



NW NEWS

West Kent

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Tel No. ....

# Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 64

*"Security through awareness"*

Spring 2024

## Lifesaving PCSO wins Royal Humane Society award

A Police Community Support Officer who saved a choking woman's life has received an award from the Royal Humane Society.

PCSO Sophie Lusher of the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Unit was on patrol and travelling along Pembury Road on the afternoon of Tuesday 27 June 2023 when she noticed the woman frantically waving her arms inside a parked car, in an attempt to attract attention.

After stopping her vehicle to investigate, PCSO Lusher realised the woman was choking on a sandwich. Using the first aid skills taught as part of her police training, PCSO Lusher performed a prolonged series of abdominal thrusts and back slaps in order to clear the woman's airway and restore her breathing. She then took her to the nearby Tunbridge Wells Hospital as a precaution, where she received further medical treatment. She has since made a full recovery.

PCSO Lusher was presented with a Royal Humane Society Resuscitation Certificate at the Chief Constable of Kent Police latest awards ceremony on 27 February 2024, where 14 other officers and police staff were recognised for their long service. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott was also in attendance.

Chief Constable Tim Smith said: "Kent Police officers and staff share a passion for public service and carry out acts of heroism on a daily basis.

"PCSO Sophie Lusher is a credit to her profession and I am delighted she has been commended by the Royal Humane Society for her actions on that day. The doctor who treated the woman later said that PCSO Lusher's quick thinking and decisive medical intervention had without doubt helped to save her life.

"I am very thankful to her and every other officer and member of police staff who regularly go above and beyond to help keep the people of Kent safe."

PCSO Lusher said: "It was really lovely to win an award for what I did but the main achievement for me is that the lady I helped is OK. She came into the police station the next day to bring me some flowers, and I went to her house after and we had coffee together.

"I have been in the job for nearly 17 years and received lots of first aid training, so I knew what I had to do and just got on with it. I am really pleased I was able to help her and incredibly proud at receiving an award."

## Enhancing safety of women and girls in Tonbridge

Officers have been engaging with women and girls in Tonbridge as part of ongoing work to further enhance their safety.

On Thursday 11 January, constables spoke to almost 50 females, to gain a wider understanding of how safe they feel in the areas they live, work, and socialise.

Patrols from the Neighbourhood Task Force were joined by local beat officers, as well as police dog handlers in the High Street, to gather responses from passing pedestrians.

Those who engaged with officers completed surveys to highlight any concerns they had and were also given advice on what steps they could take to avoid becoming a victim of crime whilst out and about, or within the home. The surveys will assist future planning to prevent crime in the town, in particular violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Tonbridge Chief Inspector Stuart Paul said: "We want women and girls to understand how committed we are to tackling VAWG, with our partners, and it is important they trust us to do this. This latest event has highlighted some concerns, including with street lighting, CCTV, and areas where people would like to see an increased police presence.

"It will help us act where it is most needed and hopefully make women and girls feel safer as they go about their daily lives, whether that be on the streets, within schools, while using public transport, or in their own homes."



PCSO Sophie Lusher with Chief Constable of Kent, Tim Smith (left) and PCC Mathew Scott (right)

**STOP**

**Violence against Women and Girls**

**Crime Prevention**

# South East Rural Crime Week

Police forces across the South East are working together to intensify their operations to tackle rural crime this week. Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators and Partners can help by raising awareness of Rural Crime and encouraging their scheme members to report rural and wildlife crime via the Kent Police website and Live Chat for non-emergency calls. Offences occurring at the time should be reported via 999.

Rural crime is a concern for large areas of our country but it tends to go unreported. It can impact on insurance premiums, food prices and damage local communities. Rural residents can feel unsafe in their own homes; wildlife and plant species suffer, farm owners have to foot the bill for criminal damage and theft; and local businesses in rural areas can see their income and cashflow adversely affected.

Theft remains a major problem in the agricultural sector, affecting many farmers who have unfortunately experienced the theft of farm machinery, vehicles, GPS units, livestock, horses or fuel. Rural thieves have evolved beyond opportunistic local individuals. Increasingly in recent years, organised and sometimes international criminal gangs are in control of criminal activities, with emerging illicit markets further fuelling the demand for stolen equipment.

