of life within the community, and ensure householders feel safe and not threatened by crime and disorder, or by other anti-social behaviour.