



**Philip Seccombe**  
**Police and Crime**  
**Commissioner**  
**for Warwickshire**



## MONTHLY UPDATE

*The latest news from the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner*

**August 2018**

Rural crime has been in the headlines again over the past week, with the release of new figures from insurers NFU Mutual that suggest the cost to farms and businesses has increased by just over 30 percent in the past year across Warwickshire. You may have seen me appearing on BBC Midlands Today (pictured above with reporter Ben Godfrey) to talk about the issue earlier this week.



The figures are certainly disappointing, though they are reflective of the regional and

national trends. As the Rural Crime Report points out, much of the crime against farms and businesses is being carried out by organised crime groups who perceive that rural areas are soft targets, with rich pickings on offer.

Clearly, there is work to be done to alter that perception, strengthen the defences of our rural communities and try to reverse this trend. I'm doing my bit by ensuring that the police continue to treat rural crime - and the underlying causes of it - as a priority, as well as ensuring there are the proper resources in place to help them detect, disrupt and ultimately bring to justice the criminals involved.

As well as funding the Rural Crime Project - which encompasses the Rural Crime Advisor posts and schemes such as Horse Watch and Rural Watch - I have also committed significant resources to:-

- Protecting the numbers of Safer Neighbourhood Teams across the county to enable them to focus on the issues that matter most to communities, including our rural areas.
- Investing the additional funding raised through the Council Tax this year directly into frontline policing, to boost the numbers of officers in local policing, response and investigative roles. This is critical to ensuring organised crime can be reduced.
- Continued co-ordination by my office of the multi-agency group which identifies and tackles serious and organised crime groups.
- Significant investment in the Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems that help detect criminals as they use vehicles to move around on our roads and motorway networks.

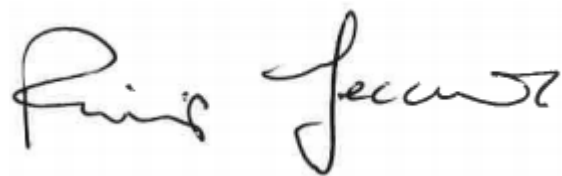
There have been some notable successes in tackling issues such as agricultural vehicle thefts through the use of vehicles and machinery equipped with police tracking devices, including the recent jailing of two men from Coventry who were arrested within an hour of one of these vehicles being stolen.

While the value of insurance claims may have gone up, police are working closely with the likes of NFU Mutual and the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service to ensure that when offenders are identified, stolen vehicles and property can be returned to their rightful

owners. Operations are also continuing to disrupt and bring to justice the organised crime groups which are often at the heart of much of this type of theft.

It will take a continued combination of these efforts to ensure that rural crime reduces but it is my priority to provide the necessary resources to enable this and to hold the Chief Constable to account in delivering on what rural communities are telling us they need.

In the meantime, we've recently published updates on a variety of schemes designed to tackle rural crime and anti-social behaviour - visit my website's [news pages](#) to read about them.



**Philip Secombe TD**  
**Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

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## **Patrol improvements for Stratford and Alcester**

A pilot programme introducing changes to the working arrangements of police officers deploying from Stratford-upon-Avon and Alcester, has resulted in faster response times and improved visibility for policing among those living in the south of the county.



Following discussion with local residents, Councillors, and community safety partners, the three month pilot has been so successful that it will now become a permanent arrangement. This means 23 officers from the Warwickshire Police response teams now deploy 24/7 from Stratford-upon-Avon and Alcester. Coverage for Warwick District will continue to be maintained from Grey's Mallory in Leamington Spa while patrol bases in the north of the county are unaffected by the changes.

I know from my weekly conversations with the Chief Constable that he keeps the deployment of police resources under constant review, so I am pleased that the decision has now been made to permanently base a number of patrol officers at Stratford and Alcester. This will address some of the key concerns that have been raised with me by local communities in south Warwickshire, which I have in turn discussed with the Chief Constable over the past few months.

