

March Newsletter from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

To [First Name],

As Police & Crime Commissioner, I'm always keen to bring new ways of working to Hertfordshire where it generates improvements. This month, I'm sharing news of two such initiatives: a new retail crime reporting system to support the crackdown on shoplifting and the use of forensic DNA marking sprays to tackle nuisance and dangerous e-bikes and off-road bikes. Find out more about these initiatives below.

This month, I'd like to highlight some great work by Hertfordshire's police officers and staff to: conclude investigations into serious violence in Watford with over 100 years of jail terms, make 10 arrests during a week of action against county lines, make arrests following a series of burglaries and tackle town centre anti-social behaviour.

I'm always interested in hearing what residents think and whether your priorities are being met, so please do get in touch and share your thoughts on commissioner@herts-pcc.gov.uk

Best wishes

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

New retail crime reporting system to support the crackdown on shoplifting



Hertfordshire shoplifters are being put on notice as a new reporting system is to be introduced, making it easier and quicker for retailers to provide evidence and information to the police.

A pilot of ShopSafe Alert is being introduced in four of the county's town centres and retail parks, as part of ongoing work to make town centres safer.

Stage one makes it easier to capture details of criminal incidents and hold intelligence for Police evaluation. Retailers will be able to share more information about incidents and prolific offenders with each other and police, allowing them to prevent more shoplifting from occurring.

Future developments aim to enable a direct reporting facility to Hertfordshire Police's control room with retail staff able to quickly upload evidence, such as CCTV footage and witness statements via the system which will speed up evidence gathering, issuing of crime reference numbers, this time saving system will make crime reporting more likely.

The pilot will be run in collaboration with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Business Improvement Districts in Bishop's Stortford, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage (Roaring Meg Retail Park).

I'm determined that we turn the tide on retail crime in Hertfordshire. It is not a victimless crime; it impacts hardworking retail staff, hurts independent businesses and means we all pay more as consumers.

Importantly, making it easier for retailers to share information and submit the right evidence to the police will ensure we see more action taken against shoplifters in Hertfordshire.

Read more here

Tackling nuisance and anti-social e-bikes and off-road bikes



One of the issues that residents frequently raise with me is incidents of nuisance and anti-social e-bikes and off-road bikes. From dangerous riding in public places to intimidation of other residents, it's important we take action.

These bikes are illegal to ride on the public highway or pavements, but police pursuits are not always safe or possible.

To address this, I've funded a pilot by the Neighbourhood Policing Team in Letchworth Garden City to use a safe forensic DNA marking spray to mark bikes and offenders. This helps identify those involved in anti-social or illegal behaviour so officers can follow up and link them to offences.

Last week, I joined the Letchworth NPT to see the pilot in action and heard some early successes, including taking stolen bikes off the road.

Supporting victims across Hertfordshire



Supporting victims of crime remains a key priority, which is why I've agreed further funding to strengthen the support available across Hertfordshire.

More than £150,000 has been pledged across 38 different projects delivering immediate, practical support to victims. I've also extended funding for our domestic abuse perpetrator programme, which is working to reduce reoffending.

Speaking at the Hertfordshire Victim Awareness Conference this month, I reinforced the importance of making sure victims are properly supported and taken seriously.

Behind every crime is a victim whose life has been affected, sometimes in was that aren't always visible. It's essential that we not only take crime seriously, but that we support victims properly and ensure the system works for them.

This latest funding builds on that approach, ensuring services can continue to response to demand, provide tailored support and deliver real impact for victims across the country.

Holding the police to account on burglary, live facial recognition and firearms licensing



Each month I hold my public Accountability and Performance meeting, where I hold the Constabulary to account on behalf of Hertfordshire residents.

These meetings are an important way of making sure the issues that matter most to the public are being addressed. They are webcast live and published on my website for transparency.

This month, burglary was on the agenda. While burglary remains low in Hertfordshire, I have been holding the Constabulary to account for increasing detection rates. I was pleased to hear there is good progress being made in increasing the number of arrests for burglary this year.

I also scrutinised the recent deployment of live facial recognition in Watford, which led to four arrests.

Progress is also being made to reduce the backlog of applications for firearms licenses in Hertfordshire and address the recommendations from a recent independent inspection.

These meetings are about one thing, making sure that Hertfordshire Constabulary is delivering for residents. You can watch this meeting here.

I'm always interested in hearing what residents think and whether your priorities are being met, so please do get in touch and share your thoughts on commissioner@herts-pcc.gov.uk

Best wishes

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

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