

Alley Gating In Your Community



Your guide to making Bristol's streets safer



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Foreword



Alley gating is a tried, tested and proven Crime Reduction Initiative. It has been used very successfully all over the country and is an excellent example of how partnership work between the police, local authorities and the community can proactively combat crime and anti-social behaviour.

Over the last year, at least 50 alley gates have been installed throughout the city making a massive difference to hundreds of people. The good news is that we have many more schemes in the pipeline. Our experience in Bristol so far, has shown that Alley gates can significantly reduce rear access burglaries and alley related incidents. This crime prevention initiative can also bring numerous unmeasurable positive outcomes such as a significant reduction in fear of crime, a cleaner, safer environment and the return of community spirit.

The benefits of alley gating are well known, alley gates work!

‘Alley Gating in your Community’ will help you get started on your own alley gating initiative and guide you through the process so that you can effectively take back the control of the space near your home. Let’s continue the excellent work achieved so far and work together to help make Bristol be safe and feel safe!

Tim Lee

Superintendent for Bristol District Police

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Introduction

This resource pack has been written with the intention of providing an in-depth look at Alley gating. It is based on best practise collated over two years and following consultation with Bristol City Council and other agencies.

The advice in this pack attempts to fill in the gaps left by other guides, pre-empt the questions and provide solutions to the problems that many gating schemes have experienced in the past when trying to get alley gates installed. There is considerable discussion and guidance regarding the consultation and permission process required for alley gates.

'Alley gating in your community' attempts to clarify the alley gating process and standardise alley gating schemes city-wide. This should help to ensure that all gates are installed legally and are as problem free and effective as possible.

I hope you find it useful!

Claire Matthews

Crime Reduction Scheme Facilitator



A little bit about Alley gating

What is Alley gating?

Alley gating is a form of situational crime prevention that attempts to reduce the opportunity to commit crimes such as domestic burglary and anti-social behaviour.

Put very simply, Alley gates are gates that are situated at entrances and exits to alleys. They restrict access to people who have keys and who can gain access to properties in your street.

Alleys originally designed to let coal men and rubbish collectors get along the street. Alley ways can still be very useful, however they tend to be used less frequently.

How do Alley gates differ from ordinary gates?

Alley gates are effectively security gates that are designed specifically with the purpose of crime reduction. The right design will depend on the shape and size of your alley. The gate will also be dependent on the aesthetic wants of the residents and the funds available. Alley gates have several features that ordinary gates will generally not have. It will be climb resistant, the sections will be thick enough and designed to prevent being cut. The lock should be tamper proof. There is more on gate design later in this guide.

Why do we need Alley gates?

Burglary

The majority of burglars break into a house through the rear or side window or door. Front door and window entries only account for about 15% of the national total and in many areas around the country this figure is as low as 5%

(Beckford and Cogan "The Alleygater's Guide to gating alleys").

55% of burglaries are from the rear of the property

(British Crime Survey, 1998)

72% of burglaries in terraced houses are accessed from the rear

(HO. Briefing note 2/01, Johnson and Loxley, 2001)



Alleyways normally run along the back and side of houses thereby giving easy hidden access to a large number of premises. Criminals can use alleys without being noticed even in daylight.

Alleys can also provide escape networks for those offenders who know the area well. Burglars have been known to hide stolen property in the alleyway in the daytime and then come back to collect it under the cover of darkness.

Many burglaries are opportunistic. A house with easy and unobserved access points will be more tempting to a burglar than a house which has blocked access making it hard to get in and out with stolen property. Alley gates also show that the residents have taken steps to secure their property. Property in the houses may be marked and other security measures may have been used which would make the burglars life more difficult. Alley gates provide a psychological deterrent as well as a physical barrier.

Putting alley gates in the alley helps keep burglars out.

Other alley-related problems:

Installing alley gates can also help put a stop to the following problems and antisocial activities:

- Fly tipping of rubbish and abandoned vehicles.
- Dog mess left by inconsiderate dog walkers and their dogs.
- Nuisance youths
- Drug-taking/ drug dealing and drugs related litter
- Graffiti and criminal damage
- Prostitution
- Vehicle related nuisances
- Arson attempts



The benefits of Alley Gating

Does it work?

Yes. According to Home office research, alley gating can have many positive outcomes.
(Home Office Briefing note 2/01, Johnson and Loxley, 2001)

Reduction of burglary

Alley gating has been shown to be very effective in reducing burglaries.

In London, it has been shown that by erecting climb resistant locked alley gates at the entrances and exits of alleyways rear access burglaries can be reduced by as much as 90%.

When 11 alley gates were put in place in a small estate in West London, they had a dramatic effect: the number of houses broken into fell from 81 to 24. The number of times burglars came back and broke into the same house fell from 15 to 2.

(The alleygators Guide, Calvin Beckford).

