

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 4th August 2019

Cheshire News & Appeals



Latest Cheshire News

Man sentenced after assaulting member of the public who caught him dealing in Congleton Park

A county lines criminal who assaulted a member of the public after they photographed him dealing drugs in Congleton Park has been sentenced to three years and eight months.

Matthew Hughes, 26, of Bank Street in Rookery pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply heroin and crack cocaine, possession with intent to supply heroin and cannabis, assault and criminal damage. He was sentenced on Thursday 25 July at Chester Crown Court. At 5.45pm on 28 May Hughes attacked a 51-year-old man who confronted him as he supplied drugs to a woman. He lunged at the victim, grabbing him around the neck in a vice-like hold while demanding he delete the photographs of his dealing. In fear, the victim handed over his phone and Hughes punched it several times causing the screen to smash. Hughes ran off leaving the victim with a cracked rib along with injuries to his face. Despite the damage to the phone, the photos were retrieved and Hughes was identified as a street dealer who worked for an organised county lines team in Liverpool supplying heroin and crack cocaine. A county line is operated by an organised crime group who use a mobile phone, known as a 'line' or a 'graft' to extend their criminal activity business into new location – usually from a city into rural areas. Hughes was arrested on 3 July and found to have heroin and crack cocaine in his possession.

Sergeant Keith Graham, of Congleton Police Station, said: "Hughes was well known in the Congleton area, he would be seen riding a bike and congregating in the park to deal drugs on behalf of organised criminals. Organised crime has a huge impact on local residents who understandably do not want to see their community riddled with drugs. We work very hard, often behind the scenes, to disrupt drug activity and while I do not advise confronting criminals directly I would encourage residents to keep reporting it to police."

Residents are urged to report drug dealing by calling Cheshire Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. To understand how to spot the signs of vulnerability and to find out how to protect your community from serious and organised crime please visit the Serious and Organised crime section of the website. Information can also be provided by email <https://cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries>

Man who fled from Elton collision which killed his wife sentenced to three and half years

A man who fled from a collision in Elton which killed his wife has been sentenced to three years and six months in prison.

Joseph Francis Berry, aged 39, of Fenwick Drive in Wrexham pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving while being disqualified and uninsured. Berry was sentenced at Chester Crown Court on Friday 2

August. On Saturday 24 November 2018 Berry was travelling on Meadow View when the black Mercedes he was driving collided with a red Range Rover. Berry crashed into the red vehicle head on after failing to negotiate the left hand bend, causing him to be on the wrong side of the road. Berry said he had been driving at a speed of 40mph even though he knew it was a 30mph zone. Immediately after the collision Berry ran from the scene towards a gap in a fence into a field leaving 37-year-old Teresa Maguire seriously injured in the passenger seat. She was taken to the Countess of Chester Hospital and sadly died. Berry was wanted by police and avoided arrest for up to 142 days until he handed himself in on 15 April 2019. A witness described hearing a loud bang and instantly jumping up within a matter of seconds to run to the window to see what had happened.

Police Constable Liz Thompson who investigated the collision said: "A woman lost her life in such tragic circumstances due to Berry driving dangerously and exceeding the speed limit. His actions after the collision are beyond disgraceful as he left not only the scene of the crash but his wife and the mother of their five children, in the passenger seat who sadly passed away. Berry refused to face up to what he had done by evading police for almost five months until he handed himself in. By admitting to his crimes he has spared his wife's family and friends the ordeal of having to sit through a trial. Driving a motor vehicle is a privilege, not a right, and it comes with great responsibility to act within the rules laid down when you pass your test. When you deliberately ignore those rules you put yourself and other people at great risk, as shown in the case of this terrible collision. Driving dangerously and exceeding the speed limit can have catastrophic consequences and our thoughts remain with the family of the victim, who have been left devastated by this tragic incident."

Berry was also disqualified from driving for eleven years and six months.

Prisoner handed life sentence for killing fellow inmate at Warrington prison

A prisoner has been handed a life sentence for killing a fellow inmate at a prison in Warrington.

Today, Friday 19 July, at Liverpool Crown Court, Adriesse Gray was told he will serve a minimum of 18 years and four months in prison after pleading guilty to the murder of Stephen O'Donnell. Gray, from Manchester, who is currently serving four years and nine months for burglary stabbed Stephen, from Stockport, at HMP Risley on Tuesday 22 January at 6.15pm. The incident took place on the landing of the Elton wing and Stephen, aged 33, was stabbed once to the chest with an improvised weapon. After he was stabbed Stephen, who was serving a five year sentence for grievous bodily harm, made his way towards his cell before the alarm was raised. Medical staff at the prison treated Stephen at the scene and he was transferred to Warrington Hospital by ambulance where he sadly died at around 7.50pm. Gray was detained by prison staff before being arrested by police on suspicion of murder. An investigation was launched by Cheshire Police's Major Investigation Team and Gray was subsequently charged.