Wildlife crime includes actions that violate UK laws to safeguard our wildlife and plant species. It not only inflicts pain and suffering on animals, such as hares, birds of prey and bats, but also threatens the survival of certain species.

It can be connected with serious offences such as firearms crimes and organised crime, including an association with cyber-crime through the streaming of illegal activities (such as badger-baiting) that reaches into towns and cities for betting.

Environmental crime includes serious and organised waste crime, fly-tipping, arson and heritage crime. Waste crime can take on many different forms from the very visible dumping of waste to fraudulent producer responsibility claims, deliberate breaches of permits, metal theft and the growing issue of the waste industry being used to launder money.

Please see below for the different types of rural and wildlife crime that can be reported online:

## Wildlife crime includes:

- Poaching;
- Coursing;
- Persecution of badgers, birds and bats;
- Egg theft and collection;
- Or trade in protected species and animal products;
- Not registering animals that require a licence;
- Taking protected plants;
- Use of poisons, snares or explosives to kill or injure animals;
- Animal cruelty;
- Hunting with dogs;
- Introducing invasive species;
- Killing or capturing, damaging or destroying the habitat of any protected animal.

## Rural crime includes:

- Theft of farming or agricultural equipment or fuel;
- Damage to agricultural property;
- Tack theft;
- Theft of lead from churches;
- Damage to ancient monuments;
- Illegal metal detecting;
- Livestock worrying.

To find out more about Rural Crime Prevention please go to . . .  
*Rural crime prevention | Kent Police.*

# Road Safety

I wanted to take a moment to remind you all, as residents of Tonbridge, of the dangers faced when travelling on the roads at this time of year.

We have noticed a significant increase in the amount of road traffic collisions in recent weeks and it does not take a genius to work out that the weather will have a lot to do with this. Please drive to the conditions and remember that the speed limit, is exactly that, it is a limit, not a target.

We all appreciate the fact that driving can sometimes be necessary in today's age, even in extremely poor weather conditions, but please be mindful of your own safety, as well as the safety of other road users.

Is it really worth the risk of getting to your destination two minutes earlier, when you consider the higher percentage risk that you may not make it there at all.

*By PC Jack Bridger, Tonbridge Beat Officer*

# Stolen Motorbike

A motorbike stolen from the driveway of a house on Longmead Way, Tonbridge, between 10th and 11th March 2024, was found and recovered by the Neighbourhood Task Force, Tonbridge, in a car park on College Avenue, Tonbridge.

Police believe the bike, which was concealed under a tarpaulin cover, was being used. The bike has now been returned to its rightful owner.

*By PCSO Mary Coe*



# New Rules for Hackney Carriages

I recently used a taxi to travel home but was quite shocked when I was told I had to pay by cash only. I had wanted to use my bank card, luckily I just had enough cash in my bag to cover the fare.

I contacted Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and I have been informed that as from 1st February 2024 all Hackney carriages have to accept cash or credit cards.

No one should be turned away if they want to pay by card. I know some people also do worry about giving a tip using a bank credit card, but just ask the driver

to add on the amount you wish to tip them and they will add it to the cost of your fare, it's as simple as that.

If anyone has any problems regarding the above, please do contact the Licensing Team at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Their telephone number is 01732 844522. Tell them the name of the taxi company, this is usually shown on the taxi, give the registration number if possible and also mention the time and date you used the taxi. For everyone's safety no one should be turned away because they want to pay with a Bank card.

# Bike Safety

Every year lots of bicycles are stolen. Take extra measures to ensure yours is safe by locking it in your garden shed with a padlock on the door. If you do not have a shed maybe chain it to the wall or fence making sure it is out of sight of would be thieves.

Always code mark your bicycle, have the postcode engraved on it and record the make and serial numbers if there are any on your bicycle. Take photos of your bicycle to help the police find it, if it is stolen.

# How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Fraud

- Always use the ABC of scam awareness. Never Assume or Believe a caller, email or text is genuine. Always Confirm by contacting a trusted relative, friend, your bank's fraud department or the police to check it is genuine.
- Remember the police will never call you asking you to assist with an investigation by withdrawing cash for them to collect, or requesting to collect your bank card. If you receive a call purporting to be from the police and are unsure it is genuine, ring them back via 101 using a different telephone.
- Avoid clicking on links in emails and text messages from unknown sources, as they are liable to be a scam.
- Always use a strong and separate password for your email address by using three random words.

