

## Monthly PCSO Newsletter November 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, which I put out at the beginning of the month, so you are all be 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. **Please share.**

I would just like to let you know that I will be your point of contact for your town and parishes.

The areas that I cover are **Tenterden, St. Michaels, Rolvenden, Newenden, Weald South and Isle of Oxney areas.**

We have new Restrictions coming, for all updates go to [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

HM Government

**NHS**

# NATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

**5 NOV - 2 DEC**

- You must stay at home
- Only leave home for food, medical reasons, exercise, education or work
- You must work from home if you can
- Avoid travel unless essential
- Schools and essential shops will remain open
- Remember: wash hands, cover face, make space

For the latest guidance, visit [gov.uk/coronavirus](http://gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Updates

It's been another busy month around the area, with a lot of different calls that have kept me busy. This has included road traffic management calls, where I have helped with road closures or getting vehicles recovered. **Please** drive carefully especially with the amount of rain we have had over the last few weeks. Over the next few months it will be getting colder and possibly icy.

### **DRIVE CAREFULLY.**



It's that time of year where the nights are drawing in, please could you take a moment to read through the below steps on securing your property.

### **At Home.**

- Lock all windows and doors before you go out or go to bed, making sure you know where your keys are in case of an emergency.
- Fit security measures such as intruder alarms, door chains and locks.

- Avoid labelling house keys in case you lose them and they fall into the wrong hands.
- Don't leave keys (including car keys) or valuables on display near doors or windows.
- Make sure fences, hedges and gates are in good condition.
- Consider installing external security lights, but make sure they do not affect your neighbours.
- Avoid leaving side gates open and put away ladders, tools or garden equipment that could be stolen or used to break into your home.
- Keep garages and sheds locked and alarmed where possible.
- Store bins carefully so they cannot be used as climbing aids.



We have had various items of machinery stolen in the rural areas over the last few weeks and months. It has been great to be able reunite one of the victims with their property which we located while out on patrol, from a member of the public making us aware. We work closely with the Rural taskings team, who again have shown what an amazing tool their Farm Watch group is. This has helped relocate property with owners, as well as making the rural community aware of what's going on, from stolen items, poaching and suspicious events.

< **Tweet**

 **Kent Police Ashford**  
@kentpoliceash

Our Crime Prevention PCSO along with a Rural PCSO, were able to locate and reunite stolen farm machinery with its rightful owners with help from a member of public and @kentruralpolice this evening. LL

22:49 · 21/10/2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

13 Likes



### **Equipment and tool security**

Equipment and tool security can be a particular issue for rural businesses and farms.

To keep your belongings safe:

- lock equipment away in a secure building or part of a building when not in use
- invest in a secure storage toolbox

- install a burglar alarm on buildings where equipment is kept
- always lock vehicles when left outside and keep the keys in your possession
- keep expensive items and vehicles out of sight when not in use
- consider using hitch locks, wheel clamps or ground anchors
- mark your tools and equipment and register them
- keep a record of all valuable items
- consider fitting outside security lights

For further information on securing your belongings and how to mark your equipment, [visit our burglary advice pages](#).

### **Estate and building security**

A good standard of building security is very important in rural areas, especially for outbuildings that may not be visited for weeks at a time.

Farmhouses and other rural properties are the same as any other home, so general home security advice still applies. However, because of the remote location, additional security measures may be beneficial.

To protect your rural home or business:

- keep the boundaries of your land and property well-maintained and secure
- keep all doors and windows shut and locked when not in use
- install a visible burglar alarm
- make sure windows and door frames are secure and in good repair
- fit strong locks to sheds, garages and outbuildings
- fit good quality window locks
- consider security bars and grilles for vulnerable windows and openings
- make sure gates cannot be lifted off or have their fixing bolts removed
- check security equipment regularly to ensure it works properly
- use locking posts or temporary obstructions to control wide access points to yards

For additional security you could also:

- install automatic security lights that come on at dusk and turn off at dawn
- install CCTV cameras to watch over the most vulnerable areas of the property
- install a monitored intruder alarm system
- install an entry control system infrared, intercom or keypad
- establish a single gated entrance and exit, removing all private access points that are not in use

## **Digital Surgery**

Coming up this month, myself and our Community Policing Sergeant – Jazz Bloomfield will be holding a digital surgery. This is your opportunity to ask us questions or speak to us about problems that we may not be aware of in your area. With Covid we are unable to conduct meetings in the normal way, so that is why we are going digital.

