

Community Beat Officer Report & Neighbourhood Watch Bulletin

February 2005

New Milton and area

At the risk of beginning to sound a little repetitive, this month's report shows the continued downward trend of reported crime. It must be remembered that January is always one of our quietest months, but even so, the figure for this January is half that of January 2004.

The campaign

For those of you who may have not read the previous monthly reports, it is worth repeating, that during November and December, New Milton Police maintained a campaign focused on juvenile alcohol abuse. Large amounts of alcohol were seized from youths on the street and the supply was restricted with the co-operation of off-licence staff, who enforced a strict 'under 21's' identification policy. In addition, four of our most persistent offenders received Anti-social Behaviour Orders just before Christmas, and the conditions imposed on them have curbed their behaviour and been a sobering warning to others.

The results

The impact on local offenders of this recent police action can be seen in the January figures for the whole New Milton area: 'burglary' fell to just 3 from 14 last year – 'damage' reports fell from 68 to 33 – 'theft' reports from 33 to 14. The only category of crime to show an increase in January was 'assaults', which rose to 35 from 33. This figure could give rise to concern until you hear that 17 of them arose in domestic/family situations and a further 8 were fights between children. Of the remaining 10, 5 were in licensed premises, and the remaining 5 were between 'teens' on the street, often the worse for drink. Alcohol abuse is still behind much of our crime and our campaign is on-going.

Meeting of Licensees

Most Licensed premises in the New Milton area have little incidence of violence associated them, however the subject was a matter raised at a meeting of Licensees which took place on the 3rd Feb. The meeting, arranged by the police, was attended by Mr Martin POWELL, NFDC Licensing Manager. The primary issue for discussion was the proposed 'flexible' opening hours and the impact of later closing on the community. This meeting was a continuance of our strategy, to combat drink related anti-social behaviour by targeting any such behaviour and in partnership with the licensed trade.

Vehicle Crime

Last summer the Hampshire Constabulary launched four campaigns across the force area aimed at reducing crime, increasing awareness, and providing reassurance to the public. They are called 'SAFER' - Homes, Vehicles, Roads and Streets. These campaigns are not meant to provide quick fix's, but sustainable long term improvements in the way we operate as a police service, putting more emphasis on 'crime prevention' rather than just detection. That old phrase 'together we'll crack it' may sound a bit dated now, but it still rings very true. Like it or not, we all have a part to play in reducing crime and improving the environment that we live in.

Vehicle crime accounts for around 1 in every 5 offences committed in the UK, totalling around a million crimes each year. Many of those crimes are easily preventable had the owners either taken more care, or been more active in trying to preventing it happening in the first place. Of course you have to leave your car unattended, and when you do, you will never be free of the risk of crime. However, the 'when', 'where' and 'how' you leave it can greatly influence your chances of becoming a victim or not.

Although we are actively targeting those individuals suspected of committing car crime, and have had some very good success in locking up those responsible, we know that new thieves are coming on the scene all the time. The variance in locations and lack of crime method can make solving this type of crime very difficult. Most car thieves are opportunists and will often take the path of least resistance. So, as a car owner, you would do well to make things awkward, even difficult and unattractive, for Mr Thief to have a go at your car. Often the simple things can make the most difference....

Thieves don't like being seen at work, so get some light on your car and leave it within view of your house preferably, or at least somebody else's.

If you have a garage, use it!

When you are out and about looking for a car park, sometimes its worth paying a bit more and going for one where you know there is CCTV fitted, car thieves tend to be a bit camera shy.

Remember most car thieves like it easy, so a visible deterrent is money well spent. 'Stoplocks' on the gear stick or steering wheel may not stop the most determined, but it will probably make most of them think again and move on. A good car alarm can make a car a very unattractive proposition. A dummy or even real CCTV camera pointed at your car on the drive will possibly cause a thief some concern about being identified.

And yes.. Valuables! Don't leave them in your car!! If you think your handbag is safe under the seat, think again, because that is the first place they look. It might sound daft, but placing a sign in the window that says that 'there is nothing in the car worth stealing' can clear up any doubt for the nice person who is just about to put a brick through your car window to find out. Finally here's a real good one... lock your car!! A recent spate of car crime revealed that nearly half of the cars broken into were not locked!

PLEASE Help us and help yourself. If you see anything or anybody who looks out of place or acting strange in your area, please make a mental note of their description and take a car number if they have one. It may not mean much at the time, but it could mean a lot to us, if a crime is committed later. If you believe a crime is being committed at the time please tell us, DAIL 999.

Please be reassured, car crime, like all crime generally, is on the decline in the New Forest, which is a low crime area compared to other parts of the County and Country. However low crime is, we all want it to be lower.

Police response times

At a recent Town Council meeting concern was expressed about police response times to calls made for police attendance. Whilst calls have to be prioritised, and at times there may well be no free unit to attend a call, it is hoped that any delay is explained to the caller. We would wish to always respond promptly, but if callers feel that their call has not received the attention it deserved, and that no explanation has been given, then we would welcome the opportunity to investigate the circumstances around this.

The Town centre – PC Steve Jennings

I am pleased to have some difficulty in bringing to you something of note in respect of January crime in the town centre. Reported crime for the month on this beat fell 44% to just 32 reports.

Just to give you some idea of my 'problem', there were only 3 reports of damage, 5 reports of public disorder, 8 thefts and 1 burglary during the whole of January – long may it last!

