

# Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

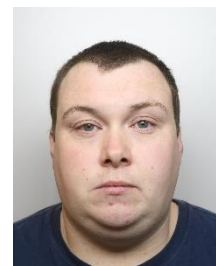
## Cheshire News & Appeals



### Latest Cheshire News

#### Ellesmere Port man jailed for sexual offences against a child

An Ellesmere Port man has been jailed for eight and a half years for a string of sexual offences against a child. Stephen Thomas, of Staker Avenue, was sentenced at Liverpool Crown Court on Friday 26 February after being found guilty of the offences. The court heard how Thomas subjected the seven-year-old girl to abuse between September 2016 and September 2018. The child disclosed to her mother what Thomas had done and told the police right away. Officers arrested the 29-year-old and seized electronic devices.



Following examination, it was revealed that the devices contained indecent images of children. He was arrested in relation to this but denied the allegation to officers. Thomas pleaded not guilty to three counts of sexual touching of a child under the age of 13 and two counts of producing indecent photographs of children. He was sentenced to eight and a half years and ordered to sign the sex offenders' register and a sexual harm prevention order both indefinitely. Detective Constable Joanna Barclay of Cheshire Police's Police Protection Directorate, said: *"This case has left the victim and her family distraught and I hope that the sentence will help bring some closure to them. Thomas preyed upon a young child for this own sexual gratification and refused to take responsibility for the crimes he committed, making the family have to relive the horrific experience again through a trial. I am pleased with the sentence which was handed down by the courts on Thomas."*

Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: *"This is a harrowing case and my thoughts are with the victim and her family. I would like to commend the work of the team who worked tirelessly to ensure justice for the girl and her family. Support is available to victims of sexual abuse and I would urge anyone who has been subjected to this to please report it to police and seek support and advice."*

If you have been a victim of sexual abuse, or know of someone who has, please contact Cheshire Police on 101, contact us via [the Cheshire Police website](#) or Crimestoppers anonymously by calling 0800 555 111.

#### Liverpool man charged with drug offences following stop check in Northwich

A Liverpool man has been charged with drugs offences following a police stop check in Northwich. Anthony Campbell, of Heydean Road, Liverpool was arrested and subsequently charged with two counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs. The 33-year-old was remanded in custody and appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Friday 5 March where he pleaded guilty to the offences. He will appear in court at a later date for sentencing. The charges relate to stop check on a vehicle in Bartington at around 12pm on Thursday 4 March where heroin and crack cocaine were found.

## **Man charged with murder following the death of a woman in Congleton**

A 47-year-old man from Congleton has been charged with murder following the death of a woman in the town. David Mottram, of Nursery Lane, appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Thursday 4 March and at Chester Crown Court the following day, both via a video link. He has been remanded in custody and is set to return to the crown court on Friday 28 May. Mottram was arrested in Nursery Lane at around 11.15pm on Tuesday 2 March after officers found the body of a woman at an address in the close that night. She has subsequently been identified as Samantha Heap, a 45-year-old from Congleton. Her family are being supported by specialist officers.

## **Police operation sees more than 300 motorists caught using their mobile phone**

Cheshire police officers have issued more than 300 Traffic Offence Reports (TORs) to motorists for using their mobile phone behind the wheel. During February officers across the county took part in enforcement and educational activity in support of the National Police Chief Council's country-wide campaign. Officers were out on the lookout for people using their mobile phone behind the wheel, or any of the other Fatal 5 offences (careless driving, speeding, drink/drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt). Throughout the month 318 motorists were issued with a TOR for their blatant breach of the law. Chief Insp for Cheshire's Roads and Crime Unit, Rob Dickinson, said: *"In line with the national focus, throughout February we targeted motorists using a mobile phone while driving, with the aim of making Cheshire's roads safer and preventing anyone being killed or seriously injured as a result of something completely avoidable. The fact that officers have issued more than 300 TORs throughout the month is astonishing. I have no doubt in my mind that everyone knows the dangers of using their phones behind the wheel, and that they shouldn't be doing it, yet so many people still do. Many people try and hide it down by their laps in a bid to avoid being caught. My question to those motorists who thought it was acceptable to use their mobile phone while driving and put other innocent road users lives at risk is, "was that call, text, DM, or scroll of your social media news feed really worth it?"*

