



NW NEWS

West Kent

Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 54

"Security through awareness"

Winter 2020

Your co-ordinator is:.....
Tel No.

Senior Kent Police Officers Receive Awards in Queen's Birthday Honours

Two senior Kent Police officers have been recognised with awards in the Queen's Birthday Honours for their contributions to keeping the communities of Kent safe.

Deputy Chief Constable Tony Blaker has been awarded the Queen's Police Medal, given to officers for meritorious service in keeping the public safe.

Superintendent Jason Wenlock has been awarded the British Empire Medal for helping improve the life chances of hundreds of the county's most vulnerable youngsters by driving the creation of the force's ground-breaking cadet scheme.

Chief Constable of Kent Police Alan Pughsley QPM said: "I am delighted that the achievements of DCC Blaker and Supt Wenlock have been recognised in this way; it is testament to their hard work and dedication to the public of Kent."

"They are both talented police officers, representing the very best of this force, and I congratulate them on their fully deserved awards from Her Majesty."

Mr Blaker took up the role of Deputy Chief Constable in June 2018 having

previously worked as an Assistant Chief Constable in charge of central operations responsible for crime investigation, public protection and counter-terrorism among other areas. He joined the force from Sussex Police where he spent the first 26 years of his career and where his last post had been head of operations command with responsibility for firearms, public order, roads and Gatwick Airport. He also ran complex, large scale operations such as Brighton Pride and the Lewes Bonfire celebrations and was strategic commander for the police response to the 2015 Shoreham air crash.

Mr Blaker said: "Policing is all about teamwork. There is an incredibly professional and hard working team at Kent Police that it has been my privilege to work alongside, serving and protecting the public."

"Policing is a vocation as much as a career and I'm extremely proud to have been nominated for and receive this award."

Supt Wenlock established the Kent Police cadet scheme, which since 2015

has given over 600 young people a start on a pathway to a career in the police either as a regular officer, Special Constable or member of police staff.

He has also been responsible for driving the force's volunteer programme, and he volunteers as a Cadet Leader in Dover in his off duty time.

Supt Wenlock said: "Our police cadets are nothing short of incredible for the way in which they have grown and adapted to every challenge placed in front of them."

"It has been my privilege to have worked with them and to have seen them grow into truly impressive young people with bright futures ahead of them."

"We have already seen many cadets join the force and we have more seeking to apply. We continue to grow and develop the programme and still have over 300 young people waiting to join us from all over the county."

"They are a credit to themselves, their families and the force."

Supt Wenlock has also developed an innovative training programme that trains volunteer Special Constables to the same standard as full-time officers – the only police force to offer such a programme.

In Kent, Special Constables are given the same powers, equipment and responsibilities as regular officers. The force currently employs 300 Special Constables, who offer more than 100,000 hours each year of police time. Kent Special Constabulary was the first in the country to be awarded the highest national award for Volunteering, the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, in 2014.

Supt Wenlock joined Kent Police in August 1997 after a ten-year career in the British Army during which time he served in the first Gulf War, Germany, the Falkland Islands, Northern Ireland and Kosovo.

Secretary of West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association Retires

The certificate along with a book token, was presented to Peter Brown, former Secretary of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association by the Chairman Peter Rolington.

Peter Brown has served on the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association Committee for 14 years; over 13 of these as the Secretary. In that time he has ensured that the Association has run professionally and efficiently. His efforts have meant that the Constitution has been updated to meet our changing times and that transparency and governance has been at the heart of our actions.

All the members of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association thank Peter for all the hard work he put in as secretary. We wish him good health and a very happy retirement.



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.

Two Children's Views of Lockdown

When lockdown was announced I didn't really care too much. I expected my school workload to decrease but the opposite was true. My teachers were evidently inexperienced with setting on-line work and I was spending about seven hours a day on schoolwork.

At the end of the day without fail, I would go on a five kilometre run with my mum. I also did Joe Wicks' online workouts at 9pm, but in the end it grew too repetitive. The Summer holidays were a welcome relief after home learning which I had found rather boring. We went to Dorset for a week and despite some busy beaches, it was really lovely.

Six weeks of Summer holidays without much freedom as normal was tricky, so getting back to school was excellent and it was great to see my friends again.

by Tom aged 14.

When I first heard there would be a national lockdown I was delighted at the thought of missing school. On the day we went home I was excited to see more of my mum, but because of her job I don't see very much of her. I was also looking forward to spending more time with my two guinea pigs. Pesto and Noodles.

