



NW NEWS

West Kent

Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 51

"Security through awareness"

Winter 2019

Your co-ordinator is:.....

Tel No.

Further clampdown on suspects linked to county lines

A total of 118 people have been arrested during the latest enforcement action to tackle the supply of drugs through county lines.

Between 4 and 17 October 2019 officers across Kent continued to target those involved in class A drug supply and other related offences including knife crime and the exploitation of vulnerable people.

The arrest period incorporates action taken during a coordinated week of activity (from 7-13 October) involving the National Crime Agency and police forces across the country, to disrupt and target organised crime groups who extend their drug dealing activity across county boundaries – known as running a 'county line'.

Working with partners, including the Metropolitan Police and British Transport Police, officers carried out a number of intelligence-led stop checks to vehicles, addresses and individuals.

On Monday 7 October officers on patrol in Northfleet arrested a 14-year-old boy and recovered around 120 wraps of suspected crack cocaine and heroin, money and a phone. He was later charged with possession with intent to supply class A drugs and remanded in custody.

In a separate incident, on Tuesday 8 October, drugs estimated to weigh around five kilograms and around £100,000 in cash

were seized after officers stopped a suspicious vehicle on the M20. The vehicle was stopped close to junction 4 and reportedly found to contain carrier bags containing amphetamine. Money was then seized from a linked address in Ashford.

Drilon Dishi, 33, of Ucilla Avenue, Kingsnorth, was arrested and subsequently appeared before Medway Magistrates' Court where he pleaded not guilty to supplying class B drugs and money laundering. He was remanded in custody to appear before Maidstone Crown Court on 7 November.

In Medway officers from the area's Community Policing Team used stop-and-search powers nine times and made six arrests. The team seized drugs including 160 wraps, as well as a blank-firing illegal firearm and cash. They also carried out visits to vulnerable people at risk of being exploited by county lines networks.

At an address in Windmill Street, Gillingham, officers identified two suspected drug dealers, one of whom had secreted substances which were discovered after a strip search. Two men aged 21 from London were arrested. They were later released pending further investigation.

In the Chevening area of Sevenoaks on Wednesday 16 October, officers arrested a man suspected to have thrown a cigarette packet containing wraps of cocaine from

a car. Haxhi Krruci, 23, of Empire Avenue, London, was later charged with possession with intent to supply class A drugs and driving without a licence. He was remanded in custody by Medway magistrates and will next appear at Maidstone Crown Court on Friday 15 November.

Superintendent Mick Gardner of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate said: "This enforcement activity is in addition to our determined and sustained focus around identifying and tackling individuals associated with gangs and county lines. Throughout the county both uniformed and plain clothes officers are working relentlessly to remove drugs from our local communities.

"We are committed to targeting those we believe are responsible for the misery and destruction of lives connected to harmful substances such as heroin and cocaine. Anyone who deals in drugs can expect a robust response. Expect to be arrested and put before the courts.

"We also continue to need your help, so remember to report any suspicious behaviour. By continuing to work together we not only ensure Kent remains a safe place to live but we are getting the message through to criminals that there is no hiding place from the law."

Info from Kent Police Press Office

Christmas Message

At the time of going to press we have received the sad news that one of our committee members John Watson has passed away after a short illness. John was our Representative for the Mallings area and will be greatly missed not just for his hard work and contribution but also his humour.

We now have two new members joining our committee, Stephen Rimmington and Jennifer Woodgate; both I am sure will bring new ideas for the future of the committee.

I would also like to welcome our new liaison officer Pria Webster who is doing a grand job. We thank her for all the hard work she has put into her new role, which she only took on in June.

Our best wishes go to Mary Wardrop who is retiring as a neighbourhood watch co-ordinator. It is a role Mary took on when her husband Nick passed away in 2004. Nick was the chap who first started the neighbourhood watch newsletter then called 'Lookout'. It has since been renamed 'Watchout'. Happy retirement to you Mary.

Thank you for your valued contribution.

In the meantime on behalf of myself and the committee I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

from Peter Rolington The Chairman

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.

