



Avon and Somerset Police
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Taunton

Policing Newsletter

May 2024

NEWS FROM ACROSS TAUNTON

So here we are at month 2 of the newsletters! We received some really kind feedback from some of you with regards to how informative you found our first edition....slight pressure now to try and maintain that high level! You may have noticed that this months edition is slightly later than the Aprils edition. We will try to remain consistent and send it out from the same time of the month but this will vary, as some months editions may require just a little bit more topping and tailing.

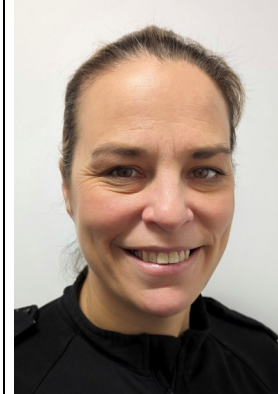
Knife Angel

On Wednesday 3rd April 2024, Taunton saw the unveiling of the Knife Angel in the town centre. The sculpture, made from over 100,000 seized blades, was specifically created to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour whilst solidifying the countries critical need for social change. Not only does the Angel act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, but it is also acts as a beautiful memorial designed to celebrate those lives who have been lost through these violent and thoughtless actions. The Neighbourhood Policing team assisted with the unveiling event, engaging with the many attending members of the public. Now before everyone panics...I want to reassure you that Taunton continues to be a safe place to live. Incidents of knife crime are still a rarity in our community and where incidents have taken place, we have taken positive action and put individuals behind bars as mentioned in last months newsletter. I can assure you that incidents involving knives happen far less than social media would lead you to believe. Don't forget that at Taunton Police Station (Deane House, Belvedere Road for those that keep asking) we have a knife amnesty bin for anyone that would like to safely dispose of their knives. Below are some of the team at the unveiling event.

From left to right: **PC Jim Breakwell, PCSO Lyndsay Smith, Chief Inspector Rebecca Wells-Cole, PCSO Jason Routley and PC Spencer Bishop.**



MEET THE TEAM



OFFICER

Ch/Insp Rebecca Wells Cole

POLICING AREA

Somerset West

YEARS SERVICE

22 Years

HOBBY

Walking the Dog

FAVOURITE FOOD

Fillet Steak & Salad

ABOUT ME

This month's 'Meet the Team' is Chief Inspector Rebecca Wells-Cole.

I joined the Metropolitan Police Service in 2002, working a in varied and wide-ranging roles from Response Teams, Custody, Territorial Support Group, Neighbourhoods and Counter Terrorism. All these roles have given me a hugely varied experience of frontline operational policing, strategic planning, and multi-agency engagement.

I transferred to Avon and Somerset in 2020. I wanted to return to where I consider home, whilst I am from a military family and have lived all over, I came to school in Taunton when I was 7. My parents settled in Somerset and now I am fortunate to call it my home.

I joined Neighbourhoods in 2022 where I became the Neighbourhood Inspector for Sedgemoor on Somerset West. During this time I have progressed to the rank of Chief Inspector and am now the area commander, a role I have been doing since June 2023.

I am married to Michael a serving Police Officer in Avon and Somerset, mother to two sons and a dachshund. I love watching cricket, and we are family members of SCC. I particularly love watching the T20 with my sons. I try very hard to be a true role model, a leader of people, putting victims at the heart of everything I do. I care passionately about serving our communities whilst keeping my officers safe.

Walk and Talk Events

On Wednesday 17th April we held a 'Walk and Talk' event. The event was aimed at women aged 18 and over and the purpose is to raise awareness and share information of where women feel unsafe in our community. We shared these events via our Facebook page where there were quite a few comments around why these events were only for women? To answer this, I spoke with **Acting Inspector Rose Green** who created this new initiative.

"The reason is that there are a disproportionate amount of violent crimes towards women and girls, which needs addressing. Too many women go about their daily business feeling unsafe."

"After the tragic incident of Sarah Everard, trust and confidence in policing has become really difficult and it is our duty to improve that. The Walk and Talk scheme aims to give women a safe platform to talk to police and show us where and why they feel unsafe."

"We as the Police will then consult and work with other agencies to try and resolve those issues in the hope we make more women feel safe and prevent those violent crimes."

"We held 10 events across the force, and had some really positive engagement. Women shared their stories, and why they felt unsafe and in return, officers were able to understand what was happening in their local communities and offer safety advice to those women."

Prolific Offender Given Criminal Behaviour Order

On Tuesday 23rd April, a prolific shoplifter from Taunton was given an 18-week prison sentence and handed a 13-month Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO).

Daniel Westcott, 33, of Kershaw Close, Taunton was arrested on Monday (22 April) and charged with six counts of shoplifting.

