

ACCORDING to the Government's National Statistics website, an estimated 13.9 million households (57%) in Great Britain could access the Internet from home between January and April 2006. The region with the highest percentage of households with Internet access in 2006 was the South East, with 66%.

Recognising the increasing popularity and accessibility of the Internet, the **Partnership** wanted to make information about itself and its work available online.

Therefore, in April 2004, in connection with local website company FAT Promotions, the **SHP** launched its own modest site, www.saferhastings.co.uk.

Originally, the site comprised just 10 pages. While this was sufficient temporarily, the site has since been developed to be more interactive, attractive, user-friendly and easy to update.

Since relaunching in the autumn of 2006, the website has featured a much wider range of the **SHP's** initiatives and achievements across its 60 inter-linking pages.

The website brings together all of the **Partnership's** Public Reassurance initiatives, with it now featuring a number of exciting elements, including:

- A Media Player where visitors can watch SHP-TV clips from the comfort of their own home, which is the most popular of media players belonging to CCN's clients in terms of monthly downloads;



- The Fear of Crime Survey was available online for the first time in 2006: 73% of respondents filled it in online and the Internet option attracted an unprecedented level of responses (13%) from under 25s, a typically hard-to-reach group;

- Every four-page spread featured in the *Hastings Observer* is available to download, or visitors can simply view the headlines and click to read more about whichever articles are of interest to them;

- The website has provided the perfect host for full details, terms and conditions of the **SHP's** schools competitions, as well as for winning entries to be displayed.

Hits on the website increased astronomically over the last few months. From the initial launch to the end of October 2006, there were fewer than 18,000 hits in total. But in November 2006, monthly hits shot up by a staggering 2,000% to 12,365.

The number of hits more than doubled again to reach 29,731 in January 2007, and the figures from March to August 2007 show that these large increases continued and have been sustained, with between 40,000 and 60,000 hits per month.

A surprising number of these hits have come from other countries. In fact, more than 50 countries spanning

every continent have visited the website. And in March 2007 the **SHP's** Community Safety Manager was invited to speak at a conference in Italy as a direct result of the organisers visiting the website.

At this conference, the measures used in Hastings to provide a safe environment for visiting language students were highlighted as best practice. This is set to lead to a marked increase in the student market, which already contributes a huge amount to the town's economy.

The website was recognised at the National Good Communication Awards 2007 when it was shortlisted and commended in the Local Authority Website of the Year category.

It has also been a success locally, winning the public vote for Best Community Site at the Hastings & Rother Web Awards run by SCIP at the end of 2006.

Latest statistics reveal that approximately 75% of the visitors to www.saferhastings.co.uk come directly, rather than through search engines, such as Google, or links on other sites.

The phenomenal increase in the number of hits over recent months is arguably due to the significantly raised profile of the **Partnership** locally and nationally.

