



NW NEWS

West Kent

Watchout

The Voice of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association

Issue 63

"Security through awareness"

Winter 2023

Your co-ordinator is:
Tel No.

County Lines Crackdown continues with more than 30 Arrests in a Week

Almost a thousand wraps of heroin and crack cocaine have been seized during the latest clampdown on drug supply networks into Kent.

Weapons including knives, baseball bats and firearms were also recovered by officers as part of a nationwide, "week of intensification," to tackle county lines and gang activity.

A total of 34 suspects were arrested by Kent Police during coordinated action involving police forces throughout the country which ran from Monday 9 to Sunday 15 October 2023.

London supply chains targeted

In a joint operation with the Metropolitan Police, officers executed multiple search warrants linked to criminal networks extending from London into areas across the whole of Kent.

Around 6.25am on Tuesday 10 October, entry was gained to an address in Warner Road, Camberwell, South London. Searches lead to the seizure of 100 grams of crack, around 300 wraps of heroin, cash in the region of £5,000 and a phone suspected to be linked to drug supply.

Hameeb Bakare, 31, was arrested and charged with 2 counts of being concerned in the supply of case A drugs. Two counts of possession with intent to supply drugs and possessing criminal property, (namely the seized cash).

The same day three addresses in Croydon and Orpington were targeted, leading to the seizure of an estimated £60,000 worth of uncut heroin and crack cocaine, knives, a knuckle duster and more than 20 phones and SIM cards. Around £20,000 in cash and two high value cars, including a Porsche and thousands of pounds worth of designer clothing were confiscated. Four suspects were arrested

and charged in connection with drug supply and money laundering.

Disruption across Kent

Since 2020, enforcement action by Kent Police has seen the number of active county lines fall more than 50 per cent, from 82 to a current estimated total of 37. The latest week of intensification has caused significant disruption to many of the remaining criminal enterprises as a result of further arrests and seizures across the county.

In Maidstone following a search of Leander Heights a suspected stolen firearm and ammunition, 400 grams of cocaine with an estimated street value of £30,000 a similar amount of cannabis, 2 knives and £12,000 were seized.

Elliott McCarthy, 20, of Leander Heights was arrested and charged with 3 counts of being concerned in the supply of drugs and possession of a firearm without a certificate.

Further joint working with the Metropolitan Police and British Transport Police Patrols resulted in successful enforcement of areas including Ashford and Medway towns.

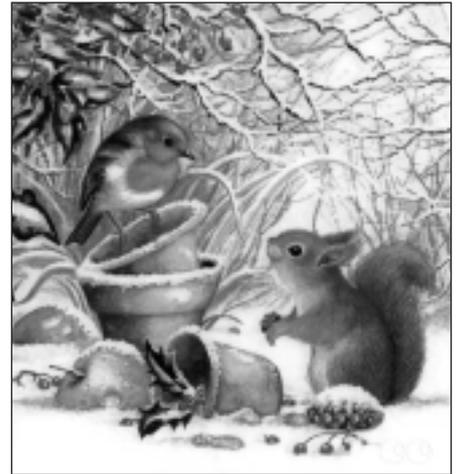
Actives lines more than halved

Detective Chief Inspector Nicola Ross, of the Kent Crime Squad, said: "During this week our enforcement has led to significant disruption to at least 18 county line networks. Action by our officers has resulted in 60 charges being made and several suspects remanded in custody.

"This latest week of intensification is in addition to our determined and sustained focus around identifying and tackling those associated with drugs supply and gangs, and since 2020 we

have more than halved the number of county lines operating in Kent.

"We have dedicated teams of officers, both uniformed and in plain clothes, committed to targeting those 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."



Cadet leader training

I used to be a police cadet within the Tonbridge Unit; and after leaving I had the opportunity to become a Voluntary Police Cadet leader.

I am really enjoying the training programme which is aimed to help equip us with everything we need to make the transition from cadet to leader.

It is a great opportunity to help and provide support for the cadets in their learning of the different elements of Kent Police.

I am really looking forward to completing the training and joining a unit as a leader.

By Emily Hoadley
Police Cadet Leader



Crimestoppers

Research conducted by Crimestoppers confirms that nearly a fifth of the public have known about a crime, but chose not to talk to the police.

Some of the reasons for people not speaking out include:

- I do not want to talk to the police;
- I need to report someone I know;
- I am worried that others will know if I speak out;
- I am not sure if what I know will help;
- I do not want to get involved with courts.

