



Business crime updates – advice for local businesses and business owners during the current Covid19 pandemic

Local businesses are being urged to ensure their premises are sufficiently protected during the Covid-19 outbreak, following an increase in organised acquisitive crime across the county – including burglaries of business premises – as such the district has seen an increase in police patrols and proactive targeting of known local criminals.



Detective Chief Inspector Alasdair Henry, burglary prevention lead for Sussex Police and Wealden District Commander, said:

“We take burglary very seriously. Staff across the force are working hard to prevent an increase in burglary and we are ready to respond to any spikes in such criminality.

"We are urging business owners to ensure that they have sufficient and robust security features in place and that they are in full working order. Security cameras should be checked and owners need to make sure that any service doors are both secure and locked. Don't store cash in premises whilst they are closed”.

"Owners of high value jewellery are encouraged to ensure it is securely locked away in the house, ideally in a safe or similar secure storage, rather than being left in drawers or cupboards.

Residents should ensure that doors to their homes are kept locked, especially overnight, but also when they might be out enjoying their gardens, and that they have measures in place to keep their residence secure.

It is vital that we all work together to disrupt organised crime and prevent opportunistic burglaries. Our Sussex Police website provides some excellent detailed advice on how to protect your property from crime”.

“Please do not hesitate to report suspicious activity to us. This includes reporting people trying to sell items that you suspect are stolen.

If you have any information concerning burglary or people selling stolen goods, please get in touch with us immediately online on our Sussex Police website, or by calling 101.

You can also report anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or by visiting their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/”.

Always remember: In an emergency, such as a crime in progress, or burglary where suspects are still on the scene, please dial 999.



A statement from Wealden Prevention Sergeant Kara Tombling

“Since our last newsletter the world has seen the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic and there is not a single member of this community that has not been affected by this situation.

I would like to start by thanking everyone that has adhered to the Government’s guidance to stay home to save lives and protect the NHS.

During the current climate our policing priorities have not changed, we continue to police and protect our communities, safeguard the vulnerable and bring offenders to justice.

You will see examples throughout this newsletter of the activity of the team, which includes a twenty year old male from Hailsham recently arrested on suspicion of possessing cannabis with intent to supply, this is an example of our commitment to reduce drugs harm within our communities.

Through daily briefings with our community contacts and stakeholders across the district we are able to identify concerns around the pandemic and act accordingly, with positive feedback being received of my team’s hard work”.



“I greatly valued the update last week and am more than happy to see the raised Police presence around our district.

Hope you stay well and safe in these extraordinary times.

“In the coming weeks we may expect to see some changes to Government guidance as to how we can start to move forward.

Please continue to support your communities as we work together to return to normality together”.

Thank you – PS Tombling

Every Mind Matters – Looking after your mental health

All over the country, people are staying at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

It’s not always easy – we can feel frustrated, miss loved ones or get anxious.

But we’re in this together and there is support out there.

It's important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently, remember; this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

Every Mind Matters gives you simple and practical advice to get a healthier mind and get more out of life – from how to deal with stress and anxiety, to boosting our mood or sleeping better.



It will help you spot the signs of common mental health conditions, get personalised practical self-care tips and information on further support.

You'll also learn about what you can do to help others, and how to look after each other.

Every Mind Matters is here to help, giving you access to simple steps to help deal with stress, boost your mood and feel on top of things.

Visit www.everymindmatters.co.uk for support and tips to look after your mental health during this current climate and get your personalised Mind Plan.

Community engagement throughout the last few months

Engagement is still the uppermost priority for us during the Covid-19 lockdown – although the way we engage with our communities has changed, our priorities and policing approach during the lockdown remains the same; we are still patrolling, we are still engaging with the public and we are still taking appropriate enforcement action to disrupt criminals and protect your communities.

PCSOs play a key part of your local policing service - working alongside and supporting police officer colleagues in solving local problems; by addressing local issues by getting out into towns and villages across the district on high visibility foot patrols, gathering intelligence, meeting people and offering advice and support to members of the public.

