

# Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 30 August 2020

## Cheshire News & Appeals



### Latest Cheshire News

#### Historic murder/suicide cases - Updated statement

Cheshire Constabulary is aware of numerous news articles suggesting the possibility of a link between five historic murder/suicides cases comprising of two incidents in Cheshire, two in Greater Manchester and one in Cumbria.

DCSupt Aaron Duggan said: *"These articles were based upon a report completed by a member of Police staff working in the Coroner's Office in Cheshire. The report was not approved by either the Constabulary or the Coroner's office. Some media reports have referred to the author as a Senior Coroner or Coroner and this is factually incorrect. The circumstances by which the report was shared with the media are subject to an internal review. The contents of the report and its conclusions are being considered by detectives. At this time, there is no reason to believe that the cases were not investigated by the Police appropriately. They were also the subject of inquests. For these reasons, the Constabulary has not re-opened the cases, however this decision will remain under review. The media coverage has caused distress to families of the deceased. We are offering support to the individuals who have been involved directly in these cases and will continue to do so."*

#### Merseyside drug dealer jailed after supplying class A drugs in Ellesmere Port

A Merseyside man who frequently travelled into Ellesmere Port to supply class A drugs has been jailed.

John Chong, aged 39, would meet drugs users in his car or visit their houses to supply them with crack cocaine and heroin. Today, Friday 28 August, he was sentenced to three years at Chester Crown Court for being concerned in the supply of crack cocaine and heroin after admitting to the offence at an earlier hearing. His activity was observed by detectives from Cheshire's Serious and Organised Crime Unit between 19 August 2019 and 14 November 2019. The surveillance found Chong, of Prophet Walk, to be regularly visiting a house on Hope Farm Road in Ellesmere Port. On 13 November 2019 officers executed a warrant at the address and Chong was found inside along with crack cocaine, heroin and paraphernalia associated with drug dealing. The digital scales and knife were being used to divide the drugs into smaller street deals for onward supply.

Prosecuting the case, Oliver King told the court that 31 deals of the cocaine recovered were just the 'tip of the iceberg'. It represented only some of the amounts couriered and distributed by Chong over three months. After being arrested Chong was medically examined and evidence suggested he was also storing the drugs in his body. Chong advertised the availability of drugs by sending a flare message on his mobile phone to multiple people.

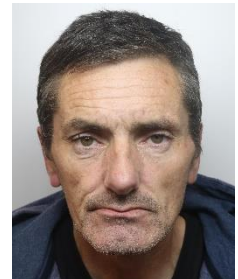
DS Mark Naylor said: *"Chong's purpose for coming into Ellesmere Port was to profit from the supply of crack cocaine and heroin. He would not only meet users in his car but use their homes to set up a drugs den, allowing him to produce and store the drugs ready to supply to customers in the town. By tracking Chong's movements*

*we were able to take action and gather further evidence resulting in him admitting to his involvement in drug dealing and being put behind bars. We relentlessly pursue those involved in drug related crime in Ellesmere Port and this is a positive step in making the area a safer place for those who live in the community.”*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, said: *“The proactive police work has led to a drug dealer being taken off our streets. Officers work incredibly hard to remove drug dealing from our community and I am pleased to hear this latest operation has put another dangerous criminal behind bars.”*

## **Chester man jailed following burglary spree in the city**

A 44-year-old man from Chester has been jailed after admitting carrying out a series of burglaries across the city.



Stephen Collins, of Hatton Road, broke into homes in Gladstone Avenue, Sealand Road, Newton Lane and Dickson Drive. He stole large quantities of valuable items and cash during the crime spree between the Fridays of 10 July and 24 July. One of the victims saw Collins leaving his address as he returned home. Collins managed to flee, but the description that the victim gave of him matched CCTV footage that officers gathered of a man who had been in the area.

An officer recognised the man in the footage as Collins and colleagues subsequently went to his home on Sunday 26 July. Collins ran out of the back of his house when the officers arrived. He was chased across the back of a number of neighbouring properties before being arrested and having his home searched. A large number of items stolen during the burglaries were recovered from his home, and the shoes he was wearing when he was arrested matched footprints at the scenes of some of the crimes. In addition, further CCTV footage gathered by the police showed Collins with Kai Davis when the 21-year-old man used bank cards stolen from one of the burglaries, in Newton Lane, to buy cigarettes from shops.

Davies, of Lynwood Road, Chester, was also arrested on Sunday 26 July. When questioned in custody, he admitted fraudulently using the stolen bank cards at five shops in the Chester area. Davies was subsequently charged with fraud and receiving stolen goods.

Collins denied being responsible for the burglary offences when he was questioned in custody. However, after being presented with all the evidence that officers had gathered against him, he pleaded guilty to five counts of burglary. Collins was sentenced for the offences at Chester Crown Court on Monday 24 August. He was jailed for three years and ordered to pay a £190 victim surcharge.

