

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 14th June 2020

Cheshire News & Appeals



Latest Cheshire News

Runcorn man charged with drug dealing offence

A 20-year-old man from Runcorn has been charged with a drug dealing offence.

Callum Pope was arrested in Pool Lane in Runcorn Old Town shortly after 2pm on Thursday 11 June after being stopped and searched by officers. He has since been charged with possession with intent to supply class B drug cannabis. Pope, of Lime Grove, Runcorn, appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court, via a video link, on Friday 12 June. He was remanded in custody and is set to appear at Chester Crown Court, via a video link, on Friday 10 July.

Man who stole more than £30,000 worth of cryptocurrency jailed for 20 months

A man from St Helens who stole more than £30,000 worth of cryptocurrency has been jailed for 20 months.

Mark Andrews, 38, of Woodlands Road, pleaded guilty to stealing the cryptocurrency and an offence under the Computer Misuse Act at an earlier hearing. The victim, from Wilmslow, first contacted Andrews in April 2019 through his IT support website to provide services for his business. During the time that Andrews was completing the IT work at the victim's business premises he found information that he eventually used to steal cryptocurrency from the victim. The victim was able to find out where some of the cryptocurrency had been moved to and this provided the initial evidence leading to Andrews arrest by Cheshire Constabulary's Cyber Crime Team.



Andrews was arrested at his home address on suspicion of theft of cryptocurrency and an offence under the Computer Misuse Act. The Cyber Crime Team seized a significant amount of cryptocurrency from Andrews as well as several devices that held key evidence. Andrews was subsequently charged with theft and unauthorised access to a computer to facilitate and offence. He was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment for theft and 10 months concurrent under the Computer Misuse Act on Thursday 11 June at Chester Crown Court.

Detective Sergeant David MacFarlane of the Cyber Crime Team who led the investigation said: *"This was a complex investigation and an example of how traditional criminality has moved into the digital world. This crime has been particularly damaging to the victim who put his trust in Andrews. The Cheshire Constabulary Cyber Crime Team with the assistance of the Digital Forensics Unit and the Economic Crime Unit were able to piece together crucial data and we were able to successfully apprehend Andrews and bring him to justice. I hope this sentence will act as a deterrent to all those who believe they can get away with this type of offence and I would remind people of the importance of protecting their data and keeping it safe from criminals."*

Update on misconduct investigation

Cheshire Constabulary has been conducting a complex investigation into an allegation of misconduct and fraud relating to the awarding of a contract by Cheshire East Council to a fitness company.

A file of evidence was submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service, who considered this in some detail and advised that although there were issues in relation to procurement, there was insufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of a conviction against any individual. The CPS advice concerns only the above fraud allegation. A further five allegations referred to police by Cheshire East Council remain under investigation. Meanwhile, a separate investigation into misconduct relating to grant funding for a primary school car park has also concluded, with no further action to be taken.

Cheshire Special Constabulary dedicate 1,110 hours to help keep communities safe during National Specials Weekend

As part of National Specials Weekend, Cheshire Special Constabulary gave 1,110 hours of their spare time to help keep the communities of Cheshire safe. The weekend took place on Saturday 6 June to Sunday 7 June with a national theme of 'thank you', chosen to recognise the hard work and



dedication of Special Constables during the coronavirus pandemic. A total of 122 duties were undertaken by 88 of the specially trained volunteers who, during the weekend, arrested two people for drug offences, seized four vehicles and spoke to 157 drivers about excess speed.

Cheshire Special Constabulary Chief Officer Celvyn Jones said: *"The duties which were undertaken by the Special Constabulary during the weekend provide just a snapshot of the fantastic work that the team have been doing day in day out. The hours that our fully warranted volunteers provide shows the high level of dedication Special Constables have to helping keep Cheshire safe especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Hours increased by 21% in May, equating to 6,190 hours, which is an outstanding level of commitment. I am immensely proud to lead a team of selfless and dedicated officers who are determined to help protect communities across the county. I would encourage anyone who is considering volunteering as a Special Constable to find out more about the role through the Cheshire Constabulary website."*

This year each force was able to pick its own area of focus so Cheshire Specials continued their work with Operation Business. Operation Business is a force-wide campaign which aims to deter criminals from targeting empty schools and businesses across the county. Along with this, the Special Constables also supported the NPCC National Speed Awareness Campaign, targeting 32 locations with speed enforcement and successfully issuing 31 Traffic Offence Reports for speeding.

Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Sims said: *"During National Specials Weekend our specially trained volunteers have collectively dedicated hundreds of hours to help protect the residents of Cheshire. This weekend of action shows just how much value these volunteers bring to communities and provides us with an opportunity to celebrate these volunteers who give so much to the Constabulary. On behalf of us all at the force, I would like to say a grateful thanks to our Special Constables for their hard work, support and dedication."*

Throughout the weekend, the force's social media accounts also highlighted several Specials who had stepped

up during the coronavirus pandemic.

Special Constable Gareth Dudley, who volunteers at Chester Local Policing Unit, has dedicated 29 years to serving the public, he said: *"I had always wanted to be a regular police officer since I was young as my dad was a Special Constable with North Wales Police for 25 years. I became a special on 31 December 1990 so this is my 29th year of service – I have served with Staffordshire Police, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Gloucestershire Constable, and have been with Cheshire Constabulary since 2006. On 31 December this year I will celebrate 30 years since I was first sworn in!"*

Volunteering for the Rural Crime Team is Special Constable Dave Howells, he said: *"I am passionate towards giving something back to our communities and ensuring they are as safe as they can be, my three beautiful children are at the forefront of my mind while doing this. My family are extremely supportive and are proud of what I do."*

Special Constable Ben Midwinter spends his spare time with the Roads and Crime Unit, he said: *"I have more than eight years of service with Cheshire Special Constabulary, five of which were based at a Local Policing Unit. My family are proud of the work I do with the Specials and for what I have achieved during my time with the force. I couldn't ask for a better support network of family and friends."*

Volunteering at Cheshire Constabulary's Deployment Support Team, former mechanical project engineer Special Constable Megan Kidwell said: *"Since a very young age, I have been passionate about helping people and keeping them safe. I have witnessed first-hand how crime can affect people's lives and have experienced how fulfilling it is to be a Special Constable during that time. My colleagues at the force are incredible, it's a pleasure working with people who share the same passion to protect and care for others as I do. We all share the same values which is respect, integrity and fairness."*

Special Constable Adam Davis volunteers for Crewe LPU, he said: *"Being a Special Constable allows me to give back to the local community. The ability to be trained as a police officer and provide frontline support seemed like a fantastic opportunity for me to gain new skills by being exposed to a variety of complex and often challenging situations."*

Speaking after the weekend, Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: *"Our Special Constables selflessly sacrifice their spare time to help protect and serve the communities of Cheshire – their work has been more important than ever during the pandemic. This national weekend of celebration gives us an opportunity to not only focus on the work of our Specials but to also promote the opportunities available for members of the public to join our dedicated volunteers. The Special Constables offer a truly valuable service and I would like to thank them all for their commitment that they give to Cheshire Constabulary and the communities we work so hard to protect."*

For more information on how to sign up to become a member of the Special Constabulary, please visit

<https://www.cheshire.police.uk/police-forces/cheshire-constabulary/areas/cheshire/careers/careers/special-constables/>

Operational activity is being stepped up across the county to target the illegal and anti-social use of motorbikes

After months of success from an ongoing operation in Widnes, Runcorn and Ellesmere Port, which was launched in response to concerns raised by local residents, riders across the rest of the county will now feel the effects of 'Operation Scrambler'.



Officers will carry out high-visibility patrols in hotspot areas at key times across the county targeting those intent on causing a nuisance in their community. The Constabulary will take action against anyone riding motor vehicles illegally and anti-socially, whether on or off road.

Chief Inspector Gareth Wrigley said: *“Traditionally at this time of year, as the lighter nights set in and the weather gets warmer, we see a rise in the illegal and anti-social use of motorbikes across the county, and even though the coronavirus pandemic has seen restrictions put in place, we have still seen individuals and groups riding illegally and anti-socially on, and off, the county’s roads. This is an issue that really matters to our communities and I want to reassure residents that we are doing all we can to crackdown on those responsible for this sort of behaviour.”*

Information from the public is vital in supporting Operation Scrambler. While members of the public have been reporting information which has proved useful and has helped officers to build up a bigger picture of what is happening across the county, officers are appealing for further information to help support investigations. When reporting incidents of illegal and anti-social use of motorbikes, officers need as much detail as possible, including a detailed description of the bike and the rider, what they were wearing, names of the rider if possible and information about the location of where these bikes are being stored. Of particular value are photographs and videos of incidents, but police urge people to only take photos and video footage if it is safe to do so.

