

Residents Newsletter

Dear Resident

Welcome to the first news letter for Bath City Centre Team. I hope that I can produce a similar letter on a quarterly basis to keep you up to date on our progress, goals and achievements. Policing relies on public confidence and feeling that we are tackling issues that concern you. I will try and keep these newsletters concise but give you a real feel for what we are trying to achieve in the City Centre.

Figures

Below are some facts and figures for crime in the City Centre

CS218	2017	2018
Arson and Criminal Damage	182	213
Burglary	161	214
Drug Offences	47	42
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	26	30
Possession of Weapons	12	16
Public Order Offences	530	489
Robbery	43	42
Sexual Offences	75	61
Theft	1047	1164
Vehicle Offences	66	93
Violence Against The Person	831	809
Sum:	3020	3173

You will notice that overall there has been a small increase in crime in the City Centre for the 12 months of 2018 compared to 2017, whilst across the whole of Bath there has actually been a 1.8% fall in criminality. This is bucking the national trend for rising crime and again we see falls in robbery, violence and sexual offences. Thefts and in particular shop theft has contributed to most of the rise in crime figures for Bath centre and may be a reflection of tightening financial conditions both for retailers and possibly those who are shoplifting.

In BANES for the last 18 months we have run a shop theft workshop for juveniles who get caught stealing for the first time. We have had over 70 attendees and to date none of them have come back to Police attention so this seems far more effective than other outcomes. It brings retailers face to face with the offenders and their parents so that they understand the damage that offending causes. We continue to work closely with Bath BID and Bath Crime Reduction Partnership to help ban our most prolific re-offenders.

There have been large increases in inquisitive offences of burglary and theft from vehicles, but for both the numbers across the City as a whole show a significant

decrease, suggesting that the small number of offenders who commit these type of offences have targeted central areas more than in the previous year, but as a City we have been more effective in bringing these people to justice in a timely manner. As individuals we can all work to ensure we keep valuables safe and out of the eyesight of prying eyes, and report people acting suspiciously.

My overall summation would be that despite many National horror stories in the media relating to gangs and serious violence, Bath is not facing an unstoppable crime wave, the figures are very similar to the twelve months before that and some of the most significant violent offences have actually reduced.

Increased Visibility

Since restructuring in Early October my team have tried to increase their visibility in the City Centre.

My team no longer travel in cars, except when having to travel outside the Centre on rare occasions and we are out either on foot or on bike.

Two of my PCSO's are currently trialling electric bicycles in the city Centre, benefitting from being able to cover more distance whilst being more approachable than travelling by car.



Every officer now has a laptop and can update crimes and other enquiries whilst on patrol rather than having to return to the station for paperwork. This gives us the opportunity to use public spaces to do our administration and be available to talk through problems people may have.

We have started a number of new coffee with cops walk in beat surgeries including at Royal Victoria Park and attending at Julian Road

Each of the PCSO's have taken responsibility for a housing block in the City Centre so that residents can have a single point of contact within the Police to discuss ongoing issues. Where we have identified ongoing problems in the City I have tried to designate one of my team to take ownership of it, so that we do more than just short term fixes.

Meetings for residents of Griffin Court and Norfolk Crescent have meant that we have taken the time to discuss concerns and answer questions from local communities. We are happy to meet with any resident group, be it large or small and will endeavour to attend any relevant meetings we are invited to.

Greater Working with Housing Associations

My team have endeavoured to work more closely with the main housing associations, CURO, LIVEWEST, GUINNESS and SANCTUARY, doing a number of joint visits, residents meetings and engaging to discuss problem residents for a quicker resolution to anti-social behaviour problems.

Knife Surrender Bins

Operation Sceptre is a national initiative to reduce knife crime and here in BANES we are doing our part to raise awareness and make the streets safer. This includes several weeks of action every year where we conduct activities such as test purchases to check knives are not sold to children, or education in schools and colleges. There are also knife surrender bins for people to anonymously hand in items which they fear may get used as a weapon in the wrong hands. We have a surrender campaign in Bath Police Station in Redbridge House, Midland Road, BA2 3EW, but the knife needs to be handed in to an officer, however, we will never take any details or record who has handed in the item. If you prefer a completely anonymous method, then we have a permanent surrender bin outside Ashmead Road Custody Centre, Ashmead Road, Keynsham, where you can post any such items securely into the bin at any time of day. We emptied our bins for the first time and have already had over 120 knives surrendered, some of which you can see below.



Working to Protect our most Vulnerable

Many of you will have heard of county lines and the issues of gangs taking over the homes of vulnerable people in order to sell drugs. In Bath we have taken an innovative approach, identifying those we believe most at risk and visiting them on a regular basis to ensure that they are not taken advantage of. This has already led to some people being rehoused to safer locations and offenders arrested from vulnerable addresses.

Begging

Begging is a very emotive subject and one that deeply divides most communities. I hope that as a team we have a very positive working relationship with both the street homeless and the support services that work with them. That being said our role requires us to prevent crime and begging is an offence that causes discomfort and irritation to many people. We spend much time safeguarding and supporting the street community but also need to deter these antisocial issues from causing tensions. Recently, and following consultation with the main support charities we have looked to change our approach to begging. Firstly by talking through the range of support benefits available to those we believe to be begging but then being more robust in our actions towards those who continue to beg. We are using legislation to stop persons from sitting in locations and gathering alms, (which is waiting to receive gifts or donations, such as sitting with a cap or cup in front of you). In the past we used to take action when we witnessed people verbally asking for money but this has led to an increase in the number of people sitting down quietly waiting to be given money. Some of these people are drawn to Bath from other parts of the country due to the amount of money that is given. This draws people away from their local connections and means that if they have no ties to Bath that they are unable to obtain benefits or housing and makes them fully reliant on obtaining money to survive from any means available. Those people with a local connection to Bath

generally have access to benefits, housing and other support such as outreach workers, drug rehabilitation and mental health support.

I hope this newsletter has been beneficial for you. As of the next newsletter I hope to be able to provide a team photo and introduce some of the team to you and the work that they have been doing

Regards

PS 4531 Jonathan Raisey