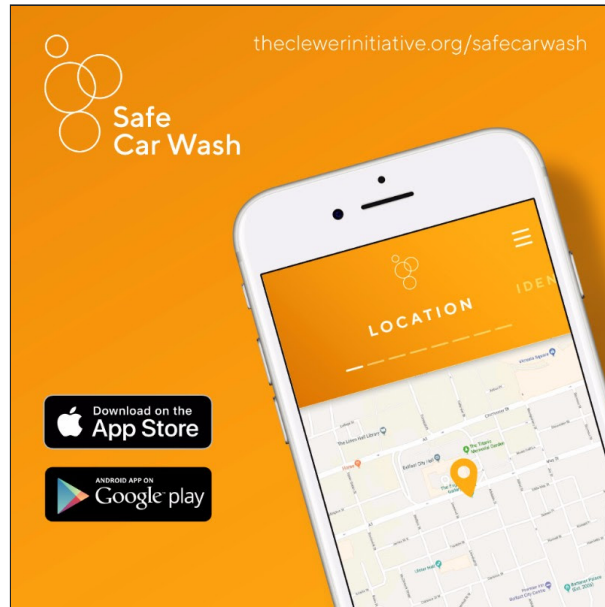
As a predominantly rural area with the iconic town of Stratford-upon-Avon at its heart, south Warwickshire has a variety of policing demands, so the extra capacity this brings for officers to be locally-based is a significant development.

The results of the recent trial demonstrated that there were clear benefits of faster response times to incidents, a positive effect on staff wellbeing and, perhaps most importantly, improved visibility within local communities. It's very positive that these changes are now to be made permanent and demonstrates how the force is willing to listen constructively and adapt to public feedback.

I pledged to deliver more effective and efficient policing by ensuring that Warwickshire Police has the right resources to meet the needs of local communities. Together with the investments I have been making to bolster the number of officers we have overall, I am sure this latest news will be very welcome across the whole of south Warwickshire.

**Help tackle modern slavery at hand car washes**

Modern Slavery is hidden in plain sight on our high streets. The National Crime Agency thinks there are tens of thousands of people being exploited in the UK, forced to work long hours, for little or no pay, and under threat of violence. Some of those people are being exploited in hand car washes, which in recent years have sprung up across the country in their thousands.



Many of those hand car washes are legitimate businesses, but some of them are not. Police raids in hand car washes in towns and cities up and down the country have unearthed victims living in horrendous conditions. Although law enforcement and the government are clear that this problem exists, there is no reliable data on just how widespread it is. This lack of information means that victims could be falling through the net, becoming more enmeshed in the cycle of exploitation.

The Safe Car Wash App has been developed to allow the general public to engage with the problem. It is a new tool that will enable the largest community intelligence gathering exercise ever attempted in the UK.

### **HOW THE APP WORKS**

Download the free app onto your smartphone, and when you are using a hand car wash, simply open the app and complete a short survey about the working conditions of the car wash. The app asks a series of questions related to the

indicators of modern slavery and if there is a high likelihood that modern slavery is occurring in the hand car wash, you will be asked to report your concerns to the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#).

The data which is collected will be anonymised and shared with the [National Crime Agency](#) and the [Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority](#), two law enforcement agencies who are leading on efforts to stamp out modern slavery across the UK.

The app is available in Apple and Android stores and you can find out more at: [www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash)

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## Photo feature: Police Cadets activity day

I spent Wednesday with the Warwickshire Police Cadets as they took part in their annual five day residential stay at an outdoor pursuits centre in Devon. The cadets programme is something I strongly support, as it gives the young people who take part a practical understanding of policing.

Cadets support local policing priorities through volunteering, working with partner agencies and positive participation in their communities. They take part in a variety of activities including self-defence training, marching, fitness, team building and role playing, with events such as the residential week helping to develop their spirit of adventure and good citizenship.