He pleaded guilty to the offences when he appeared at Taunton Magistrates' court on Tuesday (23 April).

The CBO application detailed 58 offences over a two-year period and requires Westcott:

- Leaves any business premises when asked.
- Doesn't enter any premises where he has a written banning notice.
- Doesn't enter or loiter outside any Tesco store in Taunton; any Asda store in Taunton or Wellington; or any Co-op store in Taunton or Wellington.
- If the order is breached, he could face up to five years' imprisonment.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



PC Spencer Bishop explaining how the breathalyser works to the Bishops Hull Primary School Mini Police Team.

(We promise to include other officers other than **PC Bishop** next month)

POLICE EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

It's normal and healthy for young people to want to meet with friends, be sociable and feel part of the community. Somerset is a safe place to live and no young person should feel unsafe visiting our town centres and public spaces.

As part of our work with the Violence Reduction Partnership, the EIT and Young Somerset have been speaking with children and young people. 60% of young people have told us that they would like more information about what to do if they saw or were involved in a violent incident. They told us that they feel the right people to share this information with them include their parents and guardians, police and teachers.

It can be a good idea to talk to young people about how recognise and respond to situations. Encourage young people to spot the signs, to distance themselves and tell someone.

It's important that young people understand the difference between 'Snitching', to get someone else in trouble, to stop themselves getting in trouble or to hurt or upset someone and 'Reporting', to keep themselves or someone else safe, where they might need an adults help or speaking out because they know something is wrong.

Encourage them to be brave and speak up. There is lots of good advice out there to support you and them. [Town centre safety and young people \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/town-centre-safety-and-young-people/) has links to useful information.

When incidents occur in schools or colleges, they will need to decide whether to involve police or not. Many incidents can be dealt with and resolved internally. They will have their own behaviour policies and guidance. If you have a crime, incident or concerns that you want to report to police, the best way is often online.

In Highlight Youth Hubs, **69%** of young people told us that they aren't aware of how to report anonymously.

Young people can visit the **Fearless** reporting site:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless> or call 0800 555 111

If you are worried about something or have information you can report anonymously to **Crimestoppers** on 0800 555 111 or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org



LOCAL PRIORITIES

Summer preparations

As we are fast approaching our busiest period of the year, we have started making preparations for the upcoming summer period.

But why is it our busiest time of the year? With longer and warmer days, people spend more time outside and in the company of other people, then throw in an alcoholic beverage here and there to people who can't handle their drink, a caravan that hasn't been fully checked before being towed down the M5 corridor and hey presto we have lots of people calling us asking for assistance. Apart from the increased calls to us, we also have the different summer events including **Armed Forces Day** on 6th July, multiple T20 Cricket Matches at the County Ground and then **Status Quo, Busted & JLS** all performing in Vivary Park in August...and last but not least it's the **Euro's 2024 Football competition**. All of which require shift changes for our Officers to ensure the public remain safe throughout. This will involve the team having their rest days moved around or even completely cancelled as ultimately, our Officers would like to have some summer time holiday themselves. During this time, with the increase in calls to us via 999, the constabulary will also see the redeployment of some of our Neighbourhood Policing Officers to the Response Teams to cope with the increased demand.

Persistent Caller

And speaking of rising demands, persistent callers continue to cause increased pressure on our services. In Taunton alone, our top 3 persistent callers have called us a total number of 151 times in the last 30 days, this does not include the direct calls they make to Officers mobile phones in an attempt by the team to reduce the calls to our call centres. Unfortunately each call can (not always) lead to crime reports being generated. These take time to complete by the Officers and then takes more time for Supervisors to file them. We need to be able justify why we are treating it as persistent caller and why we are not attending. Trying to identify the root cause of the problem can be a difficult challenge for each individual. There may be some of you thinking that these individuals should just be arrested for wasting Police time, but it just isn't as simple as that. Some of these individuals may lack the mental capacity, have additional learning needs or their ways of calling us mean that they don't directly call us themselves....thus not actually calling us to waste our time. Some will call other businesses or charities who in turn then call us to where we realise what the situation really is and we stand down our responding units. Where persistent callers are identified, we will work with our Anti-Social Behaviour Team to see what interventions can be put in place. In the initial process, we will issue Persistent Caller Warning letters. If this process fails, we then look for further preventative prohibitions, such as Criminal Behaviour Orders of Civil Injunctions.

Roads Policing



Roads Policing Officers stopped the driver of this vehicle twice in one week, after they had committed offences of drink driving, no licence, no insurance and fraudulent use of a registration mark. This is one of two vehicles seized. Second time the driver was stopped they were remanded to court. Great work by our Roads Policing Team.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

For those that don't know what 'Community Speedwatch' is, it is where volunteers from the local community carry out speed monitoring checks on specific roads across the community.