Davies was sentenced at Chester Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 28 July after pleading guilty to the offences he was charged with. He was sentenced to a total of 22 weeks in prison and ordered to pay a £128 victim surcharge. Two of the weeks were imposed for breaching a suspended prison sentence.

DC Tom Philpotts, who led the investigation into the burglaries on behalf of Chester Local Policing Unit, said: *“I am pleased that Stephen Collins and Kai Davis are now both behind bars facing the consequences of their actions. Collins burgled five properties in Chester – two on Sealand Road – and during his crime spree he stole large quantities of cash and valuable items, including laptops, jewellery, bikes, cameras, bags and perfumes. Burglary is a serious offence in which victims are targeted in their own home, which is the place that they should be able to feel most safe. No-one was at home when Collins committed the offences, but unfortunately for him one of the victims saw him as he was leaving the man's address. This subsequently led*

*to Collins being identified, arrested and brought to justice, as well as stolen property being returned to their rightful owners. It is always a deeply upsetting experience being the victim of a burglary, but I hope that the victims of this case can move on from the upset now that Collins and Davis have both been convicted and jailed for their offences. I also hope that this case deters others from committing similar offences."*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, added: *"Everyone has the right to feel safe in their own home. Offences like this have a devastating impact on victims and on the wider community. I would like to praise the work of all the officers who were involved this investigation and helped to deliver justice for the victims. I hope that the outcomes of this case allows the victims to move forward with their lives and provides reassurance to local residents."*

## **Warning issued following resurgence of scam phone calls purporting to be from Microsoft**

Detectives are urging people to stay vigilant following several reports of scam phone calls purporting to be from Microsoft.

In Cheshire there have been several reports of residents receiving phone calls from fraudsters posing as workers from Microsoft. The scammers claim to be computer security engineers and tell victims that their computers are at a security risk. They then say that a security check needs to be performed and if the victim agrees, the scammers can then gain remote access to the computer. This access allows fraudsters to obtain personal details about the victims including their bank account.

DS Chris Jacques, of the Economic Crime Unit, said: *"This is a particularly heinous crime whereby scammers target the most vulnerable in society. This scam has seen a resurgence over the years but as time goes on, fraudsters can use more sophisticated techniques in order to persuade victims to hand over money or gain access to their computers. These fraudsters are often extremely convincing and pose as working for a reputable company as it gives them more credibility. We are doing all we can to tackle all types of fraud and I would urge anyone who believes that they have been a victim of this scam to please report it to Cheshire Constabulary and Action Fraud."*

PCC for Cheshire, David Keane said: *"Fraud not only leaves victims without their hard earned money, it also has a significant emotional impact. As Police and Crime Commissioner, I will continue to ensure that action is taken against scammers who are so heartlessly targeting the vulnerable in Cheshire. I would urge residents to follow the key advice and please continue to educate and inform elderly family members about these scams."*

Key advice:

- Computer firms such as Microsoft do not make unsolicited phone calls to help fix your computer or fix a security risk.
- Treat all unsolicited phone calls with scepticism and never give out any personal information.
- Computer companies will not ask for credit card information to validate copies of software or ask for ID such as a driving licence or passport.

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. Information can also be reported online via the [Cheshire Police website](#).

## **Man jailed after shooting innocent passer-by in Ellesmere Port**

A man who shot an innocent passer-by in Ellesmere Port on a busy Saturday afternoon has been sentenced to 15 years in jail.

Liam Cameron, aged 26, pulled the trigger in the town centre missing his intended target and hitting the leg of a 66-year-old man. He was actually attempting to fire at a 31-year-old man after pulling the gun from his waistband and pointing it at the man's face down an alleyway. On Wednesday 26 August Cameron was told he must serve seven years and six months of his term before he can be considered for parole. He was sentenced for two counts of grievous bodily harm with intent, possessing a firearm with intent to cause fear or violence and being concerned in the supply of class A drugs. He will be eligible for parole after serving seven years and six months in prison. Cameron was sentenced at Chester Crown Court after pleading guilty at an earlier hearing.

Shortly before the shooting took place on Saturday 30 November 2019, Cameron, of Camden Road in Ellesmere Port, had intimidated his intended victim by cycling outside a sandwich shop after seeing him inside. The victim saw Cameron heading down the alleyway and he left the shop to confront him. Meanwhile, as the confrontation took place, the innocent member of the public was walking down Enfield Road when he heard a loud bang. He felt a sudden impact to his leg, which he described as being hit by a sledgehammer, and he fell to the floor. His injuries were so significant that he required surgery after 30 pellets were lodged at the bottom of his leg, however only one could be safely removed. The bullet hit the shopping bag he was carrying and caused the items to explode.

The shooting took place when a large number of people, including two children, were in the area at the time. Officers were quickly deployed to the scene and the town was cordoned off while paramedics treated the victim and he was taken to hospital. Cameron had immediately fled on his bike and hid from police at his girlfriend's home in Bromborough. He was arrested by officers the following day and subsequently charged. On sentencing Cameron, Judge Everett described him as a 'gangster with a gun'.