During my visit the cadets took part in a search and rescue exercise - with me as the person needing to be recovered - and tried their hand at surfing in the afternoon. I joined them in catching the waves and overall it was a highly enjoyable day and a great chance to engage with younger members of our community.



Find out more about the cadets at: [www.warwickshire.police.uk/cadets](http://www.warwickshire.police.uk/cadets).





**Victims of crime can now get 24/7 support online**



An online support service for victims of crime in Warwickshire has been rolled out 24 hours a day, seven days a week by Victim Support.

The independent charity, whose work with victims in Warwickshire I fund, says the Live Chat service is designed to provide a safe space for people to talk openly about their experience of crime and get the help and support they need.

The text-based service is aimed at helping those who might find it difficult to access support over the phone or in person. Live Chat is free, confidential and staffed by trained supporters, who offer emotional and practical support tailored to each person's needs.



Anyone who has been affected by a crime in Warwickshire – whether or not it has been reported to the police – can use the service at [www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat).

Victim Support continues to offer telephone support alongside the Live Chat facility. If you've been affected by crime, call your local victim care team in Warwickshire on **01926 682 693**. Lines are open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm on Saturdays. If you need support outside of Victim Support's opening hours, call the Supportline for free on **08 08 16 89 111**.

The charity also operates regular drop-in sessions throughout Warwickshire. Check out the schedule on Twitter at [@VS\\_Warwickshire](https://twitter.com/VS_Warwickshire).

## 'County Lines' campaign comes to Warwickshire



Meeting Emily van der Lely from Crimestoppers and the ad van at its first stop in Stratford Upon Avon.

At the end of July I was pleased to welcome to Warwickshire a new campaign to raise awareness of 'county lines' serious and organised crime and how people can help report it.

Independent charity Crimestoppers launched the national campaign with an ad van touring the country to spread the message about how organised crime groups from the big metropolitan cities are targeting more suburban and rural areas like ours, most usually to facilitate the supply of illegal drugs.

County Lines gangs often exploit children and vulnerable adults to move drugs and money. The gangs move into a rural or suburban area for a short time, taking over the home of a vulnerable person where they set up a base.

Many of those taken advantage of by these gangs have been forced to carry out criminal activity by threats, grooming and extortion and can be described as modern day slaves.

Police have been working hard to tackle this issue - you may have seen the recent media reports of arrests in Stratford, Rugby, Nuneaton and Leamington in relation to organised crime groups. But of course, the police need information from the public to help gather intelligence, which is where the Crimestoppers campaign comes in.

I met with the campaign's co-ordinator, Emily van der Lely, as she brought an ad van on a day-long visit to Warwickshire as part of its tour around the country. She told me: "We know that the term 'County Lines' might not be widely recognised, which is why we are launching this campaign and asking for your help to support us in tackling this issue.

"We need help to put a stop to this exploitation and the damage that these criminals are inflicting on our communities and those being taken advantage of.

"We are asking you to contact us anonymously and safely through our **0800 555 111** number, or via our secure online form at [Crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) – both methods are 100% anonymous. Always. Together we can put a stop to this."

The messages from the ad van are being supported by an extensive social media campaign - you can find out more by viewing the video below.

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Click above to play the video to find out more about County Lines and the campaign

## Diary dates

Here are some of the key events in my diary for the next few weeks:

**Aug 12:** Attending Fillongley Show (on the Police/Rural Watch stand)

**Aug 15:** Alliance Governance Group meeting

**Aug 16:** Meeting with Mark Pawsey MP and Chief Constable

**Aug 16:** Meeting with Stratford-on-Avon District Council

**Aug 18:** Attending Warwickshire Pride, Pump Room Gardens, Leamington (on Police stand)

**Sep 4:** Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board, Warwick



In addition, I have a weekly meeting with the Chief Constable to hold the force to account and discuss any arising issues. You can find details of these meetings [here](#).