



NW NEWS

West Kent

Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 52

"Security through awareness"

Spring 2020

Your co-ordinator is:
Tel No.

Kent Police team secures over 1,000 charges in its first year

A dedicated team of police officers targeting burglars, robbers and repeat offenders have reached a landmark 1,000th charge just over a year after launching.

The Chief Constable's Crime Squad, which launched in February 2019, made more than 300 arrests in its first year of operation, leading to 1,050 charges being authorised.

In total, the dedicated team of detectives and uniformed officers has secured 377 years in prison sentences.

Eighty-seven warrants were also carried out by the unit, which proactively pursues offenders who often target victims at random.

Chief Constable of Kent Police, Alan Pughsley, said: "When my Crime Squad was created, its remit was clear – go after the offenders who think nothing of causing significant harm and distress to our communities – and that is exactly what this team has done."

"It is not lost on Kent Police the lasting impact crime can have on victims which is why this team is focused on catching

opportunistic criminals and repeat offenders and putting them before the courts."

"To achieve more than 1,000 charges and over 370 years' worth of prison sentencings in a year is an achievement that should be recognised and makes me exceptionally proud that the team works under my name."

The Crime Squad, which is funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner's council tax precept, has officers based across the county and they work closely with local policing teams, serious crime detectives and tactical units.

In addition to investigating burglaries and robberies, officers in the unit target repeat offenders and increases in certain crime types such as catalytic converter thefts.

Successful cases in the last 12 months include gathering so much evidence against four shop robbers in Dartford they had no choice but to plead guilty. The conviction of a Medway man for carrying out five sexual offences against women in the local area, and a group of serial burglars who

stole charity collection boxes from businesses in Canterbury and Thanet.

Detective Chief Inspector Lopa McDermott, who leads the Chief Constable's Crime Squad, said: "Our caseload is varied but behind each offence is a victim and we are committed to supporting them, pursuing justice and preventing further offences taking place."

"Anyone with intentions of committing an offence in Kent should know that we have the resources and expertise to identify them and bring them before the courts."

"Despite an excellent first year, we will not rest on our laurels and will look to build on the good results from the last 12 months by protecting our communities, putting victims first and ensuring offenders face justice before the courts."



Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, and DCI Lopa McDermott

Scam Advice from Adam Sackett. Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer

The first is another Coronavirus alert and shows the extent of the problem of scams currently related to this.

Please stay vigilant during these difficult times and remember ABC:-

Never ASSUME
Never BELIEVE
Always CONFIRM

If it sounds too good to be true then it probably is.

Coronavirus-related frauds increase by 400% in March.

Between 1st February 2020 and 18th March 2020, Action Fraud has received 105 reports from victims of coronavirus-related frauds, with losses totalling close to £970,000.

The majority of the reports are related to online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived.

We have also received over 200 reports about coronavirus-themed phishing emails attempting to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal and financial information.

Watch out for scam messages:

Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details.

Shopping Online:

If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. Where possible, use a credit card to make the payment, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.

Protect your devices from the latest threats:

Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats.

British Transport Police

Text 61016 to report non-emergency incidents on trains or the tube. Dial 0800 405040 to give more information. A 999 call is guaranteed a quick response. For Crimestoppers dial 0800 555 111.

Safer cycling advice at West Kent Schools

Community safety officers in Tonbridge and Malling are helping to educate young cyclists on the dangers of so called 'ride out' events which are sometimes filmed and uploaded to social media.

Over the past year Kent Police has been made aware of concerns over a number of ride outs across the county – where large groups of teenagers have been cycling together on busy roads and performing dangerous stunts and manoeuvres close to other vehicles. Those who take part often film their actions to share on various social media platforms.

PCs and PCSOs are visiting schools to help inform and educate young people about the perils of ignoring road safety advice, to both themselves and other road users.

Between 25 and 28 February 2020 officers visited a total of 16 schools, which also included a number in the Swale area.



Through the use of video and role play children are shown the effects of a car colliding with a cyclist, with advice also given on issues including safe stopping distances and the importance of bicycle maintenance.

