

# Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020

## Cheshire News & Appeals



### Latest Cheshire News

#### **Police remind residents Covid-19 has not gone away**

Ahead of the weekend, Cheshire Police is reminding residents not to let their guard down in the fight against Covid-19. Whilst there has been a steady decline in the number of cases across the county, the virus has not gone away and it is essential that everyone continues to follow the government guidelines.

Superintendent Julie Westgate said: *"Firstly, I would like to thank residents for everything they have done to help reduce the number of Covid-19 cases in Cheshire. This has been an extremely difficult time for everyone and I understand the great sacrifices people have had to make to help achieve this. However, as we move forward it is essential that people don't let their guard down and they continue to follow the guidance which has been put in place by the Government. As we have seen in neighbouring areas, the situation can change quickly, so all Cheshire residents need to remain vigilant, act responsibly and do everything they can to stay safe. This includes ensuring they adhere to the social distancing guidelines and wear face coverings when out in shops and stores. This is particularly relevant ahead of the weekend when lots of people will be out shopping and socialising with friends and family, and it's easy to forget about some of the restrictions. Our officers will continue to patrol key locations and use common sense and discretion to determine what is reasonable, with officers engaging, explaining, encouraging and, only as a last resort, enforcing."*

Cheshire's PCC David Keane added: *"The vast majority of Cheshire residents have followed the government's advice over the past few months, I hope that this continues. Please keep in mind the purpose of the remaining regulations and the national effort and, by following the guidance and working together, we can all help to protect the NHS and save lives."*

For more details on the coronavirus legislation [visit the government's website](#).

#### **Detectives arrest 17-year-old boy in connection with Nantwich assault**

Detectives investigating a serious assault in Nantwich have arrested a 17-year-old boy.

The teenager was arrested in Stockport on suspicion of attempted murder and is currently in police custody waiting to be questioned by police. At 8.20pm on Sunday 27 July police were made aware of a man inside a flat on Tailors View, Arnold Street who had suffered severe injuries to his head. A 42-year-old man has been charged with attempted murder and is due to appear at Chester Crown Court on 27 August. A 50-year-old man has been released on conditional bail.

#### **Detectives issue warning following recent spate in telephone scams across Cheshire**

Detectives are issuing an urgent warning to the public after a recent spate in telephone scams which have left Cheshire victims without thousands of pounds.

Officers are continuing to see cases of courier fraud, this scam is mainly committed by organised crime groups (OCGs). A member of the OCG, known as the 'victim communicator', makes a phone call to vulnerable victims telling them that they are a police officer or work at a bank. They persuade the victim to co-operate with an 'operation' designed to gather evidence or identify offenders responsible for fictional offences. The victims are asked to withdraw money from their bank, purchase an expensive item and/or provide their bank details or card to assist with the operation. Money, items or documents are then handed over to the 'courier', who attends the address of the victim or meets them nearby, on the promise that the money or item will be returned or compensation provided. Cheshire Constabulary are now urging others to be aware of these scams and alert vulnerable neighbours or family.

DS Chris Jacques from Cheshire Police's Economic Crime Unit said: *"These fraudsters are extremely convincing and can be very persistent especially when targeting vulnerable victims. Police officers, banks and other such services will never ask you to withdraw money or provide card details so please do not be taken in by these scams. It is important to remember that telephone numbers can be easily spoofed and you should never trust a number displayed on your telephone. They may also attempt to ask victims to call back on 999, 101 or 161 to verify that they are genuine but this is part of the scam and they keep the line open so that the victim continues speak with the scammers believing that they are genuine officials. Anyone who is receiving calls asking for money to be withdrawn and handed over to a courier should call 101 or report it to Action Fraud."*

PCC David Keane said: *"It is quite concerning that there have been more cases of fraud across Cheshire. Fraudsters will stop at nothing for their own criminal gain and I know that the force will continue to crackdown on the mindless scammers and do everything in their power to bring them to justice. I am urging residents to continue to inform family and friends about these callous scams to ensure that no-one else falls victim."*

Anyone who believes they have been contacted fraudulently or have been a victim of fraud should call Cheshire Police on 101 and Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

## **Former football coach pleads guilty to sexually abusing two young boys**

Former football coach Barry Bennell has today (Friday 31 July) pleaded guilty to sexually abusing two young boys more than 30 years ago.