Our Lockdown Hobbies

When we first went into lockdown, my brother Tom, my mum and I would do frequent five kilometre runs around the area after Park run, Tonbridge's local running group closed. Another family activity we all did was to play badminton. Every evening after home learning we would have a tournament in the garden – girls v boys!

Home Learning

Fortunately my school was excellent at organising my home learning. Each day was clearly planned and included 30 minutes of exercise and reading. I liked being in more control of my learning and being able to take breaks when needed.

However after settling into the daily rhythm I found that I wasn't learning anymore as my school could not communicate new areas of learning affectively through technology.

Back to School

I was ecstatic when I realised that year six were going back to school. I could not wait to see my friends and have a teacher to help me learn! Lockdown was over.

by Marijke aged 11.

A Message for all our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators

Recently while calling some of our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators, it came to light that some had changed their e-mail address or telephone numbers and some members had moved away and passed their schemes over to someone else.

If any of these apply to you, can you please inform me, so that our records can be kept up to date.

Also please remember, if you need any help running your schemes we are happy to help.

Please e-mail me: julie.walker@kent.pnn.police.uk.

Many thanks to all our members who are still running their schemes in these difficult times. Remember to keep safe at all times and to follow government guidelines.

Courier fraud reminder after several incidents in October

Fraud detectives are reminding people to beware of criminals posing as police officers who ask for financial details over the phone.

There have been a number of incidents during October in which elderly and vulnerable people have been asked to hand over their bank cards, cash or personal information in order to assist with bogus investigations.

A courier is then sent to the victim's address to collect the money or items, often travelling via taxi. Sometimes a taxi is sent to the victim's home so they can be taken to a nearby bank to withdraw their savings.

On Thursday 29 October a vulnerable resident of Otford, near Sevenoaks, handed over his bank cards and PIN to a man after being told over the phone there had been an attempt to steal cash from his bank account. Within hours the cards had been used to withdraw more than £2,000 cash and purchase more than £600 worth of goods from a retail store.

The same day an elderly woman, also from Otford, was visited by a man who asked for her bank cards after she had earlier disclosed her PIN over the phone. However, she grew suspicious and closed the door on him, and the man left after she contacted Kent Police.

A Dartford resident received a similar call on Wednesday 21 October from somebody asking questions about his National Insurance Number. He initially hung up but was tricked by the fraudsters when they changed their caller ID to a legitimate Kent Police number and phoned him back. After being asked to withdraw money from his bank account he first attended his local police station to double-check the information and was told it was a scam.

Detective Sergeant Marc Cananur of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate said: "While it is encouraging that many potential victims are now growing wise to

the ways in which such criminals operate, the high volume of reports we are receiving demonstrates that those responsible are not giving up and that they are unfortunately successful on occasion."

"It remains as important as ever that we all continue to look out for our neighbours and family members, especially those who may be elderly or vulnerable, and ensure they are aware of the appalling lengths offenders will go to in order to steal their hard-earned savings."

"The banks are doing a good job in engaging with those who attempt to withdraw large sums of money and in reporting their concerns to the police. We would also appeal to taxi drivers to keep their eyes and ears open, and to let us know of anyone who might be collecting packages from elderly people in suspicious circumstances, or if their passenger has been taken to a bank in order to withdraw vast sums of money."

"A police officer will never ask someone to withdraw money or hand over their bank cards. Anyone who does receive a suspicious telephone call of this nature should hang up, wait five minutes to ensure the line is clear, and then call 101 to check the credentials of the person who called."

"Finally, remember the ABC rule to help protect yourself and others against fraud – never Assume someone is telling the truth, never Believe what they say unless you are confident they are who they say they are, and always Confirm the details they have provided."

Winter issue of the newsletter

Sorry folks due to the difficult times we are in at the present time, there will be no hard copies of this newsletter sent out. Please forward it to all you members via e-mail.

County lines crackdown continues with a further 22 arrests

A further 22 suspects were arrested last month as a crackdown on county lines drug supply in Kent continues.

Throughout October 2020, enforcement work by Kent Police also resulted in 26 charges linked to the distribution of heroin and crack cocaine. Specialist units from the County Line and Gang Team continue to clamp down on criminals who target areas including Thanet, Maidstone, Medway and Sheerness. During this period, disruption work across Kent included the execution of nine search warrants. There were also 24 stop and search checks by both plain clothed and uniformed patrols.

