



NW NEWS

West Kent

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# Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 66

*"Security through awareness"*

Winter 2024

## Not All Heroes Wear Capes!

Never has the saying "Not all heroes wear capes" been more apt than with a lovely heart warming incident involving our police officers.

On Saturday 31st August, PC Ashley McMahan and PC Paul Thomas were going about their normal duties and in conversation with a member of the public, when they heard sounds of distress in the form of meowing nearby. They were in a car park near to a river, so initially thought that someone had thrown a cat into the water. As they searched along the riverbank, the meowing became louder but frustratingly, they were unable to find the source.

They eventually tracked the sound of the cat to a 4x4 car that was parked near the riverbank.



After more detective work, they discovered the meowing was coming from the spare wheel, which was secured underneath the car.

With the help of the owner, who slowly loosened the bolt, PC McMahan gently coaxed a small kitten – who was well and truly stuck – to come out.

They took her to the local vet, who checked her over, fed her and gave her a drink.

To end this lovely story which will melt the coldest of hearts, PC McMahan left his name and details with the vet and said if no one claimed her after a week he would pay the bill and then give her a forever home.

In these days of sad news being broadcast all the time it is so nice to be able to print a wonderful story like this one.

Happy Christmas to all involved.



## Supporting DAVSS

Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Unit Inspector Jon Turtle recently presented a cheque of £1000 from the Kent Police Property Fund to Mrs Sam Haspell, the Chief Executive of Domestic Abuse

Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS), to support them in the excellent work that they do across West Kent.

£500 will assist with providing Christmas presents for children who have

been displaced from having a normal Christmas due to domestic abuse and the other £500 will be used across the charity to assist with the incredible work that they do to support victims of domestic abuse.

I am sure you will agree it is a very worthwhile and important cause to support.



### Christmas message from Chairman Peter Rolington

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee of our Association for all the hard work they put into making sure that our members are informed and represented.*

# Community Event Held In Southborough

Officers from Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Units spent a few hours playing football with local teenagers at a community day in Southborough.

About 50 teenagers turned up and engaged with officers by playing football also enjoying other events including speed races, as well as visiting an information stand from the Kenward Trust around alcohol and drug awareness. It is fair to say that the youths tested officers' fitness standards to the maximum!

A good time was had by everyone and there are plans to hold future events – once the officers' legs have recovered!

*Many thanks to PC Philip Burns Community Safety Unit Tonbridge.*



## Rural Task Force works with Kent Trading Standards to tackle rogue traders in East Kent

An operation to stop rogue traders and encourage residents to be alert to their consumer rights has been held in east Kent.

On Thursday 22 August 2024, officers from the Rural Task Force stopped and spoke to people carrying out building and roofing work on properties to remind them of their duties as responsible businesses and what can be done to help protect their industry from rogue traders.

PCSOs from the team worked with representatives from Kent Trading Standards to visit areas that have previously been targeted by rogue traders, where they spoke to residents about staying safe. Part of the engagement saw people given advice and information leaflets as well as items aimed at securing their homes.

The one-day operation was held in parts of Canterbury, Folkestone, Dover, Deal and Sandwich.

PC Amy White from Kent Police said: "If you encounter a rogue trader, it can feel very overwhelming and lonely. Sometimes people will agree to having work done because they don't feel confident in

challenging aspects of it, such as the quality of the work, or a sudden large increase in price.

"We want to reassure residents that they have choices, they are entitled to say no, and to encourage them to report if they think they have been a victim of rogue traders or doorstep criminals so we can work with Kent Trading Standards to identify and stop offenders."

Clive Phillips, Kent Trading Standards' Operations Manager for Complex Investigations, said: "Kent Trading Standards, in partnership with Kent Police, is committed to protecting our community from the harmful practices of doorstep criminals. These unscrupulous individuals cause significant financial and emotional distress to residents, often targeting the most vulnerable.

"We urge anyone who has concerns or needs advice to contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service for free on 0808 223 1133. Residents can also find vetted traders on our Trading Standards Checked website. Together, we can ensure a safer and fairer environment for all."