Don't be fooled – Don't be a money mule

Parents and guardians are being asked to help raise awareness among young people of the dangers of becoming 'money mules.'

Money mules are people who allow others to access their bank accounts in exchange for a cut of the criminal funds placed there, which in itself is a form of money-laundering.

In 2018 there were 136 cases of young people under the age of 18 using their bank accounts for money muling in Kent, which is an increase of 86% from the 73 cases recorded in 2016.

As part of the national Don't Be Fooled campaign, Kent Police will be contacting schools to warn parents and guardians of the risks associated with this crime type.

Detective Sergeant Marc Cananur of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate said: "We are fully supportive of the national campaign and hope it will strike a chord with the young people it is targeted at, whose futures may be severely affected if they are drawn into this type of criminal activity.

"Those who do allow others to access their bank accounts risk having them closed, making it more difficult to obtain

student loans, mobile phone contracts or other financial products.

"Most law-abiding residents would never even consider being involved in drug-dealing, fraud or other serious offences, but if they are helping to launder the money of the criminals who are then they are not free from responsibility."

The Don't Be Fooled campaign is being run by UK Finance and the fraud prevention service Cifas, who have released figures showing there were 5,819 cases of young people aged 14-18 using their bank accounts for money muling in the UK in 2018. This is a rise of 20% from 2017 (4,849 cases) and 73% from 2016 (3,360 cases).

Young people are often unaware that acting as a money mule is illegal. They are approached to take part online or in person, including through social media, at school, college or sports clubs.

Cifas chief executive Mike Haley said: "The increasing use of social media means that young people have never been more vulnerable to becoming victims of fraud.

"Many youngsters are unaware of the devastating consequences that fraud can

have on their future opportunities, and so teachers, parents and carers can play an important role here by ensuring young people have the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent them from unwittingly falling victim to fraud, or even becoming perpetrators themselves."

To spot the tell-tale signs that someone might be involved in money muling and for tips on how to stay safe, parents and guardians are urged to follow the advice of the Don't Be Fooled campaign:

- Make sure your child doesn't give their bank account details to anyone unless they know and trust them.
- Tell them to be cautious of unsolicited offers of easy money, because if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Look out for your child suddenly having extra cash, buying expensive new clothes or electronics with very little explanation as to how they got the money.
- A young person involved in money muling may become more secretive, withdrawn or appear stressed.
- Parents and guardians are advised not to attempt to contact any individual they suspect of organising money muling and should instead contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

When Celebrating Christmas and the New Year follow the fireworks code . . .

1. Light sparklers one at a time and always wear gloves;
2. Never give sparklers to a child under 5;
3. Buy fireworks marked BS 7114;
4. Keep fireworks in a closed box;
5. Carefully follow the instructions on each firework;
6. Light them at arm's length using a long taper;
7. Stand well back;
8. Never go back to a lit firework;
9. Never put fireworks in your pocket;
10. Never throw fireworks;
11. Keep pets indoors.

Take Care With Sparklers.

They are great fun and very pretty, especially when you try writing your name with them before it burns out. But they do reach a temperature of up to 2,000°C, and I'm sure you'll agree that's quite hot. So when handling them, always wear gloves. And when you've finished, have a bucket of water which people can plunge them in. If you're giving them to children,

then make sure they're observed at all times. Children under five should never hold a sparkler. Instead, you can give them a glow stick so they don't feel left out, and it will last a lot longer than a sparkler.

Have Someone In Charge.

You need to delegate one person to be in charge of the display. Give them a hi-vis vest so everyone can easily identify and find them. They should abstain from drinking, at least until after the display. Doing otherwise increases the risk of injury, and means they're less able to supervise properly. Equip them with a torch to see what they're doing and a hat, gloves and goggles to keep them protected.

Buying Your Fireworks.

Always buy fireworks from a reputable shop. Don't cut corners trying to save a few quid and don't buy from places you're unsure about. All fireworks that conform to British Standards should have BS 7114 written on the packaging. Also, make sure

you buy fireworks which are appropriate. Most fireworks in Categories 1 to 3 will be okay for a garden display. All Category 4 fireworks are only for professional displays.

Setting Off The Fireworks.