Chief Inspector Wrigley added: *“We are grateful for the intelligence that we have already received from our communities as all of this information can be really valuable to our investigations. We are committed to working together with our local communities to tackle this issue. Rest assured every piece of actionable intelligence we receive will be followed up proportionately by each Local Policing Unit, and we will use this information to support any seizures and prosecutions where necessary. Our efforts will continue.”*

Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, David Keane, said: *“The illegal and anti-social use of motorbikes is an issue that local residents often raise and I have raised these concerns with the Chief Constable. Recent incidents have highlighted how this can have a serious impact on individuals and communities. The results achieved to date in Widnes, Runcorn and Ellesmere Port could not have been achieved without the support of the public. The information and intelligence that has been provided has made a vital difference and I urge the public to continue to support Operation Scrambler.”*

Anyone with any information in relation to the illegal or anti-social use of motorbikes is urged to contact Cheshire Police. You can do this in a number of ways:

- Speak directly to a local officer whilst they are out and about on patrol in your local area.
- Call Cheshire Police on 101 and quote ‘Op Scrambler’.

- If the incident is not happening at the time of reporting, you can report via our website: www.cheshire.police.uk
- If you do not want to speak directly to the police you can call CrimeStoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.
- In an emergency dial 999.

Persistent Winsford burglar who targeted a church on two occasions jailed

A 43-year-old man from Winsford has been jailed after admitting being responsible for five burglaries in the town.

David McElligott, of Granville Square, committed four of the offences whilst on conditional bail. His crime spree began when he broke into a tattoo parlour in Fountain Court in the early hours of Wednesday 26 February. McElligott stole a large quantity of tattooing equipment from the premises and was subsequently identified as the offender via CCTV footage. He was charged with the burglary and released on conditional bail on Tuesday 17 March.



Whilst awaiting the conclusion of that case, McElligott broke into The Salvation Army church in Weaver Street on Tuesday 7 April and stole a small quantity of cash. He then attempted to steal a laptop from a kitchen workshops business on Bradford Road on Friday 10 April. After breaking into the premises, McElligott was disturbed by the police. He managed to flee the scene and went on to commit two further burglary offences in the early hours of Saturday 6 June. McElligott broke into a pub on Wharton Road and stole small quantities of cash and alcohol. He then targeted The Salvation Army church again, though on that occasion he left empty handed after breaking in.

CCTV footage established that McElligott was responsible for the two burglary offences on Saturday 6 June. He was arrested at his home on Sunday 7 June, and when questioned in custody McElligott admitted committing the offences, as well as the two burglaries in April. The following day he appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court, via a video link. He pleaded guilty to three counts of burglary in relation to the offences on Wednesday 26 February and Saturday 6 June and was jailed for a year. The burglaries committed in April were taken into consideration upon sentencing.

Detective Constable Mark Sherratt, who led the investigations into McElligott's offending, said: *"Burglary is a serious offence. As well as stealing a large quantity of tattooing equipment and small quantities of cash and alcohol during his crime spree, McElligott caused damage to all the buildings he targeted. But what makes his offending particularly repellent is the fact that he twice targeted a church and committed four of the burglaries whilst on conditional bail. I am delighted that this persistent burglar is now behind bars facing the consequences of his actions and I hope that this case deters others from committing similar offences."*

Latest Cheshire Appeals

Appeal following fatal collision near Sandbach

Police are appealing for witness following a collision on the A534 Haslington bypass between Crewe and Sandbach.

It occurred at around 12.20am on Saturday 13 June, and involved a black Vauxhall Corsa which collided with a HGV parked in a layby at the Wheelock end of the bypass. Sadly, one of the passengers, an 18-year-old local woman, was pronounced dead at the scene. Another 17-year-old woman has been taken to hospital with serious, but not life-changing, injuries, while a further passenger received minor injuries. The driver, a 17-year-old male, has been arrested in connection with the incident. Officers are appealing for anyone who may have seen the collision, or anything unusual in the lead-up to it which may assist with their enquiries, to get in touch on 101 or through the Force website, quoting IML 728618.

Man from Chester wanted for failing to appear at court

Police are asking the public to help them trace a 43-year-old man from the Lache area of Chester who is wanted for failing to appear at court.

A warrant was issued for the arrest of David Beach after he failed to attend Chester Magistrates' Court on Thursday 5 March. He is believed to be in the Chester area. Beach is 5' 9" tall with a proportionate build. He is white and has short dark brown hair and green eyes. Anyone who sees Beach, or has information regarding his whereabouts, is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary immediately on 101, quoting 20000140772. Alternatively, information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



High-powered cars being targeted by burglars in Widnes and Northwich

Detectives are urging motorists with high-powered cars to review their home security measures following an increase in the number of thefts of such vehicles in Widnes and Northwich.

