****Hello,

This is your April newsletter from PCSO’s Oliver Welch, Luke Jones and Samantha Sadler.

I am pleased to report that recorded crime is lower than at the same time last year. As I am sure you can imagine, Covid-19 has and continues to be the primary focus of staff at this time. Please see below the guidance set out from the Government.

**RULES ON STAYING AT HOME AND AWAY FROM OTHERS**

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is now (23 March 2020) introducing three new measures.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes;

2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces;

3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public.

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

These measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

**1. STAYING AT HOME**

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons.

* **Shopping for basic necessities**​, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
* **One form of exercise a day**, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
* **Any medical need**​, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
* **Travelling to and from work**​, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating​, and for the ​most vulnerable who need to be shielded​.

If you work in a critical sector outlined in this​guidance​, or your child has been identified as vulnerable, you can continue to take your children to school.​ Where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents’ homes

**2. CLOSING NON-ESSENTIAL SHOPS AND PUBLIC SPACES**

Last week, the Government ordered certain businesses - including pubs, cinemas and theatres - to close.

The Government is now extending this requirement to a further set of businesses and other venues,

including:

* **all non-essential retail stores** - this will include clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets, excluding food markets,
* **libraries, community centres, and youth centres**​,
* **indoor and outdoor leisure facilities**​ such as bowling alleys, arcades and soft play facilities,
* **communal places within parks**​, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms,
* **places of worship**, ​except for funerals attended by immediate families,
* **hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for** commercial/leisure use (excluding permanent residents and key workers).

More detailed information can be found ​on the Government website​, [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Ffurther-businesses-and-premises-to-close&data=02%7C01%7CSamantha.Sadler%40kent.police.uk%7C6e94fedbab1f49a9c48908d7d00032ed%7Cf31b07f09cf940db964d6ff986a97e3d%7C0%7C0%7C637206571578870216&sdata=m6l7f0AhpoHx5yEljCwXMMcNVsSX1pnWDqZrC8f5Xy8%3D&reserved=0) including a full list of those businesses and other venues that must close. Businesses and other venues not on this list may remain open.

**3. STOPPING PUBLIC GATHERINGS**

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the Government is also ​**stopping all public gatherings of more than two people​.**

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

● **where the gathering is of a group of people who live togethe​r** - this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home.

● **where the gathering is essential for work purposes** - but workers should be trying to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

In addition, the Government is stopping social events, including weddings, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. This will exclude funerals, which can be attended by immediate family.

**DELIVERING THESE NEW MEASURES**

These measures will reduce our day to day contact with other people. They are a vital part of our efforts to reduce the rate of transmission of coronavirus.

**Every citizen is instructed to comply with these new measures.**

The Government will therefore be ensuring the police and other relevant authorities have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings where people do not comply.

They will initially last for the three weeks from 23 March, at which point the Government will look at them again and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Please see the Government website at [https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fcoronavirus&data=02%7C01%7CSamantha.Sadler%40kent.police.uk%7C6e94fedbab1f49a9c48908d7d00032ed%7Cf31b07f09cf940db964d6ff986a97e3d%7C0%7C0%7C637206571578880207&sdata=m08GiRbSaJhWNT3bF2NSBhBvv98CblVSa6kUeiQPk1g%3D&reserved=0)  should you require further details.

Regrettably, the current situation may lead to an increase in certain types of crime. Please take this time to look at your home security. Also, if you have business premises please ensure that you have good security in place. Do not leave tools or other valuables in vehicles.

Please continue to look out for your neighbours, especially those who are elderly, vulnerable or live alone. This current situation can bring out the best in people, with many offering to help and support the vulnerable members of our communities. Whatsapp, Facebook and other networking sites are a great way to stay connected to those who are dear to us without out having to venture out. Obviously you can always pick up the phone!

Finally, I just want to leave you with John Apter’s, the Chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, response to the Prime Minister’s announcement with regards to the lockdown:

*“We are in unprecedented and uncertain times, with government advice frequently changing as COVID-19 affects more people.”*

*“Saving lives and protecting the public is the number one priority for us all; and at his time of national crisis it is essential that we all come together and play our part in doing so.”*

*“The practicalities of policing this lockdown will be challenging, but policing will do all it can to keep the public safe, but we need the public to support us. I ask that the public heed the advice and stay at home unless absolutely necessary. This will allow police officers to concentrate on keeping the streets safe and deal with all the regular calls we receive. This is about saving lives and supporting our NHS, I ask that the public gives us their support in this time of crisis."*

**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**!!

**RECRUITMENT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**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.**

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

NHW Recruitment has been severely affected as my preferred option is face to face on the doorstep when signing people on.

However, with good use of social media I have been able to have a steady stream of new members across the whole district. Its free to join and allows members to receive crime reports, alerts and warnings to help people stay free from crime and free from the fear of being a victim of crime.

**To become a NHW Member contact me on peternew1@aol.com**

**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**

**If you’re not in Neighbourhood Watch and you are reading this report, please consider joining.**

Thank you for your support as always

**Peter**

**Peter New (peternew1@aol.com)**

**Neighbourhood Watch Team**

**Suspected Ashford drug dealer to appear in court**

A suspected drug dealer, based in Ashford, has been remanded in custody.

The offences relate to an arrest made by officers from the  Ashford Community Policing Team on Friday 24 April 2020, who were on patrol in the Victoria Park area of the town at the time.

Jason Conway, 43, of no fixed address, was charged on Saturday 25 April with two counts of possessing Class A drugs with intent to supply, and possessing a lock knife in a public place. He was also charged with causing criminal damage to a police cell.

He appeared at Medway Magistrates’ Court on Monday 27 April via virtual link where he was remanded in custody. The case will next be heard at Canterbury Crown Court on Friday 22 May.

During these uncertain times we have and will be continuing our work and patrols in the area, ensuring that we can deliver support and the best service to the community as we can.

 

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