



Melksham Area Board

Hello and welcome to this month's Community policing report.

With the countdown to Christmas fast approaching, we will see millions of people going online to buy presents for their friends and family. What many do not realise, is the hidden threat that we now face from criminals online. Internet shoppers are being targeted with scams, which on the surface promise to save them time and money but in reality only deliver festive heartache and misery.

To make life as difficult as possible for the cyber fraudsters, we have put together the top tips for a safe and happy festive season online :

1. SHOP, SHOP, SHOP -

- If something seems too much of a bargain, it's probably poor quality or doesn't even exist.
- Always check payment pages are secure, and log out when you've finished shopping online.
- If possible use online retailers / brands that you are aware of and trust. For major brands always go to the official website to find a list of authorised sellers.

2. AUCTION BARGAIN ... OR NOT? –

- When making a purchase from an auction website, use insured payment methods like PayPal and never do a bank transfer to people you don't know.
- Do all you can to check the seller or buyers are authentic. And look out for fake goods: they're illegal and cost livelihoods and can be dangerous.

3. JUST THE TICKET –

- Only look at tickets from a reputable website that is secure (showing padlock) and before buying, do an internet search for reviews.
- Avoid entering your bank or credit card details on public or shared computers.
- Never pay for the tickets by way of money transfer.

4. COME FLY AWAY... -

- Whether you're planning a break at Christmas or next year, make sure the holiday or flight is genuine by researching it thoroughly, and check travel agents for an ABTA/ATOL number.
- Always pay with a credit card; if they don't accept, don't buy from them.
- Research the internet and consider the reviews of the company / person you wish to use before booking your trip.

5. CHRISTMAS E-CARDS

- If you receive an anonymous e-card, better to play it safe and delete the e-mail. Many are genuine, however cyber-criminals have been known to create their own version which may contain a virus that will embed itself into your computer.
- Use a reputable anti-virus product on your electronic advice.
- If you believe that your electronic device has been infected, switch it off and disconnect from the internet to prevent further information being stolen.

6. WHO'S ASKING? –

Scam emails, calls, texts and posts are getting cleverer and you're bound to get some over Christmas. Think twice before you get talked into anything, however busy you are.

7. YOUR PASSWORD IS YOURS. KEEP IT THAT WAY! –

Passwords that are easy to guess, that you use for more than one account or that you share with others, are a no-no!

8. SECURELY CONNECTED? –

Secure Wi-Fi is vital for your privacy. At home, check your router security settings. Out and about, never use free Wi-Fi hotspots when what you're doing is private.

9. GREAT OFFER, OR SUBSCRIPTION TRAP? –

Don't sign up for 'free' or 'low-cost' trial goods without thoroughly reading the small print. You could be signing up for massive direct debits.

10. MOBILE PAYMENTS

- Do not save passwords or personal / financial information onto your mobile device unless it is absolutely necessary. Make sure the phone is password protected.
- If stolen, most mobile devices have the software to wipe all data from their memory remotely – learn how this works.
- Do not leave your Bluetooth switched on.

11. DATING / ROMANCE FRAUD

Many singletons will be making a New Year resolution to find their ideal partner, and signing up to an online dating website. This can be a great way to find true love, but you also need to be on the lookout for fraudster trying to wind your affection.

- Guard your privacy when chatting online and be selective with the information you provide about yourself.
- Never send money or give credit card or online account details to anyone you do not know and trust.
- Trust your instincts, if something feels wrong take steps to protect yourself.
- Recommend dating locations are in public and a friend is told where you will be?

CRIME EXCEPTIONS

These figures are based on an evaluation of data, over a two year rolling period. Using this data we can predict what figure is the average that should be reported in a specific month, and what are the higher and lower parameters that we may expect. Figures outside of these parameters are classed as 'Crime Exceptions'.

ED11 (Melksham Town)

For the month of October, this area saw 115 crimes reported to Police, which is higher than predicted and has been classed as an exception.

The two areas where we saw the biggest increase, and which were also classed as an exception within their own right, was Theft (including Vehicle Offences), and Criminal Damage. Looking in to each of these, they have experienced 47 and 27 crimes respectively.

In relation to the Vehicle offences, these seem to be three different types of offences – 1) stealing tools from vans, 2) stealing anything from within cars that they can either see through the window or from cars that are unlocked, 3) catalytic converters being cut from vehicles.

At the moment, no specific pattern or suspects have been identified, but Officers are continuing to look in to this.

The Criminal Damage offences consist mainly of damaged cars, which Police are still investigating and have carried out interviews of potential suspects already.