Offenders have been snapping the locks on the front doors of residents' homes in order to enter the premises and steal the car keys from within. They have then been using the keys to steal the vehicles parked outside. BMW cars are particularly being targeted.

Detective Inspector Ian Whiley, Cheshire Constabulary's lead for burglary incidents, said: *"Investigations are ongoing in relation to the recent burglaries in which high-powered cars have been stolen in Widnes and Northwich and our officers are following a number of lines of enquiry. Whilst these investigations take place I urge the owners of such cars to be vigilant and review the home security measures they have in place. By taking a few simple steps you can reduce the chances of your vehicle being targeted. If you own the sort of vehicle that is particularly attractive to thieves, you may want to consider having anti-snap locks fitted on the external doors of your home. You should also never leave your keys in view of prying eyes. Keep them on you or in another safe and secure place at all times. Never leave your keys by an external door."*

Other steps that motorists can take to reduce the chances of their vehicles being stolen from outside their homes include:

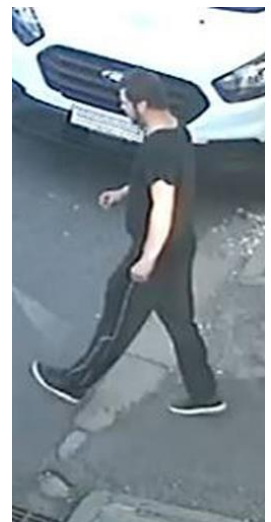
- Make sure that your vehicle is locked whenever you are not in it and that you have not left any doors, windows or the sunroof open
- If you have electronic car keys, keep them in a security pouch when you are not using them to prevent them from being scanned by thieves to open and steal your vehicle nearby
- If your keyless entry fob can be turned off, and your dealer can confirm this, then do so overnight
- Electronic devices can be used to jam the electronic signal from your key fob to lock your car – always manually check your vehicle has locked before walking away, and if you are unsure you should lock it manually and then scan the immediate area for anyone hanging around
- Fitting a Sold Secure steering wheel, gear lever or clutch pedal security device can give your vehicle added protection and deter thieves
- Many modern vehicles are fitted with engine management diagnostic ports, which can be accessed without a thief needing to open the vehicle doors, boot or bonnet, but which can unlock and start your car. If your vehicle has this type of port, consider fitting a lockable cover.

DI Whiley added: *“If you see anyone acting suspiciously in your community and suspect that they are thieves targeting properties or cars, please call us on 101 immediately. I also urge anyone with any information regarding recent key and car burglaries committed in Widnes and Northwich to call 101. Alternatively, you can give us the details online at <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”*

CCTV image released following arson incident at closed down restaurant in Ellesmere Port

Officers investigating an arson incident at a closed down restaurant in Ellesmere Port have released a CCTV image of a man they want to speak to in connection with the incident.

Firefighters were informed of a fire at the former Agra Fort Indian restaurant shortly after 7.30am on Wednesday 27 May. They were able to extinguish the blaze before it could spread beyond a ground floor extension at the back of the two-storey building. The fire caused significant damage to the extension. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and officers want to trace the man in the CCTV image as they believe he may be able to help their investigation. They are appealing for anyone who recognises him or knows who he is to get in touch.



Sergeant Jonathan Wilson, of Ellesmere Port Local Policing Unit, said: *“The blaze, which a fire investigator has confirmed was started deliberately, caused significant damage to a section of the building. However, the consequences of the fire could have been far worse. Fire spreads quickly and can endanger lives as well as properties. We are determined to establish who started the blaze and make them face the consequences of their actions. We believe that the man in the CCTV image may be able to assist us in that regard. If you think you recognise him or know who he is please contact us at Ellesmere Police Station on 101, quoting IML 714844, give us the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. I would also like to appeal directly to the man in the CCTV image to get in touch.”*

Call for vigilance following spate of catalytic converter thefts

Cheshire Constabulary is urging residents to be vigilant following an increase in catalytic converter thefts.

Since Wednesday 27 May officers have received 12 separate reports of theft incidents involving catalytic converters. Honda, Toyota, Lexus and Kia cars are particularly being targeted, and although thieves have stolen catalytic converters across Cheshire the most recent incidents occurred in Runcorn, Widnes, Northwich, Ellesmere Port, Chester and Helsby.