David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, added: *"Making our roads safer is one of my key priorities and I am shocked to see so many people flouting the law and using their mobile phones behind the wheel, when the serious dangers are very well known. Using a phone whilst driving is completely irresponsible. Not only does it put the lives of the driver themselves at risk, it also risks the lives of other road users and pedestrians. Scrolling through social media or checking a text message is not worth the loss of someone's life or a lengthy prison sentence. I am pleased that Cheshire police took part in the national operation and as a result stopped so many people from continuing their journeys while putting other road users at risk."*

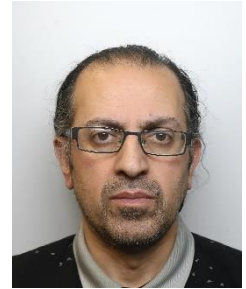
## **Five people arrested in connection with the fraudulent sale of vehicles**

Detectives from Northwich CID have arrested five people on suspicion of fraud offences. The two men, age 25 and 39, and three women, age 24, 28 and 29, were all arrested this morning (Wednesday 3 March) at addresses in Winsford and Weaverham. All five have been held on suspicion of conspiracy to commit fraud and fraud by false representation. The arrests relate to the alleged fraudulent sale of vehicles. DS Rob Astbury said: *"This morning's arrests are part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged fraudulent sale of vehicles in Cheshire and further afield. Enquiries in relation to these incidents remain ongoing and the five people arrested today have now been released under investigation pending further enquiries."*

David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire said: *“This morning’s arrests show that tackling fraud is a priority for Cheshire Police and I would like to thank all of the officers in the investigation. Fraud is an extremely serious offence and I hope that this ongoing investigation provides reassurance and acts as a warning to anyone planning to commit such offences.”* Anyone planning on buying a car online is urged to be extremely careful and never pay a deposit before you have seen the vehicle. For further information and advice about online purchases visit - [Online shopping fraud | Action Fraud](#)

## **Man wanted in connection to incidents in Runcorn involving threats and criminal damage**

Police are asking the public to help trace a 53-year-old man from Greater Manchester who is wanted in connection to incidents involving threats and criminal damage in Runcorn. Mohammed Ashraf, who is also known as Tahir Ashraf Chaudhery, is believed to be in the Northwich area of Cheshire. He also has links to Manchester, Cheadle and Stockport in Greater Manchester. Ashraf is 6’ 3” tall with a proportionate build. He has black hair that is greying and brown eyes. Anyone who sees Ashraf, or has information regarding his whereabouts, is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary immediately on 101, quoting IML 918080. Alternatively, information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



## **Northwich anti-social behaviour hotspot house closed by police**

Officers from Northwich Neighbourhood Policing Team have secured a closure order on a house in Northwich. Following a large number of reports of anti-social behaviour and disorder at 12 Binney Rd, Northwich over the last few months, officers gathered evidence from local residents, and presented the case to Chester Magistrates court. On 23 February a closure notice was served on the address, and on 25 February, the court granted the full order which lasts for a period of three months. The court granted this to prevent further incidences of anti-social behaviour, nuisance or disorder. Officers attended on 25 February to ensure that the occupant vacated the property, and the house has now been secured.

Insp Jason Murray, Neighbourhood Insp. for Northwich said: *“This is a fantastic example of community policing in action. PC Dean Butterworth and PCSO Angela Richardson listened to the concerns of residents, and took action by working with Weaver Vale Housing Trust to find a solution to this ongoing issue that was blighting the community. The occupant of 12 Binney Road has shown complete disregard for the local community and other residents of Binney Road. I hope this latest closure order gives our communities the confidence to report issues to us, and the reassurance that we will work together to solve the problem. I want to thank them for their support. The powers available under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, allow us to take such action, when despite many efforts being made, a householder fails to change their ways. I hope that the former occupant takes some time to reflect on their situation, and how they could have changed their behaviour to have avoided this. I am determined that our local communities should be pleasant places to live, and that people should show respect to their neighbours and behave in a civilised manner. Closure orders are a power that we will continue to utilise where necessary, in order to address residents who cannot respect the wellbeing of their neighbours and to make the community better for all.”*

David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire Police said: *“This is an excellent example of how Cheshire’s community police model – which has put officers and PCSOs back into the heart of our communities – is helping to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Your local police team are there to listen, find solutions and help improve your community. Tackling these type of situations before they get out of hand was exactly what I had in mind when I put a dedicated PC and PCSO in all 122 police communities in Cheshire. Keep up the good work.”*



