



NW NEWS

West Kent

# Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

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*"Security through awareness"*

Summer 2019

Your co-ordinator is:.....

Tel No. ....

## Queen's Birthday Honours. Chief Superintendent John McDermott to receive Queen's Policing Medal.

A Kent Police officer has received the prestigious Queen's Police Medal in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours. The medal is awarded by the Sovereign for distinguished service.

Chief Superintendent John McDermott, who is the Divisional Commander for North Kent, has been recognised for his work in policing.

Since joining the Force in 1988 he has worked on a large number of complex and highly sensitive investigations including anti-corruption, serious and organised crime, covert operations and counter-terrorism.

Chief Superintendent McDermott's efforts have seen organised crime

groups dismantled and corrupt police officers brought to justice. He has also played an important role in contributing towards national policy to develop the police profession.

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley QPM said: "I am absolutely delighted for Chief Superintendent McDermott. He is an exceptional police officer with an incredible record of bringing people, who thought they were above the law, to justice.

"He has always performed at the top of his profession, regardless of the rank or role he has held and his results have been consistently outstanding for over 30-years.

"His track record of success extends throughout his career with his thorough and forensic approach reflected in his investigations.

"He has been behind hundreds of successful prosecutions involving dangerous offenders, organised crime groups and corrupt police officers. Chief Superintendent McDermott's work has also saved vulnerable children from exploitation and removed those masquerading as champions of the good from the police service.

"His work has extended far beyond the boundaries of the force, something recognised by the United Nations. When serving as a Detective Sergeant in 1998 he was awarded a medal for his efforts in investigating the massacre of civilians during the Bosnian war.

"He is a role model, a man who does the right thing and someone who I have been honoured to serve with."

## Eleven officers assaulted over one weekend in Kent

Eleven Kent Police officers were assaulted after responding to calls for help from the public in one weekend.

Between Friday, 28 June 2019 and Sunday, 30 June 2019 the officers reported being spat at, kicked, threatened with violence, punched and pushed. In one incident an officer required hospital treatment after hitting his head in attempting to restrain a suspect.

At each incident the suspect was arrested using new powers under the recently introduced Assaults on Emergency Workers Act 2018.

The act came into force in November 2018 and created a new offence of assault against emergency workers, including police, paramedics, nurses and other blue light workers. It also provides tougher sentencing powers for judges.

Since then Kent Police have charged 435 people under the new legislation.

Deputy Chief Constable Tony Blaker said: "Every day our officers are required to attend unpredictable, challenging and sometimes volatile situations. This doesn't mean they should accept being abused, assaulted or spat at as part of the job.

"The large number of arrests made at the weekend demonstrates that such behaviour will simply not be tolerated.

"Like any other job, officers should not be subjected to assaults whilst they are carrying out their duties. It is unacceptable and those who are responsible for abusing and assaulting police officers can expect to be charged with an offence that can carry serious penalties."

In addition to the new legislation, to protect officers from violence, the number of Taser trained officers is being increased across Kent.

Any officer who is likely to have to deal with violent incidents whilst on duty is now

able to choose to go through a rigorous training and accreditation programme to carry the less than lethal weapon. At the end of 2018 there were 334 Taser-trained officers in Kent. This figure is projected to rise to between 1,000 and 1,500.

If you see an incident where a Police officer is being assaulted, please dial 999 immediately in case they have not been able to press the emergency button on their phones. Try and get them some more help! Filming it and putting it on social media is not the thing to do. Help the officers that are trying to help protect you.

### 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.

# More arrests from warrants targeting suspected violent and organised criminals

Scores of suspected violent and organised criminals have been arrested by Kent Police officers during three days of focused enforcement.

The successes from a two day operation, initially planned to finish on Wednesday 19 June 2019, continued into Thursday 20 June with a further four people arrested from eight additional warrants.

The new activity means 59 people have been apprehended from a total of 54 warrants. In addition, more than 600 wraps of class A drugs and £27,000 in suspected criminal money has been seized.

Assistant Chief Constable Nicola Faulconbridge said: "The volume of arrests and warrant activity carried out over the past three days sends out an unequivocal message that we have no tolerance for people who choose to become involved in violent or organised crime.