Vehicle Crime

There were only two vehicle related crimes reported, but both were the theft of cars. One, an old Maestro, was taken from behind Whitefield Rd and could have been stolen anytime since 01/11/04. The other was a Toyota, again an old vehicle, which was taken from Elm Ave car park on the 01/01 and later found damaged in a forest car park. Older cars are vulnerable and we need the public to be alert to the suspicious behaviour of thieves in this sort of situation.

Licensed Premises

We are aware that some of those who use licensed premises in the town centre do present a problem of disorder on the street at closing times. There have also been a number of incidents within such premises in recent months. The situation is being monitored and management are being encouraged to do more to address the problems. Issues of disorder in licensed premises and anti-social behaviour on the street were on the agenda at the recent meeting with licensees.

Milford, Everton & Barton – PC Del Jones

The year has started with a bang as six pieces of unexploded wartime ordinance were found on Hurst Spit. The spit was closed for about three hours in the interest of public safety whilst servicemen from the Royal Logistic Corps attended to deal with them. A controlled explosion was conducted and the ordinance safely removed.

Fraud

A considerable amount of my time this month has been spent investigating internet and credit card fraud. It is an offence which is on the increase generally and it is important that your bank cards and pin numbers are kept secure. If you feel that your card or bank account has been compromised, please contact your bank as soon as possible. They will cancel you cards if necessary and reduce the “pay off” for the people who commit this type of crime.

Speeding Vehicles

I have been asked by many residents to do something about the speed that cars travel around our streets. I have asked our Roads Policing Unit (Traffic) to give me some help with this and I have requested that the mobile safety camera pay a visit to our area.

Youth issues

I think the cold weather has cooled off the spirits of many of the young people who in the past were gathering in quite large numbers at various locations around the beat. The number of calls relating to youth nuisance has dropped considerably this month. Patrols have targeted youths purchasing alcohol underage, and those selling it to them. This has resulted in a large quantity of alcohol being confiscated and disposed of. It has also led to fines for those people who have supplied it to these youths. The patrols have had a noticeable impact on the number of alcohol related incidents we attend.

Burglary

Although the number of reported burglaries is low this month we have had a few incidents where properties have been broken into following a calls from door to door sales people. Callers who are genuine will carry identification and will be happy to show it. If in doubt don't let them in.

Damage

There have been several reports of damage to beach huts this month, including three destroyed by fire. Reported damage to motor vehicles is also down again this month with only three reported offences in the three villages this month.

New Milton West – PC Colin Stratton and WPC Jodie Bosworth

Davis Field to the North Milton Estate

This period has been quiet, however, there appears to be an increase in activity on the footbridge linking Davis Field to the North Milton Estate, which we have just been made aware of and will be monitoring with directed patrols during the evenings. We have also been told about an increase in electric scooters using the bridge and this will also be dealt with during the directed patrols.

It is vital that members of the public report incidents that occur to us to enable us to target our resources.

Assaults

There were 13 reported assaults during the month. Of these 8 were domestic incidents, happening within the home, 3 were between children on the street, and the remaining 2 were late evening incidents involving teenagers.

New Milton East – PC Sam BLAKE-WATKINS

With the long awaited retirement of PC Ray GAIT, the beat is temporarily without an officer. Very shortly PC Sam BLAKE-WATKINS will be joining us here at New Milton, but in the meantime this report is compiled by PC Steve JENNINGS.

This beat has seen a 58% fall in reported crime on January 2004's figure, which means things have been very quiet for what can be a busy area.

Vehicle Crime

A series of thefts from unattended vehicles in the Ashley Common Rd/Marston Rd areas, 4 in total – the last three being overnight on the 31/01 - has caused concern. Cars have been forcibly entered, usually by breaking a window, and property stolen.

Assaults

There were 11 reported assaults for this Beat last month. As previously explained, the majority of these, 9 of them, were committed within the home between family members. The remaining 2 occurred in the street, but were between teenagers known to each other.

Hordle, Sway , Tiptoe & Bashley

In the absence of PC.BESZANT from work at the present time, this months report is presented by PC Steve JENNINGS.

Patrols have called at the gathering points favoured by the youngsters in Hordle village throughout the month and no offences of public disorder have been reported. During the month of January, 25 crimes were recorded for the whole Beat. These crimes were well scattered throughout all the villages, Hordle, Sway and Everton, with no crime reported at Bashley.

Vehicle Crime

During the month there have been three incidents where cars have been forcibly entered. One was at Hordle Church on the 22/01 when a vehicle had its soft top cut to gain access to remove property. Another was on the afternoon of the 09/01 at Tiptoe Baptist Church when a window was broken, and the third occurred on the 05/01 at the Hare & Hounds at Sway where, in the early evening, a car window was broken. The lesson here is, do not leave items of value in your car.

Damage

There were 10 reports of damage divided between Hordle, Everton and Sway. These incidents were isolated and varied and ranged from a wall being pushed over in Sway, to a cat being 'damaged', injured by a pellet in Everton. Each report was an individual and 'one off' event revealing no trend that patrols can focus on.

Non-dwelling burglaries

There were 3 reported burglaries of non-dwelling premises. Sway Youth centre was entered, possibly through an insecure fire door, and a quantity of chocolates removed from the tuck shop store. A private garage adjacent to a house in Tiptoe Rd at Sway was also forced and a 'John REES' lawn tractor was stolen. Lastly, at Wooton Rd at Tiptoe, a tack room was forcibly entered and a quantity of tack was stolen.

If you would like to make any comment regarding the content of the Bulletin, or you have information that would enable us to target our patrols to address your local problem, your input would be welcomed. You can leave a message for either PS Dave TANNER or PC Steve JENNINGS on 0845 045 4545

'Crimestoppers' – 0800 555 111