



Councillor Newsletter

March 2020

Welcome

Welcome to my March newsletter.

The situation over Coronavirus changes on a daily basis. In the last few weeks it has been announced that the PCC elections, due to take place in May, have been postponed for a year. I shall, therefore, be remaining in post until May 2021, with Matthew Barber continuing as my deputy.



The Government, with the support of Opposition parties, and on the basis of the best scientific advice, has imposed severe restrictions on everyday life. These restrictions will be difficult for everyone, but are necessary if coronavirus is to be brought under control and the NHS protected. The powers given to the police to enforce these new rules are wide ranging, but the vast majority of the public will do their best to obey them.

It has been heartening to see so many positive actions taken by members of the Thames Valley community. From taking essential supplies to those who are most vulnerable, to ensuring vital services can continue to run and support those in need. It is, however, important for us all to follow the Government advice on how best to keep ourselves and others safe and well in these unprecedented times and it will be a test for us all.

These will be difficult times for all public services, police officers and our staff are not immune to the effects of the virus. As well as supporting the NHS by enforcing the Government's restrictions, the police must still continue to prevent crime and protect the public. Whilst some crime, such as burglary

and violence, is reducing due to the changes, we are vigilant for an increase in domestic abuse and criminals who will sadly seek to exploit these new circumstances.

The Chief Constable and I are confident that Thames Valley Police will continue to offer the public the protection and support they deserve, but we do need the public to abide by the Government's restrictions, and support public safety and the NHS. I am confident that the people of the Thames Valley have the common sense to do so. Remember the simple advice, stay home, save lives.



Victims First update

We are committed to providing the best possible service to victims of crime throughout this difficult time.



As we are currently working with limited capacity due to Covid-19 we are asking that anyone needing support from Victims First to please make a referral using our online form, rather than calling the freephone number.

To make a referral please complete the online referral form which you can find on the 'Make a Referral' page on the Victims First website <https://www.victims-first.org.uk/>. Please provide the email address and contact number for the person needing support and a Victims First Officer will contact them.

Also, Victims First is now on Twitter! We will be sharing information about the range of support Victims First provides. You can access and follow our page [here](#). We will share updates on victims services, information on the latest scams as well as topical news stories related to crime.



£100,000 available for community and voluntary groups

The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable have opened a new grant round of the Police Property Act Fund as an emergency response to the impact of the coronavirus.

The Fund, which is jointly managed by the PCC and the Chief Constable, is created from money recovered by the police and the proceeds from the sale of items that cannot be returned to identified owners, including seizures from criminals.

Applications are now invited from local voluntary and community groups who have been supporting the police in delivering the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The closing date for applications is **12pm Monday 20th April**.

Anthony Stansfeld said: "I am pleased to launch another round of the Police Property Act Fund. Now more than ever, we are seeing what important work the voluntary and community sector is having on the efforts to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We are pleased to be offering funding to those organisations who are supporting the police in delivering the response to this pandemic.

"Working in partnership with both statutory and voluntary organisations is crucial when addressing issues such as the prevention and reduction of crime. We have taken the decision to launch this fund early so that we can support this sector, and therefore our communities, at this challenging time."

Further information and the application form can be found at:

<https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/police-property-act-fund/>

Thames Valley Police call to former officers and staff

In order to further support the workforce during this unprecedented period, Thames Valley Police is keen to hear from officers and staff who have left / retired from the organisation in the past 2 years and would



be willing to re-join on a temporary basis with an expedited return.

Specifically, any former officers, PCSOs, Contact Management Centre Officers/Control Room Operators, Detention Officers or Police Staff Investigators are encouraged to get in touch by emailing Covid19resiliencebank@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Please include your name and telephone number, responding no later than Friday 3 April 2020 and you will be contacted to discuss further.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner update

An update on some other news which has been taking place over the past few months.



Thames Valley PCC working to tackle Serious Violence

Thames Valley Police, along with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and Reading FC have launched the DIVERT programme.

The programme, launched in January 2020, is designed to prevent young people who have been arrested in relation to an offence from re-entering the criminal justice system.

A DIVERT intervention coach has been embedded in the custody suite at Loddon Valley police station to talk to young adults aged 18-25 who have been referred to the programme. The coach will act as a mentor to the person involved and provide them with proactive support and advice in order to try to steer them from away from committing crime. This programme is being funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber said: "We're excited to see projects like the DIVERT scheme come to fruition as part of the work to establish our Violence Reduction Unit.

"A huge part of our work is to help fund programmes which support young people and also tackle issues around violent crime. We have done a lot of educational work as part of our Early Intervention Youth Fund to educate young people and professionals around the Thames Valley on a number of topics which all link in to this wider issue of serious violence.

"This work continues now with the Violence Reduction Unit which is funding programmes such as DIVERT, where partnership collaboration is at the heart, to see what further strides can be made towards safer communities."

PCC secures funding for 140 new tasers

The Home Office has announced that the Police and Crime Commissioner has secured funding for 140 new tasers, as part of a new fund.



Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, said: “We welcome the news that the Thames Valley will receive an additional £115,500 towards funding this important equipment. Tasers will be given to specially trained frontline staff to protect themselves and others in potentially dangerous situations.

“It is vital that our officers are appropriately equipped to deal with a variety of situations in their role and this funding will help us to provide them with the best equipment to do that.

“We’re delighted to be able to equip more staff appropriately in the fight against violent crime.”



Improved parking enforcement in the South and Vale area

Following concerns raised by local residents, Thames Valley Police is increasing the level of enforcement to deal with illegal parking in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

The District Councils have both publicly stated their intention to apply to decriminalise parking across the area. This is one of the very few areas of the country that has not already done so, and across the Thames Valley police area they are the only two districts that do not have either decriminalised parking or make a contribution to support the police in their enforcement work.

Commenting on the initiative, Matthew Barber said: “There are many competing demands on the police and they have rightly been focussing on issues such as reducing violence, burglary, rural crime and the drug trade. Nevertheless, in the absence of any other enforcement, local residents are understandably concerned about the impact of illegal parking on road safety, traffic flows and local businesses.

“I am delighted that Thames Valley Police is embarking on a targeted enforcement programme in South and Vale to fill the gap whilst the councils pursue decriminalisation. I have written to both district

councils and town councils in both areas to highlight this new effort by the police and asking them to look to provide continuing support to the police to allow this to continue.”