What follows is just a snapshot of our patrols and engagement over the last few months:

- PCSO Gilling and Clinton have continued regular patrols around supermarkets in Crowborough following reports of anti-social behaviour and disruptive groups at peak times
- Area patrols of Forest Row, Danehill and Hartfield included a drop into the Parish Council following the launch of Covid-19 measures
- Regular patrols of Uckfield continue by PCSOs Lewis and Davidson, following reports of anti-social behaviour in the town and station areas
- PCSO Lewis has been focusing efforts on linking in with shops and vulnerable community members in Hailsham town centre, and Northern Hailsham areas
- PCSOs Russell and Miranda continue their regular patrols of Heathfield, following break ins to allotments in the area, with the Parish Council keeping them updated on any potential lines of enquiry, and patrols ongoing
- PCSO Davidson continues to monitor skate parks in Polegate following reports of youths using the park even though it is currently closed under the Covid-19 measures
- PCSOs Whitaker and Davidson met with Parish Clerks from East Dean and Friston to update on current measures being taken in the area to limit the use of recreational grounds
- PCSO Russel has been patrolling Rotherfield and dropping in on vulnerable members of the community from a distance, following reports of door step scammers in the village



Thank you too, to our Police Specials and Volunteers

As well as thanking members of the public who are following the guidelines and staying home, Sussex Police is also highlighting the work of the Special Constabulary – its volunteer police officers who, alongside police officers and PCSOs, are working on the frontline.



Specials have contributed 410 shifts - a total of 3,411 hours - of their own spare time to support this national effort since the lockdown was put in place earlier this year.

The force also has 61 student police officers currently undergoing a condensed nine-week training course; adapted for current conditions, who will be ready to deploy in June this year with dedicated coaches as part of the Government's on-going programme to recruit additional police officers across the Country.

Police have been stepping up patrols of rural areas in Wealden in a bid to disrupt crime

As part of our on-going work to disrupt criminality across the Wealden district, your local teams had a designated week of action from the 20th -26th April.

The week of activity included officers from the Prevention Enforcement Team, Operations Command, Prevention Officers and our teams from investigations - a number of arrests for burglary and possession with intent to supply drugs were made during the week of action.

Numerous vehicles have also been stopped as part of an initiative to disrupt crimes against farms, rural dwellings, sheds and garages - Some of the vehicles that have been stopped include farmers checking on their outbuildings, and other members of the local communities – many of whom have expressed their appreciation for the proactive steps the police are taking.



Chief Inspector Alasdair Henry, District Commander for Wealden, said: “If criminals think that the police have reduced capacity to tackle crime because of the current pandemic, they are mistaken.

On the contrary, we are putting an increasing number of resources and focus on preventing and detecting crimes such as theft, and burglary.

The public are reporting suspicious activity in ever greater numbers, no doubt due to heightened sensitivity about anyone being out and about without just cause. It is therefore hopefully a source of reassurance when they encounter one of the proactive police patrols in their area.

This community intelligence, and increased patrol activity, is really helping to build the picture of rural crime, and will undoubtedly lead to arrests.”

Police grants to local groups assisting others during Covid-19 pandemic

Did you know we are offering grants to local groups assisting others during Covid-19? - The Police Property Act Fund (PPAF) is made up of monies received by the police from the sale of found property and from property confiscated by order of court and then sold.

Across Wealden these past few months various groups have benefited from the funds made available, including ‘NHS Angels Project’ in Hailsham; Mary is the coordinator for the group and said:



“We are delighted to receive £500 from the fund, we shall spend the money on fabric and elastic buttons and bows from our local shop Pumpkin Patch in Hailsham.

We have to date provided scrub bags and headbands to frontline NHS staff and carers in our community, sincerest thanks to PCSO Marcos for organising and being our sponsor!”

Another local group which has also benefited are volunteers at the Buxted Inn, in Uckfield, who have set up volunteers that are doing shopping and errands for people in self-isolation in the area, during the current climate - a spokesperson for the Inn said: ‘they will use the money for PPE for the volunteers’.

The main aim of the fund is to support local projects undertaken by voluntary/charitable organisations that solely benefit the communities of Sussex - to find out more click the link www.sussex.police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/au/about-us/charity-and-community/police-property-act-fund-ppaf/ or search ‘PPAF’ on the Sussex Police website.

Wealden Police Teams continue to be humbled by your well wishes

We would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every one of you in our communities who have stopped us on their daily exercise to brighten up our day with well wishes, also to those who have written in to the Police stations, or helped to donate various items to key workers, as well as vulnerable members of our community – thank you all for your kind messages of support and well wishes during these difficult times.



This month the team were most humbled to receive anonymous packed lunches to fuel them for the day, as well as a delivery of Rainbow ribbons from a lovely young man named Connor from Hailsham who has been making them for keys workers in his spare time – a big thank from us!



As we head into the Summer, the safety and welfare of local communities continues to remain our top priority.

We would like to reassure our communities that we continue to respond to all crime types and incidents. You should continue to call 999 in an emergency where a crime is in progress or there is a threat to life.

If your call is not urgent and can be reported through our website, we ask you to do so in order to release the pressure on our emergency lines and resources - our online services offer you the option to self-report, which will then be prioritised and actioned.