## **Man jailed for fraud after duping friend out of more than £500,000**

A 32-year-old man defrauded a friend and his Warrington finance business out of more than half a million pounds after his gambling addiction spiralled out of control. Peter Saad from Wroxham Drive, Nottingham appeared at Liverpool Crown Court on Monday 22 February to be sentenced, after pleading guilty to three counts of fraud by false representation. He was jailed for 21 months. As Saad’s debt to loan sharks and other loan companies snowballed but his gambling habit continued, he began concocting stories in order to get his hands on a total of £521,889.55. Between September 2018 and May 2019 he convinced his friend, who is the Chairman & Chief Executive of an Investments & Credit Group to hand over large sums of money for fictitious projects. He began by fabricating a story about his family struggling to meet their mortgage repayments due to a pharmacy they purchased in the USA. He then made up a story about having had a loan from a prominent member of an American church member to help pay for the pharmacy in America. When he became short of funds he lied to his friend that he had cancer and forged emails and invented scans and operations which he needed money to pay for. As Saad continued with his falsehoods, he convinced the victim to set up a pharmaceutical company with Saad as one of the directors. He forged invoices to obtain money for work that would never be carried out and for equipment he’d already bought for half the price. This is when the victim’s finance staff became suspicious and his lies began to unravel. An invoice was checked with a company who confirmed they had never been asked to carry out work for him and the enormity of his deception began to be realised, with the cost to the victim’s loss increasing as each lie was uncovered. Police were called in and the investigation began, with Saad fully admitting his guilt. DC Lee Ellis said: *“Saad hoodwinked his friends, family and business associates with elaborate lies to fund his gambling habit and his debts. He abused the trust placed in him and is now paying the price for his crimes, leaving those who thought they knew him not only out of pocket by hundreds of thousands, but also feeling betrayed and hurt by his actions.”*

David Keane, police and crime commissioner for Cheshire Police said: *“This case highlights just what can happen when an addiction gets out of control, whether its drugs, gambling or alcohol. We want people to admit their addictions before it’s too late so they can get the help they need and support from their family and friends. That’s why I am committed to funding charities, which help those in need in our communities and why I would urge those in crisis never to suffer in silence.”* Anyone who feels that gambling is getting out of hand can find out where to get help and support [here](#).

## **Man charged following spate of burglaries in Cheshire**

A 25-year-old man from Liverpool has been charged in connection with a spate of burglary offences in Cheshire. Jamie Horgan, of no fixed address, was arrested on Friday 26 February. He has since been charged with five counts of burglary and one count of theft of a motor vehicle. The car theft charge and one of the burglary charges relate to an incident on Chester Road in Warrington on Thursday 15 October. The other

burglary charges relate to incidents that occurred in the Hale area, near Widnes, on Friday 18 December. Two of those burglaries took place on Hale Road. The others occurred in Vicarage Close and on Hale Gate Road. Horgan appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Monday 1 March.

He was remanded in custody and is set to appear at Liverpool Crown Court on Friday 26 March.

## **Last chance to grab free security equipment in Bewsey and Whitecross**

Residents in Bewsey and Whitecross are being encouraged to grab free property marking kits that protects homes from burglars before the giveaway runs out on Monday 15 March. So far Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) have visited 4,388 homes with 1,510 being fitted with the unique crime-fighting tool that helps protect homes and possessions. The SelectaDNA forensic coding spray liquid is an invisible dye placed on items inside the home such as jewellery, laptops and TVs. Officers can use specialist lighting to identify the property and link them to specific incidents using a unique code. They will look to prosecute anyone found to have been in possession of an item that has been marked that they cannot account for. The free gift comes from grant funding worth more than half a million pounds and is part of a scheme which focuses on tackling crime including burglary and acquisitive crime. The £550,000 grant was secured by Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane from the government's Safer Streets Fund which was set up to prevent crimes in certain areas. Residents who were not at home at the time the PCSOs visited would have received a leaflet and if they are yet to take up the free gift they are asked to get in touch by emailing the safer streets team. Inspector Ruth Atherton, from Warrington Local Policing Unit and leading on the project, said: *"Local officers have been working really hard with the team at Wardens to knock on each and every door in Bewsey and Whitecross in order to fit the equipment. We have now almost visited 4,500 homes and managed to help protect over 1,500 with the crime prevention tool. However we are determined to fit as many homes as we can but in order to do this we need residents to get in touch with us before 15 March. This free gift as part of the safer streets funding is a perfect opportunity for residents to protect their possessions and homes. The property marking kits are an excellent way to make it difficult for burglars to sell items they have stolen. It will enable officers to identify the owners of the stolen property so it can be returned to them."*

