

Local PCSO Monthly Update March 2020

Hello,



I am your local Police Community Support Officer for your area. For those of you that don't know me, my name is PCSO Katherine Richards, but most people call me Kate.

This is my report for this month, so you are all aware of what I have been up to in and around your areas and what crimes have been happening. My report goes out to the Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, and any other members of the community who may be interested in receiving it. This can also be shared on your parish websites and your social media sites.

I would just like to let you know that I will be your point of contact for your town and parishes. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking PCSO Carin Andrews who I have shared the areas with over the past few months, but Carin has recently moved areas and will be looking after Willesborough. I will still have support from the rest of the team at Ashford as well as the Tasking team which I can call upon for help if needed in your areas. If anyone needs any crime prevention, we also have a designated officer PCSO Laura Langridge who can come and offer advice, please get in touch with me and I will pass on your details if you wish to meet or speak with her.

Many of you will know that I will try and attend town and parish monthly meetings when I can, this does depend on other commitments and operational needs. Please contact me if there is a matter that is arising in your area that you feel I need to attend a meeting in order to help with. I hold a police rural forum meeting quarterly which is for all the parish councillors, clerks, NHW co-ordinators in my areas to get together and share what's going on in their areas as well, they will then be able to feedback information to their individual parishes.

A new thing we are starting this year is to hold public meetings / drop in sessions where you all can come along and ask questions or discuss problems you may be having in your area. I held my first one on Tuesday 25th February at Tenterden Town hall with Sergeant Bloomfield who is my Community Safety Unit Sergeant. It was a good turn out, and residents were able to share with us the problems in their areas. It was not just open to Tenterden residents, as residents from some of the other parishes came as well. Some of the issues we were not aware of as people are not always reporting it via 101 or on the Kent police website which is still the important way of reporting not via community social media sites as we don't monitor these.

I will keep you all updated when the next public meeting will be and my aim is to do these quarterly, in different parishes i.e. Hamstreet, Puckley etc... If you feel you have a suitable place where we can hold one of these drop-in sessions or meetings, then please let me know. Also, ideas of what times suit people best: day sessions, evening or weekends, I want to work with you all.

Other events:

Other things I have been up to in the areas over the past months:

As you would have seen from last month our Knife awareness campaign has continued to run, especially through the half term holidays, where we have been out in your community speaking to the public about the dangers of carrying knives. PCSO Langridge and I along with some of our Volunteer Police Cadets have been out in Tenterden, Biddenden, Woodchurch, Wittersham, Bethersden, and Appledore in park areas talking to the youngsters in the community. Most of them would have attended our knife awareness assemblies.



There is still time for parents and guardians to get involved with our safety sessions which are being held.



Where is your teen right now?
Worried their behaviour has changed?
Have they been given money or items from a new friend?

Training to protect your child
 Kent Police and Ashford Borough Council would like to invite you to a FREE session, aimed at parents and guardians, to help safeguard young people and recognise the early warning signs that may identify involvement in knife crime, drug use or gangs.

Join us:

- Wednesday 26 February, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Wednesday 4 March, 6-8pm, Sinden Theatre, Tenterden
- Monday 9 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Tuesday 17 March, 6-8pm, Sinden Theatre, Tenterden
- Thursday 19 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre
- Friday 27 March, 6-8pm, Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre

Please reserve your space at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--kent/knife-crime-prevention-ashford/

Working in partnership



The possibility of a young person getting involved in a gang or criminal behaviour may seem unlikely, but it's essential that every parent and carer knows what to look out for and where to access help and support if needed.

These parent-focused sessions aim to give you the training to help protect young people from harm. They promote the key role that parents, carers, teachers and other professionals can play to ensure a young person feels safe, supported and empowered to ask for help from someone they trust if they need to.

Each session will provide:

- everything you should know about gangs, knives and associated criminal activity
- warning signs of gang membership including changes in a young person's behaviour
- true life stories from unique guest speakers including:
 - an ex-gang member who now works with youth charity, Uprising
 - the grandfather of a victim of drug use.

