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Office Hours 8:30am – 5:00pm  
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Dear Parish/ District / County Councillor/MP/NBH Watch Co-Ordinators

With the festive season fast approaching I wanted to update you on policing and community safety issues in your local communities.

Despite the challenging economic climate I am delighted to report that crime continues to reduce and that the communities of Somerset East are experiencing less overall crime than this time last year. I am firmly of the belief that this is as a result of individuals taking measures to secure their property and vehicles as well as communities working with my staff to keep on step ahead of our criminals to frustrate their activities and bring them to justice.

The local detection rate for crime remains strong and above our target set by the Police Authority.

As always, there are areas and opportunities for improvement. The current high value of metal has fuelled an increase in metal theft ranging from lead from roofs through catalytic converters in cars to the copper in underground BT cables. I am aware that these thefts have far reaching impact and disruption to not only the victims but the wider community and have a team of officers dedicated to working with other agencies to reduce and combat this activity. I will return to metal theft later in this update.

Vehicle crime including theft of and from motor vehicles continues to be a problem this year. We have achieved some notable successes in respect of arresting some of our prolific vehicle criminals but the level of crime are still higher than I would like. As you will be aware, most of this crime is opportunist and occurs because valuables have been left on view or the vehicle left insecure. Once again, I would ask that you help spread the message that removing money,

valuables and coats from sight and locking your vehicles are an effective deterrent against this sort of crime.

Since the last time I wrote we have held a number of Operation Relentless days of action. The focus of this activity has been on reducing anti-social behaviour around the Halloween and Bonfire Night period. This year's activity was an outstanding success. Staff and community representatives delivered personal safety inputs to schools and were very visible in communities on these key dates and the number of calls from the public to report anti-social behaviour or disturbances was the lowest ever.

We have also conducted a number of action days focusing on metal theft. Since September we have formally visited every scrap metal dealer in the area twice to ensure they are complying with registration and licensing conditions which helps to reduce the likelihood of these premises being used as outlets for stolen metal. We have also given our officers enhanced training regarding developing their skills in metal theft investigation. I am pleased to announce that in the past month several arrests have been made in respect of theft of industrial cable in the Langport area, manhole covers in Glastonbury, metal gates in Frome and an aluminum disabled ramp in Street.

Our rural crime reduction initiative continues to grow from strength to strength. Farms are continuing to sign up to our Farm Watch scheme and we now have 900 farms taking part. We have conducted joint cross border operations with partners and neighbouring police forces tackling agricultural, plant and quad bike theft, livestock theft and fuel theft.

Other successes involve the capture of a prolific dwelling house burglar who had been active in the Bruton, Wincanton and Yeovil areas. The criminal made the mistake of using a credit card stolen in one of the burglaries in a cashpoint machine covered by a CCTV camera. We retrieved the footage for the relevant time, identified the offender and arrested him within twelve hours. The offender admitted to committing twenty one burglaries.

In respect of anti-social behaviour and nuisance, a family living in Yeovil were making the lives of other residents in their road unbearable by their loud, rowdy and anti-social behaviour. Working with local residents the District Council and local housing organisation we were able to gather enough information and evidence to take the occupant to court under new Premises Closure Order legislation which has not previously been used in the Avon and Somerset force area. The Magistrates determined that the case was upheld and the family were forced to move out to the relief of other residents.

We continue to receive valuable support and assistance from our thriving Special Constabulary and a growing number of police volunteers. The variety of police volunteer roles is continuing to expand and offers exciting opportunities for community minded individuals. If you know of anyone who would be interested in exploring the opportunity of becoming a volunteer do please ask them to make contact with me.

Many councilors and members of the public have taken up the opportunity to come out on patrol with my officers to get personal experience of the operational world of a police officer. I would like to promote the fact that this opportunity is open to all on our "Ride Along Scheme". If you or anyone you know wishes to take part there are details on our website or by all means contact me directly.

As Christmas approaches I ask that you pass on the below community safety messages to the wider community:-

- Keep all doors and windows of property and vehicles locked when unattended
- Do not leave anything on display inside vehicles particularly Christmas presents
- When going out socially confirm arrangements for traveling home safely early on in the evening
- Moderate alcohol intake to keep yourself safe and in control

Thank you for reading this newsletter, which is intended to regularly keep you up to date with what is happening in Somerset East District. If you have any feedback for me then you can contact me on [nikki.watson@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:nikki.watson@avonandsomerset.police.uk).

If you want to hear first hand about witness appeals, crime reports and press releases for your community then you can register for a fresh e-mail service on our force website of [www.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk).

Before finishing I wish to pass on my best wishes for a peaceful festive period and happy new year.

Yours sincerely

Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson  
District Commander – Somerset East