

RESTRICTED (when complete)

WITNESS STATEMENT

(CJ Act 1967, s.9; MC Act 1980, ss.5A(3) (a) and 5B: Criminal Procedure Rules 2005, Rule 27.1

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Statement of: Marc Thomas
 Age if under 18: O18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: Pc 863

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature: Marc Thomas Date: 11/06/2012

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am a uniform Police Officer in the Cambridge City Centre problem solving Team. I have served as a uniformed Police Officer for 18 years and have been the Streetlife Officer for more than six years. My role involves participating in a multi-agency approach to dealing with rough sleeping, begging and street drinking issues in the City.

Mill road was the focus of continuous Dispersal Orders under Section 30 of the Anti social behaviour Act from April 2004 until it's end in July 2010. Authorisation of the relevant locality is made in agreement with the City council and lasts a maximum period of 6 months. Each order is based on strategic intelligence reviews enhanced with background information from working partnerships and the local community. The authorised locality must be subject to significant and persistent anti-social behaviour.

I have been involved in the policing of ASB issues in the Mill road area since prior to the initial Section 30 Authorisation in 2004. I became more closely involved in tackling the specific Street drinking issues in the area on commencing my role as Streetlife officer in 2006. My Policing commitment to the area increased over time as the scale of the ASB caused by my client base dictated.

During intense enforcement work in the Dispersal Area, which regularly involved tasking Police staff from across the Policing Division, displacement of ASB issues was seen in surrounding areas. The boundaries of the locality were regularly adjusted during the later period to react to displacement issues. Regardless of the displacement issues Mil road remained at the core of the problem until the end.

There were several factors that led to the eventual lapse of the section 30 Authorisation which was only possible when levels of ASB in the locality had significantly reduced. Consistent Police enforcement Action in the area led to a reduction in the size of Street drinking groups, which in turn led to a reduction in issues caused by those drinkers who gathered in the area or transited through it. Treatment services based at Mill

House, which had previously been a draw to some of the most chaotic Street drinkers in the City, were
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Continuation of statement of *MARC THOMAS*

altered. The new process removed the requirement for these individuals to attend the location on a daily basis. A major drugs operation was conducted in the City leading to multiple arrests of Street level dealers. Although the operation was widely spread the Streetlife community made a mental connection between the arrests and the Petersfield area, which led to a further reduction of groups forming in the locality. Given that very few of the remaining, problematic Street drinkers we continued to encounter in the locality resided in or near the area it became our task to establish what the draw might be. After a short period of time it became apparent, through on the ground observations and local intelligence, that the remaining draw to the area was the sale of alcohol. Certain off licence premises on Mill road had adapted their sales methods to the street drinking client base. Anecdotal evidence from Street drinkers to Police and to working partners established the belief that sales practices of a couple of establishments were not in line with licensing legislation. Unorthodox selling practices were made worse by the regular sale of alcohol to individuals in a drunken state. Essentially problematic individuals from outside the area were travelling to Mill road in varying states of inebriation to purchase alcohol, ignoring alternative outlets on the way.

After some respite from significant Street drinking ASB the Mill road area is again experiencing issues with the problem spreading across Mill road cemetery to Norfolk street. The specific problem in Mill road developed from a rough sleeping issue nearby. The rough sleepers drew other members of the Streetlife community away from their accommodation to socialise with them and sleep out. In this context socialising involves excessive consumption of strong alcohol in public leading to alcohol related ASB and criminality. Although the nucleus of the rough sleeping has been resolved through partnership working, a street drinking issue remains as do the problems that it causes the local community. Again I find myself spending a significant proportion of my working day tackling issues around Street drinking activity in Mill road. Very few of the drinkers I encounter have a direct connection to the area and many disclose that they source their alcohol within the immediate vicinity.

Mill road is not subject to a Section 30 Dispersal Order at this stage as Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (commenced August 2007) provides a separate, similar power, which is regularly being used in the area. Alcohol related ASB around Mill road has recently been a District priority for Cambridge City with Officers being tasked on a daily basis to proactively patrol the area and it remains a priority targeted by the local problem solving Team.

There is a daily Street drinking presence and persistent begging issue on Mill road near to it's junction with

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Continuation of statement of *MARC THOMAS*
Gwydir street which is subject to regular complaints from the public and has led to dispersals and arrests.

The drag of Mill road between the Bridge and Petersfield green sees regular footfall of drinkers individually and in groups with groups frequently sitting to drink in Ditchburn Place. Mill road cemetery is a street drinking and rough sleeping hot spot with different groups settling at various points throughout the day and some camping overnight. In the past month a Street drinking presence has established on Petersfield Green after a relatively quiet couple of years, it is an indicator that previous deterrent measures have now been diluted with the change in group dynamics that a constant influx of new Street drinkers brings.

We continue to work in partnership to reduce the ASB issues in the Mill road area but the work is time consuming and involves looking at multiple strands which include current licensing issues. I believe a further licensed premises in this area will be to the detriment of the local community.

Signature

Marc Thomas

Signature witnessed by:

PTO