David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, said: *"I know officers and partners are working extremely hard to visit each house in Bewsey and Whitecross to offer and fit homes with free security marking kits. The delivery of this crime fighting tool to is a fantastic way to protect homes from burglars and opportunistic thieves. The determination and passion officers have for this community is fantastic to see and I would encourage residents to grab this opportunity while they can before it comes to an end. The project as a whole is also enabling residents to come together and work alongside officers to make the community a much better and safer place to live."* Residents will also be visited by Warden's who are conducting security assessments and fitting other devices such as doors and window locks, door chains, padlocks and CCTV door bells. To make sure you grab the free security equipment please email [safer.streets@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:safer.streets@cheshire.pnn.police.uk) and provide your full name, address, email and contact number and a member of the team will get in touch.

## **Residents urged to stay at home ahead of first phase of relaxing coronavirus restrictions**

Residents are being urged to continue to stay at home ahead of the first phase of relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions next month. Last week, Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlined a four-step road map,

with strict conditions, for gradually lifting coronavirus restrictions throughout Spring and Summer. The first step, on Monday 8 March, will see schools and colleges reopen and allow the public to take part in recreation or exercise outdoors with their own household or one other person outside their household. As we move to the next stage of our fight against coronavirus officers in Cheshire will continue to provide support to the public and local businesses with our approach of engage and explain but will move to enforce when there are blatant and repeat breaches. However, for the time being, residents must continue to stay at home to protect their families and friends and to reduce the spread of the virus. ACC Jenny Sims said: *"We're still at a critical stage of the pandemic which has seen more than 120,000 people lose their lives. Since the start of the January lockdown, officers in Cheshire have issued more than 900 FPNs. These fines have been issued for a range of blatant breaches, but we are continuing to see cases where people are visiting friends in other households, holding parties and travelling without reasonable excuse. "It is really important that, although there is light at the end of the tunnel, we must continue to comply with the restrictions in place to keep infections down in a bid to move forward with each of the four steps that the Prime Minister outlined in his speech last week. The rules are clear and our officers will continue to engage with the public and explain the rules in place but when they are met with blatant and repeat breaches they will not hesitate to enforce. Our dedicated coronavirus patrols will continue to support the majority of Cheshire residents sticking to the rules and will not hesitate to take enforcement action against the small minority who choose to ignore this. I would urge you all to continue with your efforts in staying at home and only leaving for limited exceptions."*

Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: *"We must all continue to be cautious with each relaxation of the restrictions in order to get back to some form of 'normality'. We must all work together to drive down coronavirus cases and in order to do this, we must all continue to stay at home, only leaving for limited circumstances, until restrictions are lifted by the Government. I would like to thank the majority of the Cheshire public for the sacrifices they have made in sticking to the rules."* For further advice and guidance please visit [the Government website](#). To report a coronavirus breach visit [the Cheshire Police website](#).

## Latest Cheshire Appeals

### **Appeal for witnesses following armed robbery at bank in Knutsford**

Police are appealing for witnesses following an armed robbery at a bank in Knutsford. At 12.48pm on Friday 5 March, police were called to an armed robbery at Natwest Bank on Kings Street, Knutsford. Two men entered the bank, threatened staff and stole cash. The two men then fled the area on a black motorbike. No members of staff are believed to have been injured. Both rider and pillion passenger were dressed all in black and the rider of the motorbike was wearing a multi-coloured black and red helmet. Police conducted a thorough search of the area and enquiries are ongoing.

DS Stephen Joyce said: *"We are making a number of enquiries in the area and are keen to speak to anyone who has information that could help us. If you were in the area at the time and have dashcam get in touch on 101 or via website. There is also a chance that the suspects discarded their motorbike somewhere in the town or surrounding area. If you should come across this, or a green petrol can, please get in touch."*

Anyone with information should contact Cheshire Police on 101 or via [the website](#) quoting IML 931559. Information can be passed anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or report it via [the Crimestoppers website](#).