The aim of Community SpeedWatch is to make motorists who speed through residential neighbourhoods aware of the impact their actions have on local residents, or the danger they pose to other road users and pedestrians. This is something we are working with communities to address.

How SpeedWatch works

A Community SpeedWatch can be set up in any village, small town, or urban area, governed by either a 20, 30 or 40 miles per hour speed limit.

A team of local residents who are willing to volunteer a small amount of time each week are trained and issued with speed detection equipment to monitor speeds.

Vehicles observed speeding will be sent a warning letter along with advice to help change their driving behaviour.

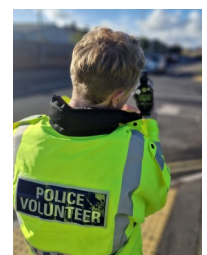
Further action will be taken by the police against persistent and high end speed offenders as well as targeting individual locations.

Activity during April

Over the month of April, 10 out of the 14 Community Speedwatch schemes in Taunton have been visibly active across the different communities. From the **28** sessions that have taken place, **8,902** vehicles have been monitored by our Speedwatch volunteers. From those, a total of **280** letters have been sent out to drivers that have not adhered to the speed limit.

The Community Speedwatch is a great service that greatly assists the Constabulary in reducing speed across the communities. Should you wish to join an existing Speedwatch, or would like to set one up for your area, you can find more information here:

[Community SpeedWatch | Avon and Somerset Police](#)



CRIME STATISTICS - MARCH 2024

(Latest information available to the public online)

Category	Crimes Recorded
Anti-social behaviour	99
Bicycle Theft	7
Burglary (Including Commercial Burglary)	16
Criminal Damage & Arson	68
Drugs	4
Other theft	36
Possession of weapons	4
Public Order	77
Robbery	8
Shoplifting	63
Theft from the person	12
Vehicle Crime	23
Violent Crime	365
Other Crime	11

You can access and find out more about crime statistics for a specific area by clicking either of these two links:

[Your area | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

[Avon and Somerset Constabulary | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

What I would like to reassure you all with regards to these statistics is that certain crime types are grouped together in one category. On our systems we can see far more detailed information, but for what we are allowed to share with the public, crime types are grouped together.

For example one of the categories above is '**Violent Crime**'. Domestic incidents fall within that category and Domestic incidents are one of the most common type of incidents we as the Police attend. If you would like to know the definition of what a Domestic relationship is, you can find it here:

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Hopefully this somewhat reassures you of why the number of crimes within that category are high.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The History of Avon and Somerset Constabulary

There has been a police force serving the Avon and Somerset area for more than 180 years. In 1835, the Municipal Corporation Act gave towns and cities the power to create their own professional police forces. Bath and Bristol were among the first cities in the country to form their own police forces. Our first police officers would have worn a uniform of a top hat, blue swallow-tailed coat and white dress trousers, with a cape or greatcoat. They were equipped with a rattle, a wooden truncheon and a wicker lunch basket with access to cutlasses and handcuffs in case they got into some serious trouble. Bath Constabulary was the first to form in 1836, followed later the same year by Bristol. Bridgwater and Chard formed a constabulary in 1839 and in 1940 they become part of the Somerset Constabulary. Avon and Somerset Police as we know it today formed in 1974 from the merger of the former Somerset and Bath Constabulary with the Bristol police force and the Staple Hill division of Gloucestershire Constabulary.

"To recognise always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them."

TAUNTON POLICE STATION

Opening Times

Monday: 08:30—16:30

Tuesday: 08:30—16:30

Wednesday: 08:30—16:30

Thursday: 08:30—16:30

Friday: 08:30—16:30

Saturday: CLOSED

Sunday: CLOSED



USEFUL LINKS

STREET SAFE

StreetSafe is an online tool that can be used by anyone to anonymously tell us about public places where they have felt or feel unsafe.

You might have felt unsafe in your local area due to anti-social behaviour or environmental factors, such as a lack of street lighting. We encourage you to share your experience using the StreetSafe tool.

The information you provide will be considered alongside evidence already gathered by police forces and will be used to inform policing and local authority safety activities within your community.

Link to Website to report:

[StreetSafe | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

KEEP UP TO DATE



Facebook is a great way to keep up to date with your local Neighbourhood Policing team. Follow us on:

Facebook: [West Somerset and Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)

GET IN TOUCH

In an emergency always call 999

For non-emergency matters call us on 101 or report online via

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report](#)

Contact the Neighbourhood Team directly:

[SomWestNPTTaunton@avonandsomerset.police.uk](#)

To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers on

0800 555 111 or visit

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](#)

**WRITTEN & EDITED BY
PCSO SUPERVISOR
SAM BUSHEN**

