



Supported by

Kent
County
Council
kent.gov.uk



WATCH OUT

the newsletter for North Kent Neighbourhood Watch members

WINTER 2021 EDITION

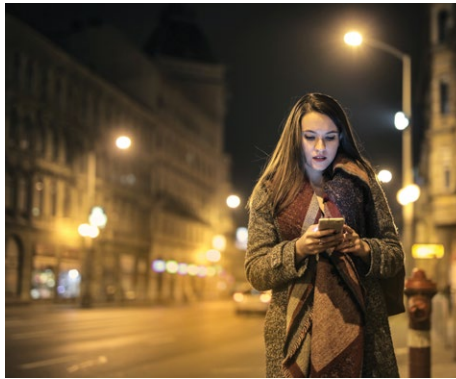
Women have an absolute right to be safe says Kent Police Chief

The safety of women and girls is a top priority for Kent Police, Chief Constable Alan Pughsley told a recent public meeting in the wake of the horrific murder of Sarah Everard by Wayne Couzens, a serving Metropolitan police officer.

Every aspect of modern policing is being used to rebuild trust and confidence in the police, Mr Pughsley said. "Women and girls have an absolute right to be safe, whether in their own homes, in the workplace, or on the streets. We are putting violence against women and girls at the heart of everything we do.

"Wayne Couzens does not represent anyone in Kent Police," he emphasised. "This evening is about reassuring women and girls, and the public, that they can trust my officers and staff to look after them and keep them safe - that is why they come to work each day."

He outlined his force's mission to provide a first class service through increased visibility, connectivity and transparency, by inviting scrutiny, determining that inclusivity is at the heart of everything they do, by introducing safer streets programmes,



putting together a perpetrators programme, getting officers quickly into places where they are needed, and giving talks in schools, to youth clubs and sports clubs, and working with young offenders to reinforce the message that violence against women and girls is unacceptable.

Kent now has the largest number of police officers in its history; an increase in January will bring the total to over 4,000 men and women. Of this, 43% are female.

Questions from the audience included what the force was doing about making misogyny a hate crime (the law Commission is making recommendations): tackling cultural behaviour within the force (excellent work already undertaken); restoring confidence

after Couzens was alleged to have been referred to as 'the rapist' by fellow officers who allegedly did nothing about it (currently under investigation); what is being done about the increase of violence against women around large sporting events (using White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions is one aspect); what is being done about drink spiking and needle spiking (no confirmed evidence of the latter in North Kent at the moment but there is a plan to respond to it - anyone found in possession of the drug will be arrested, charged and brought to court) ... and the questions continued.

The meeting was hosted by senior county and local police officers at Northfleet School for Girls on 27th October. A similar event was held in Dartford.

General safety advice given: If women think they are being followed they should ring 999, not 101.

A suggestion from the audience: Download one of the many personal safety apps now on the market which pinpoint location and send audio and video evidence directly to the mobile phones of a pre-set group of contacts.

Kent Police launches new way of working

My Community Voice is a new two-way communication tool set up by Kent Police for residents, businesses and community groups in Kent and Medway.

This new way of communicating and listening to the public builds on the successes of Kent Neighbourhood Watch, a Kent Police commune



**Kent
Police**

states. "My Community Voice will support, not replace, the excellent work being done by

Neighbourhood Watch across Kent and Medway."

It enables Kent police officers and staff to update news, alerts, appeals, engagement events and general policing activities and will be a new way of working for Kent Police PCSOs.

Find out more on the Kent Police website.

FRAUD ISN'T JUST A SCAM IT'S A CRIME

Digital technology the key to a brighter future

The entire range of digital platforms will be used to help ensure a brighter future for Neighbourhood Watch in North Kent.

This was the message from the incoming Chair to the Annual General Meeting of the Association of North Kent Neighbourhood Watches.