Detective Inspector Nigel Reid, who led the investigation, said: "Today justice has been secured for Stephen and his family after Gray was told he will serve at least 18 years in prison for his murder. Our thoughts remain with them at this incredibly difficult time and we will continue to support them throughout this process. Gray carried out such a callous act and had total disregard for how his actions would end Stephen's life and the devastation it would have on his family. By admitting Stephen's murder he has spared his family the ordeal of having to sit through a trial and I hope it will bring some comfort knowing he will serve a lengthy time in prison. I would like to thank Stephen's family for their support, patience and understanding as the investigation progressed even though it was an extremely difficult and emotional time. A dedicated team of detectives have worked tirelessly over the past seven months. The investigation was rigorous, at

times difficult and complex but detectives built a solid case which meant Gray had no choice but to plead guilty at the earliest opportunity. I hope this shows that regardless of where a serious offence takes place those who are prepared to use weapons and resort to violence will be brought to justice.”

Following the sentencing Stephen’s family have issued a tribute: They said: “Nothing can compensate for the pain and loss that we’ve all suffered as a result of Stephen’s death. However we are grateful that the court has passed the sentence that it has today and hopefully we can now try to move on and come to terms with our lives without Stephen. We would like to thank Cheshire Police and everyone involved for their hard work and the help and support they’ve given to us throughout the investigation.”

Police urge landlords, letting agents and residents to spot the signs of organised crime gangs

Officers from Cheshire Constabulary are appealing for landlords, letting agents and local residents to help root out organised crime gangs (OCGs).

Over recent months officers have received intelligence to suggest that OCGs have been renting large high value properties in rural areas to house modern slavery victims. In some cases the properties have also been used as illegal call centres, where fraudsters target vulnerable residents and defraud them out of thousands of pounds. While there have been no recent incidents in Cheshire, officers are aware of similar cases at neighbouring forces and are asking local residents to be on the lookout.

Detective Sergeant Jon Ryder, from Macclesfield Local Policing Unit, said: “Organised crime gangs are continually evolving the way in which they operate and are always looking for new ways of evading justice. In recent months we have received intelligence to suggest that gangs have been letting out properties in order to house modern slavery victims and operate illegal call centres. By renting larger homes in mainly rural and concealed areas they are hoping that they can operate without being noticed. To help combat this, we are asking all Cheshire residents to be vigilant and keep any eye out for any suspicious activity in their communities, particularly rural areas. We are also asking landlords and letting agents to ensure that they conduct regular inspections on properties they are renting out and report any suspicious activity. If a tenant won’t let them view the property, there is probably a reason for that – and the reason may regard criminal activity. I urge anyone who suspects that a property is being used by an organised crime gang to contact us on 101. We will act on the information that we receive. Alternatively, residents can report information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit the Crimestoppers website at www.crimestoppers.co.uk.”

Signs of a property being used by organised crime gangs include:

- Increased vehicle movements in and out of the property
- Suspicious activity at the address
- Constantly covered or blocked-off windows
- People coming and going at all hours or neighbours you never see
- Increased utility bills.

If you think you are a victim of modern slavery/human trafficking contact the modern slavery helpline on 08000 121700

Dancers perform in Warrington to empower victims of modern slavery to seek help

Shoppers in Warrington Town Centre today (Tuesday 30 July) were treated to a surprise dance performance on International Day against Human Trafficking. The street performance stunt was organised by the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit (NWROCU) and Cheshire Police to raise awareness of the important issue of human trafficking and promote the confidential 24/7 'Modern Slavery Helpline'.

The dancers from local company MD Productions performed to Beyoncé's song 'Freedom' whose lyrics are hoped to empower those who have been exploited to seek help from police or agencies like the Modern Slavery Helpline. The initiative in the town centre aimed to capture as wide an audience as possible. Shoppers and passers-by were also given freebies promoting the Modern Slavery Helpline, which supports victims of modern slavery.

Detective Sergeant Lisa Wilson of Cheshire Constabulary said: "Modern Slavery is a hidden crime that sees victims suffer in silence, terrified, often feeling isolated, alone and trapped. By speaking to the community and putting on the performance we hope to have raised awareness of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and to have helped educate the public on how to spot the signs of potential victims of exploitation. This crime is closer to home than people think, it is present in all types of communities and could well be happening in your neighbourhood. I would encourage people to familiarise themselves with the signs, look out for them and contact the local police on 101 or the Modern Slavery helpline on 08000 121 700 if they feel something isn't right."