DI Nigel Parr, of Ellesmere Port Local Policing Unit, said: *"Cameron intended to cause serious harm to his target but missed and injured an innocent passer-by instead. The injuries the victim sustained were extremely serious and he will live with the consequences of that for the rest of his life. It is likely that the shopping the man was carrying helped save him from greater harm as it bore the brunt of the blast before hitting his leg. Cameron fired his weapon, without a thought for the people in the area and left the town in fear. His actions were nothing short of reckless and dangerous. Although both men will always be reminded of what happened that day, it is perhaps pure luck that no-one suffered life-threatening injuries or worse, lost their life. I want to thank everyone who played a part in ensuring a dangerous man has been taken off the streets and putting him behind bars for a very long time."*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, said: *"This incident terrified the local community and my thoughts are with the man who was injured. I want to take this opportunity to praise all the officers involved in catching Cameron and ensuring justice was served for both men and the wider community."*

## **Widnes man jailed following knife attack on his partner's ex-boyfriend**

A man from Widnes has been jailed after attacking his partner's ex-boyfriend with a knife in the town.

Connor Wright, of Avondale Drive, was sentenced at Liverpool Crown Court on Tuesday 25 August for assaulting a person and causing them actual body harm and possessing a knife in a public place. The 25-year-old was jailed for 12 months and ordered to pay a £156 victim surcharge. The court heard that the offences were committed after the victim had gone to Wright's partner's home in Widnes. The 22-year-old man was refused entry. Wright was on the phone to his girlfriend when the victim went to her address. He subsequently confronted the victim as he walked towards Hough Green Railway Station to go back to his Liverpool home. Fearing that Wright had a weapon, the victim pulled him off the bicycle he was on. In the ensuing struggle, which occurred near the entrance of the railway station at around 12.30pm on Sunday 12 July, Wright attempted to stab the victim with a kitchen knife he was carrying. This resulted in the victim sustaining two minor cuts to his torso.



Wright then ran off along Liverpool Road to a nearby convenience store, discarding the large knife as he did so, as well as the coat and snood he had on and his house keys and mobile phone. He called the police from the store, claiming that the victim had brought the knife to the scene. However, a subsequent search of Wright's home revealed that it was part of a set of kitchen knives in the property. Wright was arrested outside the store, and when interviewed in custody he claimed that he had gone to the train station to meet a friend. He said the victim attacked him and that the knife 'came out of nowhere'. Wright also initially claimed that he was unaware the victim had gone to his girlfriend's house that morning. However, he later admitted in custody that his girlfriend had phoned him that morning to tell him about the unexpected visit. After being informed of all the evidence that officers subsequently gathered against him, including CCTV footage and witness statements, Wright pleaded guilty to both of his charges.

Following his sentencing, DC Rob Catterall, who led the investigation on behalf of Widnes Local Policing Unit, said: *"Connor Wright went to Hough Green Railway Station armed with a large knife to confront his girlfriend's ex-partner, and in the ensuing altercation in a road he attempted to stab him. Thankfully, this only resulted in the victim sustaining two minor injuries that did not require hospital treatment. The consequences of this incident could have been far worse, for both the two men involved and their families. I am pleased that Wright has now been convicted of, and sentenced for, the offences he committed, and I hope that this case deters others from carrying and using knives."*

CI Sarah Heath, who is Cheshire Constabulary's knife crime lead, added: *"Cheshire has a lower rate of knife crime than most other counties in England. We saw a reduction in knife crime in Cheshire last year, in contrast to the rise in knife crime that was seen nationally. However, we will not be satisfied until we have achieved our goal of achieving weapons-free streets throughout Cheshire. We have a multi-faceted approach to tackling knife crime at Cheshire Constabulary. Our structured prepare, protect, pursue and prevent approach to combating knife crime involves various partner agencies, including local authorities, education providers, health authorities, third sector organisations, youth representatives and community groups. We work together to educate young people about the dangers and futility of carrying weapons, steer them away from criminality and offer them attractive alternative ways to spend their time. We will continue to endeavour – through education, awareness and action – to make Cheshire a county in which no-one carries a knife or feels that there is a reason to do so. However, the police cannot achieve this goal on our own. Knife crime is a societal problem that cannot be solved without the support of the whole society. I urge anyone with information regarding knife crimes or those who carry weapons to give us the details. If you know someone who carries a knife then reporting it to the police could be enough to save a life. For the small few in*

*our communities who continue to carry knives, bring harm to others and have no intention of changing their behaviour, we will enforce action in every case.”*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, said: *“Carrying a knife doesn’t make you safer, and the consequences can be devastating for all those involved. Cheshire Constabulary is doing all it can to reduce the number of dangerous weapons on our streets, and to educate people about the dangers of knife crime, and I urge anyone with information about those who carry such weapons to come forward in confidence and report it.”*

To report any type of crime involving weapons call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, or 999 in an emergency. Information can also be passed to the force online via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report>. Anyone who knows someone that carries a knife can report it to Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

## **Cheshire Constabulary secures first full Stalking Protection Order**

Cheshire Constabulary has secured its first full Stalking Protection Order.