Long before you set them off, you should have read the instructions and prepared in the daylight. Let your neighbours know and remember it's better to be over cautious. Make sure the area is clear of animals and people, and that all your guests are standing well back. Only light one firework at a time and never return to a firework after you've lighted it. Once lit, run to safety and watch the beautiful fireworks light up the sky.

And Just In Case.

Unfortunately, things can go wrong from time to time. If someone does get burnt, then remain calm. Cool the burn with cold water, then cover and go to a hospital if it's serious. Maybe have a small first aid kit to hand for such accidents.

by Pria Webster.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Who are we?

The Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) is a community based charity created in April 2011, and registered as a Charity (No 1143001) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 07660698) in July 2011, following a successfully evaluated pilot project. Our Trustees are drawn from the community and represent legal, financial, community safety, health and voluntary sector expertise, with specialist Police, Domestic Abuse and Housing advisors.

DAVSS provides vital support services for anyone (men as well as women) experiencing domestic abuse, through a highly innovative and cost effective volunteering model involving the community in meeting its own needs. DAVSS aims to break the cycle of abuse and enable survivors to take control of their lives again and improve life opportunities for their children who are often traumatised by their experiences.

We work across the West Kent area, running the Domestic Abuse helpline from our independent Offices in the Tunbridge Wells Police Station in Crescent Road. We provide a client centred service and arrange face to face meetings individually at convenient and safe venues across the area in both towns and rural areas.

What do we do?

We receive many self-referrals plus referrals from the Police, other agencies including health and social services, and voluntary organisations. We provide practical tailored support to our clients including:

- A Helpline on weekday mornings with 24/7 messaging, giving immediate safety advice;
- Face to face support services at venues across the area convenient to our clients, offering options for action and client choice whatever the level of risk for as long as needed;
- Risk assessments to national standards and personal/family safety planning;
- Referring and representing clients at the West Kent MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) chaired by the Police and referring children to Social Services for safeguarding;
- Sign posting to other agencies or voluntary groups eg Police, Social Services, CAB, Benefits and Housing, Health professionals, Counselling, legal

representation etc, which many clients experiencing the impact of domestic abuse may not be aware of because of their isolation;

- Free legal advice appointments for clients with DAVSS pro bono Lawyer if needed;
- Support to court alongside clients who often find this very daunting and frightening;
- Assisting with paperwork for people with language or literacy difficulties;
- Raising public awareness and providing training about domestic abuse for business and community groups, and providing safe and healthy relationship courses in schools and colleges;
- Co-ordinating and co-facilitating Freedom Programmes and Recovery Toolkit for victims, and also separately for their children; improving wellbeing and helping prevent future revictimisation;
- Volunteer interpreters;
- Assistance at the Tonbridge One Stop Shop on Wednesday mornings;
- Support Plus Project, including Peer Support Groups for survivors of abuse.

What are the benefits of this approach?

- Early intervention whatever the level of risk helps to reduce repeat victimisation and escalation – a real risk for domestic abuse victims and their children;
- We deliver practical cost effective services for vulnerable people just when needed most;
- Supported access to court for Litigants in Person when legal aid is not available;
- Survivors of domestic abuse and their children are empowered to take control of their lives, make their own choices and start living independent and fulfilling lives again;
- The life chances of children witnessing domestic abuse at home are improved by helping our clients to obtain protective injunctions safeguarding the whole family;
- Clients tell us that they benefit from being assisted in a sympathetic and non judgemental way and appreciate that the DAVSS Advisors are doing this voluntarily;
- The community is enabled to meet its own needs through volunteering opportunities and can get involved by supporting DAVSS in other ways,

such as publicity, fundraising, administration etc;

- Some of our Volunteers are survivors of domestic abuse and can make positive use of their own previous experiences by helping to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on others;
- Volunteers themselves also benefit by developing new skills, and community links.

Why do we do it?

Domestic abuse is a hidden crosscutting issue irrespective of social status, educational achievement or geographical location. It affects affluent areas as well as areas which are perceived to be less advantaged. Research shows that at some point in their lives, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse, with long term and often profound adverse effects on individuals and their children. Many victims endure abusive and even life threatening difficulties for many years before seeking help.

