



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



## **MONTHLY UPDATE**

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

**June 2020**

As we head into the peak of summer, there is improving news for us all across the county as lockdown restrictions begin to be eased. This has led to a gradual reopening of our town centres and businesses, alongside greater opportunities to travel and see friends and loved ones.

It's been a very difficult few months, so these changes - while by no means a return to normality - are very welcome, though it remains the case that we all still need to be very cautious. While reported cases of Covid-19 are reducing, coronavirus remains in our communities and we must all be careful by continuing to follow the rules on social distancing. If we don't, we risk a second wave of infections and the need to bring lockdown restrictions back in place.

I have said previously how impressed - but not surprised - I have been by the way in which the vast majority of people in Warwickshire have kept to the rules and helped ensure that enforcement activity by Warwickshire Police has needed to be very minimal. Of course, as lockdown restrictions are eased, they do become much harder to police and, ultimately, it is up to us all to take personal responsibility to ensure we continue to do everything we can to minimise the chances of the disease spreading further. Without this caution, further lives are put at risk and the economic hardships many are having to endure will only continue further.

### **From outbreak to recovery**

I am mindful that across Warwickshire over the past few months we have seen an outbreak of another kind; community spirit, as people come together to help each other get through the difficulties coronavirus has brought. Voluntary groups have sprung in all parts of the county and many charitable organisations have continued to offer their support, despite the fact that their fundraising efforts will have been severely curtailed.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I have always been keen to support projects which improve community safety and provide help for the most vulnerable in society. That's why, in these extraordinary times, I have decided to launch a Covid-19 Recovery Fund, to help

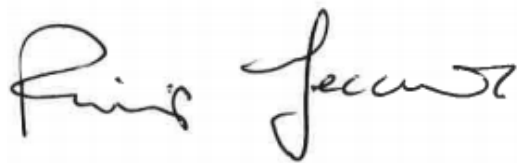
ensure that these voluntary groups, charities and community organisations can continue to provide their much-needed help. Grants of up to £5,000 are available for established organisations to help them respond to, survive and recover from the effects of Covid-19.

Of course, many community and voluntary groups have evolved to support local communities and vulnerable groups over the past few weeks, who would not ordinarily be able to meet the criteria for a grant. I'm keen to ensure that they do not miss out, so am making donations of up to £1,000 available in these circumstances.



In total, I will be awarding up to £100,000 through grants, donations and other arrangements to help the county as it begins to recover from the effects of Covid-19. This is funded from reserves I have been able to save through careful financial management and, as taxpayer's money, it is right that it is put to good use in response to one of the most significant emergencies to have hit the county in our lifetimes.

You can find out more about the application process on my [Covid-19 Recovery Fund page](#) and I look forward to seeing the applications come in over the next few weeks. The final deadline for applications is 24 July.



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

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## Reflecting on the death of George Floyd in the USA

I share the shock and anger felt by all right-minded people over the death of George Floyd in the USA. The video of his arrest and the scenes that have followed make for extremely distressing viewing. Put simply, this was a death which should not have occurred and justice must be served. I want to echo the heartfelt sympathies that have been expressed from around the world to Mr Floyd's family and loved ones and also to acknowledge the impact that incidents like this have on communities far and wide, including here in Warwickshire.

In the UK, we police by consent. This means that our officers are drawn from the communities that they serve and must understand the requirements that our diverse populations have. Respect for all, regardless of skin colour or background, is a fundamental cornerstone of the ethics underpinning all policing activity in this

country, as is the considerable training and scrutiny to which officers are subjected to on their use of force.

Incidents like the death of Mr Floyd do however give rise to fundamental questions about how we, as a society, value the lives of those around us and whether all that can be done to improve matters is being done. It causes us to acknowledge that racism and inequality continue to persist, regardless of the progress that has been made in recent times. Imbalances and biases remain in our systems and institutions which need to be understood and addressed if we are to achieve a fair society for all.



As Police and Crime Commissioner, part of my role is to ensure that people's voices are both heard and represented here in Warwickshire. I want to use my position to drive forward progress on getting equal access to opportunity, regardless of ethnicity or background. I've previously engaged with community representatives to explore the issues which discourage or prevent many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) from becoming positively engaged with policing and I remain keen to hear people's experiences across the whole of the criminal justice system in the county.

I have an important role in holding the police to account and providing independent scrutiny on areas of practice that cause community concern. It's important that the public have confidence in policing and so I have regularly asked questions around stop and search and over the use of force, to seek reassurance that it is being carried out in a way that is both appropriate and proportionate. I will continue to do this as, advocating the concerns that are raised with me as it is clear that, while there has been positive progress, more still needs to be done to ensure all communities are confident in the policing response.

Building relationships within communities is fundamentally important to this and I want to ensure that Warwickshire Police is truly representative of all those it serves. Although we do have officers and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds, we need to increase their numbers further. There is an opportunity to improve representation as we recruit more police officers and police staff in the coming years and the force's new Positive Action programme marks an important step in achieving that. It has been designed to identify, understand and remove the barriers which have historically discouraged greater participation in policing from BAME communities, while also putting in place the support needed to retain people once they join the organisation to ensure they can progress and have fulfilling careers.

