



Avon and Somerset Police
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Taunton

Policing Newsletter

August 2024

NEWS FROM ACROSS TAUNTON

Hello and welcome to the Taunton Policing Newsletter for the month of August 2024. As always, the newsletters contain a snapshot of some of the work the Taunton Policing Teams have been involved in the previous month.

Euros 2024

In a month where we nearly saw England Bring it Home for what feels like the millionth time...the team were heavily committed with change of shifts to accommodate the events of the tournament. For Police Officers this means that shifts can be changed at very short notice and several of our officers had their shifts changed as the Three Lions got further into the competition than anticipated. Unfortunately it wasn't meant to be for Southgate's boys....but on the plus side we thankfully didn't see a significant rise in demand on our services due to the football which is great. Domestic Incidents do rise in and around Football Matches, particularly around the National football matches, so it was good that we did not see a significant rise in incidents reported to us.

Somerset Armed Forces Day July 6th 2024

Saturday 6th July we supported the Somerset Armed Forces Day in Vivary Park! Approximately 36,500 people attended the day, which was a great opportunity for us to engage with members of the public. We were joined by our new PCC—Clare Moody and our Road Safety Team with all their flashing toys, who were on hand to advise the public on the best ways to stay safe on the roads. We handed out what seemed like a million freebies!



MEET THE TEAM



OFFICER

PCSO Darren Cullum

POLICING AREA

Taunton Central

YEARS SERVICE

2 Years

HOBBY

Snowboarding

FAVOURITE FOOD

Chicken Shish Kebab

ABOUT ME

This month's 'Meet the Team' is PCSO Darren Cullum.

I spent too many years talking rubbish for a living so I thought it was about time I had a proper job and 2 years in, I am still loving it.

As a town centre PCSO, there is always something that lands in your lap and every day is different so it's fair to say that there is no 'typical day'. I started my working life as an apprentice carpenter before becoming a DJ and then into marketing which is how I ended up in the police! Admittedly, a bit of a strange transition but I explored the idea of becoming a PCSO after working in a promotional capacity with the force.

Weirdly, it was deemed a good idea to let me patrol the town centre, much to the surprise of my friends and family. Before you ask, NO, I don't have cuffs; NO, I don't arrest people and NO, I don't carry a taser! What I love about the job is the community engagement and being able to chat to people, hopefully making a difference to what happens in and around the community. When I am not working I like to run, swim and spend time with the family but my favourite pastime is my annual trip to the slopes. Give me snow over sunshine any day of the week.

Anyways...that's enough about me. If you see me patrolling in the town centre please say hello!

These community events are also a great opportunity for us to do some 'Myth Busting'. We answered a lot of questions around the use of E-Scooters and where and when they can be used, so I'll include information below around their use;

E-Scooters: Your questions answered

• **Can private e-scooters be ridden on public roads?** No—they can only be ridden on private land, with the landowner's permission. The law says they cannot be used on public places, including roads, pavements, parks or cycle lanes. If you are caught using a powered transporter (e-scooter) on a public road, pavement, or other prohibited space you are committing a criminal offence and could be prosecuted.

• **Why are electric bikes legal to use, but not e-scooters?** Electrically assisted bikes are allowed in public places – provided they have pedals to propel it, the electric motor's power doesn't exceed a specified limit, electrical assistance cuts out when the vehicle reaches 15.5mph, and the rider is not under 14 years old.

• **Why aren't private e-scooters legal to use in public?** E-scooters are classed as powered transporters and fall within the legal definition of a motor vehicle under the Road Traffic Act 1998. This means that the same rules that apply to motor vehicles, apply to e-scooters. This includes, but isn't limited to:

- driving with a licence
- driving/riding with insurance
- driving/riding other than on a road

It is not currently possible to get appropriate insurance for privately owned e-scooters, meaning it is illegal to use them on the road or public spaces.

• **I'm a parent – if my child is stopped while riding an e-scooter, would I be prosecuted?** Yes. You could be liable to prosecution for allowing a child to ride otherwise than in accordance with a licence, or with no insurance.

• **Why can't police concentrate on more important crimes?** We have a duty to enforce the law. We also react to community concerns, which do include the nuisance and danger being caused by some e-scooter users. Officers can take specific action where scooters are being used in a way causing a public annoyance.

• **Isn't this just an easy way for police to raise some revenue?** Police don't benefit from seizing e-scooters or taking other action against their users. However, it helps keep our roads, pavements and communities safe.

For more information you can find more questions and answers that can be found on our website— www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/escooters

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



PCSOs Cat and Brian posing with one of our new Police recruits! In all seriousness, they were helping out with some promotional photos for a local charity and we thought it was a great photo that had to be shared!

POLICE EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

Lots of us, including children and young people have been worried or upset by recent events in the news. It can be difficult to answer children's questions but its important that children feel listened to and that they are able to talk about the things that they see and to process the feelings they are experiencing. The below links offer advice about how to have these conversations;

[Talking about distressing current events with kids \(savethechildren.org.uk\)](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

[How to speak to children about trauma and tragedy, Psychologists offer expert advice | BPS](#)

There is a lot of information out there but make sure that you use reliable sources. Recent events have demonstrated how misinformation and untrustworthy sources can cause harm. Encourage your children and young people to speak to you or other trusted adults about the things that they see and help them to understand that not everything they see is the truth. Think before you share online, do you know the information to be true and the source. Use the Share Checklist to help you understand if a story can be trusted.

