

Hello,

This is your October report for the Victoria ward from PCSO's Oliver Welch, Samantha Sadler and Luke Jones.

You may or may not be aware that PCSO Emma Swietochowski-Hay will be taking up a new role within Kent Police very shortly and she will be leaving the Ashford area. Due to this PCSO's Welch, Sadler and Jones will be taking over joint responsibility of the Victoria ward.



Between the three of them they have almost 15 years of experience working within the community safety unit in the Ashford district and form the community safety units Tasking team that tackle emerging issues and anti-social behaviour across the district.

Over the past couple of weeks we have been out introducing ourselves to members of the community and with Halloween and Fire work night fast approaching we have been delivering posters to Local shops and businesses about not selling Eggs or Flour to youths or Fireworks to any youths under the age of consent. On those particular evenings we will have designated patrols out across the whole of the district to deter any anti –social behaviour and ensure the safety of all members of the public. I have attached a copy of our ‘NO TRICK OR TREATING’ poster that may be useful for residents who feel vulnerable at this time of the year.

There has been a recent rise in the theft of items from motor vehicles and also of catalytic converters from under motor vehicles across the Ashford district. Below is some information and guidance on these issues to help keep your property secure.

### **Vehicle crime**

Vehicle crime often happens when people leave their belongings on display for others to see.

Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a thief to break in to your car or vehicle and steal your property.

Follow these simple guidelines to reduce the risk of you becoming a victim of this type of crime:

- remove all valuables including portable sat nav systems, mobile phones and laptops, even if you’re only away from your vehicle for a few minutes
- clean suction marks from your windscreen if using a portable sat nav – these show a potential thief that it might still be inside
- don’t hide valuables in the boot or glove compartment as these are the first places a thief will look
- thieves steal number plates to use in other crimes, you can fit tamper proof number plate screws to help prevent this.

### **Catalytic Converter Theft**

There has been a slight rise in this type of crime recently in the local area and due to this here is an advice guide to what this type of crime is and also how to protect yourself from becoming a Victim.

Your car has something that’s in demand for thieves. It isn’t your stereo system or anything you’ve hidden in the glove box. Some thieves target the car’s tyres or machinery underneath the car. Thieves want your car’s catalytic converter, which takes seconds to remove and is required for your car to run properly. Catalytic converters have been fitted to the exhaust systems of most petrol cars built since the early 90s. Thieves have been targeting catalytic converters because of the precious metals they contain- with high clearance vehicles like vans and 4x4’s being particularly vulnerable. This link is for a recent BBC article on this type of theft: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46882497>



### **The Appeal of Catalytic Converters**

The reason is platinum. Catalytic converters contain platinum, rhodium, and palladium. The metals are expensive, and thieves sell the converters to scrap yards. It is illegal to drive your car without one. The resulting gap in your exhaust system also makes the car run poorly until it is fixed.

The rate of catalytic converter theft varies depending on the current prices of the metals inside it. Price increases typically result in an increase in thefts. Thieves look for easy targets when it comes to catalytic converter theft. A thief just needs a saw to remove the converter. Some thieves also use a sliding board to get under the vehicle more efficiently. A jack is sometimes used to lift the car for easier access, but this is rare because of the added time the jack adds to the process. Taller vehicles such as 4x4's, Vans or pickup trucks are often more attractive to thieves because of the easier access to the undercarriage. Once under the vehicle, the thief uses a saw to slice through the piping on both sides of the converter. The converter is then pulled off.

### **To avoid becoming a victim of this kind of theft, follow this advice:**

- Fitting perimeter security fencing can help deter opportunist thieves and slow down more organised thieves.
- Good security lighting makes vehicles more visible and can act as a deterrent.
- If you can, park your vehicle in a locked garage when it is unattended.
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) can be an effective deterrent.
- Where possible park a vehicle against a kerb, with the catalytic converter being closest to the kerb.
- If there is a fleet of vehicles, park the low clearance vehicles to block the high-clearance vehicles. This will obstruct access underneath.
- If a catalytic converter is a bolt on type it is possible to have the bolts welded shut.
- Fit protective coverings on catalytic converters, these can make it much more difficult for thieves.
- Have your catalytic converter etched or forensically marked and put stickers in the windscreen to say this has been done.

- Consider installing a Thatcham approved alarm to your vehicle. Ones that activate if your vehicle is lifted or tilted are particularly effective.