In Merseyside, there was a significant reduction of burglary within the alley-gated areas. On average this reduction was around 41%. However, in some areas it was as much as 79%.

By January 2001, 200 gates have been installed at 20 sites protecting some 3000 properties. As a result, burglaries in the gated area have reduced by approximately 50% and anti-social behaviour has been substantially reduced

(Design against crime).

After gates being erected at an alley in Central Bristol, there was a 75% decrease in rear access burglaries. There was also 100% reduction in rear access attempted burglaries and rear related criminal damage.

(Avon and Somerset Constabulary Community Safety, 2004)

Reducing the fear of crime and alley related anti-social behaviour

“The alley gate initiative is an effective way of significantly decreasing crime and anti-social behaviour within areas that have houses backing on to lanes. The initiative also causes an extensive reduction in the residents fear of crime”

(A Alldridge and P Naish (2003) "Alley gates Initiative: results analysis" Avon and Somerset Constabulary)



Residents responses prior to Alley gates being fitted

- "I am worried about walking in the lane and being in the house alone"
- "I am nervous about going out and locking doors before going upstairs"
- "I feel very stressed"

Residents responses since the Alley gates has been fitted:

- "I am not feeling so nervous and feeling more secure"
- "I can now leave my premises with more confidence and can sleep easier at night. The gates are very effective"
- "I am a lot calmer and happier"

(Information obtained from a fear of crime questionnaire sent to residents in Bristol after completion of an alley-gating scheme.)

Improving the environment

Taking control of the lane can facilitate the 'beautification' of an area and improve its aesthetic appearance. In place of abandoned rubbish and broken glass can be flower baskets, shrubs and paving.

A significant positive outcome of Alley gating can be the community involvement and integration. In addition, strangers will be more easily recognised if residents are aware of who lives in their neighbourhood.

Children can play safely in the alley once it is gated since it will be free from unwanted visitors and traffic. Alleys have become the communal garden for many communities, the location for street parties and barbecues.

"There is strong evidence that alley gating reduces burglary and disorder and increases the perception of safety and satisfaction with area of residence.

In terms of crime reduction, it is among the most effective crime prevention techniques that has been rigorously evaluated to date"

*(K Bowers and S Johnson and A Hirschfield (2003)
"Closing off opportunities: The impact of alley gating, university of Liverpool)*



Before Gating can take place.....

Permissions and Consultations

Consultation is essential to ensure the long-term success of any Alley Gating scheme, and it can prevent the worst case scenario of the gates being pulled down at a later date.

On page 11 there is a list for the checks that should be carried out prior to the installation of gates.

Alley ways and rights of way.

Public rights of way issues are only relevant for alleyways that provide a through route and are not 'dead ends.'

What are public rights of way?

Public rights of way are public highways¹ (including footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic and restricted byways) and are recorded on a 'definitive map' and statement, a legal record of public rights of way. These are held by Bristol City Council.

The general public has rights of passage through these routes.

Is our Alley a public right of way?

The Bristol City Council Planning Land Charges department can help you establish whether your alley is currently considered to be a public right of way.

Tip! It is helpful to mark your alley on a large-scale map and send this to the Planning Land Charges Team (your local neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator may be able to provide you with one). They will then know exactly where you are referring to and can compare this to the definitive map.

Our alley is a public right of way!

If your alleyway is a public right of way then you will probably not be able to fit alley gates. You cannot fit an alley gate across a public highway without the permission of the local council. It is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that public rights of way are kept clear of obstructions and that landowners meet their responsibilities in this respect. The local authority should offer advice and where appropriate take action over blocked or disputed public rights of way.



New legislation

New powers have been introduced under Schedule 6 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 where “rights of way can be closed or diverted on the grounds of crime prevention (including a right of way that crosses school land, if necessary to protect the pupils or staff).”³ However, there are complications with applying these powers and the area must have already been declared as a “crime area” by the Highways department at Bristol City Council. At present, there are no crime areas specified in Bristol.⁴

Local Concerns regarding rights of way...

If the path is not recorded as a public right of way, then it can be claimed as a public right of way if there is evidence that public rights have been established. Gating a path or notice to gate a path may trigger a claim to have the alley applied to the definitive map. Applications to have a path deemed as a public right of way are dependent on several factors and more information on this can be obtained from the council.⁵

Agencies such as the Ramblers Association, the Pedestrians Association and the Cycle Touring Club may object to alley gating schemes if they feel that the passage rights provided by the lane should be protected. It makes sense to consult with such parties and objections in the early stages of alley gating, often they will want to check that proper consultation is being carried out.

Tip! It makes sense to inform the Public Rights of Way Team at the Council if you are planning to alley gate your lane. You can leave contact details so that they can inform you of any concerns that are registered with them by the general public.