Liz Borthwick, the Regional Modern Slavery Co-ordinator from the NWROCU said raising awareness of what human trafficking is and how victims can seek help was crucial. She said: "Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of what we do and we know that human trafficking is still a vastly under-reported crime. It is our duty not only to build confidence and trust in the police with victims but also raise awareness among the general public about this very important issue. Modern slavery is happening all around us but the public can play their part in stamping out exploitation by keeping an eye out for the signs of slavery".

Rachel Harper from the Modern Slavery Helpline said: "Modern slavery is happening across the UK and is a searing scourge on our society. The Modern Slavery Helpline is proud to work with the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit and applauds MD Productions for today's dance flash mob and for lending their skills to such a pressing issue. The more we, as a community, look for signs of modern slavery, the more we see them. And, when we see signs of abuse and exploitation, it is important to know whom to call. The Modern Slavery Helpline is free, available 24/7 and ready to discuss suspicions or take reports from members of the community, advise victims, offer guidance to frontline professionals, or support businesses. Raising awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery is key to preventing it. It is fantastic to see leadership from Merseyside Police and events such as today's performance in Liverpool used to increase understanding of these often hidden crimes."

General signs that someone may have been exploited include:

- Physical appearance - Signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt
- Isolation – rarely allowed to travel on their own and seem under the control of others. They may be in relationships which just don't seem right e.g. a young teenager appearing to be the boyfriend/ girlfriend of a much older adult
- Poor living conditions – living in dirty overcrowded accommodation
- Restricted freedom of movement – appear to have no identification documents and few personal possessions

- Reluctant to seek help – avoiding eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers

For more information visit www.modernslaveryhelpline.org . You can report by calling 0800 121 700 or online by visiting www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report or by using the Unseen App.

Ellesmere Port man jailed after admitting Chester burglaries

A burglar has been sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to a series of offences.

Jake Fagan, 23, from Exeter Road, Ellesmere Port appeared at Liverpool Crown Court to be sentenced after admitting to two counts of burglary and three counts of taking a vehicle without consent. He also pleaded guilty to driving without insurance, driving without due care and attention and having no insurance. He was disqualified from driving for an extra 24 months for these offences. Between 28 May 2019 and 31 May Fagan targeted two houses in Chester each time taking vehicles from the drive. On the evening of 31 May officers attempted to stop the car he was in. He reversed the vehicle into another car and drove off at speed. He then dumped the car and fled the scene. A search was made by police but they couldn't locate him. They later tracked him down and arrested him in Manchester on 20 June.

DC Kelly Birch from Chester CID said: "Fagan had no regard for the victims and the effect his actions had on their lives. Burglary is an invasive crime that has long lasting effects to the victims. In this case we managed to trace and recover the three vehicles stolen, but this doesn't always change the emotional and psychological effect of being a victim of burglary. We can only hope his time in prison will help him to understand the impact his actions can have on his victims."

Latest Cheshire Appeals

Appeal for information following armed robberies in Warrington

Detectives are urging witnesses to come forward following two armed robberies in Warrington.

The first incident occurred at approximately 10.30pm on Thursday 1 August, three unknown men armed attempted to force their way into McColl's convenience store on Admiral Road, Birchwood. The men, who were all wearing dark clothing and armed with a weapon, were banging on the door, threatening staff and demanding that they let them inside. Staff within the store immediately called for police assistance and the offenders fled the scene empty handed. A short time later, at around 11pm, two men wearing black clothing and balaclavas entered Sainsbury's convenience store on the Cross in Lymm via the main entrance. The men, who were both carrying weapons, approached the counter and demanded that the two store workers opened the tills and the safe. The pair, who were both described as having Manchester accents, then stole a quantity of cash before exiting the store and fleeing in an a car. Thankfully, there were no reports of any injuries in either of the two incidents.

Detective Constable John Parry said: "These were terrifying incidents for all those involved and I want to reassure the community that we are doing all we can to trace those responsible. We take any incidents of this nature extremely seriously and we will do all we can to locate the offenders and ensure they are brought to justice. Extensive enquiries are being carried out in a bid to piece together as much information as we can

about these incidents, which we believe could be linked. I would appeal to anyone who has any information regarding any of these incidents to come forward. Even the smallest amount of information can be useful when piecing together a case. The same goes for any motorists with a dashcam who may have any footage which may aid the investigation.”