On 22 October, officers stopped a suspicious vehicle in Kingston Crescent, Chatham and a man was arrested who was suspected to have concealed drugs in his body. Elias Balogun, aged 23, of no fixed address, was later charged with two counts of being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs (heroin and cocaine). He was further charged with intentionally obstructing a police constable in the exercise of his powers under the Misuse of Drugs Act (in relation to the secretion of drugs). Mr Balogun is currently remanded in custody by the courts, pending further progression of his case.

Earlier in the month, a London man suspected of dealing in Folkestone was also charged after a search warrant was

executed in the town in Bradstone Road. Quantities of heroin and crack cocaine were seized at the address on 6 October, along with a number of mobile phones and cash. Teniola Olanipekun, 27, of Bird in Bush Road, Peckham, was charged with two counts of being concerned in the supply of class A drugs, possession of heroin and crack cocaine with intent to supply and possession of criminal property. After appearing before Medway Magistrates' Court on 8 October he was remanded in custody. He is due to appear next at Canterbury Crown Court on 9 November 2020.

In the west of the county, plain clothed and uniformed officers continue to crack down on dealers who seek to exploit vulnerable people, in areas including Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks. October also saw the official launch of the Maidstone Task Force, a multi-agency team which will bolster efforts to tackle key issues in the town including knife crime and drugs supply.

In the courts, prison sentences linked to county lines totalled more than 12 years in October. They included that of Leandro Da Silva who tried to destroy evidence of his supply chain by hurling a 'burner' style phone into the River Medway, as he was being pursued by officers in Maidstone. Although the phone was never recovered,

an investigation was able to show Da Silva had been sending text messages from the device to market and sell Class A drugs. On 14 October, Da Silva was sentenced to two years and four months' imprisonment at a young offenders' institution.

A London-based dealer responsible for running a county line into Dover, known as 'Ghost,' was also jailed last month. Joseph Odoi, 19, was tracked to his home in east London, where officers seized £8,000 worth of designer clothing. Odoi's ill-gotten gains also included around £2,000 in cash. He admitted being concerned in the supply of heroin and cocaine and was sentenced to three years and nine months in a young offenders' institution.

Detective Superintendent Mike Worrall said: "The supply and misuse of drugs in any area can have a profound and far reaching effect on communities. As well as the misery and distress caused by county lines, residents often also end up being plagued with anti-social behaviour, caused by users and dealers entering and leaving properties on a regular basis. The associated fear and anxiety which is caused is simply never acceptable, which is another reason why there will be no let-up in our determination to tackle and dismantle this destructive trade. The vital support we receive from members of the public in helping detect and deter offenders remains vital. By continuing to work together we really are ensuring the message gets through to criminals that operating in Kent simply won't be tolerated."

Kent Against Burglary

We are reminding residents to take simple crime prevention steps to keep their homes and themselves safe during the winter months.

Historically, we have seen an increase in burglaries over the autumn and winter months when it gets dark early and we fill our homes with gifts in readiness for Christmas.

As the nights draw in this presents opportunities for acquisitive crime such as burglary which, as well as causing inconvenience and distress, can have a profound impact on feelings of safety and security.

Chief Inspector Lara Connor from Kent Police said: "With new Covid-19 restrictions in place for the next four weeks, we understand people are staying at home, but this will not stop opportunist burglars."

"We want people to think about making it harder for thieves to steal."

"Simple steps such as storing keys away from doors and windows and taking

them with you when you go to bed will mean you are less likely to be a victim of a car-key burglary, disposing of packaging rather than leaving them by your bins outside so you are not advertising expensive items you have bought and storing and locking away bikes, tools and garden items which could be stolen or used to break into your home."

There are other steps you can take such as security marking items including bikes, mobiles and laptops, keeping receipts, serial numbers safe and phone IMEI numbers safe and photograph and insuring expensive or unique items so if you are a victim of burglary, your belongings will be too hot for thieves to sell on.

For further advice about how to prevent yourself becoming a victim of burglary, go to: <https://www.kent.police.uk/police-forces/kent-police/areas/kent-police/campaigns/campaigns/2019/kent-against-burglary>.

The West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Committee wishes all staff in the NHS, Fire Brigade, all our friends in the Police Force and the Air Ambulances a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Thank you for all you have done to help us during this pandemic, your hard work is much appreciated.