## Sadly, we say farewell . . .

Sue Mason who has worked tirelessly for N/hood Watch has decided due to changes in her health she has to resign from the West Kent N/hood Watch Committee and running her local schemes in Tonbridge.

Rosemary Carter originally started the N/hood Watch Scheme in an area known locally as "Roselands". Rosemary worked very hard setting up new schemes so that the residents of North Tonbridge felt safe in their own homes. Sue helped Rosemary with this and when sadly Rosemary passed away, Sue stepped in and took over the running of it. Sue has done a amazing job and worked so very hard keeping local residents actively involved. We can't praise her highly enough for her dedication. Heather Hoadley also helped Sue in recent months, for which we are very grateful, but she too has to resign due to work commitments. Luckily for North Tonbridge, Stephen Abrahams is going to help out as much as he can. Thank you Stephen.

We wish Sue good luck for the future and sincerely thank her for her dedication to West Kent N/ Hood Watch.



# St. Stephen's Walking Group

## 40th Anniversary 1984 – 2024.

We have enjoyed 40 years of walking, sadly there were no walks in 2021 due to the ongoing Covid issues.

With some lovely people, enjoying each other's company and different and exciting experiences from the snow capped peak of Kilimanjaro, to the boggy peat of Rannoch Moor, the Atlantic rollers aboard a ship to the Skellig's off South West Ireland to the Montaigne Fleurie, Flower Mountain, in the Pyrenees, the vertical climb to the top of the Matterhorn to the steep descent to Robin Hood's Bay at the end of the Coast to Coast long distance path, these have been our challenges.

Saturday walks are enjoyed once a month exploring Kent and Sussex, in all weathers, picnic lunches or pub meals, birdwatching, flower identifying and plenty of exercise. Munro bagging, Scottish hills over 3000 feet, for thirty years, all completed in 2018.

All these events have characterised the walking group and its adventures over those long years.

We have travelled all around the country to walk many of our Country's Long-Distance Paths, including the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path in Wales, Isle of Wight and Isle of Man Coastal Paths,

The Thieves Road in Scotland, Cleveland Way in England and the MacGilly cuddy's Reeks in Ireland.

It is not dissimilar to our Christian lives where we experience highs and lows, personal challenges, which can be demanding, always rewarding.

Travelling with God in our lives is not always easy, choices have to be made and sometimes we take the wrong road. I have been known, too often, to take the wrong path on our walks. I started the wrong path this very weekend, fortunately corrected by worthy leaders. God is there with us to guide us, help us and correct us if we choose to follow him. John 1: 12 says "Yet to all who receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God".

Our aims have always been to encourage fellowship and to encourage people to know Christ, as well as enjoying a bit of exercise in the countryside.

God is with us on all our walks and he has blessed the group over these 40 years; we have seen people come to faith, seen faith rekindled, other walking groups started, had wonderful fellowship, seen prayers answered and had lots of laughs.

May I take this opportunity to say a special thanks to Ann, my wife who has been my inspiration and fellow walker over all these years. Please speak to Ann or I about walking with the group or see the programme on St. Stephen's Church website. *Rowland Wills.*



*40th Anniversary Walk 28/9/2024 – Nicola taking photograph, 3 older members joined at the finish.*



*Old analogue picture scanned, Kilimanjaro 2002. Rowland Wills, Lyndon Collins, Guide, Asst Guide, Paul Tabor, John Denyer, Asst Guide, Paul Funnel, Roland Rippendale. Many thanks to Rowland Wills for this item, do contact him if you would like to join the walking group. Telephone number Tonbridge 356437.*

## The Fatal Four

Pay attention to the FATAL FOUR, because every 17 mins someone is seriously injured or killed on U.K. roads.

Before you go out please focus on the FATAL FOUR.

1. DO NOT SPEED.
2. DO NOT DRINK or TAKE DRUGS BEFORE DRIVING.
3. DO NOT USE YOUR MOBILE WHILE DRIVING.
4. PLEASE REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT.

If everyone was to follow the rules above, many, many lives would be saved.