Anyone with any information in relation to the three incidents is urged to call Cheshire Police on 101 quoting incident number IML-474071 for the incident in Birchwood or IML-474103 for the incident in Lymm. Information can also be reported via our website on <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries/> or anonymously, via Crimestopper, on 0800 555 111. Dashcam footage can be submitted online at www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/roads-and-vehicle-safety/submit-dashcam-footage.

Appeal for witnesses following charity shop robbery in Northwich

Officers from Northwich Local Policing Unit are appealing for witnesses following a robbery at a charity shop in the town.

At approximately 3pm on Sunday 28 July two men and two women entered the Cancer Research store on Witton Street. Once inside one of the men and both of the women began to browse the store. Meanwhile, the second man made his way to the rear of the store where he was confronted by a female member of staff who asked if she could assist him. The suspect then pushed the woman to the floor and made his way into the back office and stole a coat. All four suspects then fled the store via the main entrance onto Witton Street, heading towards McDonalds. The man who stole the coat is described as a white, of large build and approximately 5’ 8” tall. He was wearing a cream jacket and had short fair hair. One of the two women was described as white, with black hair which was swept back. She was described as wearing a dark jacket and a lot of make-up. There are no descriptions of the other the other two suspects. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and officers are keen to hear from anyone who witnessed the incident, or anyone with any information which may aid the investigation.

Police Constable Graham Lee said: “To stoop so low as to rob from a charity shop is a despicable offence and we are committed to doing all we can to trace the people responsible. Thankfully, the store worker who was assaulted during the incident did not sustain any serious injuries. However, she was left shaken as a result of her ordeal. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing at this time and I’m keen to hear from anyone with any information, no matter how small, which may assist our investigation.”

Anyone with information about the incident please contact Cheshire Police on 101, quoting incident number IML 469965, or you can send in information via our website on <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries> . Information can also be reported anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

Appeal for information following serious assault in Alderley Edge

Detectives from Macclesfield CID are appealing for information from the public after two men were seriously assaulted in Alderley Edge.

At approximately 12.20am on Sunday 28 July officers were called to reports of an incident at the Bubble Room on London Road. Officers attended the scene and found that a 28-year old man had been stabbed twice by two unknown offenders. The man, who is from the Irlam area, was taken to hospital; his injuries are not believed to be life threatening. A second man, a 28-year-old man from the Congleton area, was also

found to have been stabbed during the incident. He had left the scene and taken himself to hospital prior to the arrival of officers. His injuries are not believed to be life threatening. Two people from Derby were subsequently arrested on suspicion of Section 18 Assault in connection with the incident. The 30-year-old man and 25-year-old woman have since been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

Anyone with information in relation to the incident is asked to call Cheshire Police on 101, quoting IML 469441, or you can leave information via our website <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries/>. Alternatively, information can be reported anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

Appeal for witnesses following fatal collision in Wilmslow

Officers from Cheshire police are appealing for witnesses to come forward following a fatal collision in Wilmslow.

At approximately 1.20am on Sunday 28 July officers were called to reports of an incident on the A34 Birrell Way. Officers attended the scene and found that a 21-year-old pedestrian had sustained serious injuries following a collision near to the Polar Ford roundabout. Sadly the man, who is from the Wilmslow area, passed away at the scene. Enquiries in relation to the collision are ongoing and as part of the investigation officers are keen to hear from motorists who were driving on Birrell Way between 1am and 1.20am. They would also like to hear from anyone who thinks that they may have dashcam footage which may aid the investigation to get in touch.

Anyone with information about the incident please contact Cheshire Police on 101, quoting incident number IML 469476, or you can send in information via our website on <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries/>. Dashcam footage you can submit that on our website on <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/roads-and-vehicle-safety/submit-dashcam-footage/>.

Appeal for information following serious assault in Ellesmere Port

Officers from Ellesmere Port CID are appealing for information after a man was assaulted with a machete.

The incident happened near to the Naylor Green roundabout, Ellesmere Port, at 11.15pm on Friday 19 July. A man distracted the 34-year-old male victim whilst another hit him on the back of the neck with a machete. The victim went to hospital and has since been discharged.

Detective Constable Timothy Cope said: "We believe that prior to the attack one of the offenders was hanging around in an entry on Naylor Green. If anyone saw anything suspicious on that day then please get in touch. This is a very serious assault which has left a nasty injury."

Anyone with information is asked to call Cheshire Police on 101, quoting incident number IML 461337, or you can leave information via our website - <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/contact/general-enquiries/>. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

To find out further information about the Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, to log into your account or for Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Literature please visit our website: <http://cheshire.ourwatch.org.uk/>