

Knife crime

28.8.08

Knife crime is dominating the headlines. In Gravesham we have had a number of vicious murders but thankfully, so far, we seem to be clear of knife crime.

We need to halt this decline. We need to "crack down" on knife crime and criminals but taking long-term measures to make families stronger and deal with the causes of crime. We need tougher policing to catch those who carry knives without a reasonable excuse and those who commit knife crimes and tougher sentencing, so that rather than a third of knife criminals being let off with a caution or final warning, as happens currently.

We also need a system of rehabilitating young offenders to stop them committing knife and other crimes in the future. I have met youngsters in prison who have carried out gun and knife crimes, many of them from broken backgrounds and many of whom were using a knife to "protect" themselves. This is a sad indictment of our society.

I lament the loss of our police area commander who has been promoted to assistant to the Kent chief constable but wish Gary Beautridge well. He did a good job under difficult circumstances, lack of money, lack of resources, had his hands tied in red tape and bureaucracy and a lack of manpower. Let's hope he can influence those in Whitehall to get to grips with our policing.