The civil order, which places strict restrictions on a Runcorn man for the next five years, is one of only a handful to be granted in the country. The order prohibits him from contacting or approaching a named woman, contacting or interacting with her family and friends and bans him from entering a particular area of the county. It also means that he must immediately hand over any electronic devices when requested by a police officer and must give access to passwords and log-in details.

DCSupt Denise Worth, who is in charge of Cheshire’s Public Protection Directorate, said: *“Once again we are proud to be leading the way in Cheshire. This full Stalking Protection Order is a first for the force and is testament to the dedication and hard work of all those involved in securing this order at court and safeguarding a woman who is potentially at risk of stalking behaviour. It is a great example of team work at its best. The officers involved in the case have worked extremely hard alongside solicitors from the force’s legal team and dedicated Domestic Abuse officers working within the force’s Public Protection Directorate to ensure a positive outcome for the victim with a full order being granted. Not only does it restrict the activities and movements of the man for the next five years, it also provides peace of mind to the victim that safeguarding measures are in place if needed.”*

Stalking Protection Orders, which were introduced in January 2020, are one of a number of options available to police forces to help safeguard and protect victims at risk of stalking. They are civil orders made on application by police through magistrates’ court and applications for interim or full orders can be made. An interim Stalking Protection Order is a temporary order that can be imposed immediately if the court considers it appropriate to do so. In this case, an interim order was put in place in March, reviewed in July and extended until a hearing on 13 August at Cheshire East Magistrates’ Court where the full order was granted.

A full Stalking Protection Order requires a finding in law that a person has pursued a course of conduct amounting to stalking behaviour and that an order is necessary to protect a person from such a risk. It is not an alternative to a prosecution but allows police forces and courts to move quicker to ban alleged stalkers from contacting victims or visiting their home or place of work or study. The order can be granted without a conviction in place. Breaching the terms of a Stalking Protection Order is a criminal offence.

Joanne Clark, from the force’s Legal Services Team, said: *“The impact of stalking behaviour should never be underestimated and I hope that this case highlights once again that, as a force, we are committed to doing*

*everything we can to make sure that all options are explored when dealing with this type of behaviour and to ensure the best possible outcome for the victim. Together with the valuable work our officers are involved in as part of the Integrated Anti-Stalking Unit, we are helping to make a real difference to people affected by this issue.”*

Only the second in the country – and the first of its kind in the North West – the Integrated Anti-Stalking Unit is being run by Cheshire Constabulary in partnership with North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The unit is jointly funded by the force and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and all agencies are working together to help stalking victims and the risk caused by perpetrators through a range of interventions. The unit operates from a base in Warrington and involves an experienced and dedicated team of police officers and mental health professionals and outreach workers along with victim advocates who provide practical support, safety planning and advice for stalking victims regardless of whether the stalker’s identity is known.

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire, said: *“Stalking is an abhorrent crime which leaves its victims living in fear. I am pleased to have provided funding to support the work of Cheshire’s Integrated Anti-Stalking Unit which works hard to address stalking at its root-cause and provide protection and support for victims of the crime. Cheshire Constabulary is one of the first forces to secure a full Stalking Protection Order and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of officers and the force’s legal team in securing this. It is an important tool that can be used to deal with stalking behaviour and will provide vital reassurance to the victim that we are taking the issue seriously and doing everything we can to help.”*

For more details about SPOs visit the [Government website](#).

## **Two men jailed for life following Macclesfield murder**

Two men convicted of murdering a popular and well-loved father in Macclesfield have been jailed for life.

Daniel Whitmore, aged 26, and Daniel Mayers, aged 38, were both found guilty of murder following a 12 day trial at Chester Crown Court on Wednesday 26 August. The pair reappeared in court where they were both jailed for life. Whitmore, of Mayfield Avenue, Macclesfield, will serve a minimum of 17 years and six months and Mayers of Glegg Street, Macclesfield, will serve at least 20 years.

Their victim, Peter Robson, known by all as “Archie”, was found collapsed in his room at a hostel in Glegg Street, Macclesfield, at 6pm on 8 November 2019. Mayers alerted hostel staff claiming that Archie, aged 59, had a seizure and that they had found him on the floor of his room. Paramedics were called and they rushed him to hospital where staff, concerned about the seriousness of the injuries to Archie’s head and face and that they were likely the result of an assault, alerted police. Officers attended the hostel and discovered Archie’s room in disarray with obvious signs of a disturbance and an assault having taken place.

CCTV showed Mayers and Whitmore’s movements around the hostel from the early hours of the 8th November throughout the day, often leaving the hostel and returning to Archie’s room over the course of a that day. It also showed Archie walking into his room during that morning seemingly fit and well and not being seen again until taken out of his room by ambulance staff. The CCTV also showed the defendants removing items of clothing, footwear and a television from Archie’s room after the assault took place. The footage later shows them returning and reporting to staff that Archie had collapsed. Mayers was arrested that evening and Whitmore was arrested the following day as enquiries revealed that Archie’s injuries had

been the result of a violent assault. Sadly, Archie died on Saturday 9 November and the two men were subsequently charged with his murder.