Support and advice for victims of domestic abuse – At home, shouldn't mean at risk

Encouraging the reporting of domestic abuse and ensuring any victims can receive help and support during this period remains a policing priority - During this Covid-19 pandemic, limited contact with the outside world may make you or someone you know feel unsafe because of the increased risk of domestic abuse.



No one should live in fear of a partner or family member - We are still here for you 24/7, in the same way we always are, call us for help or 101, or 999 in an emergency and we will respond, if safer please contact us online.

DCC Shiner said: "In the past few weeks, we have started to see an upwards trend in domestic violence crimes following a dip and we expect this to rise further when lockdown measures are eased or modified.

We have adapted to ensure we can support people at risk and find them a safe space. We will always pursue offenders."

Some of the specific measures in place include:

-Dedicated 'domestic abuse' cars across Sussex, responding to medium risk incidents - Emergency response officers will always respond quickly to high risk incidents.

-A new specialist team able to deal with any non-urgent cases by appointment and this has included a new video appointment service for those who cannot meet officers face to face.

-The launch of an awareness campaign at local supermarkets, with signage at entrances and take-away information.

If you're a victim of domestic abuse, or know someone who is, and there's an emergency that's ongoing or life is in danger, call police on 999. If you can't talk because the perpetrator is nearby, you can press the numbers '55' into your mobile phone which will alert the operator of your circumstances.

The Sussex Safe Space website also provides a directory of help and support available near you click the link here www.safespacesussex.org.uk/ or search 'Sussex Safe Space' online.

Significant arrests - March – May 2020

The safety and welfare of local communities continues to remain our top priority during the current climate; and we continue to work with our various Policing teams, as well as partner agencies in these unprecedented times to ensure everyone is kept safe.



April 23rd - Police received a report of a blue Ford Focus acting suspiciously near a house in Royal Oak Lane, High Hurstwood, Officers followed up the report and spotted three men crawling along a hedgerow close to the premises.

After running back to their vehicle, the suspects were blocked off and detained. A search of the car revealed items including a crowbar, a tow rope, a wrench and pairs of gloves.

Enquiries later revealed an outbuilding at the property had been broken into.

Three men from the Wealden area, aged 18, 29 and 30, were arrested on suspicion of burglary and going equipped for burglary. Each has been interviewed and released under investigation, pending further enquiries.

Detective Inspector Daniel Dugan said: "We continue to work closely with our communities in rural areas to keep the public safe, and to prevent and detect crime.

April 23rd - Police in Hailsham arrested a man on suspicion of possessing cannabis with intent to supply to others, a quantity of cannabis was also seized by police.

The 20-year-old local man was arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of a Class B drug and was interviewed, he was later released under investigation pending further enquiries.

Wealden Police Inspector Jon Gross said: "This arrest is another example of our commitment to reducing the harm of drugs within our communities - I am sure our enforcement activity will have been noticed by the local community and that this will have been welcomed by those living in the area."

April 2nd - A 33-year-old local man was arrested by officers investigating a series of 8 burglaries in the town spanning from February 10 to March 24 - He was released under investigation for the burglary offences while enquiries continue.

The man was also arrested on suspicion of harassment without violence, for which he was given conditional bail, and has been recalled to prison as his release on licence was revoked.

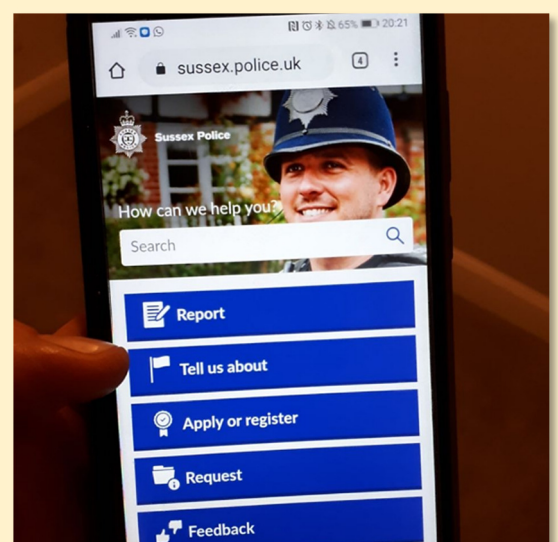
Wealden Inspector Jon Gross said: "An arrest such as this provides a good opportunity to reassure communities. The key message is that, despite it being an uncertain time for all, our capacity and capability to tackle crime is very much intact."

Reports, and local intelligence from members of our communities help to contribute to these arrests.

Please continue to report any suspicious activities, vehicles, or persons to us, either online or to 101 for non-emergencies, and always to 999 in an emergency or crime in action.