Launch of Maidstone Task Force

Efforts to tackle crime, reduce violence and enhance safeguarding for vulnerable people are being boosted by the creation of a new Maidstone Task Force.

Strengthening local communities and keeping people safe will be at the heart of the work carried out by the multi-agency team, comprised of Kent Police, Maidstone Borough Council, and other partners including Trading Standards, housing associations and voluntary organisations.

The Task Force was officially launched on 16th October 2020 and will be focused around tackling key issues including knife crime, drugs supply and anti-social behaviour. Working together more closely will make it easier for police and other stakeholders in Maidstone to share information and solve problems. It will also help in identifying causes of crime more accurately, as well as highlighting other concerns and priorities raised by communities.

Kent Police Chief Constable Alan Pughsley said: "One of the main objectives of the Maidstone Task Force will be to proactively target criminals who seek to exploit the vulnerable, such as rogue traders, fraudsters and burglars. By regularly engaging with residents, schools, businesses and local community groups the task force will also support the work we already do in bringing to justice violent offenders, drug dealers and those who think nothing of targeting the elderly or exploiting young and vulnerable people for their own financial gain."

"We know from other task forces, which have previously been created in Thanet and Medway, that by working

together with our partners under one roof we can be more effective, responsive and ultimately improve people's lives. Pursuing a more co-ordinated approach enables us to provide shared solutions to shared problems. It will also allow us to clamp down harder on problems such as anti-social behaviour and illegal fly-tipping, issues which cause considerable harm and distress in our communities."

Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott said: "Bringing partners together to solve problems and tackle anti-social behaviour means we can make a real difference to local people's lives. We know the approach works from what has been achieved in Thanet and Medway. I am delighted that Maidstone is now going to benefit from its own dedicated task force, staffed with police officers funded by my decision to raise the council tax earlier this year. These officers are on top of Maidstone's extra town centre PCs who were funded by last year's precept."

The Task Force has been in operation for a number of weeks, with teams working together from the borough council premises in King Street. Martyn Jeynes, Community Protection Manager at Maidstone Borough Council added: "We put partnership at the heart of everything we do, and it's working! We want to ensure Maidstone is a place where people feel safe and are safe. We are really looking forward to working with local communities to help understand their concerns and to utilise the strengths from within those communities and, with the combined strengths of the task force, bring about sustainable positive changes."

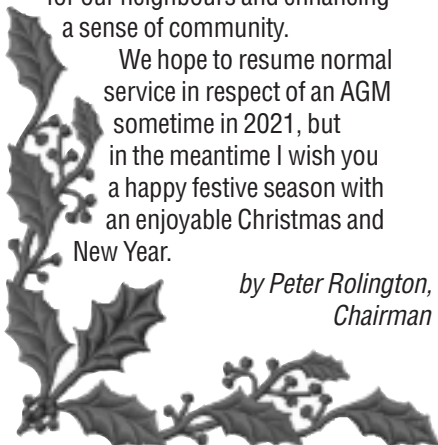
Christmas Message

I would like to thank you very much for all your work and commitment to the NhW cause over the past very difficult year.

The pandemic has shown the value of Neighbourhood Watch, not just in preventing crime but also being there for our neighbours and enhancing a sense of community.

We hope to resume normal service in respect of an AGM sometime in 2021, but in the meantime I wish you a happy festive season with an enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

by Peter Rolington,
Chairman



Message from KCC Warden

During Covid 19 the KCC Community Wardens remain out working in the rural villages. They have been supporting many residents who have been feeling lonely and isolated, ensuring they have access to food and medication, as well as the constant support for our elderly who are vulnerable to scams.

Scams continue to be an issue in all areas and it is important that we all remain alert and aware. Please do not agree to work being carried out by cold callers/rogue traders. KCC Trading Standards have just relaunched their Trade Checked facility and details can be found on the KCC website. This gives a list of Businesses that have been checked thoroughly and are safe to use.

By Sandra Edmonds

Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

Peter Rolington, Chairman.
e-mail: peter.rolington@gmail.com

Stephen Rimmington, Secretary.
e-mail: Petersvillage@gmail.com

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Peter Rolington, Tunbridge Wells

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Michael Laidlow, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer, for Kent Police – Tel: 07870 999885

Peter Brown

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 Office,
Floor 2, 1 Pembury Road,
Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2HS.**

**STAY SAFE DURING THIS
DIFFICULT TIME!
KEEP TO SOCIAL
DISTANCING.**



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.