### **Digital surgery – Join the conversation**

Pose your questions to your local officers  
PS Jazz Bloomfield and PCSO Kate Richards

**Tuesday 24 November, 1pm-2pm**

For Tenterden, Rolvenden, Isle of Oxney, Weald South and St Michaels residents to raise any matters they wish to discuss via Microsoft Teams.

If you are interested in this virtual, video meeting then register your interest by emailing [csu.ashford@kent.police.uk](mailto:csu.ashford@kent.police.uk) you will be sent a link to join the day before the meeting.



**Kent Police**

## **Kent Fraud Alert System**



### **Increase in Courier Fraud offences this week across Kent**

As a result of an increase in courier fraud offences this week the below press release has been issued. I would ask that you share this with family and friends and make aware anybody who you feel may be susceptible to becoming a victim of this type of scam.

### **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.'

## **Scam calls - Fraudsters impersonating Internet providers.**

There have been several reports over the past week from people being telephoned by scammers (automated calls) purporting to be from their internet providers. The scammers are saying that the persons internet will be cut off due to illegal activity or low activity. They are



then directing them to press the dreaded button 1, where the fraudsters will either try to obtain personal data or normally request you to allow them access to your computer by allowing them to download malicious software. This is with the intention of taking over your system and obtaining access to your online banking etc. when they will then steal your monies.

One such call claimed to be from Open Reach and from an address in London. They were challenged by the person they called, who started asking the scammers questions, the scammers immediately hung up.

If you receive any of these calls, please hang up immediately and report it to Action Fraud. Never allow anyone remote access to your computer and never download any unknown software/apps that allows people access to your system. Remember your internet provider will never ask you for remote access to your computer.

If you are unsure and want to contact your service provider, then please call them via a trusted number. If possible, use an alternative phone than the one you were called on. If you do not have access to another phone then please allow time for your line to clear or call a family member or friend to confirm that the line has cleared, as scammers will try to remain on the line.



### **The Kent PCC, Matthew Scott, wants to hear your views on business crime**

Your elected Police & Crime Commissioner **Matthew Scott** has created a survey to understand the impact of business crime in the county.

**The survey is available online at [kent-pcc.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://kent-pcc.gov.uk/haveyoursay)**

While it is intended mainly for business leaders and store managers, employees are also welcome to complete it and offer their views.





### **Motorists urged to get Tyre Safe**

Motorists in Kent are being reminded to check their tyres as part of a national campaign which highlights the dangers of defective tyres.

National Tyre Safety Week begins on Monday 5 October 2020 and aims to encourage motorists to perform a safety check on their car to ensure they are safe before making a journey.

This year Tyre Safe's campaign covers all three areas of routine tyre maintenance with advice being issued around air pressure, condition and tread depth.

Motorists are advised to use an accurate tyre pressure gauge to check pressures. To find out what the correct pressure should be check the car's owner's manual or fuel filler cap. Additionally lumps and bumps in a tyre could indicate internal damage and increase the risk of failure. Motorists who find lumps, cracks or cuts in their tyres are urged to seek professional advice.

It is also important motorists check the tread depth on their tyre, if a gauge is not available a 20p coin can be used. Insert the 20p into the main tread grooves of the tyre, if the outer border is hidden the tyre is above the legal limit.

Chief Inspect Rhiannan Pepper said: 'It is important that motorists get into the habit of checking their vehicle for defects. Performing a quick safety check on your car could prevent you from being involved in a collision or facing a fine if stopped.'