## Appeal for witnesses following fatal collision on A556 in Knutsford

Officers are appealing for more information following a fatal collision in Knutsford. Just before 3.30pm on Thursday 4 March police were called to A556 in Plumley following reports of a collision involving a black Vauxhall Corsa and a silver Mercedes. The driver of the black Vauxhall Corsa, a 44-year-old man from Northwich, died at the scene. His next of kin have been informed. The driver of the Mercedes, a 31-year-old man, was taken to hospital for minor injuries.

Police are appealing to anyone who may have witnessed the collision or may have any dashcam footage of the vehicles before the incident to come forward. Anyone with any information is urged to call 101 quoting IML 903987 or report it via [the Cheshire Police website](#). Alternatively anyone with information can report to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via [the Crimestoppers website](#).

## Renewed appeal for information to help find missing man from Crewe

Police are again appealing for information regarding a 51-year-old man who has now been missing for more than two weeks. Josef Skrdlant, who is also known as Pepik, left his home in the Queens Park area of Crewe to go for a walk at around 10am on Friday 19 February. His family have not heard from him since. Officers are urging anyone who sees him or has any information regarding his whereabouts to get in touch. DI Claire Jesson, of Crewe Local Policing Unit, said: *“Josef, who some people know by his nickname of Pepik, has now been missing for more than a fortnight and we are becoming increasingly concerned for his*



IML 922551

*welfare. It is completely out of character for Josef to not make contact with his family or return home – he has never been reported as missing to the police before. We have been conducting searches for him since he was reported as missing. So far, the extensive efforts of our officers have been to no avail. Josef lives in Crewe and we believe that he is most likely in the town. There have been some potential sightings of him within Crewe since he went missing, but none of them are confirmed sightings. Josef was recently living in Birmingham and he also has links to Bradford. I urge anyone in the Crewe, Birmingham and Bradford areas or elsewhere who thinks that they may have seen Josef since he went missing to contact us at Crewe Police Station. The same goes for anyone with any information regarding his whereabouts, or CCTV or dashcam footage of him that was recorded after 10am on Friday 19 February. I would also like to appeal directly to Josef to get in touch to let us and your family know that you are safe. You are not in any trouble. We are all just really worried about you.”* Josef is around 5' 2" tall with a proportionate build. He is white with a tanned complexion and has brown eyes and black hair that is greying and receding. When Josef went missing he was wearing a black jacket, blue jeans and blue shoes. He is originally from the Czech Republic and speaks very little English. Anyone with information or footage that may help officers find Josef is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary immediately on 101, quoting IML 922551.

Below is a Czech version of our appeal:

Žádost o informace, které by pomohly najít pohřešovaného muže z Crewe  
Policie žádá veřejnost o informace, které by pomohly najít pohřešovaného muže. Josef Skrdlant nebyl viděn od doby, kdy v přibližně 10 hodin ráno v pátek 19. února odešel pěšky ze svého domova v oblasti Queens Park v Crewe. Má 51 let a je okolo 157 cm vysoký s průměrnou postavou. Je bílý s opálenou pletí a má hnědé oči a černé prošedivělé vlasy, které se ztrácejí. Když byl Josef naposledy spatřen, tak měl na sobě černou bundu, modré rifle a modré boty. Je původem z České republiky a mluví velmi málo anglicky. Josef se nedávno vrátil do Crewe z Birminghamu. Policie z hrabství Cheshire žádá kohokoli, kdo ho uvidí nebo má informace o jeho místě pobytu, aby se přihlásil. Inspektor Dave Levins z místní policejní jednotky v Crewe řekl: "Toto je poprvé, kdy byl Josef Skrdlant nahlášen policii jako pohřešovaný. "Několik policistů jej hledá, ale zatím marně, a začínáme se stále více obávat o jeho bezpečí. "Žije v Crewe, ale před nedávnem žil v Birminghamu. "Žádám kohokoli z těchto nebo jiných oblastí, kdo si myslí, že mohl Josefa od doby, kdy se ztratil, vidět, aby se s námi spojil. "Totéž platí pro kohokoli, kdo má jakékoli informace o jeho místě pobytu nebo záznamy z kamerového systému nebo autokamery, na kterých by se vyskytoval poté, co se v pátek ráno 19. února ztratil."



Josef Skrdlant in the clothes he was wearing when he went missing

Kdokoliv s informacemi nebo záznamy, které mohou policistům pomoci Josefa nalézt, ať okamžitě zavolá na policii v hrabství Cheshire na číslo 101 a uvede IML 922551.

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/>