Crimestoppers is a charity that allows you to report incidents with complete anonymity. If you have information that you'd like the police to know but prefer to stay anonymous, please contact Crimestoppers using the number below or click on the link to complete the online form.

Phone number – 0800 555 111

**Giving information anonymously,
Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org)**

After receiving your call or a completed anonymous online form, Crimestoppers create a report that brings together all the information you gave them, making sure it doesn't contain any information that could identify you.

Your report is sent to the relevant authority with the legal responsibility to investigate crimes, make arrests and charge people in order to bring them to justice. This could be your local police force or an agency such as the UK Border Agency or HM Revenue & Customs.

Crime Prevention Advice Especially During The Christmas Period

- Do not leave your belongings unattended;
- Keep your valuables in a bag in front of your body, zipped up or closed and use a purse chain if possible;
- Do not leave valuables in view or easy reach, such as on top of a pram, shopping trolley or mobility scooter;
- Security mark valuable items.

All non-urgent incidents can be reported online via the Kent Police website www.kent.police.uk or by using the live chat on the website.

Linda Baker PCSO.

Thefts of and from Cars

Your home and Bank Accounts are highly valued and desired by criminals. There has been a significant increase in both theft of and from motor vehicles across the U.K.

We wish to raise the awareness of this growing trend and provide you with some practical tips on how to reduce the threat of becoming a victim of criminality.

1. Keep all valuables and documents out of sight and take them out of the vehicle when leaving it .
2. Never leave anything on show inside the car, even a carrier bag may give the would be thief a clue that there is something of interest in the car.
3. Turn your engine off, as keep it running or leaving your keys in the ignition is an invitation for trouble, no matter how long you are away from the car. It doesn't take long for a thief to jump in the car and drive away with it.

4. Try and park in a well lit area. If it's possible, do have lights installed on your driveway, this is also a good deterrent to stop would be car thieves. Having cameras installed on your property is certainly a good idea as are doorbell cameras.
5. If you use a van or works vehicle, please take the same safety precautions.
6. Motorcycles are also being stolen, do chain your machine to a secure base if at all possible try and park it off road, so it is not so easily seen by would be bike thieves.
7. If you lose your keys and don't have a spare set, an auto locksmith approved by the MLA can replace any type of key for most models of vehicles.

Help your friends or relatives to take steps to secure their own vehicles are safeguarded.

Lock Up Your Garden Sheds

Every year hundreds of lawn mowers, chainsaws, hedge trimmers and others garden tools are stolen from sheds and garages. Bicycles are also stolen.

The loss of equipment is not only very inconvenient for the owner's it can also prove very expensive if not covered on their household insurance policies. It is worth checking your household policy just to make sure valuables in the shed or garden are insured.

Many pieces of garden machinery are often recovered by the police. Unfortunately unless the property is security marked with owners details, it is hard to find the rightful owner, therefore the items cannot be returned.

It is well worth thinking about marking your property, especially if you own bicycles and these are locked in your garden sheds. Chaining items of value together is a good idea.

Fit good security locks / lights, an alarm on your sheds or summer houses where your goods are stored.

Never ever leave garden tools in your garden, these could be used to break into your shed or even your house.

Make a list of items stored away in your shed or summer houses just in case you fall victim of a theft , you will be able to inform the police of items stolen.

Electric Bikes and Scooters

There has been an increase in cases of Electric bikes and scooters exploding usually when they are being charged . . . There has been a 60% increase in fires in London alone.

It seems that the lithium battery can explode when being charged . . . It then releases a toxic vapour cloud.

Some of the Conversion Kits being used have the wrong batteries in them which causes overheating and then, maybe, an explosion that can result in a fire spreading rapidly putting lives at risk.

What is really worrying is that some people charge their scooters or bikes in their homes, usually in the hallway.

These are also charged in blocks of flats down near the main door. This is extremely dangerous because if the battery explodes causing a fire, this can block the escape route for the residents.

Please check that your scooter or bike have the correct batteries in them and never charge them up in your home.



Firework Safety Advice

At Christmas and New Year many people celebrate with fireworks. Here is some safety advice, but firstly can we ask that your bonfires are checked to make sure that no hedgehogs are hiding in wood you have stacked up for your bonfire. Many hedgehogs are hurt in bonfires.