**These websites provide details of product that could help protect your vehicle**

Approved by the Association of Chief Police Officers’

Secured by Design scheme [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

Approved Thatcham alarm installers [www.thatcham.org](http://www.thatcham.org)

Catalytic converter marking system [www.retainagroup.com](http://www.retainagroup.com)

Products to enhance vehicle security [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com)

Other products by Secured By Design are available

Catalytic converter guards [www.garrisonlocks.co.uk](http://www.garrisonlocks.co.uk)

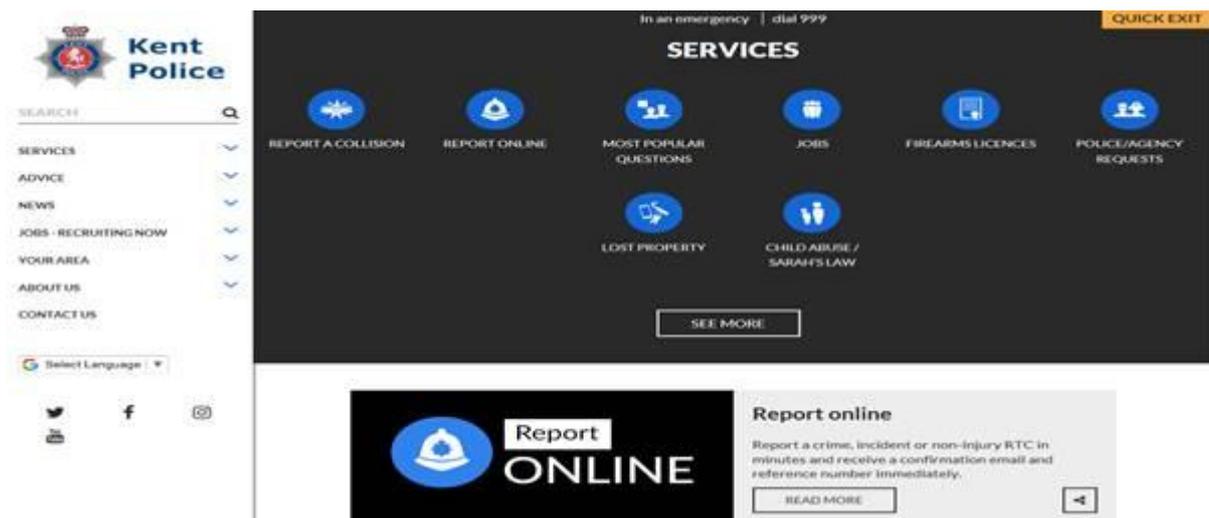
Catalytic - theft prevention kit [www.catalyticconvertertheft.com](http://www.catalyticconvertertheft.com)

CatSecure theft prevention device for Mercedes Sprinter vans [www.maplefleetservices.co.uk](http://www.maplefleetservices.co.uk)

CatClamp catalytic converter lock [www.catsafe.org.uk](http://www.catsafe.org.uk)

**I hope you find this guide of use, and remember if you see any suspicious activity or if you suspect a converter has been stolen then report it to the Police immediately by calling 101, alternatively report this online: <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online/>**

We would like to remind all residents to stay vigilant and report anything suspicious online or via the Kent Police non-emergency number 101 or if you do witness a crime in progress then please do call 999.



**\*\*\*Also please do not forget the online chat and crime reporting system on the Kent Police website which gives members of the public the ability to report crime online rather than by phone which some may find easier, faster and more convenient.\*\*\***

<https://www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice/>



## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

**My name is Peter New and I work with Ashford Police Neighbourhood Watch Team**

### **What is Neighbourhood Watch?**

An active Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, which is free to join, can

- 1. Reduce crime and the opportunities for crime**
- 2. Help and reassure those who live in fear of crime**
- 3. Encourage neighbourliness and closer communities**
- 4. Help improve the local environment.**

I am pleased to work with your PCSO's Oliver Welch, Sam Sadler and Luke Jones to help to keep your community safe by providing Crime Reports, Warnings and Alerts to help keep you safe and your property secure.

Many of you across the district may already be members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes and please continue to support your local coordinators as much as you can

If you would like to join Neighbourhood Watch please contact me on

[peternew1@aol.com](mailto:peternew1@aol.com) OR 07768437422

### **THE MORE WE ARE, THE STRONGER WE ARE AND CRIME CANNOT FLOURISH IN A COMMUNITY THAT CARES AND IS VIGILANT**

Across the Ashford District and Communities there are trends of crime to try to warn you of to allow you to prepare and plan to keep your properties safe and secure.

**To report a crime in progress or if someone's life is at risk, please dial 999, otherwise incidents can be reported, and intelligence given to 101. If you want to give information about any crime anonymously, please contact Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.**

The last number is important. In the community sometimes the criminals are known and people are too frightened to make the call. Crime Stoppers can take information in total and absolute confidence.

- 1. VEHICLES.** Ensure vehicles are secure and leave nothing whatsoever on show. Care with commercial vehicles and vans that have tools and equipment left in them overnight.
- 2. GARAGES, SHEDS and OUTBUILDINGS** keep locked and as secure as possible.
- 3. BEWARE OF BOGUS CALLERS and DISTRACTION BURGLARIES**
- 4.** Please take care with the notes you leave out for **DELIVERY DRIVERS** "I'm out all day" may be read by anyone!!
- 5.** Take great care please with **SCAM TELEPHONE CALLERS. If you are unsure hang up and check.**

**Stay safe, secure, alert and vigilant at all times**

**THANK YOU. Peter New. ([peternew1@aol.com](mailto:peternew1@aol.com))**