IMPORTANT

If the alley provides a ‘short cut’ then the local community in the immediately surrounding streets needs to be consulted with to give them a chance to register their concerns regarding through rights.

This can be in the form of a leaflet drop, a meeting, posters in local shop, adverts in local papers.

One way of ensuring that everyone who uses the alley is informed about the proposed gating is by erecting signs at the entrance and exit points of the alley. These signs must be easy to read, writing must be clear and not too high or low. The sign should be put in place at least one month before the proposed closure. Anyone who believes that the alley should be designated as a formal public right of way should put in an application with the council.

Tip! Contact the Public rights of way team at Bristol City Council to check whether the path which is to be gated is already subject to a formal application for it to be added to Bristol’s Definitive Map as a public right of way.



Adopted Alleyways

Adopted alleys are highways that are maintained at public expense. The public has a right to use these routes and the Highways authority is responsible for keeping them clean and usable. Although these alleys can sometimes be 'unadopted' and the maintenance of the alley taken over by a Residents' Association, they can not be closed up without a legal order from a magistrate.⁶ There are usually costs involved with this.

Contact the Adoptions Team at Bristol City council for more information.

Who owns the alley?

If the Local authority does not own the alley (i.e. it is adopted), then the lane is privately owned. It is not always clear who owns the lane:

- i- Ask residents to check their deeds. They should be able to tell you whether you own all or part of the alley and your legal rights to use it. Ask a solicitor to look at them if the rights seem complicated or unclear.
- ii- Contact the Land Registry and complete the relevant form ([www. Landregistry.gov.uk](http://www.Landregistry.gov.uk)). The Land Registry should be able to clarify ownership.
- iii- If ownership of land is still not clear and no-one can provide evidence to show that they have sole/ part ownership of the alley then it is generally accepted that all the rights of way affected home owners (residents who require access to the lane in order to access the back of their property) have joint ownership and responsibility for the lane.

Permissions to be obtained

1. If the owner of the alley has been identified, then they must provide their permission to have the alley gated.
2. You must have the permission to fit Alley Gates from all affected residents.

IMPORTANT

All affected residents must be provided with a key to the new Alley Gates (regardless of whether or not they are willing to pay) since they will have rights of access through the lane. Affected residents are usually homeowners whose property backs onto the alley.

The easiest way of doing this is to write a letter to all the affected residents explaining why you want the Alley Gating scheme and include a permissions form (see page 12).



Possible problems and things to consider...

No Alley Gating scheme is without its difficulties! Below is a list of issues that you may need to consider in order to minimise problems.

Rented properties

You will need to contact the homeowner for permission since tenants have no authority over the lane. You could ask the tenant for the landlord's details or ask them to pass on the letter.

Tip! It is helpful to address all letters to the home owner/ landlord.

Garages

If there are garages in the lane, then the owners of the garages will need to give their permission for the installation of the gates. Sometimes the local residents do not own the garages. Try and contact the owner if you have their details, if not leave clear documentation so that they are made aware of the gating scheme and that you are trying to contact them (e.g. signs at the entrance points to the alley/ letter posted into the garage/ notice).

No response?

You must give **reasonable opportunity** for residents to object. Below is a suggested procedure:

- i) Send a Letter informing every resident of the proposed gating scheme with an appropriate document to sign stating their 'objection' or 'no objection'.
- ii) **If no response:** Send a second letter restating the content of previous letter.
- iii) Visit to the house on at least **two** occasions in an attempt to get the resident to sign 'objection' or 'no objection'. These should preferably be at different times of day to allow for working hours.
- iv) Final letter re-stating the gating proposal and informing resident that the Alley Gating Committee is assuming that they have 'no objection' since there has been no response. This letter should give a reasonable period of time and contact details to ensure the resident can object if they so desire.

Tip! Keep a log of all phone calls, letters sent and contact made. Keep a copy of all your paperwork and replies. Remember to get all official responses in writing so that you have evidence if required at a later date.

Objections

It is possible that you might receive objections from residents regarding the gating of the alley. Often these concerns can be resolved very easily by communicating with the person. Sometimes residents simply want more information, or reassuring that they will still have



access to the lane. It is not uncommon to reach compromises regarding gate location or include reasonable expenditure with the scheme such as additional fencing or security lights, if it means the scheme can proceed.

If there are a large number of objections to the scheme, then Alley Gating may not be the best solution for your area.

Objections should be reasonable and with good reason. If there are no “rights of way” issues and the majority of the residents are in support of the gating scheme, then the reasons for the objection should significantly outweigh the positive effects that the gating scheme would bring to the community as a whole. Remember EVERY resident will be supplied with a key and so they will continue to enjoy access through the alley.

It can help to ask your local police officer to speak with them to explain the benefits of Alley Gating. You could call a meeting to try and air their concerns. Try and invite a representative from another gating scheme to discuss their experiences of Alley Gating and how it has improved their quality of life. Talk to your solicitor to get support and advice on what to say to help change the minds of any neighbours who are still not convinced about it being a good idea.

