

# Call for tougher police approach to reduce crime

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

RIVER ward councillor Craig Mackinlay has hit out at the "appalling" crime statistics for Medway, which were exclusively revealed by Yourmedway last week.

Cllr Mackinlay said the figures, now posted monthly on Kent police's website, were shocking and unpleasant.

He also called on police to adopt a zero tolerance policy in order to cut down on the number of offences being committed across the towns on a daily basis.

The councillor paid particular attention to his ward's crime figures, which were the fifth highest in Kent for the period up to March 2008.

He said: "With Medway's primary shopping area of Chatham High Street being in the ward, a higher figure that would include shoplifting offences is to be anticipated.

"But even if you strip shoplifting out, the statistics are still truly appalling with a one in eight chance of being subject to anti-social behaviour, a one in 13 chance of suffering a violent attack and a one in 50 chance of being burgled or subject to vehicle crime each year.

"I can attest to that figure with two vehicle crimes against my household in the past three months alone.

"The figures are made that much worse in that the ward takes in St Mary's Island, which enjoys relative affluence and low crime, and Chatham town centre having an insignificant night-time economy compared to say Rochester West, which takes in the busy High Street and fares reasonably well in the crime statistics.

"I call upon the police to implement zero tolerance, high-visibility policing to crack the problem."

Kent police's website shows 22,393 crimes were committed across Medway during the last 12 months – equating to 61 crimes per day.

Anti-social behaviour made up



**SHOCKED:** Cllr Craig Mackinlay says zero tolerance and high-visibility policing will help reduce crime

the bulk of this number, with 15,474 incidents recorded between December 2007 and 2008.

There were 4,297 cases of 'violence against the person', more than 3,000 vehicle crimes and more than 2,000 burglaries.

Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley said: "I intend to meet with Cllr Mackinlay to discuss his observations and concerns, and welcome working together to continue to reduce crime figures in the area.

"It is important to note however, that while we are not complacent, crime levels in the River ward have fallen and we will continue to work with our partners to impact on them further.

"River ward, which includes Chatham town centre, is subject to countless visitors every day, as well as being home to many thousands of residents and therefore it is not appropriate to compare it to different wards."

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