'Motorcyclists should also take particular care to ensure their vehicles are safe for use as good tyres will offer additional safety when accelerating, braking and cornering.'

'Paying the care and attention your tyres will help you stay safe and potentially save you money in vehicle maintenance in the long term.'

Failure to ensure that tyres meet the minimum legal standards means a motorist could face a fine of up to £2,500 and three penalty points for each illegal tyre.

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Please note that on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> October an attempt deception burglary was committed in the Charing Heath Road area of Charing.

The suspect was described as – a white male aged approx. 40 years, tall, well built, wearing a jacket with "Morrisons" or similar on the back. He was driving a small grey vehicle possibly a Fiat.

The suspect claimed to be from the Electricity Board, but the householder was vigilant and refused entry.

If you have any information regarding this incident, please call 101 and quote reference 01-0577/20 or call anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 11 1

## **Over 85 people targeted by HMRC scam in September**

A warning has been issued following a number of fraud reports in which victims have been led to believe they may be arrested for owing a debt to Her Majesty's Revenue Customs.

In September 2020, 85 reports of scams involving fraudsters claiming to be from HMRC were reported to Kent Police.

- On 18 September in Canterbury a woman lost £4,000 after being contacted by someone claiming to be from HMRC. They demanded immediate payment and threatened her with arrest.
- On 30 September police received a call from a man in Maidstone who had paid out over £11,000 after receiving a call from someone claiming to be from HMRC. He was told that he could either pay the money or go to court for tax evasion.
- On the same day in Dartford a woman was contacted by someone stating they were from HMRC and she would be arrested if she did not pay £6,000. The fraudsters made her download an app to transfer the funds.

Detective Sergeant Alec Wood of the Volume Fraud Team said: 'These fraudsters prey on vulnerable individuals and use scare tactics, like the threat of arrest, to rush people into making rash decisions and parting with large sums of money.

'They are good at what they do and always have a convincing reason why money has to be received a certain way. In addition to a direct bank transfer they also encourage people to purchase gift cards or download money transfer apps to make a payment.

'Not content with stealing from a person once, it is not uncommon they will persistently target someone over a period of time, in some instances lump sums have been paid on three or four occasions.

'It is important we all stay alert to these fraudsters and speak to anyone who may be vulnerable to ensure they are aware of steps they can take to keep themselves and their money safe.

'There are several variations of this particular scam. They sometimes use an automated phone call, or tell you that you're entitled to a tax refund and ask you to call them. Avoid engaging with these people, make a note of the numbers they are using and report them to HMRC.

'Take a moment to stop and think before paying out any money or giving information, if you have the slightest doubt the caller is legitimate challenge them - only a criminal will try and rush you into making a payment.

It's fine to refuse, ignore and reject calls if you don't know the caller, however if you have given out financial details contact your bank immediately as they may be able to stop a transaction.

If you do become a victim of this crime contact Action Fraud. Often people are embarrassed to come forward but these are professional fraudsters and people should not feel ashamed to seek help, it may also prevent someone else from becoming a victim.'

### **Crime prevention advice**

- If you get a call from someone claiming to be from HMRC and you feel you need to engage with them, ask the caller to put the demand in writing to you. If they then ask to confirm your address – do not - as HMRC already have that information.
- Be mindful that any legitimate demand for tax will be in writing.
- HMRC will never ask anybody to pay a fine by purchasing gift cards, if you get a call like this, then hang up immediately.

You can report HMRC phishing emails to [phishing@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gov.uk) please include,

- Your number
- date of the call
- phone number used
- content of the call

You can forward HMRC scam text messages to 60599 (you'll be charged at your network rate).



**Kate Richards PCSO 46059656**

**Community Safety Unit | Ashford Police Station | East Division**

**Please do not use this email to report incidents. For a non-emergency please report online or contact 101 and in case of an emergency call 999.**