Inspector Anton Sullivan, of Cheshire Constabulary's Roads and Crime Unit, said: *"Investigations involving my unit and colleagues from neighbourhood policing teams are ongoing in relation to the thefts and we are following a number of lines of enquiry. While the investigations take place I encourage motorists to be vigilant and review any security measures they have in place. In recent times offenders have been predominantly targeting hybrid vehicles. Honda, Toyota, Lexus and Kia cars have been targeted, but other vehicles may also be at risk. Offenders use specialist tools to remove catalytic converters from vehicles and have been doing so in daylight at car parks and other areas where cars are left. If you see anyone using tools on cars in such places please let us know as soon as possible. I also ask scrap metal dealers to be mindful if they are ever offered catalytic converters or exhaust systems and to contact us if they suspect that they could have been stolen."*

There are a number of steps that motorists can take to reduce their chances of becoming a victim, including:

- If possible, park your car in a garage
- If your car is at high risk, consider marking the metal shell of the converter with a unique mark, so that if it is stolen it will be easier to trace back to your vehicle
- If your catalytic converter is bolted on, the bolts can be welded shut – this would not stop a determined thief but would slow them down
- Giving some consideration to the way your vehicle is parked could reduce the chances of your catalytic converter being stolen – high and low clearance vehicles being parked close together make it more difficult for a thief to gain access to converters
- Good quality lighting will improve natural surveillance and make a thief less likely to be able to remove a catalytic converter without being seen
- Leaving your car in an area covered by CCTV may also deter thieves – CCTV systems should be well signed.

If you have any information about the thefts, or if you see anyone removing catalytic converters or acting suspiciously in your community, please call Cheshire Constabulary on 101. Alternatively, information can also be reported anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

Man from the Northwich area wanted on recall to prison

Cheshire Constabulary is asking the public to help the force trace a man from the Northwich area who is wanted on recall to prison.

As well as Northwich, Bradley Thomas has links to Winsford. The 20-year-old is white and around 6' 3" tall with a slim build. He has brown hair and blue eyes. Anyone who sees Thomas is advised not to approach him but to instead call the police as soon as possible on 101, quoting IML 710085. Alternatively, information regarding Thomas' whereabouts can be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Appeal following attempted robbery in Runcorn

Detectives investigating an attempted robbery in the Halton Brook area of Runcorn are appealing for information from members of the public.

The victim, a local woman in her 20s, was walking her dog towards Halton Brook Park from the direction of the Penfolds estate when the incident occurred at around 11.20pm on Sunday 7 June. After speaking to the woman, a group of five men tried to steal her dog, grabbing her wrist and attempting to take the lead out of her hand. She struck one of the offenders, who were disturbed by a member of the public walking in the area. The victim then walked away with her dog. The offenders looked around 25 to 30 years old. They were all wearing jogging bottoms and hooded tops, with their hoods up, and they all spoke with local accents. One of them had black hair and a small beard and another had quite long blondish hair. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and detectives are urging anyone who was in the area and saw anything that may help their investigation to come forward. They also want to speak to anyone who believes they may know who the offenders are, or have CCTV or dashcam footage of them.

Detective Constable Dan Williams, of Runcorn CID, said: *“This was a frightening incident that has understandably left the victim shaken up. I would like to reassure residents that this is believed to be an isolated incident and we are determined to establish the identities of the offenders and make them face the consequences of their actions. Enquiries are ongoing and as part of our investigation we want to speak to anyone who was in the area that night and believes they may have seen the offenders. We particularly want to talk to the man who disturbed them as they were trying to steal the victim’s dog. We also want to hear from anyone who believes they may know who the offenders are, or have footage of them.”*

Anyone with information or CCTV or dashcam footage that could aid the investigation should call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 725080, give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Renewed CCTV appeal following attempted burglary in Runcorn

Detectives investigating an attempted burglary in Runcorn have renewed their appeal for information.



At the end of April detectives released CCTV images of two males they want to speak to in connection with the incident, which occurred in Heath Road South at around 4.40pm on Wednesday 11 March.

After breaking into a house, the offenders fled empty handed after being disturbed by an occupier. As part of their investigation detectives want to speak to the two males in the CCTV images and are renewing their appeal for anyone who recognises the males or has information regarding their whereabouts to get in touch. It is believed that the males may have links to West Yorkshire as well as to the Rochdale area of Greater Manchester.

Detective Constable Ciara Murphy, of Runcorn Local Policing Unit, said: *“We are determined to establish the identities of all those responsible for the attempted burglary and make them face the consequences of their actions. We believe that tracing and speaking to the two males in the CCTV images will help us as we endeavour to achieve those goals. If you think you recognise the males in the images, or know who they or where they are, please contact us at Runcorn Police Station on 101, quoting IML 658280, give us the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. I would also like to appeal directly to the males in the CCTV images to get in touch.”*

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/>