Most residents will see the benefits that the Alley Gates will bring them and welcome the gating scheme.

Planning Permission

If your gate is no more than 2 metres high and does not join directly to a road that is open to vehicles then you should not need planning permission.

If you have any questions regarding planning permission, contact the Planning Enforcement Team at Bristol City Council.

Services

Occasionally there are services running under the alley and so you should carry checks with the providers of the following services to ensure that the installation of any Alley Gate posts do not cause problems:

Water
Gas
Electricity
Cable

Fire Safety

You should get fire safety advice for your street before you put a gate in. Invite the local fire brigade to look at your plans.

It can be helpful to provide your local police/ fire and ambulance service with a copy of the key in case they need it.



Alley Gating Permissions and Consultations Checklist

Below is a list of checks that must be carried out in order to show that the Alley Gating committee has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the gates are legally erected, and that sufficient opportunity has been provided to object to the gating scheme. All documentation must be kept since it may be necessary to refer back to it at a later date should the closure be challenged. For more information please refer to pages 6.

Is the alley a public right of way? Bristol City Council Planning Land Charges

Is the alley subject to an application to become a PROW? Bristol City Council Public Rights of Way Team

YOU CANNOT ALLEY GATE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Is the alley 'adopted'? Bristol City Council Adoptions Team

IF YES, IT MUST BE 'UNADOPTED' IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE GATED

Who owns the alley? Consider property deeds/ Gloucester Land Registry

Have you got the owner's permission to gate the alley?

Have you got permission from all directly affected rights of way residents?

Do your gates require planning permission? Bristol City Council Development and Control
(Send in a sketch of the proposal)

Have you consulted with the immediate local community? Leaflets/ notices etc.



Alleygating Interest Form

Please tick one:

- I AGREE with the gating of my alleyway.
- I DO NOT AGREE with the gating of my alleyway.

Please tick as appropriate:

I am a tenant of this property - please contact my landlord on
.....

I would like to help with this project
(e.g. collecting monies, fund-raising, co-ordinating).

It states in my house deeds that I own all or some of the alleyway.

Name

Address
.....
.....

Telephone

Email (If regularly checked)

I understand that I will be supplied with a key notwithstanding my willingness or ability to pay toward the gating scheme.

I understand that the above details will be passed onto the Scheme Committee once it is formed.

Signature

Date

Financing the gates

Public funding

Occasionally funds are available from Bristol City Council, Neighbourhood Renewal and the Police. Generally this money is allocated to a Crime Reduction Team who will initiate the process of alley gating. If you have an area that you feel would benefit from Alley Gating, then it may be worth bringing it to the attention of these agencies so that they can consider the location.

Generally Alley Gating locations are decided based upon crime statistics and 'walk rounds'. Residents will then be approached if Alley Gating is suitable and your lane qualifies for funding.

Private funding

Unless there is public funding for alley gating in your area, the community will need to find their own funding for the Alley Gating scheme.

The money is usually raised through resident contributions. The total cost of the scheme is calculated and then divided by the number of residents who will benefit. Some residents however, may not be able to afford to contribute and this should be taken into account. They may however, be able to give up their time to help run the scheme.

Gating schemes have been very inventive in the past in helping to raise money for the schemes. Have you considered?

- Sponsorship from local businesses
- Bring and buy sales/ car boot sales
- Selling cakes
- Raffles
- Sponsored run

All of the above initiatives help to bring the community together which is one of the benefits of Alley Gating.

Some gating committees have managed to raise funds through some of the charities listed on the next page. There may also be other charities willing to help fund the project that are not mentioned but that you or the other residents know of.

Charity Funding:

a) The Police Community Trust

The Police Community Trust has funding available for people who want to invest in projects that improve the safety and quality of life within the Avon and Somerset area, with particular emphasis on helping the young, vulnerable and elderly.

The Trust will usually match-fund Alley Gating projects i.e. the community pays for half of the scheme.

Contact: The Trust Manager
PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 8QJ
Tel: 01275 816240
Fax: 01275 816129
E-mail: paul.lillington@avonandsomerset.police.uk

2. The Quartet Community Foundation

An independent charity whose purpose is to build strong, vibrant communities where everyone has the chance to contribute and be valued whatever their circumstances. The Quartet Community Foundation offers a number of grants that can be accessed assuming you meet their criteria.

Contact Quartet Community Foundation
Royal Oak House, Bristol, BS1 4GB
Tel: 0117 9897700
Email: info@quartetcf.org.uk

There is more information on the website at [www. Quartetcf.org.uk](http://www.Quartetcf.org.uk)

b) Awards for all (Lottery Funds)

Not for profit groups who wish to fund projects that supports community activity.