The 66-year-old, who is currently in prison after being convicted of similar offences in 2018, appeared via video link at Chester Crown Court, where he admitted nine sexual offences in relation to two victims. The offences include one count of buggery and six counts of indecent assault in relation to one victim and two counts of buggery in relation to the second victim. The boys were aged between 10 and 14-years-old at the time of the offences, which date back to the 1980s.

DI Sarah Oliver, who has been leading on the case, said: *"Today, Barry Bennell has pleaded guilty to a number of sexual offences – sparing his victims the trauma of having to re-live what happened to them during a trial. This would undoubtedly have been a very difficult and upsetting experience for them. I hope that this decision will help to provide some closure after so many years of pain trying to deal with and make sense of what happened to them. Bennell abused his position of trust as a football coach for his own sexual gratification. He was highly regarded in his field and took advantage of this by preying on these two young boys at a time in their life when he knew they were vulnerable and dreamt of making it in the world of professional football. He knew exactly what he was doing was wrong but carried on regardless. Anyone who has suffered from sexual abuse – whether it took place recently or many years ago – should never feel*

*ashamed about talking about what has happened to them. Help and support is available to those who need it. I commend the victims for their bravery and courage in this case and would like to thank them for their support throughout the investigation.”*

The case was adjourned until 5 October when Bennell will be sentenced at Chester Crown Court.

### **Three men jailed following £600,000 burglary spree**

Three men who caused damage and stole items to a total value of more than £600,000 during a series of burglaries across the country have been jailed for more than 24 years.

Vincent Ball, John Barlow and Thomas Mee are all members of a sophisticated organised crime gang from Liverpool. Between them they committed at least 14 burglaries at addresses in Cheshire, Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire, Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire between November 2018 and October 2019. The group specifically targeted homes in affluent rural locations. They stole high value watches, designer handbags and jewellery worth more than half-a-million pounds. The majority of the burglaries were committed during the hours of darkness and at weekends. Ball acted as the getaway driver, while Barlow and Mee carried out the burglaries.



The group first came to Cheshire Constabulary’s attention in late 2018 when a series of burglaries were committed by offenders using ladders to enter properties through first floor windows and doors to ultimately avoid setting off house alarms. An investigation was launched by officers from the force’s Serious and Organised Crime Unit and over the following months officers began piecing together a raft of evidence linking the trio to burglaries across Cheshire. These included incidents in Goostrey, Neston, Allostock, Mere, Chelford, and Lymm. They also found evidence which linked the men to burglaries in Barnby Moor in Nottinghamshire, Barnt Green in Worcestershire, Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire and Lapworth in Warwickshire. Their downfall came at around 8.30pm on Saturday 5 October 2019 when police received a 999 call from a resident in Prestbury reporting that a family member had disturbed a number of intruders at their Macclesfield Road home.



Whilst fleeing the property the burglars dropped valuable items worth approximately £500,000. Police were at the scene within minutes and Ball and Mee were arrested a short time later in Massey Street, Alderley Edge, where officers also discovered a Vauxhall Insignia which the group had used as their getaway car. Within the car officers found crowbars, walkie-talkies, torches, mobile phones, disposable gloves, false number plates, along with various items of clothing which contained traces of Barlow and Mee's DNA. Barlow managed to evade officers on the night, disposing of some of his clothing and making his way back to Alderley Edge before travelling back to Liverpool in a taxi in the early hours of the morning. He was arrested on Monday 28 October. During subsequent searches of the trio's homes in Merseyside, officers discovered a significant amount of evidence, including stolen items, a large quantity of cash and mobile phones. One of the phones recovered belonging to Mee was found to contain pictures of items that were stolen from several of the burglaries.



Ball, 52, Barlow, 58, and Mee, 42, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to burgle and were sentenced at Chester Crown Court today, Friday 31 July. Mee also admitted three counts of handling stolen goods. They were jailed for a total of 24 years and 10 months Ball, of Ranworth Place, Liverpool, was sentenced to 6 years and 9 months in prison; Barlow, of no fixed address, was jailed for 7 years and 6 months; and Mee, of HMP Altcourse, was handed an 8 year and 7 month custodial sentence.