Munjeet Mehmi said links with North Kent Police and community partnerships will be maintained, and every aspect of digital platforms used to raise awareness of crime and crime prevention, promote online safety, and engage with members on current safety issues impacting on local areas. We will also broaden our reach to non-members and the wider community, she said.

The new lineup of officers is:

Chairman - Munjeet Mehmi

Vice-Chairman - Chris Cook

Secretary - Harj Goraya

Treasurer - Chris Cook

Committee - all the above plus Peter Harman, Jason Clitherow, Isobel Kesby and Michael Laidlow.

In her annual report to the meeting the outgoing Chair Isobel Kesby

said while the pandemic had been a challenging time for NHW in North Kent, the focus had remained on three main aims, preventing crime in all its forms, promoting membership and maintaining and building on community safety links. She expressed confidence that the incoming officers and Committee would take the Association fully into the electronic age.

The Treasurer Chris Cook's annual report revealed that overall the Association is in a good financial position. Although there was funding to hold face to face meetings to increase membership, they were unable to take place because of Covid personal contact guidelines. The online version of the quarterly newsletter WATCH OUT continued but a print version had often not been an option, again due to Covid restrictions.

Both reports were accepted with thanks.

Mr Doug Powell (outgoing Vice-Chairman) spoke personally and on behalf of the committee when he thanked Isobel Kesby for her dedication and support to NHW

in North Kent, firstly serving as the Secretary and then with the dual role of Chairman and Secretary. Isobel worked tirelessly to ensure the business of the committee continued through the difficult covid pandemic, attending many meetings and representing NHW on important North Kent Police and local council working groups. Isobel intends to remain on the committee to support the new incoming Chairman.

Chris Cook spoke on behalf of the committee to thank Mr Powell for supporting North Kent NHW for over 10 years as he has decided to step down this year. In this time Doug had held many officer roles, and for the last few years he provided invaluable support to the officers of the committee in his role as Vice-Chairman. Doug's experience and willingness to share information has helped the committee to engage with Kent Police and to ensure our Constitution meets the needs of the community.

The AGM took place via Zoom on 26th October.

Christmas Crime Prevention

- With all the additional holiday food and drink, presents and other goodies stored within garages and outbuildings, ensure that they are hidden out of sight and the buildings are securely locked with good quality and well-fitted locks. Treat your shed to a shed alarm this Christmas!
- Avoid tempting window shopping burglars; don't leave presents and valuables on full view in front of a window.
- Don't attract burglars to your home by leaving it in darkness; leave lights on, operate them on timers.
- Lock gates and keep unwanted visitors from getting to the rear of your home.
- Whether on an evening out or Christmas shopping keep your bags, handbags, wallets and mobiles safe. Busy places make it easier for the sneak thief and pickpockets, so be alert at all times.
- Don't leave valuables and gifts on display in your car.
- When you go to leave the house and find that your car is all iced up, don't leave it unattended with the engine running to de-ice it. It only takes a second

to steal your car and it would invalidate any insurance claim.

- When attending a party plan your return home in advance. Don't use unlicensed taxis. Ensure you drink responsibly and are aware of your surroundings, whilst keeping your drink and belongings safe.
- Be careful about what you post on social media. Try not to broadcast your activity and information about the gifts you have received when not at home.
- After Christmas don't advertise your nice gifts to the thieves by putting out the empty boxes for collection undisguised. Fold them up inside-out or put them inside other nondescript boxes and bags.
- Register your new property free on www.immobilise.com Install tracking and security apps on relevant electrical and computer products.



Who to call

In an Emergency: dial 999

Non Emergency: dial 101 or online at <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online/kent-police-online-reporting>

To report anonymously: Kent Crimestoppers dial 0800 555111 or online at <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/crimestoppers>

Neighbourhood Watch: Call Michael Laidlow our Volunteer & Watch Liaison Officer (VWLO) dial 07816 291343

Victim Support Kent: Freephone 0808 168 9111

Newsletter Editor: Chris Cook email address christopher.cook@kent.police.uk