Choices
 Remind your child they have choices and discuss their options. Young people generally just want to fit in and belong, which can sometimes be the reason why they end up making the wrong choice. Encourage them to find things to do that they are interested in. Sports clubs, fitness centres, youth clubs, theatre, music and dance studios are just some of the opportunities out there for young people.

Don't know what to do – there are people who can help you:

- NSPCC – call 0800 800 5000
- Childline – call 0800 1111
- Crimestoppers – call anonymously on 0800 555 111
- Kent Police – you can report a non-urgent incident or crime online at www.kent.police.uk/report. In an emergency call 999

For further information please visit www.kent.police.uk

I have also attended a Fraud awareness drop-in session at Barclays Bank in Tenterden with our Prevent & Protect co coordinators, and Barclays staff to give advice to their customers.



I have also attended a bike marking session where myself, PCSO Langridge, Volunteer Police Cadets, KCC warden Peter Beasley, and NHW co-ordinator Adrian Lidgett who arranged the bike marking event in Biddenden. Sadly, we were probably hit by the bad weather. However, we still marked 18 bikes which was a very good turnout.



Other Information.

I have been monitoring and patrolling areas where I have been made aware of nuisance vehicles, i.e. Charing Health (motorbikes) and Tenterden to name just a few. These people will be spoken to and warned about their behaviour. The tasking team are also out in the areas looking at nuisance vehicles and Section 59's will be handed to vehicles which continue to cause a nuisance. If this is happening in your area, please make sure you report via 101 or online reporting.

Ashford CSU together with Ashford borough council have invested in a decibel meter due to an increase in calls relating to noisy vehicles across the Ashford district. The decibel meter is used to measure the noise output of a vehicle and ensure the exhaust has not been tampered with or modified in an illegal way.



HMRC scams.

- Fraudsters are contacting the elderly and vulnerable claiming to be from HM Revenue & Customs.
- Victims are being told they have arrest warrants, outstanding debts or unpaid taxes in their name.
- The fraudsters are asking victims to purchase iTunes gift cards as payment.
- There are a variety of methods being used including calls, texts and voicemails.

Victims are being contacted in a variety of methods by fraudsters claiming to be from HMRC and are being told they owe an outstanding debt. In most cases they ask for payment in iTunes gift card voucher codes.

Fraudsters like iTunes gift cards to collect money from victims because they

can be easily redeemed and easily sold on. The scammers don't need the physical card to redeem the value and instead get victims to read out the serial code on the back over the phone.

One 87 year old victim recently told the BBC he was phoned by fraudsters who claimed to be from HMRC stating there was an arrest warrant out in his name. They told him it would be cancelled if he bought £500 in iTunes gift cards at Tesco. The man bought the cards and gave them the serial numbers but when they asked for a further £1,300 in vouchers, he became suspicious and hung up.

TV licence Scams.

The scam email claims to offer a refund for over-payments of TV Licence fees but states the victim's bank details need to be updated before the refund can be issued.

The email then links to a website designed to look like TV Licensing's own website with a form for victims to enter their details. In reality the website has been set up to look authentic but the form steal victim's bank details, giving the fraudsters the chance to steal the victim's savings.

These types of scam are likely to become more prevalent with mobile phones over the coming months as we approach over 75's having to pay for their TV licences in the future.

Romance Scams.

When the victim thinks they have met the perfect partner through an online dating website or app, Facebook etc., but the other person is using a fake profile to form a relationship with them. The fraudster uses the site to gain the victims trust and eventually asks them for money or enough personal information to steal the victim's identity. Once the fraudster using a fake dating profile is confident that they've won the victims trust, they will tell them about a problem they're experiencing and ask them to help out by sending money.

They may have arranged to visit to the victim but need money to pay for the flight or visa. They may tell them everything has been booked but their ticket has been stolen, and they need to send money quickly to get them on the next flight.

Alternatively, they may prey on their sympathies, telling them a family member or someone else they are responsible for is ill and they need money for medical treatment.