A spokesperson from Cheshire Constabulary's Serious and Organised Crime Unit said: *"Ball, Barlow and Mee are all members of a sophisticated organised crime gang responsible for at least 14 burglaries across England. They showed an extreme level of forensic and digital awareness when committing the offences, demonstrating their determination to obtain hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of other people's property and family heirlooms. A significant level of planning and preparation went into each burglary, with the trio travelling hundreds of miles to commit the offences and specifically targeting the homes of high profile businessmen and women, footballers and celebrities. In these 14 incidents alone they caused damage and stole property to a total value of more than £600,000. The impact of their crime spree should not be underestimated. To know that criminals have been in your home – the place you should be able to feel most safe – rifled through your property and stole your personal possessions is sickening. While the majority of these incidents occurred when the victims were out, some burglaries took place while they were at home. To be subjected to such an ordeal must be absolutely terrifying and something that nobody should have to experience. I hope that these convictions provide some comfort and reassurance to the victims and allows them to move forward with their lives. I would also like to thank all of the officers involved in this case for the roles that they have played in securing the convictions against Ball, Barlow and Mee. As a result of their work, a major organised crime gang has been removed from our streets and the trio are now facing a significant period behind bars. I hope that this case acts as a warning to anyone who is planning on travelling to Cheshire to commit crimes. Our message to them is 'don't make a wasted journey'."*

If you have any information about this type of crime in Cheshire you can call Cheshire Constabulary on 101 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

## **Man jailed for three years after heroin seized during warrant in Neston**

A 54-year-old man has been jailed for three years for drug offences after heroin with an estimated street value of £1,360 was seized during a warrant in Neston.

Kevin Bennion, of Drake Road, was arrested with being concerned in supply of class A (heroin) and subsequently charged with possession with intent to supply class A following a warrant at an address in the town. During the raid officers recovered a quantity of heroin, cash and mobile phones. Bennion was remanded in custody, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three years imprisonment at Warrington Magistrates Court on Thursday 23 July.

Sergeant Kevin Green, of Ellesmere Port Beat Management Team, said: *"I hope that this result shows that we will not stop when pursuing those responsible for drug dealing in our neighbourhoods and we will always act on information provided by local communities. I am glad that we have prevented these drugs from reaching the streets of Neston but our fight against those who blight our neighbourhood with illegal drugs continues. We will do everything our power to stamp out illegal drug activity and I am urging anyone with any concerns about dealing in their local area to call Cheshire Police on 101 or report it via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report>."*

PCC David Keane said: *"This result is a great example of how officers are doing everything they can to put an end to illegal drug activity across Cheshire. This sentence should be a warning to those who are involved in this type of criminal activity and believe that they are beyond the law. As police and crime commissioner I will be working with the chief constable to ensure officers continue their efforts in tracking down and bringing these criminals to justice."*

## **Man charged with attempted murder in connection with Nantwich incident**

A 42-year-old man has been charged after a man was found with serious injuries in Nantwich.

Stephen Symes, of Tailors View, Arnold Street was arrested shortly before 5am on Wednesday 29 July. He has subsequently been charged with attempted murder. The charge relates to an incident at an address on Tailors View, Arnold Street on Sunday 27 July. A 39-year-old man sustained serious injuries to his head and was taken to hospital. He remains in hospital in a critical but stable condition. Symes has been remanded and is due to appear at Crewe Magistrates Court on Thursday 30 July. A 50-year-old man arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender has been released on conditional bail. The investigation remains ongoing and anyone who has any information is asked to contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or Cheshire Police on 101.

## **Drug dealer from Runcorn jailed**

A drug dealer from Runcorn has been jailed after being caught in possession of more than £1,500 worth of cannabis.



Callum Pope, of Lime Grove, Runcorn, was found guilty of possessing the class B drug with intent to supply it following a trial at Chester Crown Court. The 20-year-old returned to the court to be sentenced on Monday 27 July. He was jailed for two years. The case against Pope began when officers attended an address in Pool Lane in Runcorn Old Town on Thursday 11 June regarding an unrelated matter. Before entering the property at around 2pm, one of the officers witnessed Pope walk out of the back door and hide a large tin in the



garden. When they were all inside Pope was searched and found to be in possession of a snap bag of cannabis. A large amount of cannabis, snap bags and cash were found inside the tin that had been hidden in the garden. Digital scales containing traces of cannabis and a mobile found that was subsequently found to contain text messages regarding drug dealing were found inside the address. A drug expert estimated the total street value of the cannabis that officers seized from the address to be £1,620. Pope confirmed that the cannabis was his after being arrested and interviewed in custody but he claimed that it was all for personal use. However, the extent of the evidence that officers gathered against him led to Pope being found guilty of the drug dealing offence he was charged with.