Contact Awards for All South West
Beaufort House, 51, New North Road, Exeter, EX4 4EQ
Tel 01392 849705 (*for information*)
0845 6002040 (*for an application form*)
Email: south.west@awardsforall.org.uk

There is more information on the website at www.awardsforall.org.uk

Tip! Remember, when you apply for funding you will be competing against other very worthy applicants. You will need to evidence your application well and show why your scheme deserves the money. Statistics, letters of support and photographs are always helpful if appropriate. Applications may have deadlines.
- remember to do your research!



Points to remember:

- If you are applying because the residents cannot afford to contribute because of unemployment/ low income/ elderly then remember to state this.
- Remember to state in your application if your area is considered to be deprived or disadvantaged.
- If the lane is unregistered, then this can also be relevant to mention. Charities can sometimes be reluctant to fund projects on privately owned land. If the council are not willing to take responsibility for the lane (i.e. it is unadopted) then it would be sensible to state this in your application.
- Remember to demonstrate the community benefit of the Alley Gating scheme. i.e. how many people the scheme will benefit/ how the alley could be used/ improvements in the environment if it was gated etc.
- Charities will often only support applications from committees (there is more information on setting up an Alley Gating committee on page 17). They may also want you to set up a scheme bank account to pay funds into.

Costing up your project

Don't forget to include costs other than the gates (including keys/ locks/ installation). There may be:

- Administration costs (photo copying/ paper/ stamps/ phone calls etc.)
- Solicitor's fees, local authority fees, land registry fees etc.
- Insurance
- Maintenance costs
- Skip hire and paying for rubbish to be cleared out of the alley

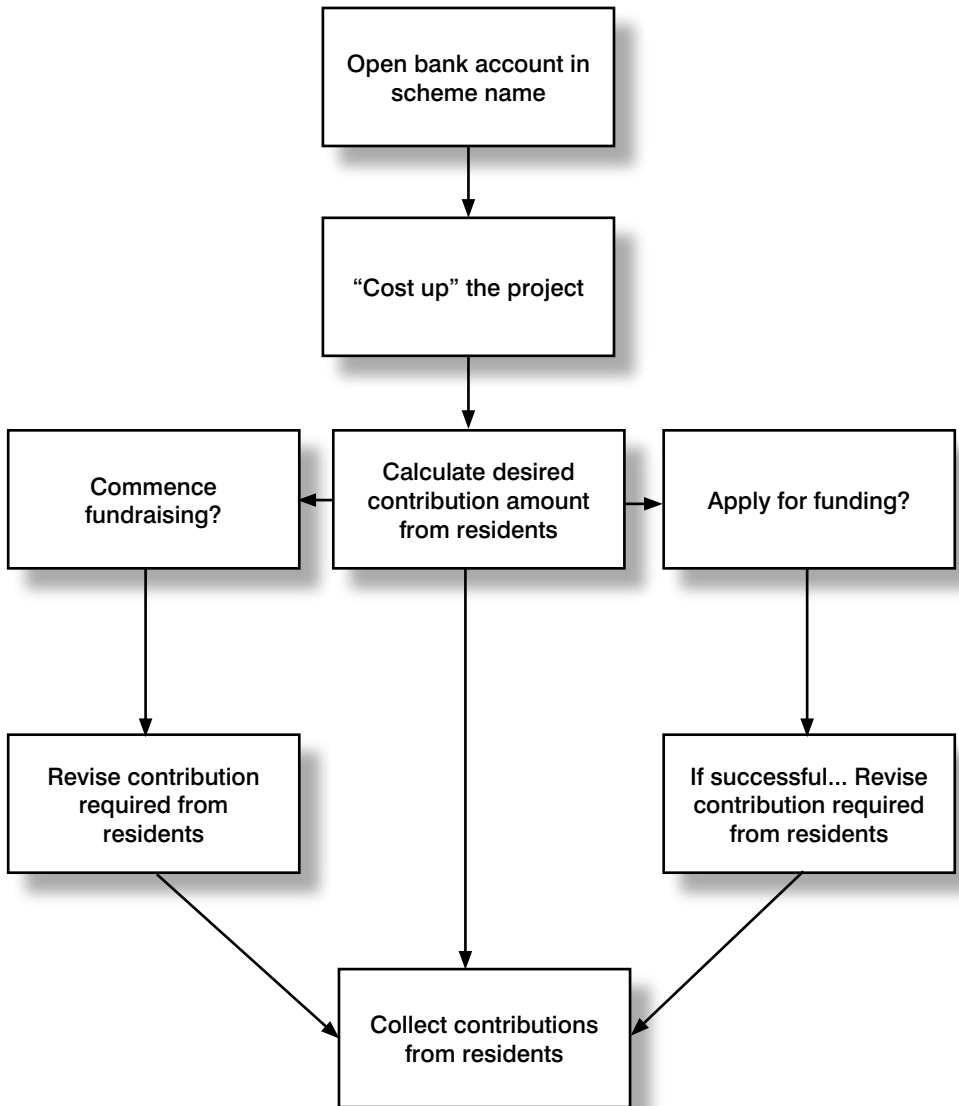
You need to include all the costs when you are 'costing up the project' so that you collect and apply for, if relevant, the right amount of money rather than having to go back for more. Remember to give everyone a receipt for their contribution- keep a copy for the committee records.