For more information on fraud and advice on how to combat it, visit the advice section of our website: Advice about fraud @Kent Police.U.K.

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# Emily shares her story of how her career is progressing . . .

## Becoming a Cadet Leader

After I left the Cadets at 18, I had the opportunity after 6 months to go back as a Leader, by following the Cadet to Leader pathway. I was trained on how to adapt to the changes this new position would bring.

I am enjoying my time as Cadet Leader, as it presents new challenges every week, training has helped us to prepare for this.

Becoming a Leader has opened up many opportunities, for example, visiting other units to see the difference in how each unit is run and gaining valuable work experience.

Through becoming a Leader I was given the opportunity to work with Collaborate Digital, which is commissioned by the PCC. Mathew Scott, I was able to travel to schools in Kent to help raise awareness of Online safety.

*by Emily Hoadley Cadet Leader.*

# Have You Seen Anything Suspicious?

If you noticed anything suspicious which you think "maybe I should report that," please do. The police will always welcome any information that may help them stop a crime.

It maybe some suspicious behaviour you have seen outside your home in the early hours of the morning.

Let me give you an example, a few years ago I awoke to hear the sound of lads chatting outside my house. I got up without putting on my lights so as not to let them know I was about to watch what they were up to. I was able to see three lads breaking windscreen wipers off our car.

I rang the police asked them to come around with out blue lights flashing so they could catch them in the act. As the lads walked down the road they were breaking the windscreen wipers off of several more cars.

I gave a description of the lads to the police and they caught them further down the road.

You may see something happening in the daytime which you think is suspicious. Another example, neighbours you know are away on holiday but you observe a van parked outside and men walking around the side of their home which looks suspicious. Your neighbours have not advised you that they are expecting builders to do any work at the property, so your suspicions are aroused.

Do call the police and when they arrive they can find out whats happening. You could well have stopped a burglary taking place. Please do not put yourself in any danger by approaching these people, just give all the info you can such as a description of the people involved, car or van numbers if you can see them, to the police and they will let you know what was happened.

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# Are you a Neighbourhood Watch member?

If you would like to join a NhWatch scheme or would like to run one yourself.

Please, e-mail our Kent Police Liaison Officer: [pria.webster@kent.police.uk](mailto:pria.webster@kent.police.uk).

She will be happy to help you achieve this. Come and join us.

# Cuckooing . . .

Cuckooing is a form of action, termed by the police, in which the home of a vulnerable person is taken over by a criminal in order to use it to deal, store or take drugs, facilitate sex work, a place to live or financially abuse the tenant. It can sometimes be used as a place to store firearms.

The practice is associated with County lines drug trafficking.

If you have concerns about a vulnerable neighbour or even a member of your own family, please do inform the police of the situation as soon as possible, it may save someone from being seriously hurt.

A property owner or landlord whose property has been used to store drugs, may face up to 14 years imprisonment under the misuse of drugs act 1971. However the maximum sentence for cuckooing may stretch to an unlimited fine and /or life imprisonment.

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# Are You Lonely?

I spoke to someone recently who told me that their partner of many years had passed away, and they did get very lonely at times. They had good friends and relations who were very kind but there were times when they still felt very alone.

One day this person was in a local pub eating his lunch. When he had finished the meal he went to pay for it at the bar, only to be told that the meal had been paid for by a stranger.

The stranger had left a message for him which said, "I paid for your meal as an act of kindness as I felt you looked lonely. In the future if you see someone you think is lonely maybe you could do the same act of kindness, then in a way we can help lonely people, so they won't feel they are alone and that no one cares".

I felt this was a lovely kind gesture by a complete stranger.

There are some very kind people in this world of ours.

Remember if you feel lonely and are 55 and over and need to talk to someone who cares please call Silver Line Helpline on 0800 470 8090 which is free.

It was originally set up by TV presenter Esther Rantzen but is now run by Age UK. It offers friendship, conversation and support for older people 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

So if you are feeling sad or lonely why not give them a call .

# Therapy Dog “Willow”



During January 2024, Community Policing Volunteer Elaine Dobson and her Therapy Dog “Willow” attended Canterbury Crown Court where they supported an extremely vulnerable juvenile victim with learning difficulties who was required to give evidence in a serious case of sexual abuse.