Following his sentencing, PC Jamie Macdonald, who led the investigation on behalf of Runcorn Local Policing Unit, said: *“The vast majority of the cannabis that we seized from the address had been split down into individual £10 and £20 street deal sizes. We also seized a package that contained around 25 grams of loose cannabis and a large number of unused snap bags. With the amount of cannabis we found at the address – as well as the manner in which it had been packaged and the presence of digital scales and unused snap bags – it was clear that the drugs were being stored there for onward supply. We are delighted to have removed this significant quantity of cannabis from our streets as we are fully aware of the negative impact illegal drug use and supply can have on communities. We are equally pleased that Callum Pope has been convicted of dealing the class B drug and is now behind bars facing the consequences of his actions. I hope that the 20-year-old spends his time in custody rethinking the choices he has made and changes his ways.”*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, said: *“This is another example of proactive police work leading to a drug dealer and a significant amount of illegal drugs being taken off our streets. Illegal drugs and those who supply them blight our communities, causing untold damage to both those that use them and the wider society who suffer from the resulting crime. As Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, I know that officers work tirelessly in their fight against drug dealing and I am delighted to hear of this latest successful result.”*

PC Macdonald added: *“Although this case has now concluded, our battle against those who supply illegal drugs continues. I urge anyone with any information about suspected drug related activity in their community to get in touch. You will be listened to and we will investigate the matter.”*

To report suspected drug dealing, call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, [give the details via our website](#) or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## **Man in Widnes charged with grievous bodily harm**

Detectives have charged a 29-year-old man with grievous bodily harm.

Anthony Gelling, of Cronton Lane Mews in Widnes, appeared at Warrington Magistrates Court today, Tuesday 28 July. He entered a not guilty plea and is due to appear at Liverpool Crown Court in August. The charge relates to an incident at an address on Cronton Lane Mews in Widnes on Thursday 6 February and subsequently reported to police on Saturday 8 February.

## **Runcorn man jailed after £6,000 worth cannabis discovered during warrant**

A 55-year-old man has been jailed for 18 months for drug offences after cannabis with a total street value of around £6,000 was seized during a warrant in Runcorn.

Ian Ainge, of Davenport Row, was arrested and subsequently charged with possession with intent to supply class B drugs (cannabis) and possession of class C drugs (tramadol) when officers executed a warrant at an address at around 12.30pm on Friday 29 May. Officers recovered a quantity of cannabis, tramadol, cash and a number of weapons including a machete and a stun gun. Ainge pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 21 July.



Sergeant Phil Brown of Runcorn Beat Team said: *“This was a great result for the Runcorn Beat Team following an investigation into drug dealing in the town. “I hope that this result will act as a deterrent to those who believe that they can get away with drug activities in Runcorn. Illegal drugs can have a detrimental impact on the local community, so it is crucial that we work to stamp out this type of crime. If you have any information about drug offences in your area then please contact Cheshire Police via 101, or by visiting <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report/>. Alternatively, information can be passed on to Crimestoppers anonymously via 0800 555 111 or by visiting <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>. ”*

PCC David Keane said: *“Officers across the Constabulary are working tirelessly to end the misery that illegal drugs can bring to communities. I am pleased that Runcorn’s beat management team have prevented these drugs from reaching the town’s streets and although this investigation has now concluded, I know that Cheshire Constabulary’s fight against those who blight our neighbourhood with illegal drugs continues. I would urge anyone with information about suspected drug activity in their community to contact Cheshire Police.”*

## **Family of a man who died following serious assault in Warrington pay tribute**

The family of a man who died following a serious assault in Warrington have paid tribute to him.

Andrew Webster sadly died following the assault at Gateway Trade Park, Kerfoot Street, Warrington, which occurred shortly after 10am on Thursday 2 July. Andy’s wife, Lisa, said: *“Andy was such a strong, brave, wonderful husband, but more so he was a brilliant father. He made us feel safe and secure and built our family a great future. He worked hard as a builder, always perfecting every job he completed, he was never scared of a hard day’s work and could always be found perfecting his garage or working on his next project. Andy was so well thought of in the town and so many called upon him for help and advice, whether that be personal or business. Ruby was the apple of his eye and Andy loved nothing more than spending quality time with her, whether that be on the back of one of his motorbikes, or on their annual Dad and daughter trips abroad. He loved his motorbikes, he had such a burning ambition to race, just recently he had put a small race team together and was excited for the first event. Words cannot describe how much we miss him and how much of a hero he is to us. Our time was cut short but we can still feel his love and loyalty and his many stories will be forever told by all who knew him.”*



## **Two men charged in connection with Chester burglaries**

Officers investigating a series of burglaries across in Chester have charged two men in connection with the incidents.