"Our activity has targeted those we suspect of committing crime and in the coming months we will continue our investigations to ensure that offenders are brought to justice in the courts."

The warrant activity was carried out by Kent Police officers alongside detectives from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate.

Activity in Kent was mirrored by Essex Police, whose efforts in their county mean over 100 suspects have been arrested by the two forces as part of the same operation.

Locations targeted in Kent have included Dover, Tenterden, Folkestone, Dartford, Medway, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Thanet, Canterbury and Gravesend.

Officers also travelled to several addresses in London to target those suspected of bringing criminality across the border.

Notable seizures from the past three days include a samurai sword, cannabis hidden in cans disguised as fish food, an Audi S3 and designer goods worth more than £10,000, which are believed to have been bought with the proceeds of crime.

Assistant Chief Constable Faulconbridge added: "Members of the public can feel assured that Kent is a safe place and we are doing everything in our power to make the county a hostile environment for those intent on bringing crime to our communities. This includes working closely with our colleagues in Essex Police, who have achieved similar levels of success.

"Our proactive work has by no means come to an end. This recent surge of activity complements the approach we take on a daily basis with specialist officers who proactively work to identify and disrupt those who seek to commit crime in our communities.

"I would ask members of the public to join us in our efforts to remove weapon carriers and drug dealers from our streets by reporting their suspicions to us online or by calling 101. Alternatively call Kent Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111 or 999 if a crime is in progress."

## Fisheries Checks Nets Results

Officers from the Rural Task Force teamed up with the Angling Trust and the Environment Agency as part of a national campaign to target those who illegally catch fresh water fish.

On Sunday, 9 June 2019, the officers visited a number of fisheries including locations in Paddock Wood and Marden on the lookout for people fishing without a licence and poaching fish.

On Sunday the team checked around 150 anglers to ensure they were fishing legally. A total of 16 fishing offences were evident and action was taken against those without a licence. The officers also gave a cannabis warning to a woman found to be in possession of a small quantity of the drug.

Sergeant Darren Walshaw of Kent Police's Rural Task Force said: "Poaching fresh water fish is a worrying crime for rural communities. Businesses can be devastated by the effects within a relatively short-space of time.

"Fishing clubs are concerned about the destruction of fish stock and the wider range of criminality that offenders are often linked to. We often get reports of drug and alcohol abuse around the lakes which can present a serious danger given the close proximity of very deep waters."

## Thefts from Parked Vans

Van owners in the area are being reminded to lock tools and valuable items away to deter thieves.

The advice comes after a number of reported daytime thefts.

Recently, Kent Police was called regarding the theft of a mobile phone from a van in Aylesford. Tools were also reported stolen from a van in the same location.

The owner of a van in Tonbridge found the rear doors of his vehicle had been damaged by a drill.

Later that morning, officers were also notified that somebody had tried to force open the rear doors of a van in Tonbridge Road, Hildenborough.

District Commander, Chief Inspector Peter Steenhuis said: "While we are investigating these offences, I would urge van owners to make sure you lock all doors and close windows whenever you leave the vehicle. Never leave anything valuable on display.

"If feasible, park in a garage or secure car park and try to leave the vehicle in an area which leaves no space to open the rear doors.

"It is advisable to take tools and valuable work equipment with you whenever possible, rather than leaving them in an unattended vehicle at any time of the day."

Further advice includes wiping satnav suction marks from your windscreen or dashboard.

An approved immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older vehicles.

Anyone with information which may assist the investigation is asked to call 01622 604100 quoting reference 11-0524.

Alternatively, contact the independent charity Crimestoppers in Kent anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## It's the start of National Barbecue Week.

**We have some important safety tips for you.**

- Always keep your BBQ in good working order, and never use it if you suspect a problem.
- Only use a BBQ on a flat location away from trees, shrubs, and structures.
- Keep children and pets away from cooking areas and never leave your BBQ unattended.
- Always have a bucket of sand or water available in the event of a fire emergency.
- Never move a BBQ until it is cold.
- Think of safety first and enjoy yourself.