[Share Checklist | Take care with what you share - Home](#)

When anything is reported to Police, we always encourage people to use the crime reference number. If you aren't sure, don't share it.

[Your Police](#) on Instagram can be a good source of information for teenagers on policing related matters.

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you or someone else based on disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, sex or other perceived differences. Help your children understand racism by talking about it with them.

[Talking to children about racism | NSPCC](#)

If you or anyone you know is the victim of Hate Crime, please report it

[Report hate crime | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

SARI can provide support [SARI - Stand Against Racism & Inequality \(saricharity.org.uk\)](https://www.saricharity.org.uk)

Don't forget the Highlight Youth Hub run by Young Somerset, every Saturday between 3pm and 5pm at McDonalds, East Street, Taunton, offering support and advice.

MORE NEWS FROM THE AREA

Rapid Response to Commercial Burglary

In the early hours of the morning, Police received a report from town centre CCTV operators that there were individuals with masks trying to break into a property on Station Road with crowbars. Police responded to the incident immediately which resulted in multiple arrests being made within 500 yards of the incident location. However there was another vehicle that got away.....that was until it was stopped on the motorway by our Roads Policing Officers. A great result totalling of 6 arrests made and a large quantity of products recovered. Investigation continues!

Arrest made following French Weir café damaged

At approximately 0615hrs on the 29th July, we received a 999 call from a member of the public, reporting that someone was smashing the glass panes surrounding the Café in French Weir. Officers arrived within minutes of the report and located the offender still within the park. Following offender being stop searched, items including a hammer were located and the offender was arrested. Although a positive arrest, we are sorry to see the sheer amount of damage that happened during this incident. The suspect was charged and remanded to court.

Prison sentence following criminal damage and assault Police

On Sunday 21st July, PCSO Supervisor Sam and PCSO Imran found a male asleep in a fire exit doorway on East Street. The male advised the officers that he needed an ambulance due to having difficulties breathing. After waiting a while for the ambulance, the male stated he no longer required an ambulance, but unfortunately became abusive and aggressive to both Imran and Sam. With the males behaviour escalating and becoming violent, he then struck the window of one of the shops on East Street causing it to break. Both Sam and Imran, assisted by an off duty officer detained the male where he then tried to assault the officers. Thankfully he was unsuccessful but was restrained to the floor where extra resources were called for. Male was arrested for 3 offences; Public Order, Criminal Damage and Assault Emergency worker. The male was remanded to court whereby he was sentenced to 5 months in prison.

Taunton Police Station

And finally a reminder that Taunton does in fact have a Police station. We often read and hear that people believe that there isn't a station in Taunton. Taunton Police Station which is situated at Deane House on Belvedere Road, has two teams based from it. Firstly the response team, whose role is to respond to the majority of crime reports that come in either via 999 or 101. Secondly is the Neighbourhood Team, and hopefully by now you have an understanding of what we do. The opening times are on page 4 at the top right. Although we have no cells at Taunton Police Station, the facility itself is fantastic, with lots of desk space and a centralised location for responding to incidents.

Roads Policing



This vehicle was stopped by Roads Policing Officers following a report of concerns about the standard of driving. Officers located and stopped the vehicle in a car park in the town centre. Driver was found to have no licence, no insurance and failed the drug wipe test so was subsequently for all of the above offences! Thank you to the member of the public who reported this to us, and hopefully everyone finds this reassuring. Another dangerous individual taken off of the roads. If you are ever concerned about the nature of driving and it is happening there and then, please call us on 999!

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.

The 14 CSW groups in the Taunton area operate in a variety of environments with different speed limits and traffic flows. The urban sites that they operate at have far higher traffic flows with typically 500 to 1400 vehicles per hour whereas the rural sites have approximately 50 to 200 vehicles an hour. However the rural sites have a higher proportion of speeders. Unfortunately the 20mph limits have a higher proportion of speeders whether they are an urban site or rural.

Activity during July

Over the month of July, 8 out of the 14 Community Speedwatch schemes in Taunton have been visibly active across the different communities. From the 24 sessions that have taken place, **8,163** vehicles have been monitored by our Speedwatch volunteers. From those, a total of **151** 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 - June 2024

(Latest information available to the public online)

Category	Crimes Recorded
Anti-social behaviour	102
Bicycle Theft	9
Burglary (Including Commercial Burglary)	16
Criminal Damage & Arson	67
Drugs	4
Other theft	51
Possession of weapons	0
Public Order	88
Robbery	15
Shoplifting	91
Theft from the person	2
Vehicle Crime	38
Violent Crime	348
Other Crime	15

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...?

Do you know what a Closure Order is?

Closure Orders protect victims and communities from continuing disorder by closing residential properties or business premises. The process begins with a Closure Notice, issued by the police or relevant local authority. This prohibits access to the property for a specified period – often 48 hours – at all times and in all circumstances, unless specified otherwise. At this point, an application can be made to the magistrates' court for a longer-term Closure Order. This must be heard no later than 48 hours after serving the Closure Notice. If approved, the order will stay in effect for up to 3 months, with the opportunity to extend further. In 2023, Avon and Somerset Police obtained 22 Closure Orders. This year, 9 Closure Orders have been issued so far. Our anti-social behaviour coordinators work alongside local authorities, social care and housing associations to disrupt the unacceptable actions of select individuals. Every single incident reported at an address will need to be documented to the highest standard, showing that persistent ASB has occurred and that voluntary measures to remedy a situation have been exhausted. The team also work with partner agencies to ensure the safety of any children involved.

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:

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

To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers on

0800 555 111 or visit

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

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