DI Adam Waller said: *“Mayers and Whitmore tried to cover their tracks by lying that Archie had a seizure. CCTV clearly showed they had been spending time in Archie’s room for a prolonged period, leaving us with no doubt that they had been involved in some way in Archie’s death. Despite their efforts to clean up after attacking Archie, powerful forensic evidence also supported the involvement of the defendants in an assault. Despite our best efforts we still don’t know why. His family are devastated and have told me that their lives will never be the same again. Archie was a much loved father and, despite some of the challenges he faced during his life, he remained a well-liked character, especially in the Knutsford area where he spent most of his life. His frailties and vulnerability made him a prime target for Mayers and Whitmore, and he was assaulted and left to suffer in his room for most of that day. It was only due to a suggestion from an associate of Mayers, that medical help was sought. Leaving Archie in the manner that they did whilst they played snooker and visiting a pub was quite frankly, despicable and cowardly. I’d like to pass on my thanks to all the officers and staff that worked on the investigation and to those members of the community that assisted in our search for the truth. I would also like to recognise the part that Archie’s family played in this case and in particular the manner in which they have conducted themselves throughout what must have been a harrowing trial to sit through. I only hope this conviction and the sentences handed to Mayers and Whitmore will help his family and friends in some way to come to terms with his death.”*

David Keane, PCC for Cheshire said: *“What these two men did shocked a community and left a family devastated. My thoughts are with the family and friends and I hope this conviction gives them some form of comfort in that justice has been done and those responsible for his untimely death are going to pay price for their violence.”*



Daniel Whitmore



Daniel Mayers

## **Detectives issue warning following recent spate of Facebook scams**

Residents are being warned about a new wave of online scams where fraudsters hack into Facebook accounts in a bid to steal money from family and friends.

The sophisticated scam involves a hacker gaining access to an existing Facebook Messenger account who then message friends and family asking them to receive cash after an item has been sold on eBay. Scammers will say that their PayPal is not working or that they do not have an account and ask whether the friend or family member can receive funds to their own PayPal account. Once the undisclosed amount has been



transferred to a bank account, they will then forward it to an account controlled by the fraudster. Once the payment has been transferred, the transaction is then reversed, leaving the victim with a negative balance and the fraudster benefitting from cash. Across the UK the total reported loss for these reports is around £44,035. Cheshire Constabulary is now urging residents to remain vigilant when receiving a message asking for help with PayPal.

DS Chris Jacques, of the Economic Crime Unit, said: *“We are extremely concerned with the national trend of fraudsters using social media accounts to make a criminal gain. Nationally there have been multiple reports from victims stating that their Facebook Messenger accounts have been hacked and fraudulent messages have been sent to their friends on their behalf. Interestingly, between June and July, there have been 95 reports of scam messages which specifically mentioned that the item sold on eBay was a camera. I would urge everyone to remain vigilant as this scam will not discriminate. Please follow the key messages and help us to stop more people from being targeted.”*

PCC for Cheshire, David Keane said: *“The concerning aspect of this particular scam is that there is multiple victims with each account that is targeted. Fraudsters will stop at nothing to target innocent victims with a range of different and sophisticated scams. I would urge residents to please share this warning in order to protect those we love and care about from also falling victim to these criminals.”*

Key advice:

- Always be wary of unusual messages asking for help with financial transactions even if the message appears to be from someone you know and trust. Be sure to always check that the message was sent from them by calling them or speaking to them in person
- Never respond to any requests to send money or have money transferred through your account by someone you don't know and trust
- Protect your online accounts from hackers by using a strong separate password and, when you can, turn on two-factor authentication
- If you have made a payment then inform your bank or payment service provider as soon as possible, they will be able to help prevent further losses. Always monitor bank statements regularly for unusual activity.

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. Information can also be reported online via the [Cheshire Police website](#).

## **Police drone takes to the sky to help keep Cheshire safe**

Cheshire Constabulary has a new piece of kit to help keep communities safe, with the force's drone officially taking to the sky from today (Monday 24 August).

The Matrice 300RTK drone, which is also known as an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), will equip the frontline with a useful and powerful tool that can support officers in their daily duties.



By using the latest technologies in the fight against crime, the drone will enable the force to provide a better service to the public and make sure vulnerable people are safeguarded. The force has recruited and trained up a team of officers who make up the Drone Support Unit, which includes three officers and a sergeant. The unit is based at the headquarters in Winsford and will assist with:

- Searching for missing and wanted people
- Aerial imagery and reconstruction of road traffic collisions
- Aerial imagery for crime scene investigations
- Protests and disorder
- Identification of cannabis farms
- Event management planning

The newly qualified pilots have all received qualifications the Civil Aviation Authority recognise to enable them to operate a drone on behalf of the Constabulary.



