

# Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Unit Newsletter

October 2020

Rural Wards – Benenden & Cranbrook, Brenchley & Horsmonden, Capel, Frittenden & Sissinghurst, Goudhurst & Lamberhurst, Hawkhurst & Sandhurst, Paddock Wood and Pembury

Welcome to the monthly newsletter from the Community Safety Unit, filled with information about what we have been doing, crime prevention advice and other news!

## What has been going on this month?

We continue to receive reports of nuisance youths in Paddock Wood around Mascalls and the Putlands sports centre where groups have been congregating before and after college. There have been suggestions they have been using cannabis and causing ASB. The local PCSO has been attending the location and as well as moving the youths on, his presence has also meant that the number that have been congregating has decreased. SALUS and Early Help have also visited the area and engaged with the youths.

Criminal damage was reported in the church yard at Goudhurst and the local PCSO has subsequently spent time engaging with the youths in the area and patrolling the area to deter any further issues. We also received reports of motorbikes being ridden in fields at the back of Lurkins Rise. Patrols of the area have taken place and there have been no further reports.

A male was stopped on the High Street in Cranbrook where he and his vehicle were subsequently searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act. A large quantity of cash and drugs were located, and the male was arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs. They are currently released under investigation for further forensic analysis and phone research.

Two males were arrested for going equipped when they were located next to a building site between Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. Numerous tools were located in the vehicle that they were travelling in, and they could not account for their presence at the location, raising the suspicions of the officers sufficiently for the arrests to be made.

There have been reports of thefts from motor vehicles across the district where vans and cars have been broken into. Tools and other valuable items have been stolen from the vehicles. Please see the advice on the next page to secure and protect your vehicles and belongings.

Unfortunately, the run up to Christmas also tends to coincide with an increase in the number of burglaries from dwellings. The CSU have reviewed offences that took place at the same time last year and will be contacting previous victims to check what safeguarding and crime prevention advice they have been offered and see whether there is further advice that can be given to reduce the risk of being targeted again. There is also crime prevention advice available on the Kent Police website to provide guidance about reducing the risk of becoming a victim of crime.

Extra police officers and police community support officers have been on patrol from late afternoon through the evening over the last couple of weeks to deter youths from causing ASB and committing crime. Over Halloween, Fireworks Night and the following weekend they have also been assisting with preventing COVID breaches and lockdown issues. They were on hand to offer advice to the public and move groups on to prevent loitering in town and village centres.

## Twitter

The Tunbridge Wells CSU regularly Tweets updates on what we have been doing and any live incidents that need to be shared with the public.

Please follow **@kentpolicetwell** for the latest news and information.

You can also report non urgent crimes online at [www.kent.police.uk/report](http://www.kent.police.uk/report) as well as via 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Three new PCSOs will be joining the team towards the end of November, taking the total number of PCSOs who patrol the Tunbridge Wells borough up to 12. Each PCSO is responsible for a couple of Wards and liaises with the Parish Council to discuss any issues that are raised by the residents or the Council. They are responsible for providing reassurance through community engagement, being highly visible in their wards and feeding back intelligence. The PCSOs are expected to contact the Councils at least bi-monthly and attend Parish Council Meetings when they are able to do so.

## Preventing Vehicle Crime

We have recently seen an increase in thefts from motor vehicles; both work vans and cars, so below is some advice to assist with reducing the risk of being targeted.

### 1. Always lock it

Fuelling up or popping back into your house to get something are perfect examples of how easy it is to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecured. So, get into the habit of locking your vehicle even if you're only going to be away from it for a moment.

### 2. Close windows and the sunroof to prevent 'fishing'

Leaving windows and the sunroof open invites fishing for items through the gap by hand or with, say, a bent coat hanger, which could also be used to unlock a door for them to get in. Thieves can be ingenious. Don't give them the opportunity.

### 3. Secure your number plates with tamper-resistant screws

The easiest way to change the identity of a stolen vehicle or avoid speeding tickets and parking tickets is to fit stolen number plates. Using security screws to attach your vehicle's number plates makes it harder for thieves to get your number.

### 4. Fit locking, anti-tamper wheel nuts to secure alloy wheels

Stolen wheels are valuable, either as parts or for their scrap value. Using locking wheel nuts reduces the risk of your vehicle's wheels being stolen.

### 5. Secure anything that's on the outside of your vehicle

Anything left on roof-racks, tailgate racks, holiday top boxes or in tool chests are easily stolen when the vehicle is parked. The use of cable locks, padlocks and self-locking tool chests, which are secured to the vehicle, makes them more secure, but still, don't leave things in them if you can avoid it.

### 6. Take it with you or hide it

Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. Remember, the cost of replacing a window is often much more than that of what's stolen. It should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle.

### 7. Hide electrical items and leave no clues

Leaving sat nav mounts, suction cup marks on windows or cables on view gives it away that you have left a Sat Nav, smartphone or other device in your car. Even if they can't see the Sat Nav or iPad they might still break in to see if it's stored in the car, out of sight.

### 8. Tool theft from vans

Vans are often targeted by thieves for the tools stored inside. If you must leave tools in a van overnight, it's a good idea to mark them clearly with your name / company name and address using paint pens and seal with a clear lacquer spray. Alternatively, you can use a variety of other property marking systems. Items that are clearly marked are less desirable and more difficult to sell on.

Consider using a lockable cabinet within your van to store tools – several security rated products are available. Small cameras are also designed to record inside vehicles.

You can also take photographs of items of value, make a note of the serial numbers and consider registering them online at a property register site.

### 9. Park in well-lit and busier areas

It can take less than 30 seconds to break into a vehicle. Parking in well-lit areas and busy streets increases the chances of a thief being seen, so they'll probably steer clear.

### 10. Take your documents with you

Having a vehicle's registration and insurance documents could let a thief pretend to be the owner. Which means they could sell it on quite easily. So, never leave any documents in the vehicle.

### 11. Choose your car park wisely

If possible, always try to park in well-lit and staffed car parks or those with a Park Mark safer parking award.