Giving evidence in court is traumatic no matter who you are, I still get the butterflies even after 34 years as a police officer. To someone who is especially vulnerable giving evidence in Court can seem an almost impossible task, which is why we added this extra role for the volunteers to perform as a team to help the victims find strength and feel supported. This in turn leads to justice and hopefully the beginning of closure for them.

The feedback for Elaine & Willow has been incredible, words like instinctive, supportive, kind, and calm were used by the victim, their parent, and the witness care team. Perhaps most importantly was that the victim stated they felt “safe” thanks to their interactions with Willow, which would have meant emotionally safe.

So far this year, since the support in court aspect of the role started, the team have supported a total of 10 cases, mainly at Crown Courts in Kent, with future ones being booked continually through the year.

We thank PC Martyn Tulk for this update on the good work these wonderful therapy dogs are doing to help reassure people. Amazing!

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

# Action Fraud to report Fraud or Internet Crime

Take action and contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

1. If you receive a bill for something you haven't bought.
2. If you think you may have responded to a fraudster without realising it.
3. If you have given someone your bank details and you are now worried, they may not be genuine.

Action Fraud will give you advice on what to do next.

If you have concerns that an elderly or vulnerable neighbours, relatives or family have been targeted, talk to them, and check they are ok.

If you need more advice, contact Action Fraud or visit their website [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

Also, make sure your computer, tablet or smartphone has anti-spyware software. If you are unsure how to do this please visit [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org).

## New Committee Members

Peter Rolington and all the members of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Committee would like to welcome onto our committee: Cllr Laura Manston, Stephen Robinson, Steve Abrahams and Heather Hoadley. We are sure that these new members will help to bring new ideas that will benefit all our members.

## Sadly, We Say Goodbye . . .

Richard Myers is now leaving the Committee due to health problems . . . He has been a devoted member of the Committee and looked after the Sevenoaks area very well indeed. We wish you well for the future Richard.

**The Tonbridge Town Centre Team would like to remind people that E-Scooters should not be used in a public place.**  
**If officers come across and are able to stop the rider, they will be seized.**

## Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

*Peter Rolington, Chairman.*

*e-mail: [peter.rolington@gmail.com](mailto:peter.rolington@gmail.com)*

*Secretary Stephen Robinson, Tunbridge Wells.*

*e-mail: [stephen.srobinson@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.srobinson@gmail.com)*

*Julie Walker, Editor – Tel: 01732 771075*

*e-mail: [julie.walker@kent.police.uk](mailto:julie.walker@kent.police.uk)*

*Marguerite Bernard, Treasurer*

*Jenny Woodgate.*

*e-mail: [jenny.woodgate2@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.woodgate2@gmail.com)*

*Sue Mason, Tonbridge.*

*e-mail: [seileenmason@virginmedia.com](mailto:seileenmason@virginmedia.com)*

*Heather Hoadley, Tonbridge.*

*e-mail: [heatherhoadley9@gmail.com](mailto:heatherhoadley9@gmail.com)*

*Steve Abrahams Tonbridge.*

*Cllr Laura Manston Sevenoaks.*

*e-mail: [cllr.manston@sevenoaks.gov.U.K](mailto:cllr.manston@sevenoaks.gov.U.K)*

## Committee members

*Pria Webster, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison*

*Officer, for Kent Police.*

*e-mail: [pria.webster@kent.police.uk](mailto:pria.webster@kent.police.uk)*

## Other Useful Numbers

*Tonbridge & Malling Crime Reduction Unit*

**– Tel: 01732 844522**

*Tunbridge Wells Crime Reduction Unit*

**– Tel: 01892 526121**

*Kent Trading Standards – Tel: 03454 040506*

*Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership*

**– Tel: 01732 227000**

*[community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk)*

*Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership*

**– Tel: 01732 844522** *[msp@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:msp@tmbc.gov.uk)*

*Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership*

**– Tel: 01892 526121**

*[communitysafety@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto: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 Office, Floor 2,  
1 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2HS.**

## e-watch.co

There have been problems recently with members not receiving e-watch's twice weekly reports. If you are experiencing problems receiving e-watch updates, please remember that past issues can be found on the e-watch.co website at: [e-watch.co/updates.php](http://e-watch.co/updates.php).

## 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 15p from landlines or mobiles.**