CI Gareth Wrigley said: *"A few short months ago the unit formed, and the team have been working hard to get to this point, where the drone can officially take to the skies to assist with frontline policing. I want to*

*reassure the public that the drone will not be used for general surveillance and will only be used for incidents and operations. Having drone capability will make a huge difference in the way we protect vulnerable people and gather critical evidence at scenes. This is a really exciting time for the Constabulary which will increase our tactical options to help make Cheshire even safer."*

The PCC for Cheshire, David Keane, said: *"Police currently use the National Air Support Service (NPAS) for all its aerial requirements such as search and photography. Although manned aircraft will always be required for some operational activities, there are opportunities, such as when aerial photography alone is required, that drones would be more suitable, quicker to deploy and more cost-effective. The drone will bring huge benefits to frontline policing in Cheshire and I am really pleased that the force is now in a position to start using the drones on a day-to-day basis to help keep the public of Cheshire safe."*

## **Officers join forces to tackle county lines drug dealing in Halton and Merseyside**

Officers from Merseyside and Cheshire joined forces to tackle county lines drug dealing and the criminal exploitation of vulnerable adults and children on Friday 21 August.

Organised and led by Merseyside Police, with support from Cheshire Constabulary and British Transport Police, the latest Operation Medusa focused on Liverpool and Halton. With their direct links to Liverpool by both road and rail, Runcorn and Widnes are amongst the towns that are targeted by county lines gangs based in the city.

As part of the regional operation, plain-clothed officers from Merseyside and Cheshire joined British Transport Police officers at railway stations in a bid to identify people involved in county lines drug dealing. During the day Liverpool Lime Street, Liverpool South Parkway and the main railway stations in Runcorn and Widnes were monitored by a significant number of officers, who utilised a number of police tactics to spot people acting suspiciously and took action where necessary.



Drugs dogs were also utilised by officers at the railway stations to identify passengers in possession of illegal substances. Plain-clothed officers were also deployed at other strategic locations in Runcorn and Widnes, and warrants were executed simultaneously at addresses in Runcorn and Liverpool by officers investigating county lines drug dealing. In addition, a significant number of extra resources were committed to monitoring the main arterial routes in and out of Halton and Liverpool and stopping vehicles and speaking to occupants suspected of being involved in the supply of illegal drugs. Drugs dogs also assisted officers monitoring the roads.

Warrants were addresses in Halton and Liverpool as part of the operation, and a large quantity of people and vehicles were stopped and searched. Quantities of class A and class B drugs and cash were seized on the day, as were weapons including knives, machetes and air weapons. A total of 14 people were subsequently arrested, with two of them since being charged with drug dealing offences.

Merseyside Police Inspector Katie Wilkinson said: *"The operation was a key part of our continued operational activity to put a stop to young people being exploited at the hands of criminal gangs. Organised gangs are*

*exploiting children and vulnerable adults to move and supply drugs on their behalf. This lifestyle shouldn't be glamourised and can lead to serious consequences. By working with our colleagues across the border, we'll continue to showcase our extensive efforts to protect the public and arrest offenders."*

County lines drug dealing involves organised crime groups based in major cities or urban areas extending their criminal enterprise into more rural locations. They often recruit and coerce young children and vulnerable adults to sell illegal drugs for them.

Supt Laura Marler, who oversees policing in Runcorn and Widnes for Cheshire Constabulary, said: *"Criminals don't simply stop when they reach borders. In fact, organised crime groups based in major cities are always looking to extend their criminal activities into other locations, using mobile phones to let drug users know when and where they can buy illegal drugs from them locally. Friday's operation was part of our ongoing commitment to disrupt criminal activity and make Runcorn and Widnes safer places to live, work and visit. However, it wasn't just about catching criminals and seizing drugs. One of the main aims was to help identify and safeguard vulnerable adults and children who are controlled, coerced and manipulated into dealing drugs on behalf of organised crime gangs. By doing so we can offer them the support that they require and help to set them on the right path for a better life. The operation has also helped us to gather further information on how transport networks are being used by county lines criminals."*

DSupt Gareth Williams, Taskforce lead at British Transport Police, said: *"British Transport Police has a unique approach to county lines. We are the only force that operates nationally, targeting gangs who use railway stations and trains across England, Scotland and Wales to transport drugs. This joint operation, and the many others like it, are designed to target these criminal gangs at every stage of their county lines activity, from the cities they operate from to the rail routes they use to transport drugs and the smaller towns and villages where they sell. The activities of these gangs breed violence and go hand-in-hand with child exploitation. Our experience has proven that gangs who use the railway network rely on younger people to move drugs. These individuals are victims, forced through exploitation or intimidation into desperate situations, and it's always our priority to make support available that can get them out of harm and away from crime."*

