

Community Beat Officer Report & Neighbourhood Watch Bulletin March 2005

New Milton and area

Reported crime for February totalled 159, against last February's figure of 281. All categories of crime continue to show a marked fall in incidence on last year, with the one exception of 'burglary.' Three different areas of the Sector have suffered, and there is reason to believe that we have more than one burglar at work. The Beat officers will go into more detail in respect of their own areas, but in total we have had 16 burglaries. Nine of these burglaries have been in Barton on Sea, a further four in the North Milton area, and the remaining two in Sway. In nearly all cases, access was forced to houses where the offender could get to the back of the property where he could not be observed.

New 'Pub Watch' Scheme

At the meeting on the 3rd February local Licensees agreed to form a 'Pub Watch' Scheme in the New Milton town area. This scheme basically allows the licensed trade to adopt a united front to deal with violent and troublesome customers. In essence, if a person is excluded from one premises then he may well find himself excluded from them all. We had the example of the scheme in Romsey, which has been up and running for a year now. It has proved to be a great benefit, not only to the Licensees themselves, who have seen a reduction in the problems on their premises, but also to the community, which has seen crime in the town centre halved.

A further meeting is planned for the 9th March, when the scheme will actually get going and Licensees will have the opportunity to 'sign up' to it. As previously stated, initially the scheme will centre on the town area where there is, at present, the most interest. However, it is thought vital that the licensed premises in the outlying areas come on board so as not to leave a haven for those who are banned from 'Pub Watch' premises. It has been very encouraging to see the enthusiasm that the proposal of the scheme has generated amongst the town's Licensees, and credit needs to be given to them for their responsible attitude towards their role in our community.

Concerning the proposed 'flexible' opening hours that will be allowed under the new licensing laws, it is only possible, at this time, to say that the consensus amongst our local Licensees will be that they are likely only to seek to extend their opening times to mid-night. They would particularly wish to have that option at weekends and during the summer months.

The Town Centre – PC Steve Jennings

There were just 18 reported crimes in the town centre for February - last year during the same month 61 crimes were reported. This is a very low rate of crime for a town centre and I do hope that it reassures residents and town centre users that New Milton is a safe and pleasant place to live and work.

The 18 reported incidents are a mixed bag of minor crime. There is nothing amongst them that warrants hi-lighting in this report.

Pub Watch

I would raise the matter of the 'Pub watch' scheme again, as it particularly affects the town centre area. It is our experience that most of the crime in this area – when we have any to report – is drink related. This scheme, which is supported by the staff of the three licensed premises in the town, will tighten further our control over would-be troublemakers. The Romsey experience, where the scheme has operated for the past year, bodes well for the future here in New Milton. Whilst we cannot realistically

hope to see further major reductions in crime, our figures being so low anyway, we can perhaps hope that this measure will see them stabilise at this low level during the busier summer months.

The next step

It is anticipated that the next logical step for the town centre will be to build on the goodwill and consensus that we have found amongst our Licensees, and extend the 'watch' idea to the shops in the town. This will be a bigger undertaking and will not, I fear, meet with the universal support of everyone. However, that is our aim and we will be encouraging retailers to join us in it.

Milford and Barton – PC Del Jones

Burglary

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of reported burglaries this month. Barton on Sea being particularly badly affected with nine of the 16 dwelling burglaries, reported during the month of February, taking place there. The offenders seem to be targeting houses where the occupants are obviously away from home. Although we are actively investigating these matters, residents can also do their "bit" by improving the security around your home. This needn't be difficult or expensive. Leaving a light on whilst you are out is fine but if you are away for any length of time a light that is constantly on is like a welcome note for burglars indicating that no one is home to turn lights on or off. Electrical timers are available from most good DIY shops or electrical retailers. These can be set to various times, allowing lights to come on at random times. These can also be used on radios.

If you are worried about leaving your home unoccupied, a house sitter could be the answer. As well as being a deterrent for the burglar a house sitter can feed the cat and water your plants. Again this need not be expensive. I know from experience that younger (responsible) family members often want their own space and would jump at the chance to help. If none of the above is practicable then at least tell your neighbours, and the local Police station, that you are going to be away and give details of how you can be contacted and/or a key holder for your house in case of emergency.

Damage

There have been a number of reports of damage in Milford Village. Two in particular involve damage / theft of signs outside of houses in the village. This follows a series of similar incidents late last year. Would anyone with any information please contact me on 0845 045 4545.

Drugs

This month we have had several reports of used syringes being found in local toilets, both in Barton and Milford. Apart from the legal implications of drugs misuse there is also a health and safety one as well. If you find any of these needles please do not touch them and call the NFDC Customer Services who will arrange for their disposal.

Beach Huts

Only one report of damage to a beach hut this month.