# Is your outside property safe?

## Improve the security of your outbuildings by taking the following steps.

- Fix laminate film, steel mesh or bars on the inside of windows.
- Fit concealed hinges to prevent criminals from unwinding screws or bolts.
- Check that fittings are bolted through the door and reinforced at the back with a steel plate or washer.
- Install an alarm – either a battery operated alarm or upgraded house alarm which includes your shed and/or garage.
- Add an extra layer of security with CCTV. Cameras nowadays can be bought fairly cheaply and can be monitored remotely using your mobile phone.

## Always keep keys safe and out of sight.

### Lock it, hide it, mark it.

It is important to use locks at all times, even if you are at home.

- Fit good quality locks to all doors, ensuring any screws are well concealed. Padlocks should be at least 6cm/2.5ins wide of hardened steel, have at least 5 pins and 'closed shackle' type. This reduces the risk of them being forced. Try to ensure you fit British Standard approved locks.
- Fit additional locks to garage doors.

### Don't give criminal the opportunity or the tools to commit a crime.

- Secure all items that could be easily removed, or even used to break into your house.
- Cover up any expensive tools or goods within your outside buildings.
- Property marking your valuable items

is advisable. Some tools can be painted with your name and postcode.

- Advertise the fact that your property is marked and take photos of each item. In the event of any theft, these photographs can then be circulated.
- Some items can be registered on the immobilise website for nothing. Immobilise helps the police to identify the owners of recovered items. Find out more at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

### Protect your home by protecting your garden.

- Consider installing security lights both to illuminate your garden and deter thieves. Motion sensor lights switch on when movement is detected. Sodium tubes switch on automatically when it becomes dark. Keep shrubs, bushes, hedges and plants cut back as they can provide a hiding place for thieves.
- Plant a prickly hedge as a physical and psychological barrier; a trace of blood or shred of clothing could assist the police identify an offender if something is stolen.
- Check that all boundary fences, walls and gates are in good repair. A solid barrier is an excellent deterrent to an opportunist thief.
- Consider a gravel driveway. The noise created by gravel can make it harder for burglars to go undetected.
- Ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your garden, and do the same for them.

### Prevention.

Reduce the risk of metal theft.

- Secure garden items like water butts, waste bins and furniture away from

your property so they cannot be used to access roofs and porches.

- Store ladders and tools in a secure place.
- Keep gates locked and restrict vehicle access to your property where possible.
- Make it difficult for thieves to move goods by removing wheelbarrows and wheelie bins.
- Maximise visibility around your property by keeping landscaping well pruned.
- Keep your home, business and vehicle secure – lock doors and windows and use perimeter security, alarms and CCTV where appropriate.
- Check your roof regularly – if roofing materials have been stolen, early detection may enable you to replace them before it rains and any further damage is caused to your property.
- Encourage neighbours to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity.
- Photograph and security mark valuable metal items.

### Allotments.

Much of the advice contained in this item can be used to protect allotments from criminals too. Additionally:

- Get to know your neighbours on the allotment. If they know you, they are more likely to be suspicious if someone else is on your plot.
- Do not leave expensive equipment or tools on the site unattended.
- Contact your local Neighbourhood Watch to see if there is a group running in your area. If not, consider starting one up.

**To set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme please contact:  
Peter Rolington, Chairman of the  
West Kent Neighbourhood  
Watch Association.**

## Cash scam targeting pensioners – Maidstone and Tonbridge

Residents in West Kent are urged to be vigilant following reports of a scam for cash involving a woman who claims to be in distress.

Kent Police is investigating four separate incidents in Headcorn and Tonbridge where well-meaning members of the public have been approached and duped into handing over money.

Between Saturday 1 and Monday 3 June 2019 a number of incidents were reported in Headcorn, where members of the public were approached by a woman claiming she needed to pay for a locksmith, either because she had been locked out of

her car or due to her bank cards being stolen. On two of these occasions, pensioners were targeted and persuaded to part with money.

The incidents are being linked to a scam in Tonbridge on 27 April. On this occasion a woman approached a pensioner in the High Street and said her car had been broken into and she needed to pay a locksmith. She pledged to pay the victim back, but failed to do so.