Sergeant Sarah Alvey, of the Tonbridge and Malling Community Safety Unit said: "The vast majority of cyclists ride safely and within the rules of the road, however as the weather begins to improve there is a concern that a number of young people may again be tempted to take part in these types of gatherings."

"We are working hard to get the message through that what may seem like a bit of harmless fun, can actually be extremely dangerous, resulting in serious injury, or even with tragic consequences. We are also reminding parents to speak to their children about road safety and where possible to encourage them to use purpose-built bike and skate areas, which are designed to be safe spaces."



Community Action Response –

Five things you can do:

Think of others, consider your actions and be kind:

People in every community will face the challenges of Covid-19 in some way – from needing basic provisions to help while they are unwell.

Connect and reach out to your neighbours:

As self-isolation increases, we need to find new ways to stay connected and check in on one another for our physical and mental wellbeing.

Share phone numbers and stay in touch.

Make the most of local online groups:

Keep up to date, share information and be positive.

Support vulnerable or isolated people:

Different groups in our communities are at increased risk and social isolation and loneliness are key concerns for all ages.

There are things you can do like volunteering for local support services or donating to food banks to help.

Share accurate information and advice:

Support anyone who may be anxious about Covid-19. Signpost them to the correct advice from Public Health England and encourage people to follow the correct hygiene practices.

Please support one another and work together as a strong community.

TEXT 61016 to Report Non-Emergency Incidents on Trains and Tubes

Recently a friend of mine was travelling on the train from central London down to Kent. She was in the First Class carriage with many other passengers.

While working on her laptop two young girls started playing their music really loudly. After a while my friend asked nicely if they would turn their music down please. They became verbally abusive and hostile. My friend took out her phone to text 61016 and inform the Transport Police that she thought the situation was getting out of control.

When the girls saw her get her phone out they became even more aggressive and threatened to take the phone away. A man on the train asked them to stop it, but they continued in the same vein. My friend was getting very worried now that her phone and laptop maybe taken.

Luckily another passenger came from the far end of the carriage and told them

to stop their aggressive behaviour to this young lady, saying it was totally unacceptable to speak in such a threatening way to a fellow passenger. She told them to get off the train at the next stop. They did alight from the train at the next stop without saying another word.

My friend reported this incident to 61016 who took all the details. They rang her the next day and are now looking at CCTV coverage.

So please if you feel threatened in any way on the train or Tube please do text 61016 and give them the details, they are there to help you. Dial 0800 405040 if you wish to give more information. Dial 999 if an incident is more serious and needs an instant response.

If you witness something suspicious on a train or tube (or elsewhere) you can dial Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 and report this anonymously.

Silver Line

In these very uncertain times where we all have to stay indoors to try and beat the Coronavirus, many people are becoming isolated and very lonely.

If you do live near to an elderly person, do ask them if they are ok and ask if they need any shopping, have they enough food? Generally make them feel as though they are not alone and people do care about them.

Esther Rantzen set up Silver line; she later joined forces with Age UK and between them they run a 24 hour a day confidential telephone helpline which offers information, friendship and advice to older people. They receive 10,500 calls each week.

You can call the telephone number free if you just wish to chat to someone, if you are feeling lonely or worried about something. They say its good to talk, don't they?

So if you feel this may help you, why not give them a call. Call free on 0800 470 8090.

Peters Village Neighbourhood Watch

Background

Peters Village is a new development sited on the bank of the River Medway within the parish of Wouldham, located between the villages of Woulham and Burham. It has been designed as a village, with its own community facilities. When completed, it will have its own shops, medical centre, school, and village hall with changing rooms to serve the area's playing fields.

It is anticipated the whole development will accommodate approximately 1000 new homes.

Initiative

In July 2017 I moved into Peters Village and realised the importance of bringing people closer together by developing a stronger community spirit, to promote confidence within that community that something positive is being done to prevent local crime / anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of life for all within the new development.

It was clear to me following research that the Neighbourhood Watch network was the voluntary organisation that would help to provide the requisite ethos to support a new community.

Neighbourhood Watch is a partnership between the police and local communities supported by others various local and regional organisations such as KCC Community Wardens, Kent Trading Standards and others with the aim to help people protect themselves and their property and reduce the fear of crime.