Open a bank account in the scheme name so that all money is going to the gating fund and not to an individual. It is sensible to have at least two signatures for the account.

Tip! It may be sensible to collect payment in cheques where possible. Be very careful if you are collecting money and carrying it on your person. Where possible collect money with someone else or ask for it to be delivered.



The Process of Privately Financing Alley Gates



Forming a Committee

A committee sounds very formal but it doesn't have to be. However, it can be useful to have some sort of structure in order to keep the scheme focused.

Keep the committee small, simple and working. You can organise your committee as you see fit (adding or removing roles as required). Remember to share the burden of the gating scheme. After all, it is meant to be a community project!

It is a good idea to start with a set of rules about the gates and how they will be managed and the 'aims and objectives' of the scheme.

Co-ordinator

A contact point and chair person in meetings:

- *Makes sure that meetings make the best use of time*
- *Maintains order in meetings*
- *Keep the team focused and efficient and keeps up momentum*
- *Allocates tasks and sets time limits*

Treasurer

To keep a record of the monies collected and any expenditure that may be needed

Supporting Residents

- *Delivers letters*
- *Collects contributions*

Secretary

Someone to organise:

- *Sets agendas for meetings*
- *Takes notes at meetings*
- *Types up letters*



The Alley Gating Committee

Optional Specialists

The Registrar

Keeps a record of who has got keys - contact point for new residents who need keys.

Gatekeeper (and deputy)

Allows access to alley to people like refuse collectors or emergency services if required

Tip! Avoid having meetings for the sake of it- people will lose interest if they feel that they are wasting their time. Sometimes people prefer to communicate by email. You could even set up a web site!



The Alley Gate itself

The “Alleygators Guide” has a ‘tried and tested’ design specification that has been proven to work. This design can be given to gate manufacturer. A copy of the “Alleygators Guide” can be downloaded from: <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/gating.pdf>

There are some basic things to consider:

Appearance - Alley gates should not downgrade the appearance of your area. How the gates look will be an important factor when choosing your design. However, do not compromise the gate's effectiveness.

Material - The gate should be designed to last with minimal maintenance cost. Galvanised steel is preferable since it should not rust. The material should be too thick to cut through or bend/ break (at least 3mm thick).

Anti-climb design - The gate design must prevent the burglar from having a foothold on the gate. For example, from horizontal bars or hinges. The best gate designs have protected anti-climb rollers to prevent unwanted access from anyone trying to climb over the gate. The gap at the bottom of the gate should be small enough to stop anyone crawling through.

Visibility - The gate should allow for a clear line of sight in the alley. This can be incorporated by punched grills or vertical bars. The gate should not be solid.

The lock - The lock should be an ‘automatic dead locking mortice latch’ or ‘slam to lock.’ This ensures that the gates are not left open or unlocked. Ideally the lock and hinges should be encased to protect from deliberate attack.

Padlocks and combination locks are less suitable alternatives since they can be left unlocked or go missing.

Self-supporting posts - the gate should deliberately not be attached to an adjacent property since this may make them liable for any problems and damage their property. Gateposts should be sunk into the ground deep enough to ensure that there is no sagging of the gate.

Noise - A rubber strip should be fixed to the gate to reduce the noise of opening and shutting the gate. Rubber stops can also be used to prevent the gate banging onto adjacent property when opened.

Tip! If your alley is used for vehicular access, then the access should ideally allow for taller vehicles and wider vehicles such as removal vans or mobile homes.



Make sure your gates are cost effective!

Obtain at least 3 quotes. This way, you can justify your expenditure and ensure that you are paying a fair price. It can be helpful to ask for a sketch of the proposed gate so that you know how it will look.

Don't compromise cost for quality - you may end up spending more in the long run.

Agree the price **BEFORE** the gates are installed and get this in writing.

Ensure that the gates meet the minimum Alley Gate specification. *You want them to work!*

Tip! Check whether the manufacturer provides a warranty or guarantee for the gates-how long does this last and what does it cover? - Try and get this in writing.

There are many gate manufacturers in Bristol that will build Alley Gates, however the quality may vary. Ask to see examples of gates they have already built. Try and get references if possible.

Tried and Tested solutions...

The police can only recommend companies that have achieved **Sold Secure** and/or **Secured by Design** status since the quality of the product has been tested and assured as being effective in crime prevention.