Stephen Collins, 44, and Kai Davis, 20, were both arrested on Sunday 26 July following a series of burglaries across Chester. Collins, of Hatton Road, Chester has since been charged with five counts of burglary. The

charges relates to incidents on Sealand Road, Newton Lane, Dickson Drive and Gladstone Avenue which occurred between Friday 10 July and Friday 24 July. He had been remanded in custody and is set to appear at Warrington Magistrates' Court later today, Monday 27 July. Davis, of Lynwood Road, Chester, has been charged with handling stolen goods and fraud offences. The charges relate to items which were stolen during the Newton Lane burglary. He has been released on bailed and is set to appear at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Monday 27 July

## Latest Cheshire Appeals

### Two men arrested in connection with Nantwich assault

Detectives investigating a man seriously assaulted in Nantwich have arrested two men.

On Wednesday 29 July a 42-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and a 50-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender. Both men were arrested at separate addresses and are currently in police custody. At 8.20pm on Sunday 27 July police were made aware of a man inside a flat on Tailors View, Arnold Street who had suffered severe injuries to his head. The 39-year-old was taken to hospital where he remains in a critical but stable condition in hospital.

Leading the investigation DI Claire Jesson said: *"This is a fast moving investigation and we are continuing to follow a number of lines of enquiry to establish the full circumstances. The man sustained horrific injuries during the attack, which I believe took place between 3pm and 4.30pm. I am still urging anyone who was in the area of Tailors View, Arnold Street around this time and may have information to come forward. If anyone with information feels uncomfortable speaking to police I would encourage you to contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."*

A scene remains in place at the address and local officers are continuing to patrol the area to provide reassurance. If you have any information please contact Cheshire Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously.

### Police appeal for witnesses following serious assault in Runcorn

Police are appealing for witnesses following a serious assault at a bar in Runcorn.

At 1.43am on Saturday 25 July, police were called to Alchemy in High Street, Runcorn following reports of an altercation. On arrival paramedics were treating a 21-year-old man who was taken to hospital. He remains in a serious but stable condition.

DC John Ellis said: *"We're still piecing together events from that night and are appealing to anyone who saw the incident to contact police. During the incident the victim's mobile phone also went missing. If anyone found a Huawei P6 in the pub or High Street, please make contact with police."*

As part of enquiries into the assault a 21-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of a section 18 assault. Anyone with information should contact Cheshire Police on 101 [or via our website](#), quoting IML 763112. Alternatively information can be given anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



## Detectives investigating a man seriously assaulted in Nantwich

Detectives investigating a serious assault in Nantwich are appealing for witnesses to come forward.

At 8.20pm on Sunday 27 July police were made aware of a man inside a flat on Tailors View, Arnold Street who had suffered severe injuries. The man was taken to hospital with injuries to his head and he remains in a critical but stable condition. A 42-year-old man was arrested at the address in connection with the incident on suspicion of attempted murder. He has since been released on conditional bail. A scene is currently in place at the address.

DI Claire Jesson, from Crewe Local Policing Unit, said: *“We are currently working very hard to establish the full circumstances of this incident. At this stage we believe the attack to have occurred at some time before 4.30pm. I am therefore encouraging anyone who was in the area of Tailors View, Arnold Street between 3pm and 4.30pm to come forward. The man has sustained horrific injuries to his head and he is currently in a critical but stable condition. We have been conducting a number of CCTV and house-to-house enquiries however I am keen to hear from anyone who has any information or saw any activity at the address before the attack took place. I know there will be people who may feel reticent to speak to police and therefore I would urge you to contact Crimestoppers anonymously.”*

Local officers are patrolling the area and anyone who has any concerns is asked to speak to them. If you have any information please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 [or visit their website](#). Information can also be provided by calling Cheshire Police on 101 or [via our website](#).

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/>