

Monday, 29th December 2008

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How should we spend £4m?

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ALMOST a year after a crimebusting project to rid Spring Boroughs of prostitution and drug dealing came to an end, residents have been given the chance to have their say on how almost £4million earmarked for improving the estate should be spent.

The Caspar+ project, which aims to carry on the work started by the original Caspar scheme, has received the windfall from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to pay for improvements to community facilities and open spaces in the area.

Northampton Borough Council and other agencies involved in the area gave residents the chance to have their say on what needed to be done at an open day at Spring Lane Lower School.

Joe Joyce, chairman of Spring Boroughs Residents' Association, said: "This open day has been held to see how people in Spring Boroughs think this government money can be spent and used to improve life on the estate for everyone."

The Caspar project was introduced into Spring Boroughs and Semilong in 2002 and during that time its main focus was to crack down on drug dealers and prostitutes operating out of the area.

Through a mixture of ASBOs, crack house closures and other anti-social behaviour measures the police and a partnership of local authorities and residents managed to bring crime on the estate down by a third.

One of the major visible changes was the introduction of permanent roadblocks to prevent kerbcrawlers and prostitutes using the streets on the estate.

Mr Joyce said that the work done under the original Caspar project would have to continue in Caspar+ to make Spring Boroughs a safer community.

He added: "Caspar has done very well to achieve all it has in the area but it hasn't been a magic fix. There are still problems. It has been a long hard road to get where we have got but Caspar has helped us tremendously."

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