The suspect on each occasion is described as being white, in her late 40s or early 50s, around 5ft 5in tall with brown or blonde shoulder-length hair.

District Commander, Chief Inspector Mark Hedges said: "The suspect appears to be targeting elderly and vulnerable people and we believe this is the same woman on each occasion. If someone approaches you in the street or at your door asking for money, don't be tricked into parting with any cash. Take down their details and a description and call 101.

"Officers would also like to hear from anybody who believes they may have given money to a person of this description using a similar story. Anybody with information is asked to contact the Kent Police appeals line on 01622 604 100 quoting reference 4-0533."

Incidents can also be reported to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or online by visiting: <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

# Important . . .

## Have You Taxed Your New Vehicle?

When you now buy or sell a vehicle the tax can no longer be transferred as part of the sale. This is because the seller will automatically receive a refund of any remaining tax. Buyers must get the vehicle taxed before it can be used.

If you have not taxed the vehicle it may be clamped and you may receive a fine.

You can check if your vehicle is taxed at [www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax](http://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax).

You do not need to do anything if you have already taxed the vehicle.

If you are keeping it off the road you will need to make a Statutory Off -Road Notification (SORN).

### To get vehicle tax or to make a SORN:

1. Go online at [www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax](http://www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax);
2. Phone 0300 123 4321.

You will need to use the reference number from the registered keeper section

on the front page of the vehicle registration certification (V5C).

If you cannot or do not wish to get vehicle tax online or by phone, go to a POST OFFICE branch that deals with vehicle tax.

### Take:

1. Your V5C;
2. The vehicle MoT (if it needs one), and;
3. A valid certificate of insurance or cover note for a vehicle registration with a Northern Ireland address.

By law, all drivers must be covered by motor insurance when they use a motor vehicle on the road or in any public place.

Just like insurance you must tax the vehicle before you use it.

**This information is from the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency.**

## County lines drug supplier jailed for Sheerness dealing

A county lines drug supplier who co-ordinated the sale of crack cocaine and heroin in Sheerness has been jailed for five years.

Jordan Watkis, 22, arranged for another man to sell the class A substances in the town while he agreed the deals from his home address in London.

Detectives established through mobile phone analysis that they travelled to Sheppey together on Thursday 6 September 2018 before Watkis, of Parkholme Road, Hackney, returned to the capital alone.

Over the next several days he received numerous text messages from local drug users, whom he put into contact with his associate after agreeing a price.

Watkis travelled back to Kent on Monday 10 September and was arrested at a property in Sydney Road, Chatham, the following day.

He pleaded guilty to being concerned in the supply of class A drugs and was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court on Friday 31 May 2019.

Investigating officer Detective Constable Robin Hemsley said: "London gangs are always looking for new markets in which to sell crack cocaine and heroin but this case demonstrates that we do not tolerate such offending in any part of Kent.

"We will continue to target those who seek to bring class A drugs into our towns in order to protect those most vulnerable to the harm they cause."

## Don't be Tempted to Leave Them On?

This is a warning for everyone who is tempted to leave their washing machine or tumble driers on while they are out.

Recently a couple went to the pictures with their son and when they got home, there was a fire engine outside their home.

Their kitchen was alight!

The dish washer had been left running and had caught alight and had burnt the kitchen, sadly it killed the dog that had been left in there.

In another incident someone had left their tumble dryer on in the shed in the garden, it caught alight when the owner was out. It burnt the shed and spread to next door's conservatory. Please be extra careful and don't be tempted to leave the machines on even if you are nipping out for a short while.

Please pass this information onto friends, family members and neighbours.

## Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

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

*Peter Brown, Secretary*  
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*Richard Myers, Sevenoaks.*  
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*Peter Rolington, Tunbridge Wells*

### Committee members

*Pria Webster, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer, for Kent Police – Tel: 01622 604395*

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

*Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership*

– Tel: **01732 844522** [csp@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:csp@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 Tray,  
1 Pembury Road, Tonbridge,  
Kent TN9 2HS.**

*WKNSWA 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.**