

Local PCSO Monthly Update May 2020

I am your local Police Community Support Officer for your area. For those of you that don't know me, my name is PCSO Katherine Richards, but most people call me Kate.



This is my report for this month, so you are all aware of what I have been up to in and around your areas and what crimes have been happening. My report goes out to the Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, and any other members of the community who may be interested in receiving it. This can also be shared on your parish websites and your social media sites.

This month has been another challenging month especially at these strange times for everyone regarding the ongoing Coronavirus, which has many of our communities either in self-isolation or dealing with the government's rules of a country wide lock down. These are still very important times and we must make sure we are carrying out the rules. It has shown me how amazing our local communities have been at pulling together to help those who are unable to get out for food due to being vulnerable or unwell. With a lot of people either off work or not able to go to school, please can I once again remind you all that the lockdown is very important for us to fight this illness. We are starting to get a few more calls in regards of youngsters being out and about meeting friends, please make sure they are not and that you know where they are. Don't break the Covid – 19 rules.

A reminder:

Keep your distance – keep safe

Under current measures set by HM Government, we must all **stay at home** wherever possible, and **avoid meeting with anyone outside our household**. This includes friends and family.

Remember: You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Help prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home).
- If you go out, always stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

For more information visit **[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)**

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

#StayHomeSaveLives



I have been patrolling some of the areas where we have been having nuisance calls regarding nuisance bikes and vehicles in the woods. We are patrolling these areas and the Rural Tasking Team are fully aware and are out and about in the area also. The forestry commissions are also working with us to stop this.

Please can I also remind residents that when out on your daily exercise, whether a walk, run, cycle, if you are out in the country please only use designated signed footpaths, not farmers' fields, or private land. Otherwise this will be classed as trespassing and if the footpath does go through a field with livestock that dogs are always kept on leads and gates are shut probably behind you. Sadly, I have been to a few calls this month where I have had cows that have been let out on a main road, as well as sheep.



There are also few footpaths which have been closed due to Covid – 19, these are because they go through people's properties and they are self-isolating and don't want to put themselves or others at risk, please respect this. They will be re-opened once restrictions get lifted.



Other information:

Fraud

Below is an input on current scams doing the rounds from our Fraud Prevention Co-ordinator.

My name is Emma Swietochowski-Hay and I am the Fraud Prevention Co-ordinator for the East Division of Kent Police. My role includes creating awareness of current fraud trends and scams and offering prevention advice as well as visiting vulnerable and repeat victims of fraud.

I have put together some of the most common scams circulating at present. During this current climate fraud has escalated and criminals are taking advantage of the vulnerable position we are in.

What are scams?

Scams could reach you by post, phone, email, text, when you are using the internet or on social media.

They will look and sound genuine and usually claim to be from a reputable company, service provider, bank, the police or a government service such as HMRC. They could even be someone asking for help.

They will ask you to click a link, call a high-rate telephone number or encourage you to hand over personal information, bank details, bank cards or even cash. **Don't do it.**

From our colleagues at National Trading Standards, we have received the below which offers further advice around scams with COVID19 theme. Additionally, Friends Against Scams is a national campaign that you may want to get involved with and can find out more details by viewing their website which is displayed below.

Friends Against Scams

Number Of Friends Against Scams

4 2 3 9 5 3

NATIONAL TRADING STANDARDS
Scams Team

Home | About Us | What Is A Scam? | Where To Get Help | How Can You Help? | Businesses Against Scams | Scam Marshals | Updates | Contact Us

SCAMchampion Login Search this site

Together We Can Take A Stand Against Scams

Start Here
20 Minutes

Empowering People To Take A Stand Against Scams

Below is an alert from Action Fraud in relation to a phishing scam, where fraudsters are impersonating Tesco.

The fake Tesco emails are offering 'free vouchers' during the coronavirus outbreak and you are asked to click on a link, which takes you to a convincing looking phishing website that is designed to steal your login, personal and financial information.

If you receive one of these, please do not click on the link and delete it and report to Action Fraud.

Criminals are exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic to defraud innocent people, including sending fake emails and texts purporting to be from government. Avoid clicking on links in emails as they could lead to fake websites, and contact organisations directly using a known email or number.



Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment.

They can contact you by phone, email, text, on social media, or in person. They will try to trick you into parting with your money, personal information, or buying goods or services that don't exist.

If you are approached unexpectedly remember to:

- **Stop:** Taking a moment to think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen victim to a scam and report it to Action Fraud.
- You can also report suspicious texts by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad.
- The police, or your bank, will never ask you to withdraw money or transfer it to a different account. They will also never ask you to reveal your full banking password or PIN.
- Do not click on links or attachments in unexpected or suspicious texts or emails.
- Confirm requests are genuine by using a known number or email address to contact organisations directly.