# Be Alert During the Christmas Period

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year, but please do take extra care because this is the time of the year when thieves are most active.

It's best not to leave presents on view, for example, stacked up by the Christmas tree where passers-by may see them and decide that's just what they would like for Christmas to put under their tree, remember thieves have no conscience. Also it's best not to leave any shopping bags on view in your car if you are leaving it unattended to pop to another shop. Lock items securely in the boot.

Once presents have been opened please do break down the gift boxes and once flattened hide them in your recycling box maybe under old newspapers so that the item cannot be seen.

Make sure your doors and windows are securely locked if you are out for the day or evening. Partly pull your curtains so items cannot be easily seen. Timer switches are a good thing to have, so that lights are on in your property. This will help to deter thieves.

Enjoy your Christmas, but just be more alert at this time if the year .

## Launch of Forcer Protocol

At a launch event at the Kent Police College on Wednesday 30 October 2024, the force officially adopted The Forcer Protocol.

The tool is used by forces to ensure key information is available to them when they are informed an armed forces veteran, reservist or serving member is lost, missing or in need of support – helping to find them more quickly.

The protocol gives police access to veterans' details such as any key vulnerabilities or any known-risk factors, and where they have been found if they went missing before.

It was founded by Claire Lilly and named after her former husband Alan Forcer, a veteran who tragically took his own life in May 2020 following concerns over his whereabouts.

There are more than 61,000 veterans in Kent.

Chief Inspector Gary Woodward said: "We are pleased to be able have this life saving initiative available to us in Kent which aims to locate veterans and prevent them coming to harm.

"Serving within and transitioning from the armed forces can be an overwhelming experience at times and in some instances difficult and distressing. I would encourage all service veterans, concerned family or friends to visit the website and complete the form. It could save your life."

Before an individual goes missing, a veteran or their professional carers, family members or friends can complete a form which records vital information relating to them in case they go missing. Forcer Protocol – Safe and Found Online

Officers will only ever ask for the information provided on the form if the person is reported to them as a missing person using the following three-step approach:

The person is reported missing to Kent Police. The call handler will then

ask whether that person is known to be a veteran in every missing case as part of the initial assessment. They can then get direct access to Safe and Found Online, giving them crucial information in a matter of minutes.

Kent Police will then identify the risk, investigate, and will hopefully locate the missing person safe and well.

A referral is then completed on a Single Veterans Pathway, particularly through Operation Nova and the NHS, to ensure that the veteran gets the correct support they need, and also will potentially reduce demand on policing in the long-term.

Whilst anyone can sign-up, it is important to note that if the person who is missing is in the Kent area, officers will automatically be able to access the details through Safe & Found Online when checking if they are a veteran.

If in another force area, the person reporting the missing person needs to make it clear to the respective police force that details have been submitted through the Forcer Protocol so an access request can be granted to them.

Claire Lilly said: "Since we launched the Forcer Protocol in Manchester last year, more than 170 veterans have been safely located.

"I would like to extend our families deepest gratitude to Kent Police for adopting the Forcer Protocol. It means so much to see a network so invested in driving real change."

Visit the Kent Police website to find out more – Forcer Protocol | Kent Police.

**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*

*Secretary Stephen Robinson, Tunbridge Wells.*

*e-mail: stephen.srobinson@gmail.com*

*Julie Walker, Editor – Tel: 01732 771075*

*e-mail: julie.walker@kent.police.uk*

*Marguerite Bernard, Treasurer*

*Jenny Woodgate.*

*e-mail: jenny.woodgate2@gmail.com*

*Steve Abrahams Tunbridge.*

*e-mail: abrahs@yahoo.co.U.K.*

*Cllr Laura Manston Sevenoaks.*

*e-mail: cllr.manston@sevenoaks.gov.U.K*

## Committee members

*Pria Webster, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison*

*Officer, for Kent Police.*

*e-mail: 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*

*Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership*

**– Tel: 01732 844522** *csp@tmbc.gov.uk*

*Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership*

**– Tel: 01892 526121**

*communitysafety@tunbridgewells.gov.uk*

## 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.**

## 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 to both these numbers are free.**