Setting up Peters Village Neighbourhood Watch

I conducted research and contacted local schemes to obtain advice and support on how to develop a new scheme within Peters Village. The Volunteer and Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer based within Kent police was a valuable source of information along with Ourwatch.org.uk the Neighbourhood Watch National Network.

Utilising the local community social network, I sought the opinion of residents within Peters Village to establish whether they thought a NhW was a good idea and more importantly whether residents would support such a scheme. Upon receiving a positive reply, I decided to create and register Peters Village Neighbourhood Watch through the Ourwatch national network. Once established details were provided to all residents to register through the same network, this ensured they were residents with Peters Village whilst providing them with the security of the principles under the Data Protection Act. (GDPR). In addition to registering with the national network it was important Peters Village formed links to the regional network, I therefore registered with the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association. An excellent association with deep rooted links with Kent police who have volunteers working within the police.

Once residents registered with the Ourwatch network, they were able to select the specific scheme on the network. I as the coordinator was able to confirm their details and accept them into the Peters Village scheme.

In addition to the registration process I also created a private Peters Village Neighbourhood Watch page on Facebook with all registered members being automatically added to the page. No one is accepted onto this page unless they have registered via Ourwatch to the Peters Village scheme. Facebook allows information from reliable sites such as the Kent Police and Crimestoppers to be circulated to all members, along with the regional information site E-watch, which is an invaluable source of information expertly put together to keep residents up to date with all regional events and incidents.

Peters Village Neighbourhood Watch scheme members can also join our Whats App group, which is used to send out instant messages of suspicious activity within the community. All residents are constantly encouraged to report all suspected criminal activity via 101 or Crimestoppers or 999.

by Stephen Rimmington.

ICE

Remember to insert the letters ICE (In case of an emergency) next to your loved ones names in your contacts list on your mobile phone.

For example. Ice Fred 0765xxxxxxx or ICE daughter 07xxxxxxx.

This really helps the emergency services if you are involved in an accident and they need to contact your next of kin quickly.

Lets hope it is not needed but at least if it is, your family can be contacted quickly.



PCSOs help to tackle motorcycle thefts in Hadlow

Community support officers tackling motorcycle thefts and associated antisocial behaviour in Hadlow are appealing to local residents for their help.

PCSOs are assisting regular officers with an ongoing crackdown on nuisance bikers in the area and are reminding members of the public to report any suspicious activity. The reminder follows the recent recovery of a stolen motorcycle, which was returned to its rightful owner following intervention from a local PCSO. The officer retrieved the vehicle from a field off Steers Place and was then able to identify and contact the owner and arrange for it to be collected.

Two other vehicles, also believed to be stolen, have recently also been recovered by PCSOs from the grounds of Hadlow Castle. Officers have been unable to

identify the owner of one of the bikes (pictured) which was discovered lying in a hedgerow. Anyone who recognises it is asked to call 01622 604100, quoting reference 21-0908.

District Commander for Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, Chief Inspector Pete Steenhuis said: "PCSOs make invaluable contributions to their communities and they are often our eyes and ears, providing a vital link to the areas they patrol. A recent concern raised has been around a spate of motorcycle thefts, the likes of which can cause considerable distress to victims, who are often left having to foot the bill for any damage caused or sometimes cannot even work because they have no other form of transport."

"These stolen bikes are then often ridden illegally and dangerously in country

lanes and off-road locations and whilst my officers are working hard to deter and detect those responsible, it is also important that residents continue to report any incidents to us, particularly when they are happening. If possible always take down any number plates, which will assist us in taking positive action."

Report antisocial behaviour by calling 101 or if a crime is in progress dial 999.



County lines crackdown leads to more than 40 arrests

Firearms, a bag containing £50,000 and a three kilogram package of heroin have been seized during the latest searches to tackle drug gangs and county lines in Kent.

A total of 42 people were arrested after 38 properties were searched at addresses across the county as well as in London, Surrey and Sussex. The searches took place over two days in areas including Medway towns, Thanet, Folkestone, Ashford, Tonbridge and Maidstone, during a coordinated operation involving 150 officers and with the assistance of the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police.