In total, four warrants were executed during the operation, in Wheatlands and Littlegate in the Halton Brook area of Runcorn and in Roscommon Street and Anfield Road in Liverpool. A small quantity of class B drug cannabis was seized at the address in Wheatlands but no arrests were made. At another address in Runcorn, a quantity of what is believed to be cocaine and cannabis and drugs paraphilia were seized by officers, as were a number of weapons, including knives, machetes and an air pistol. Two men at the property, aged 21 and 18, were arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of the class A and B drugs. After being questioned in custody, they have been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

A 46-year-old man and a 45-year-old woman were also arrested in Runcorn on suspicion of possession with intent to supply class A drugs, after being stopped and searched by officers. The pair have subsequently been released under investigation in relation to this. The woman has been charged with being concerned in the supply of cocaine and another class A drug, heroin, in relation to a different matter. Also in Runcorn, a 23-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of drug driving and possession of an air weapon in a public place. He has been released under investigation. A 20-year-old man was arrested in Widnes on suspicion of possession with intent to supply crack cocaine after being stopped and searched by officers. He has subsequently been charged with the offence. A 24-year-old man was arrested in Widnes on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of a class B drug after officers seized a quantity of cannabis and his moped in

Widnes. He has been released under investigation. A 36-year-old man from Widnes has also been released under investigation, after being arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to supply heroin and crack cocaine following a stop and search. In total, 47 people were stopped and searched in Halton, with drugs being found and seized from 10 of them.

A number of addresses have been searched in Runcorn and Widnes on the back of arrests made in the towns. Out of the roads in the Halton area, a vehicle was seized, a driver was summoned to appear at court in relation to driving offences and two Traffic Offence Reports were issued.

PCC for Cheshire David Keane said: *"I would like to thank all the officers involved in this operation that was organised to protect communities from serious and organised crime and bring offenders to justice. Illegal drugs 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 county lines drug dealers and those who exploit and manipulate vulnerable adults and children to aid their criminal enterprises. Friday's operation is a great example of how police forces work together to stamp out serious and organised crime, which has no place in our communities."*

Supt Marler added: *"We will continue to work with other forces and partner agencies to do everything in our power to protect Halton residents from serious and organised crime. However, we also need support from the public. We need residents to be our eyes and ears by looking out for, and reporting, suspicious behaviour and signs of vulnerable children and adults being exploited. If you have any information that may help us to build more intelligence regarding county lines drug dealing, bring offenders to justice and keep vulnerable members of our communities safe then please get in touch. Together we can take dangerous substances off our streets."*

For more details on how to spot the signs of county lines drug dealing, and help make Halton a safer place, visit <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/police-forces/cheshire-constabulary/areas/cheshire/campaigns/campaigns/2019/impact/>. Any information regarding drug dealing in your community, no matter how small, should be reported to Cheshire Constabulary on 101, or via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk>. Alternatively, you can contact independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## **Latest Cheshire Appeals**

### **Appeal following an aggravated burglary in Great Sankey**

Detectives investigating an aggravated burglary in Warrington are appealing for witnesses to come forward.

Shortly after 2am on Friday 28 August three men broke into a house on Maine Gardens in Great Sankey while the occupants were asleep inside. The men, one armed with a knife, confronted the man and woman. The man suffered injuries to his arm believed to have been caused by the knife. He was taken to hospital by ambulance where he remains in a stable condition. One of the men has been described as white, aged between 25-30-years-old and of a medium build. He was wearing a mask and a tracksuit. Officers have been carrying out a number of enquiries and are appealing for information from the public.

DC Laura Gilbert, of Warrington CID, said: *“This was a terrifying incident and we have been following a number of lines of enquiry to establish what has taken place. The incident occurred in the early hours of the morning and I am encouraging anyone who saw or heard anything to come forward. If you have any dashcam or CCTV footage which could assist our investigation please send it through to us.”*

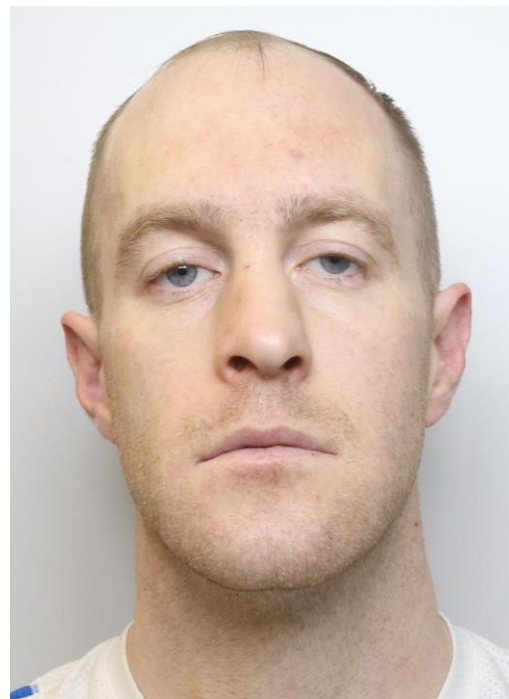
Anyone with any information is asked to contact Cheshire Police on 101 quoting IML 791269. Information can also be provided anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## **Appeal to locate man wanted in connection with Crewe assault**

Officers are appealing to the public to help locate a man they are looking to speak to in connection with an assault in Crewe.