Bonfire / Firework Safety

Please remember:

- An organised display is the safest way to enjoy fireworks;
- Fireworks are noisy (which can upset very young or elderly people as well as pets). They can cause damage and they can cause serious injuries if not used properly;
- Only buy fireworks from a legitimate retailer;
- It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 years to buy fireworks. You can be fined or imprisoned for buying or using fireworks illegally;
- Shops are not allowed to sell fireworks louder than 120 decibels;
- It is an offence to let fireworks off between 11pm and 7am except on 5th November when the cut off is midnight and on Diwali, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year when the cut off is 1am. It is also an offence to set off fireworks in the street, onto a road or in a public place;
- Anyone caught causing a nuisance with fireworks will receive an instant fine of £80 and any fireworks found on a person under 18 will be confiscated;
- Always inform your neighbours if you are using fireworks and be considerate;
- Keep bonfires small and manageable and build them away from houses, garages, sheds, fences, overhead cables, trees, bushes and vehicles;
- Never use flammable liquids – paraffin or petrol – to light the fire;
- Avoid drinking alcohol whilst in charge of a bonfire or fireworks and particularly when supervising children;
- In case of an emergency, keep buckets of water, the garden hose or a fire extinguisher ready;
- Make sure your fireworks conform to British Standards BS 7114, EN 14035 or EN 15947;
- Keep fireworks in a closed box and use / light them one at a time;
- Light the firework at arm's length using a taper or fuse wick and stand well back – never return to a firework once it has been lit;
- Only children over the age of five are allowed to use sparklers and should be supervised by an adult at all times;

- Remember, if you break the law on fireworks you could be sent to prison for up to six months or a child's parents or carers could receive a fine.

Fireworks Code - Before they explode read the code!

1. Light sparklers one at a time and 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. Follow the instructions on each firework;
6. Light them at arm's length using a 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.

Safety Advice

Take Care With Sparklers:

Sparklers can reach a temperature of up to 2,000°C, 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.

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 stood well back. Only light one firework at a time and never return to a firework after you have lit it.

Once lit, run to safety and watch the beautiful fireworks light up the sky.

Just In Case

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

Should someone's clothes catch fire get them to stand still, drop to the ground and roll to extinguish the flames. Have a fire blanket available to wrap around the casualty to put out the flames. Having a 2kg powder fire extinguisher available will enable you to act quickly to prevent a small fire escalating.

Who to contact to report suspicious activity or a crime?

- If there is a threat to life or public safety, or you suspect a crime is in progress, call 999;
- To report a crime other than a crime in progress call 101 or visit the Kent Police website to access the "Live Chat" facility.

999 Emergency Call Out

5 STAR TV has recently showed a series of programmes named 999 Emergency Call Out. It involved Kent Police Special Constables paired with Paramedics.

This meant that working together they could give a fast response to any incidents.

The programmes showed a paramedic receiving police protection when treating a victim that had been stabbed. In another programme in the series, a dangerous driving incident resulted in a very serious head injury where the joint police and paramedic response was needed at the scene. It really was a very good series to watch and showed how well the Police Special Constables and Paramedics worked so well together to help the public.

Well done to all who were involved in the series, let's hope there are more programmes to come.

Police officers help deliver baby in Canterbury

A team of police officers helped deliver a baby after being flagged down at the roadside by the child's father.

Kent Police dog handler PC Ed Goldswain was driving through Canterbury on the afternoon of Monday 23 October 2023.

He saw a man at the roadside near the roundabout in Kingsmead Road and stopped to see if he could help.

It quickly became clear that the man's partner was in labour in the vehicle and there was not time to take her to hospital.

After details were put out on the police radio system, Local Policing Team PC Billy Knight arrived at the scene along with police medic PC Rachael Taylor.

They helped the woman deliver the baby before an ambulance arrived and took mother, father and the little baby girl to a local hospital, where they were all confirmed to be well and have since returned home.

Chief Inspector Gary Woodward said: "Police officers can be called at a moment's notice to any sort of emergency or incident.

"This may have been an out of the ordinary call for those PCs responding, but I am pleased their professionalism and training equipped them well to help this couple.

"I would like to wish mother, father and baby well and I hope they are enjoying family life together."

Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

Peter Rolington, Chairman.

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Peter Rolington, Tunbridge Wells

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

Christmas Message from Chairman of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Committee

*Now is the time of the year that we reflect on the past year
and our hopes for the next.*

*We in West Kent Neighbourhood Watch are subject to the
same challenges of the voluntary sector in the rest of the
country; recruitment and retention of members who can give
their time to our cause. However, we have recently been
successful at our AGM and have attracted some new faces, we
are therefore and looking forward to a successful 2024.*

*I hope you all keep well and safe over the
festive period and into the New Year.*

By Peter Rolington.



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.

**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.**

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.

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.