On Wednesday 11 March, 350 wraps were seized from an address in Dane Road, Margate after officers entered at 5.30am. Three people were arrested. Six people were also arrested in Trove Court, Newcastle Hill, Ramsgate where 130 wraps were recovered.

At the same time simultaneous raids were carried out at addresses in London, also linked to the supply of drugs in Kent. These resulted in further arrests, in areas including Mitcham and Brockley.

The crackdown continued on Thursday 12 March, when three kilograms of Class A drugs were seized from a property in Goose Close, Chatham and where a man was arrested. Nearby, in Magpie Hall Road officers entered an address and found around £50,000 in cash stuffed into a rucksack, while in Solomon Road, Rainham more money, as well as supplies of cocaine were seized. A man linked to both addresses was arrested.

In London, a handgun, live ammunition and large quantities of heroin and amphetamine were recovered from a flat in Federation Road, Abbey Wood. One man was arrested. Meanwhile, in Orpington a woman was detained after two imitation firearms were found in a car linked to an address in Lower Road.

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley said: "There are currently around 39 active county line networks in Kent which are being operated mainly from London, but by continuing to target and disrupt the gangs responsible my officers are making it much harder for them to establish a foothold."

"Those associated with gangs think nothing of the violence and misery they bring to our communities, however they should know that our knowledge and intelligence around their activities is comprehensive and growing rapidly. As these warrants show it is only a matter of time before these criminals are arrested and left facing lengthy prison sentences."

"I would like to reassure residents that we are investing significantly in the number of police officers dedicated to tackling county lines and that a coordinated approach with our partners, including other forces, is key to identifying and bringing to justice not only the street dealers, but those higher up the chain who are orchestrating the significant supplies of heroin and crack cocaine. Please also remember that your help remains vital. You can be our eyes and ears, so if you see anything suspicious call 101, or 999 if a crime is in progress."

Is Your Back Door Shut and Locked?

I recently watched a TV programme called Crime Watch. It was a sad story but with advice I think we should all adhere too.

In the programme it showed CCTV footage of three lads breaking into an old ladies house.

Firstly the CCTV footage showed one of the lads jumping over the back gate. He moved the bolt so that his friends could walk in. They made their way to the back door, which sadly was not locked. They walked in and started looking around the house for items to steal.

The lady who lived there was watching television and saw one of the young lads in her house. She was extremely frightened by this and dialled 999. While talking to the operator she collapsed with the shock of it all. The emergency operator called an Ambulance.

Let's learn by this and make sure our back gates are locked with a key, so that they can't be opened easily. Always make sure your back and front doors are locked at all times even if it is during the day.

Some thieves are opportunists and will just jump at the chance of a door that is not locked to see what items they can steal once in the property.

Please remember to keep your doors locked at all times.

Sorry folks but due to the difficult time's we are in at the moment there will be no hard copies of this newsletter, please pass it on via e-mail to all your members.

Thank you, Julie Walker, editor.



Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

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Peter Rolington, Tunbridge Wells

Committee members

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Stephen Rimmington

Jennifer Woodgate

Cedric Read

Other Useful Numbers

Tonbridge & Malling Crime Reduction Unit

– Tel: 01732 844522

Tunbridge Wells Crime Reduction Unit

– Tel: 01892 526121

West Kent Special Branch – Tel: 07528 989208

UK Border Agency – Tel: 08435 047198

Kent Trading Standards – Tel: 03454 040506

Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership

– Tel: 01732 227000

community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership

– Tel: 01732 844522 csp@tmbc.gov.uk

Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership

– Tel: 01892 526121

communitysafety@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

If you wish to contact a member of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee, please write to them at:

**c/o: Tonbridge Police Station,
Neighbourhood Watch Tray,
1 Pembury Road, Tonbridge,
Kent TN9 2HS.**

*WKNA Executive
Committee expresses its thanks
to the Borough Council for
their assistance with production
of this Newsletter*

Make a note

When contacting the Police in West Kent

Emergency only 999

Kent Police 101

**Is for reporting non-urgent crime, suspicious incidents
or to contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team.
Calls cost just 16p from landlines or mobiles.**