If your call is not urgent and can be reported through our website, we ask you to do so in order to release the pressure on our emergency lines and resources

Our online services offer you the option to self-report, which will be then be prioritised and actioned, to report online, please visit www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/ or use the 'Report' tab on our Sussex Police website.



Advice and support for victims of stalking and harassment

Stalking is when someone shows repeated and unwanted attention towards another person. Often when individual incidents are put together they can reveal a pattern of fixated and obsessive behaviour.

For those affected by stalking, the current lockdown measures and self-isolation as a result of Covid-19 has seen an increase in stalking activity online.

Stalking is a crime that is distressing and malicious, and is something no one should have to put up with - Remember, we're always here to advise you and if you feel you're being stalked or harassed, report it.



Trust your instincts, and always contact us – We have a range of advice on our website, from protecting yourself in person, over the phone or over the internet, as well as further agencies and support organisations who can help:

Visit the link here to access this advice

www.sussex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/harassment/sh/stalking-and-harassment-advice/what-you-can-do-about-stalking-and-harassment/

Operation Blitz – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in your local communities

Antisocial behaviour can have a lasting impact on neighbourhoods and communities as it often leads to an increase in crime, particularly violence and criminal damage.



Operation Blitz is a designated ASB patrol, and an on-going focus.

Each **Friday** and **Saturday** night between 6pm-Midnight (during the Spring/Summer months, and in addition to our weekly patrols across the district), officers from the Wealden district Prevention team take to the streets in areas which have seen an increase in ASB crimes, or youth related ASB, along with areas which have come to attention from your reports over the week.

Our additional ASB patrols continue during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

From 6pm-Midnight, you can call officers on a designated phone number should you witness or become victim of any ASB, or youth related ASB. The contact number for the Wealden District is: **07770 700642**.

Outside of these times, please continue to report ASB to us on 101, or report online on the newly designed ASB reporting form: www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/asb/af/antisocial-behaviour/

Whilst we continue to direct patrols to known areas of ASB to prevent further occurrences; no one knows your neighbourhood quite like you do - ASB in our district will not be tolerated, if you have any concerns within your local community around ASB, please report it to us by either calling 101, or visiting our website www.sussex.police.uk - alternatively you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Your reports help to form designated patrols across the district, and assist your local Prevention team in intervening early, to help prevent ASB and crime and disorder from occurring across your towns and villages.

Remember if an offence is occurring, or there is an immediate danger to you or those around you, **always call 999**.

Beware of fraudsters that may try to call or knock on your door offering to test you for Covid-19

Sussex Police have received reports of Covid-19 Fraud - One from the carer of an elderly gentleman who received a phone call to say someone would be coming to test him for Covid-19, and another of people have reported receiving cold calls 'selling' face masks.

One caller told the person due to their age it was needed and both began asking for personal and financial information. Luckily the two people realised this was a scam, hung up and reported it.



Please make elderly relatives aware that these are scams. Hang up or close the door immediately.

Now, more than ever, we want to remind you to:

- Check people are who they say they are when they phone you
- Never send money or financial details to anyone who you don't know or don't trust
- Keep your personal information to yourself
- Make decisions in your own time – don't be rushed
- Phone a relative or friend for help or advice
- Do not be embarrassed to report it to us, you could also prevent someone else falling for similar scams

If you have been a victim of a scam, report it to Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk - Suspicious emails can also be reported to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Stay Home – Protect The NHS – Save Lives

We continue to thank the vast majority of Sussex residents who continue to observe the Government's restrictions and maintain social distancing to ensure the cases of coronavirus do not suddenly escalate.

Together with all our colleagues responding to this unprecedented pandemic we are working hard to keep people safe and protect the most vulnerable to save lives.

But we are not over this national health emergency yet and we ask the public to follow the latest Government advice, continue to follow the guidance, and only change behaviours as new guidance is provided.

We all know it's frustrating when you see or hear of others who aren't doing their bit.



We also know this is not easy, for anyone, but we also all know it is not forever.

Please continue to follow the latest guidance issued by the Government, and do not make changes to current behaviours until new guidance is issued.

For the most up to date advice and guidance on Covid-19 measures, please refer to the Government website here, www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Thank you – Wealden Police.

You can also keep up to date on the latest Policing news during the Covid-19 pandemic by regularly visiting our news page here www.sussex.police.uk/news/sussex/news/ or by searching 'Sussex Police News' online.