Across the wider community safety landscape, my office will be undertaking a needs assessment for BAME victims of crime, so that we can truly ensure that the services that are there to support them are properly meeting their needs and being accessed equally. I am also considering what further level of independent support and research could be commissioned to better enable me to hold to account and, where necessary, challenge agencies to help formulate lasting solutions that improve the lives of all.

These issues are societal as well as institutional and so change will not be easy or instant. However, I do want to ensure that through a collective effort, we create a safer and more secure Warwickshire for all of our communities and that is something I will continue to work hard for.

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## **Extra funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence support services is confirmed**

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Ensuring that support services are widely available for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence from all backgrounds is critical, particularly at a time when we know lockdown will have left some victims having to share a household for an enforced period with the perpetrators.

The message has always been that help and support is available and I know that organisations working in these fields in Warwickshire have been working tirelessly to meet the demands that lockdown imposed and continues to deliver.

Covid-19 has forced them to quickly adapt to new ways of working and often this has involved in unforeseen investment in equipment to allow remote working and bring in new processes. This came at a time when many of their usual opportunities to fundraise have been curtailed.

That's why I am pleased that the Ministry of Justice has confirmed more than £218,000 of emergency funding for six organisations in Warwickshire, following a bidding process organised by my office. The grants are to help meet the additional costs registered charities or social enterprise have incurred or will incur whilst adapting their services during the pandemic. They have also been designed to meet the additional demand for help from victims which is expected to occur as lockdown restrictions are eased and people are more readily able to ask for help.

They six funding awards are:

- £35,030 – Family Intervention Counselling Service (domestic abuse services funding)
- £58,919 – Refuge (domestic abuse services funding)
- £48,000 – Insight Services (Formerly DACS) (domestic abuse services funding)
- £11,359 – Parenting Project (domestic abuse services funding)
- £28,930 – RoSA (sexual violence services funding)
- £35,926 – Safeline (sexual violence services funding).

These additional grants will therefore provide a vital extra support at the time it is needed most.

We received several applications for each funding pot and while some could not be recommended as they did not meet eligibility requirements, we have been successful in making the case to the Ministry of Justice for funding above and beyond the amount that was initially indicated for Warwickshire.

This means we have been able to provide the amounts that each of the eligible bids had requested in full. This is great news and allows these organisations to focus on continued delivery of high-quality support to victims.

## **Valuable advice for firms as they reopen from Business Watch**

Shops and other businesses are being reminded of the help that's available to help them combat crime as they reopen across Warwickshire now lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease.



With many of our town centres beginning to see increased footfall and companies re-opening or scaling their operations back up to more normal levels, it's an opportune time to ensure they benefit from membership of Warwickshire Business Watch.

The scheme is run in partnership between Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team and my office. It aims to provide information and advice to businesses and retailers on how they can protect themselves from becoming victim to crime.

Throughout the lockdown period, the Business Watch website has been kept updated by Business Crime Advisor Bogdan Fironda – whose role is directly funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner – a Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor and two Police Volunteers.

The website features the latest alerts about crime affecting businesses as well as detailed crime prevention advice for download on a wide range of topics. Businesses can also find links to other groups who provide support including Trading Standards, the Safe in Warwickshire team and Action Fraud, and also the details of the team behind Business Watch and their contact details.

Over the past few weeks, Business Watch has provided a wealth of information to help businesses as they begin to re-open, including overviews of the changing legislation and advice on cyber security as many firms have sought to bolster their online offerings.

Recent updates have included tips to help businesses ensure they are Covid Secure; the latest on Covid-19-related scams which can affect businesses and practical guidance for those firms operating click-and-collect services.

There's also a free Business Watch Messaging System which delivers incident alerts straight to your inbox along with a weekly compendium of information and advice.

To find out more about Business Watch and to sign up to the newsletter and free email alerts, visit [www.warwickshirebusinesswatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshirebusinesswatch.co.uk).

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Visit the OPCC website for the latest news and updates on the response to the Covid-19 outbreak, together with links and information about the support services helping victims of crime and helping protect the vulnerable.

**Visit our Covid-19 Information and Advice page**

**To contact the OPCC:**

We are continuing to operate as normal, though our offices in Northgate Street, Warwick remain closed and my staff are working remotely. You can continue to contact us as normal however by email at [opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:opcc@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk) or by phone at 01926 412322. Wherever possible, please try to contact us by email in the first instance, but please note that due to our revised working arrangements, it may take us longer than usual to provide you with a reply.

**To contact Warwickshire Police:**

Officers are working 24/7 to help keep everyone safe. If your call is not urgent, please use an alternative way to contact the emergency services. Non-urgent incidents and crimes can be reported on the force website: [www.warwickshirepolice.uk](http://www.warwickshirepolice.uk).

The website also contains lots of advice and guidance which may relate to your issue, so please check there first. If you do need to speak to someone on the phone (but it is not an emergency), please call 101 or contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT).

Only dial 999 in an emergency.