We have used several **Secured by Design** companies for Alley Gates in Bristol with very successful results. You can find out more about approved suppliers on the following web sites:

www.soldsecure.com

www.securedbydesign.com

These companies have had their gate designs tested and approved. The designs of the gates have evolved and improved over time based upon problems that have been experienced and the requirements of differing alleyways.

Tip! Make sure you are comparing "like for like". Some quotes include installation costs and locks and keys, others don't! It may be helpful to ask for an itemised quote.



Gate location

When deciding where to locate your Alley Gates you should try and put yourself in the mind of a burglar!

- Can the gates be circumvented? - wheelie bins, low walls, ladders!
- Would the gates be better-located further in/ further out of the alley?
- Are there any other ways that a burglar could use to get in the alley?

Often extra panels or fencing is required to ensure that the gates are fully effective.

Your local crime reduction officer and experience manufacturers should be able to provide help with this.

Whose responsibility are the gates?

The gates are the responsibility of the residents who are benefiting from them and the landowner. This includes maintenance of the gates and distribution of the keys.



Keys

All affected residents must be issued with at least 2 keys regardless of whether they have paid. Don't forget that some houses are divided into flats - all affected flat owners who need access to the lane will require a key. *Do you have garages owners who require keys?*

Residents need to be issued with keys BEFORE the gates are installed otherwise their access may be restricted.

Remember, access to the keys needs to be controlled otherwise the gates become ineffective. Some gating schemes charge a deposit and require a signature for the keys. The advantages of this is that the monies raised can help pay for the maintenance of the gates. It also gives people ownership for the keys, making them less likely to lose them. However, some people may resent paying for keys as well as contributing towards the gates.

You will also need to decide how the residents will get the keys - will they be delivered or expected to collect them?

Points to think about...

- Will you allow extra keys to be cut? You may decide to include the price of the first two keys within the cost of the project and then charge for any additional keys.
- Will residents get their own extra keys cut or will the committee arrange this for them?
- Will you have security keys? Security keys cannot be re-cut just anywhere, and identification is required.
- Will you allow landlords to have extra keys cut so that they can supply their tenants with keys if the originals go missing?
- Sometimes service access (for example, water, electricity, sewers, refuse collection) is required for the alley. If this is the case then you should contact the relevant agencies in order to ensure that they can gain access. Occasionally, access to properties can only be obtained through the back of the property and so the post person may need a key to the alley in order to deliver mail.

New Residents

The Committee will have to decide how to deal with new residents. Hopefully the old owner will hand over their keys to the new owner. However this does not always happen.

How will new residents get keys?

One way of dealing with this is having a welcome letter for new residents. This should explain what the scheme is and why it is in place. It should make clear where they can get information or keys if they require them.



They are up!

Once the gates are up, pat yourselves on the back! Your neighbourhood has just been given an extra line of defence against crime!

You could consider having an official launch or a street party in the alley! You could even invite the local press and any sponsors that you may have had.

Tip! Send out a newsletter to the residents, thanking them for their support and reminding them to look after and lock the gates. You could provide statistics such as how much was spent and how long the project took. You could even consider evaluating the success of the scheme using crime statistics.

The Future!

Try and maintain the community spirit that will have inevitably evolved throughout the scheme, perhaps you could set up a Neighbourhood Watch?

Basic crime prevention still applies, remember burglars like easy opportunities:

- Remember to keep all unattended windows and doors closed and locked.
- Consider having a burglar alarm and security lights fitted.
- Property mark your possessions.

Your local police Crime Reduction Department can provide advice with this.



20 Small steps to success...

1. Get together with neighbours interested in Alley Gating and make the decision to get a scheme up and running.
2. Identify and evidence the problems about how the alley is being misused.
3. Send a letter to your neighbours telling them about Alley Gating, why you want to do it and asking them to return the permissions form. This should let you know how many people support the scheme and provide you with the names of people willing to help. The number of supporters should be high if you are to proceed.
4. Meet with local residents who have volunteered to help and form a committee and decide on the scheme name.
5. Chase up non-respondents and try and resolve objections (*this may be ongoing*).
6. Carry out checks regarding "public rights of way" and "adoptions".
7. Find out who owns the lane.
8. Set up a bank account.
9. Obtain 3 quotes for Alley Gates, check they are suitable and then decide on a manufacturer.
10. Apply for planning permission if necessary.
11. 'Cost up' the project.
12. Apply for funding and consider funding raising/ sponsorship options.
13. Once a decision has been made on funding- calculate resident contributions and send out a letter asking for donations.
14. Collect residents contributions- give receipts and keep records of who paid what and when.
15. Order the gates from the chosen manufacturer and contact the residents regarding the installation date.
16. Clear out the lane if necessary.
(*Bristol City Council Clean and Green may be able to help you with this*).
17. Distribute the keys to all affected residents.
18. Gates are installed.
19. Decide on future meetings/ maintenance/ key cutting and other interventions.
(*Neighbourhood Watch?*)
20. ***Celebrate your new Alley Gates!***



A Few Final Words...