Reporting a scam

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of a scam, report it immediately to www.actionfraud.police.uk

If you have paid money or shared your bank details, contact your bank's fraud team straight away.

Always remember the advice of "Take Five which is Stop, Challenge and Protect" and are own ABC message:

- A- never **assume** a caller, email or text is genuine.
- B- never **believe** a caller, email or text is genuine.

C- always **confirm** by contacting a trusted number, family member, friend, your bank's fraud department or the police to check if it's genuine.

Get the latest scam updates and advice

- Follow **@KentPoliceECU** and **@kent_police** on twitter
- Sign up to the Kent Fraud Alert System – **stephen.kelly@kent.police.uk**
- Visit **www.actionfraud.police.uk**

If you would like some further prevention advice or online leaflets, I am able to supply this for you. Alternatively, if you would like a Fraud Prevention Presentation or input in any of your local groups, care homes or sheltered living accommodations please send myself or your local PCSO an email and we can get this organised for you.

If you have any questions or queries, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Stay Safe.

Emma Swietochowski-Hay 59657

Fraud Prevention Co-ordinator

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Please follow us on Twitter @KentPoliceECU



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Community Safety Unit | Ashford Police Station | East Division

ASHFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT FOR PCSO MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2020



I am pleased and proud to write this article in support of my PCSO colleagues who work tirelessly for the community in a town that is growing by the week.

There is no doubt we are working and living in the strangest, difficult and indeed challenging of times.

The type of work that I would normally be undertaking with 'PCSO's, for example public meetings with the community, bike marking sessions and general interaction with residents across the Ashford District, have been curtailed. My PCSO colleagues have been switched to duties that are required in the lockdown we are all in.

That has not stopped constant interaction between us by email and phone so that we are ready and good to go when life returns to normal and we can work closely together again to benefit the community.

There is good proactive work being undertaken on the "new builds" sites across Ashford so that NHW Membership grow as the developments grow and as new residents move in.

It is clear what the type of incidents and what the areas of risk now are during this lockdown period.

CRIME

Main residences are virtually occupied by someone the whole time now. Just ensure that when you retire for the night those Patio/French doors and all ground floor windows are secured after you have enjoyed the warmer weather of the day.

Please ensure **vehicles, sheds, garages, outbuildings and even gardens** are all as secure as possible. Leave nothing like bikes or mowers out in a garden if your fence is overlooked by the public. Also, vigilance in buildings such as **community halls, sports pavilions and clubhouses where they could be vulnerable to break-ins** now that they are not in use. These are the risk areas now!

ALL THE ABOVE ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS AND THAT RISK WILL BE HIGHER IN RURAL OUTLYING AREAS

Thieves, chancers and opportunists, especially those who steal to fund drug problems, are really struggling under the lockdown. Please stay extra vigilant and keep prevention to the forefront of your thinking and make their criminal activities as hard as possible. If they get desperate, they will also get careless.

In rural and outlying areas there have been reports of vehicles in the early hours of the morning travelling around "scouting targets"; if you see these events or suspicious activities call the police immediately and use 999 if that is your judgement.

As always be alert to **SCAMS by telephone and email** which are nearly now a daily event for us all. Coronavirus and the resulting lockdown may have reduced some types of crime, however coronavirus has also been seen by criminals and scammers as a "business opportunity".

I was pleased to see the HOME SECRETARY refer to the scams and the criminal activity around those events in the Coronavirus briefing from Downing Street that she led on behalf of the Government.

We must ramp up our prevention, advice, warnings and alerts to match the criminals who have seen the virus as yet another “business opportunity”.

REMEMBER THE HARDEST MATTER TO QUANTIFY IS... WHAT WE HAVE PREVENTED!!

LIFE AFTER CORONAVIRUS

As I said earlier in this article this has been the most challenging time for us all BUT could some good come from this all

2 years ago, when I first took this job on, some people did not know who lived next door, they now do shopping for them.

Cars were broken into everyday where people had left items in cars that should never be left in vehicles especially overnight. That has now virtually stopped. When lockdown is eased and finally lifted be as security aware with your vehicle as you are now.

There is the most uplifting community spirit out there at the moment! How do we maintain that?

The community and many agencies now know where our vulnerable people are with every form of disability that renders them at risk to criminals and scammers.

Bogus calling has virtually stopped but how do we maintain that.

Police colleagues are out there in the community, look at the drug arrests recently in East Kent as drug sellers and users look to move their evil product around.

Let us enjoy the time when the restrictions are gradually lifted but let's not just default back to where we were but let us retain the good and great things that have happened in our community during this difficult period where we have all pulled together.

REMEMBER THE MORE WE ARE THE STRONGER WE ARE AND CRIME CANNOT FLOURISH IN A COMMUNITY THAT CARES

Thank you for your support as always

Peter

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Neighbourhood Watch Team