Peter Bebbington resides in the Crewe and also has links to the Winsford area. The 35-year-old is described as white, of proportionate build and around 5’ 9” tall. He has short blonde hair and blue eyes. Officers are looking to speak to him in connection with an assault in Crewe.

Anyone who sees Peter, or has information on his whereabouts, is asked to call Cheshire Police on 101, quoting IML 772568 or visit <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/>. Alternatively, information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through their website [www.crimestoppers-uk.org/](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/).



## **Appeal for information and footage following fatal collision in Handforth**

Officers investigating a fatal collision in Handforth have renewed their appeal for information.

The incident on Dean Road, which becomes Handforth Road, involved a black Suzuki Grand Vitara car and a cyclist. It was reported to the police around 1am on Saturday 22 August. Officers attended the scene and discovered that the cyclist had sustained serious injuries. Sadly, the 43-year-old local man was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. His family have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers. The driver of the SUV car stopped at the scene following the collision. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and no arrests have been made.

The enquiries that have been carried out so far have established that the cyclist was lying in the road when the collision occurred. Officers want to speak to anyone who was in the area and believes that they may have seen the cyclist prior to the collision, or captured relevant footage on a dashcam. They particularly want to talk to the people who were in two cars that were travelling along Dean Road around the time of the incident, between 12.40am and 1am.

Anyone with information or dashcam footage that may aid the investigation is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 786461, or give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report>.

## **Appeal for information following serious assault in Ellesmere Port**

Detectives are appealing for witnesses to come forward after a woman was seriously assaulted outside a shop in Ellesmere Port.

Sometime between 2.50pm and 3.15pm on Friday 21 August a 43-year-old local woman was exiting the Express Corner Shop on Stanley Road when she was approached by two men. The group became involved in a verbal disagreement. The group then walked over to Alexandra Street, where the argument escalated resulting in the woman being hit in the face. The men then fled the scene leaving the victim serious facial injuries. The two suspects are both men, they were wearing casual clothing, one had dark hair, while the second man had with frizzy/curl mousey blonde/brown hair.

DC Iain Ross, of Ellesmere Port CID, said: *“The victim in this case has been left with serious facial injuries and we are committed to doing all we can to trace the people responsible. As part of our investigation I am keen to hear from anyone who witnessed the incident or anyone with any information which may aid our enquiries. The same goes for anyone who thinks they may know who the offenders are, or have CCTV or dashcam footage of them.”*

Anyone with information or footage that may aid the ongoing investigation should call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML786031, give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## **Appeal for information on the anniversary of the death of a woman from Widnes**

Detectives have renewed their appeal for information on the anniversary of the death of a Widnes woman.

Mother-of-two Veronica Anderson left her home in Widnes at 10.10pm on Saturday 24 August 1991 after receiving a phone call. Just hours later (shortly after 3am on Sunday 25th August 1991) the 42-year-old was found dead in her car off Tannery Lane in Penketh, Warrington. A murder investigation was subsequently launched by Cheshire Constabulary. Despite extensive and exhaustive enquiries over the years, no-one has ever been convicted in connection with her death. On the anniversary of Vera’s death, officers are appealing for anyone who has any information about the case, to come forward.



DI Adam Waller said: *“Vera’s family were left heartbroken by her death and have had to live with what happened over the past 29 years. Someone out there must know something about what happened that day. I appreciate that it is a long time ago but I am sure that if you witnessed something you would still remember this now. Anyone with any information is urged to come forward – even the smallest detail can be crucial.”*

Anyone with any information is urged to contact Cheshire Constabulary on 101 quoting occurrence number 0709373610. If you do not want to speak to the police then information can also be passed on anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

## **Appeal for information following burglary at Northwich convenience store**

Detectives are appealing for witnesses to come forward after a large quantity of cigarettes were stolen during a burglary at a convenience store in Northwich.

At around 1.30am on Monday 24 August three unknown men broke into the Co-op store on Cheshire Business Park, Lostock Gralam. Once inside the building the offenders, who were wearing dark clothing, stole cigarettes. They fled the scene in a black Audi at around 1.40am, travelling towards Manchester on the A556. Officers believe that the incident may be linked to an attempted burglary which occurred at a store in Holmes Chapel a short time before the incident in Northwich.

DC Matthew Uren, of Northwich CID, said: *“The investigation is currently in its early stages and we are following a number of lines of enquiry, including CCTV and forensics. As part of the enquiries I want to hear from anyone who was in the area between 1.15am and 1.45am and witnessed anything suspicious. The same goes for any motorists who were driving in the area around the time of the incident and believes they may have captured the offenders on their dashcams. I urge anyone with any information, no matter how small, to call the team here at Northwich on 101, quoting IML 788053.”*

Anyone with information or dashcam footage that may aid the investigation should call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 788053 or visit <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about>. Information can also be reported anonymously, via Crimestoppers, 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/>