Some of the steps will take longer, and some can be done at the same time. Alley Gating can take anything from six months to over a year to complete. The time it takes is dependent on many factors. The key success is to plan ahead, communicate effectively and to not become disillusioned.

There can be problematic and frustrating times, especially surrounding objections, the location of the gate and issues regarding "rights of way." Most hurdles can be overcome, but it will require patience and perseverance.

The schemes that have followed through to completion have never looked back.

Remember success is much more likely than not!

"I am not saying it was easy, but it was worth it. No one in our street has been burgled since the gates went up and we no longer have mopeds racing through the lane. My kids can play and I can relax knowing that they are safe out there without needles and broken glass. The Alley Gates have brought back our quality of life- I can sleep easily at night now."

(A resident who has benefited from Alley Gating in Bristol)

Good luck!



Footnotes

1 'Sauvain' describes a highway as essentially a public right of way over a defined route, with four elements:

- a) The way must be open to the public at large
- b) The public use must be as of right
- c) The public right must be for passage
- d) The public right of passage must follow a defined route

With the following caveats:

1. Routes that begin as private rights of way, may, over a period of time, become public highways through the usual principles of dedication and acceptance.
2. Once created, the public right cannot be lost save by operation of law i.e. By means of an extinguishment order, and the landowner no longer has the right to exclude members of the public. This does not apply to permissive routes or private easements used with land-owner consent (unless public rights were acquired prior to permission first being given) - permission being an overt act like signs/ notices or written permission.
3. Where the highway becomes maintainable by the Highway Authority, this gives the authority a right to possession of the highway surface. This interest must be distinguished from the rights of the public at large to pass over the highway - which rights exist whether or not the highway has become vested in the Highway Authority. As a guiding principle, public rights of way will be publicly maintainable if they are created formally or if they were created before 16 December 1949.
4. There are three main categories of highways - 'carriageways' with or without footways (i.e. carrying public vehicular rights, plus the rights of pedestrians and horseriders) and 'non-carriageway' highways (e.g. footpaths and bridleways).

2 It is an offence to physically divert or close a path, even temporarily, without lawful authority and anyone who does so runs the risk of action being taken against them. A diversion or extinguishment of a public right of way can arise only out of legal action by either a Local Authority, Magistrates Court or a Government Department or through an Act of Parliament. The process of diverting or closing a right of way is a public one, and is designed to ensure that the public are made aware of the change that is proposed and that anyone who wishes to do so has the opportunity to state their views and have them taken into account before a final decision is made.

Consequently the process of diverting or closing a right of way is lengthy and may involve considerable expense. There is a charge for making diversion orders. If you would like to apply to divert or extinguish a right of way across your land, you should contact the Rights of Way Officer for an initial discussion.



3 These provisions work by adding new grounds on which a Local Authority can make an order to extinguish or divert a footpath or bridleway under the current procedures in the Highways Act 1980. The Countryside and Rights of way Act (2000) added the following amendments to the Highways Act:

An order to extinguish a footpath or bridleway can be made if:

Section 118B- It is expedient for the purposes of preventing or reducing crime that would otherwise disrupt the life of the community.

Section 119B- it is expedient for the purposes of protecting the health and safety of pupils or staff of a school.

This legislation is only relevant to attempts to close off public rights of way (new or existing). It cannot be used to pre-empt attempts to have alleys added to the definitive map using the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

4 In order for a public right of way in a 'crime area' to be closed under the new powers under schedule 6 (CROW Act 2000) there must be evidence to show that the route is facilitating crime.

5 If members of the general public at large (as opposed to a small group of residents) have walked the path which is proposed to be gated without let or hindrance (examples include, a sign or gate or spoken challenge) for over 20 years, then they can apply for a modification order under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The objectors must submit a formal application and provide substantial evidence that these conditions have been met. The 'allegator' must provide (with evidence) that the alley couldn't have been used as a thoroughfare for at least one day. The Traffic Management Tteam at Bristol City Council will decide the case on a basis of a 'balance of evidence'. The decision can be appealed by either party.

Any barrier to the proposed public right of way must be removed as soon as any application has been received (i.e. the gates must be left open until the case has been decided). There is currently an approximately 5-year waiting list on claims.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) imposes an "obligation on every police authority, local authority and other specified bodies to consider crime and disorder reduction in the exercise of all their duties"

6 Adopted highways are usually stopped up using Sections 117 and 116 of the Highways Act 1980 by application through the Magistrates' Court. The applicant is required to pay the costs of approximately £3500 and ensure that a management scheme is set up for the lane. The court must be shown that the lane is not necessary for highway purposes.



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