Rural community advice and support

Rural crime is an issue for large areas of Wealden, it can impact on insurance premiums, food prices and can cause damage to our local communities - **Our Policing commitment to rural communities continues to be a priority during the current climate.**

We have created the below crime prevention advice, to help offer support and raise awareness to farm owners and rural residents in areas that may not have access to a local Police station or Police contact point; to pass on valuable crime prevention advice and safeguarding techniques to help you keep your properties, machinery, livestock and outbuildings safe from theft and criminal damage.

Equipment and tool security

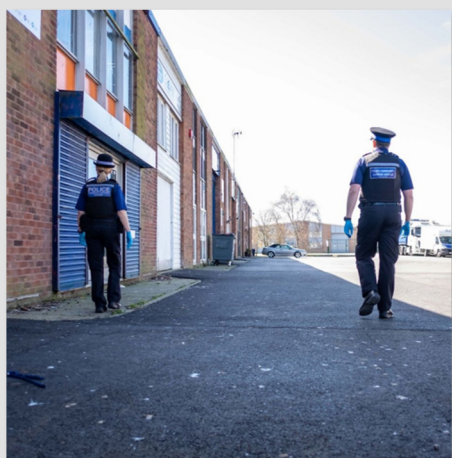
- Lock equipment away in a secure building or part of a building when not in use, and install a burglar alarm on buildings where equipment is kept - mark your tools and equipment and register them online
- Always lock farm vehicles when left outside and keep expensive items and vehicles out of sight when not in use
- Consider using hitch locks, wheel clamps or ground anchors

Estate and building security

- Keep the boundaries of land and property well-maintained and secure
- Keep all doors and windows shut and locked when not in use, and make sure windows and door frames are secure and in good repair with good quality window locks
- Fit strong locks to sheds, garages and outbuildings, or consider security bars and grilles for vulnerable windows
- Use locking posts or temporary obstructions to control wide access points to yards
- Establish a single gated entrance and exit, removing all private access points that are not in use

Protect your land

- Look closely at the perimeter to ensure it is as secure as possible
- Consider using large tree trunks, rocks, ditching and earth mounds around boundaries to prevent access
- Restrict vehicle access by digging deep ditches
- Keep unused land maintained and free from litter and other waste



Livestock theft

- Make regular checks of the fields where animals are kept to check that fences haven't been breached
- Use ear tags, horn brands, freeze marking or tattooing to make your animals more easily identifiable
- Keep your hedges, fences and gates in good repair: field gate hinges should have capping hinges so they can't be removed easily; cattle grids should be removable and locked out of position when they're not in use; use locking posts to obstruct large openings

Please do not hesitate to report suspicious activity around local businesses and rural areas to us.

If you have any information concerning burglary or people selling stolen goods, please get in touch with us immediately online on our Sussex Police website, or by calling 101.

Always remember: In an emergency, such as a crime in progress, or burglary where suspects are still on the scene, please dial 999.

Spring/Summer months – Rogue traders come in all shapes and sizes, and at all times of the year.

Follow our top tips for keeping you and those around you safe from fraud and scams.



- Be suspicious of all 'too good to be true' offers and deals
- Don't agree to offers or deals immediately. Insist on time to get independent or legal advice before making a decision
- Don't hand over money or sign anything until you've checked someone's credentials and their company's
- Never send money to anyone you don't know or trust, whether in the UK or abroad, or use methods of payment you're not comfortable with
- Never give banking or personal details to anyone you don't know or trust. This information is valuable so make sure you protect it

-If you spot a scam or have been scammed, report it and get help; contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or on the Action Fraud official website www.actionfraud.police.uk, or call 101 if you know the suspect or there are local

-Don't be embarrassed about reporting a scam. Because the scammers are cunning and clever there's no shame in being deceived. By reporting it, you'll help to make it more difficult for them to deceive others.

A digital copy of the Little Book of Big Scams can be viewed and downloaded:

www.sussex.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/sussex/advice/operations-initiatives-and-watch-schemes/operation-signature/the-little-book-of-scams - alternately you can obtain one from your local Police front office or Police contact point.

Are you in the know? Did you know that you can sign up to witness appeals, crime updates, crime prevention advice, local Police news and more via the community messaging service In The Know? Visit: www.intheknow.community/ to sign up today.



Wealden Prevention staff and officers contribute to a Police news and alerts email which is sent each week, outlining upcoming events, such as local scam talks and Police drop in sessions; as well as a crime summary of recent crimes in your local areas, patrol locations and updates, weekly snapshots and more.

A weekly update from the Op Blitz ASB team is also sent via the community messaging service In The Know each Thursday, detailing the team's patrols and their findings from the previous week.

To further keep up to date on your local Police team you can also follow your Prevention team on social media for up to date community news, snapshots and events in your local area.



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