We believe it is important to raise community awareness of this serious issue to try to ensure earlier reporting, prevention and reduction wherever possible, reducing the harmful consequences to victims and their children.

Without our volunteers DAVSS could not provide these key services.

Our current team of 56 volunteers, includes trained volunteer Domestic Abuse Advisors, Helpline Advisors, admin assistants co-ordinating the Freedom and Day programmes and fundraising, is drawn from a range of professional and community backgrounds.

The team is managed by three professional IDVAs who between them have many years experience in supporting people experiencing domestic abuse.

One of our volunteers is also an IDVA and ISVA. Our Domestic Abuse Advisors undertake Quality Mark training of 14 days over 7 weeks plus subsequent refresher training and personal development. They commit to a minimum of 10 hours client based work per week (5 hours per week for the Helpline Team). Volunteers also receive clinical supervision to address their own needs as they experience very traumatic situations whilst working with high risk

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or complex cases. From April 2018 to March 2019, our volunteering hours have provided the cash equivalent of over £350,000 calculated at Kent average earnings rates – a huge return on investment. Volunteers themselves say this is one of the most satisfying roles they have ever undertaken – making a real difference to those in real need. Clients themselves say it is beyond value. This year, our volunteers were recognised with the Queens Award for Voluntary Services to the community.

Feedback from clients and agencies.

User feedback and independent evaluation has confirmed that this is a much needed service for West Kent and clients have commented on the difference it has made to their lives:

Client: “The Volunteer spent all day in court with me. She met me, arranged to have my locks changed, and made me and my children feel much safer. Without this support, I would have been in trouble.”

Housing: “Without DAVSS victims would be left to fend for themselves and deal with agencies, courts and solicitors at what is already a traumatic time for them and their children.”

Community Safety Manager: “The work that DAVSS does is crucial to some of the most vulnerable and oppressed people in society.”

Ongoing and urgent need.

From April 2018 to March 2019 we have received 751 referrals, including 40 men, and involving 1007 children, with 1052

calls to our helpline, demonstrating that the need for our services is ever present. From April to June 2019 we have already received a further 233 referrals (including 20 men) involving 307 children. Positive community safety outcomes include a greatly reduced repeat rate compared with other areas across Kent, with positive client outcomes including survivors obtaining Protective Injunctions, retaining jobs or getting new ones, starting training courses, living in safer or new accommodation, taking up volunteering, and reporting health improvements plus better nursery/school attendance for their children. Many other family members and friends and the community also benefitted.

Fundraising.

Going forward, we are continuing to raise sufficient funds to maintain this vital and much needed service. To achieve this, we are working with Local Authorities – Sevenoaks District Council, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils, Community Safety Partnerships, Town & Country Housing Group, Grant making Trusts, Great Stonebridge Trust, John Coldman Foundation, Kent Police & Crime Commissioner, West Kent Housing Association, Kent Community Foundation, the Kelly Family Trust, the Green Family Trust, Violence Against Women & Girls Transformation Fund, M&S Sevenoaks, businesses, voluntary organisations, other trusts, local Churches and many individuals for which we are very grateful.

This is a key opportunity to help make a real difference in the lives of many people and their children.

For more information visit our website: www.davss.org.uk.

Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

Peter Rolington, Chairman.
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Richard Myers, Sevenoaks.
e-mail: richardn.myers@btinternet.com

Peter Rolington, Tunbridge Wells

Committee members

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

Stephen Rimmington

Jennifer Woodgate

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 msp@tmbs.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.**

WKWVA 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.

Christmas Message

“Neighbourhood Watch has an important role to play in making our communities safe and in helping to reduce crime. I would like to thank those who continue to support Neighbourhood Watch; the Co-ordinators who give up their time to ensure their areas are safe places to live, and our members who remain aware and supportive of our mission.

Since starting my role in June I have had a busy and challenging few months, I appreciate your patience whilst I continue to learn more about my post.

The West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Committee have been a tremendous support to me and I look forward to working with you all next year.

Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a happy New Year.”

from Pria Webster. Liaison officer.