Once the victim sends them money, the fraudsters will keep coming back and invent new reasons to send them more.

Police link robberies in Biddenden, Cranbrook and Ruckinge

Detectives have launched an investigation following three robberies that they believe may be linked.

The first incident was reported to have taken place at a house in Digidog Lane, Frittenden between 10.45pm and 10.58pm on Sunday, 9 February 2020. It is reported three men broke into the victim's home before threatening him and assaulting him. The victim's car was stolen in the incident.

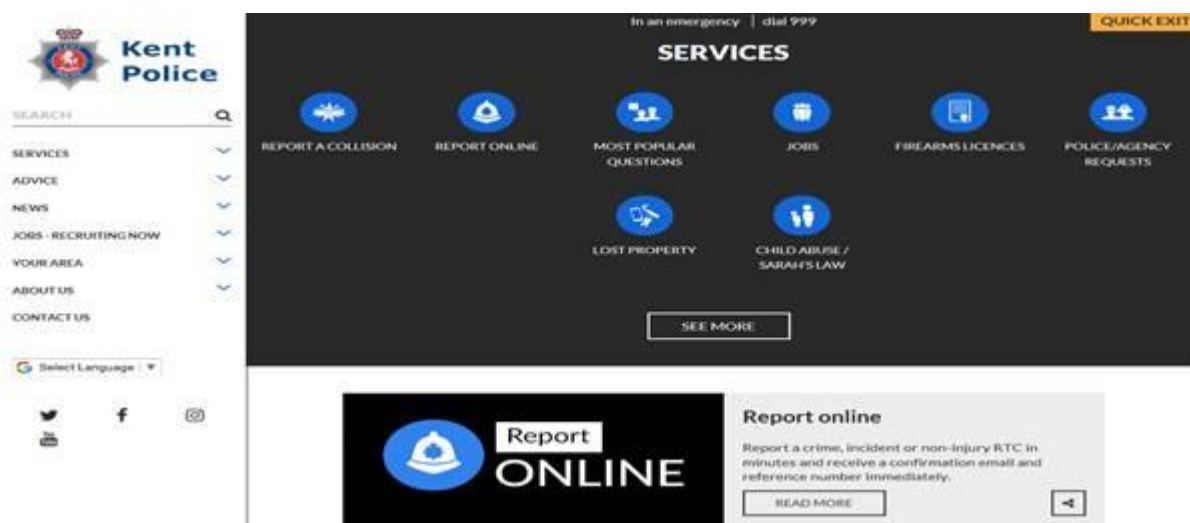
Officers are not ruling out the possibility the incident is linked to an attempted robbery at a house in Headcorn Road, Biddenden, Ashford between 10pm and 10.07pm on Saturday, 15 February. It is reported three men attempted to gain entry to a property by smashing through the door, but the occupants acted quickly and called the police before the men made off. Nothing was stolen in the incident.

A few hours later at 1.19am on Sunday, 16 February three men with baseball bats attempted to break into a property in Bromley Green Road, Ruckinge. They made off empty handed after being disturbed.

PC Michael Kingwell, who is investigating said: 'I am not ruling out the possibility that the incidents are linked and are currently conducting a number of enquiries and examining CCTV and dashcam footage. I would ask anyone who may have information about the robberies or may have seen a red BMW in the area at around the time of the incidents to contact us.

Anyone with information can call the appeal line on 01843 222289 quoting reference 46/29650/20. You can also call the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111 or complete the online form at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

All incidents that have been reported to the Police can be found in full depth from crime statistics which are available by visiting www.police.uk .



I would like to remind all residents to stay vigilant and report anything suspicious online or via the Kent Police non-emergency number 101, or if you do witness a crime in progress then please call 999. *****Also please do not forget the online chat and crime reporting system on the Kent Police website which gives members of the public the ability to report crime online rather than by phone which some may find easier, faster and more convenient.*****

<https://www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice/>



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Community Safety Unit | Ashford Police Station | East Division

Please do not use this email to report incidents. For a non-emergency please report online or contact 101 and in case of an emergency call 999.