ED12 (Shaw, Whitley, Atworth, Broughton Gifford, Beanacre, Bowerhill etc)

For the month of October this area collectively has experienced 46 crimes reported to Police. This has been classed as an overall crime exception as a whole, and above the predicted number of 29. The areas in which the increases have been significant are Violence Against the Person, and Criminal Damage where we have had 18 and 15 crimes reported respectively.

Looking at the first category, most of the offences were in the Bowerhill area, with 6 offences being attributable to two separate residences.

In relation to the second category, 4 of these offences have been committed at the Police Station, and other than that there is no specific pattern identified to indicate any link between them, neither is there one particular area identified as a hotspot for this type of offence as they are all spread out over the entire location.

ED13 (Seend, Bulkington, Poulshot, Keevil, Semington, Great Hinton, Steeple Ashton etc)

For the month of October this entire area has seen 10 crimes reported to Police, which is in line with the figures predicted for that month. No one crime type has been assessed as being an exception, with 7 different crime types having experienced less than what was predicted.

OTHER INFORMATION

Melksham Criminal Damages – prior to the offences this month, Melksham was subject to a number of tyre slashing incidents towards the end of September. A couple of youths were interviewed about these matters, and the evidence is being fully reviewed so that a suitable disposal can be sought for

each of them. A number of these offences have already been closed as 'undetected' due to the lack of corroborating evidence available to link them sufficiently to the potential suspects, but we are hopeful that some of them will result in a suitable and positive sanction. We are legally unable to comment further on the current situation with the youths, but we are confident that the right agencies are working together and sharing information to best address the issues here.

CCTV – We were approached by Melksham Community Safety Group and Rhys Schell regarding the CCTV within the market place and what our thoughts were about its potential for improvement and repositioning of cameras. A document was created for this purpose by one of our analysts and this has been passed to Rhys and the group to assist them with looking further at the potential for better CCTV within the Town area.

Attendance at meetings – It will come as no surprise to hear that Police resources are somewhat stretched, but we are continually striving to try to meet the needs of our community groups and to balance this out against other competing work demands. Where it is possible we will always do our very best to be represented at the Area Board meetings and Town Council meetings by either the Sector Inspector or a Community Coordinator. All other Parish Councils and Residents groups should be attended by the PCSO for that individual area when they are on duty and free of other commitments. In our rural areas we often have over 5 villages that are under the jurisdiction of 1 PCSO, and with their shift pattern mainly consisting of day shifts during the working week this does make it very difficult to guarantee their attendance at every meeting. If there is a specific issue that you wish to raise at one of your meetings then please do get in touch beforehand so that we can try to allocate someone to attend or to at least try to give you some extra information relating to it. However, you should ALL receive a written report on a monthly basis as an absolute minimum, so if your group isn't currently receiving them then please get in touch with CPTWestWiltshire@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk or with your local PCSO.

Melksham Priorities – At our weekly Police tasking meetings we have had a number of priorities over the last month relating to Melksham. We had concerns raised over Anti-Social Behaviour and possible drugs use at the skate park and at Hornchurch play park. We also had Shaw and Whitley Community Speedwatch raised as an area that required extra support from Police. We increased our patrols in each of the areas, and are now looking at other ways that we can best record and share the work we are carrying out. This is likely to be done through Community Messaging. And whilst on that topic, the Community Messaging will pick up again – our sincere apologies for the lack of updates recently – business as usual will resume shortly!

We have had a changeover in staff carrying out the Community Coordinator role. Following the departure of Alex Trombetta who accepted a position within the National Crime Agency (he informs us that he is doing very well and enjoying it so far!) we then saw PC Amy Hardman step in to the role. Amy was expected to be with us for a few more months but after successfully passing the promotion process earlier in the year she has been offered a Sergeants role and so will be leaving us to head up her own shift of Officers in Swindon imminently. And so this leaves us to introduce to you our new Coordinator, PC Lee Pelling. Lee comes in to the role having been working within West Wiltshire Community Police Team since it was first trialed. He brings with him a huge wealth of experience having also previously been a Community Beat Manager in Bradford on Avon. He understands the importance of multi-agency work and is looking forward to taking on the new role. We would like to thank Alex and Amy for their work so far, and to wish Lee the best of starts as Community Coordinator.

For a detailed breakdown of the crime in your area visit...

<https://www.police.uk/wiltshire/>

Sector Inspector – Inspector Andy Fee – andy.fee@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Sector Deputy – Sergeant Gill Hughes – gill.hughes@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Community Coordinator – Pc Lee Pelling – lee.pelling@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

feedback@wiltshire.police.uk