General Matters

Several reports this month that bags of rubbish left out for the bin men are being removed. For what reason? Identity theft is becoming one of the largest problems we face. It can affect us all in some way, either directly as result of theft and deception or by way of increased bank charges. The most seemingly innocent junk mail can disclose personal details about you and your finances. Think about what you threw away last month! A statement from the bank or cash point machine? A letter from a credit card or loan company? Even a domestic bill containing direct debit information. Just because you don't want it anymore doesn't mean that others can't make use of it. Please give serious consideration to shredding your financial waste.

New Milton West – PC Colin Stratton and WPC Jodie Bosworth

Another relatively quiet month. Reported crime fell from 52 for February last year, to 30

Damage

On the evening of the 19/02, around 1.0am, a group of 9-10 youths aged between 15 -18 years, walked through from Carrisbrooke Ct into the Stem Lane area and en-route they caused a considerable amount of damage, mostly to windows. If anyone can assist with any information that might enable the offenders to be identified, it would be appreciated.

Davis Field to the North Milton Estate

Concern was expressed by a resident of Davis Field concerning the use of electric scooters, which were being ridden onto the estate from North Milton over the railway foot-bridge. The owner of one of the scooters has been spoken to and his parents advised regarding offences being committed. We will keep our eyes open for others using these scooters. In addition, if any of the local motorcycle nuisance is being caused by motorcycles provided with the assistance of the New Forest Council Grant Scheme, then steps will be taken to review the grant available to the driver/owner.

Assaults

During the month of February we have had only 6 reported assaults, and as was previously the case, the majority were between family members.

New Milton East – PC Sam BLAKE-WATKINS

I have just taken over the beat from Ray GAIT, now retired. I have previously worked out of Lymington for some time, and I am now getting to grips with 'Beat' work and quickly trying to improve my knowledge of the Ashley area. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns regarding this beat or would just like to make my acquaintance.

Burglary

There were 4 reported burglaries during February in the Brooke Ave/ Barrs Ave area. Three of the four had a window forced at the rear of the premises and the fourth had an insecure window. I would urge everyone to take reasonable precautions to address the security of their property and report any suspicious behaviour to the police, particularly in the evenings. An investigation is obviously currently underway, and local residents should please come forward with any information that they may have which might assist.

Vehicle Crime

In addition to the 4 incidents of damage to, or theft from, vehicles reported last month, there have been a further 8 incidents during February. Two of these were definitely theft related, as items were stolen once entry had been gained by breaking a window. The vehicles were parked in the street – Ash Tree Close and Frampton close. The remaining 6 incidents involved damage, either to a window or to tyres. Three of the vehicles were in Andrew Lane and a fourth in Thornham Rd. Neither of these two streets is likely to suffer from 'passing' trouble, and so it is likely that the offender(s) live in the area. Any suggestions as to who might be responsible would be gratefully received.

Hordle Beat - including Sway, Everton and Bashley

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

During the month of February 22 crimes were recorded for the whole Beat. These crimes were mainly committed in the Sway area, and no crime reported for either Bashley or Everton villages.

Damage

There were 9 reported incidents of damage in February and 7 of them were in Sway. The on-going juvenile nuisance problem in the village is behind most of Sway's reported crime. Patrols continue to be directed towards the village. We have identified the main offenders and visited parents and are gathering evidence towards obtaining 'Behavioural Contracts' or 'Anti-Social Behaviour Orders' in respect of each of them. This process does take a little time, but is effective and relies on evidence of the local community telling us what's going on. Therefore Any information concerning the anti-social behaviour of persons that you can name will assist us in obtaining these orders.

The other two reports of damage were for Hordle, both involved damage to vehicles, one on the garage forecourt and the other in Elvin close. These two reports were the sum total of reported crime for Hordle during the whole month.

Vehicle Crime

During the month there were two incidents of theft from vehicles parked in forest car parks. It is usually dog walkers and visitors to the Forest who are the victims of this crime, I would remind you all again not to leave items of value in your car, wherever you park it.

Burglary

On Thursday 24/02, during the morning or early afternoon, two burglaries were committed in the Sway area. One at Durnstown and the other at Tiptoe. In both cases windows were forced open. Once again, unrestricted access to the rear of the property was an issue. If you live in a rural or isolated area please be suspicious of strangers, particularly if you see them entering or leaving a neighbouring property – and, of course, report sightings to the police.

There were also two non-dwelling burglaries during the month. One at Pitmore Lane, over night of the 17/02, where a secure barn was forcibly entered and, amongst other things, a horse box and mini tractor were stolen. The second incident was another illegal entry to the Sway Youth Centre overnight of the 24/02. On this occasion a window had been left insecure, and nothing was either stolen or damaged.

**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