



December 2020 Updates

December would normally see an increased presence and activity in the shopping areas and therefore high visibility patrols have always been a focus for Essex Police, this year has been more challenging due to the COVID pandemic which has resulted in a reduction of planned events and street scenes with many people gathering together. December also encompasses the holiday season and we would like to wish every resident of Witham a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year for 2021.

December 4th

We commenced foot patrols following a suspicious circumstances incident near to the park area at the bottom of Rosebay Close, after a search with no trace we moved through Powers Hall End to the area behind the shops on Spa Road. Here we spotted three people that appeared to be sheltering in a store shed, as we approached, one walked briskly away and we stopped to engage with the other two. After moving them on we continued our patrol around the shops before heading in to the Humber Road estate. At the bottom of the estate we came across the same three teenagers near to the field and as we approached two immediately ran off leaving one in the process of rolling a joint containing cannabis. A subsequent stop search did not produce anything further and due to the juvenile age of the person, this has been recorded and will be dealt with appropriately. Unfortunately the others deserted their friend but we will be looking out for them in the future. We continued our foot patrol through the Spa Road park then over to the River Walk where we were cut off by significant flooding. After a detour via Chelmer Road we headed back towards town along Guithavon Valley & Mill Lane. We carried out visible patrols in the town before we were joined by another member of the team on foot and we headed along Kings Chase towards the Witham Town Park. We did notice a group gathered by the toilet block which still seems to be a focal point and although we had another Community Special Constable officer join us in a vehicle on Maldon Road we were unable to prevent them running off towards the River Walk. This location will be checked on further patrols.



Unfortunately, due to a nearby emergency all officers were asked to provide support in Hatfield Peverel, and we were unable to return on this shift.



December 5th

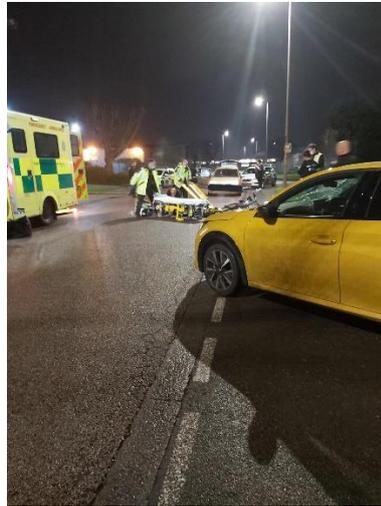
My patrol began on foot in the town centre with several loops through the shopping areas of Newlands Precinct and The Grove Centre before heading out through Witham Town Park and on to the River Walk, where after navigating the flooded areas I headed up to Spinks Lane, Blunts Hall Road, Spa Road and on to the Humber Road estate before heading back again towards Armond Road, Guithavon Valley, Guithavon Road and back in to the town centre. I did see several people out walking but I was pleased to see that there were no specific issues during my patrol time.



Following my foot patrol, I headed back to Braintree Police Station, catching the train from Witham.

December 9th

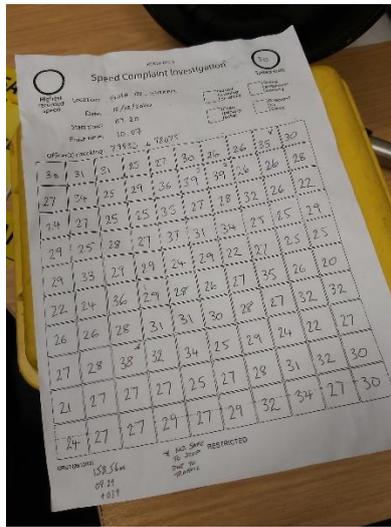
I started my foot patrol on the Templars estate where I tried to cover all the Courts, there were some impressive Christmas lights and they certainly brightened up a cold evening. I did see a few residents out, however, there were no groups gathered around the park and shop areas. Before I could continue a report of a road traffic collision between a car & cyclist came over the radio and I left the Courts to head over to Freebournes Road. With my presence already in Witham I was able to arrive first on scene, just before ambulance and an additional response police unit. Fortunately, on my arrival I could see that the cyclist was being looked after by local business workers who had provided some comfort until arrival of the emergency services. Following an assessment by the ambulance crew the person was taken to hospital for further checks and the driver was reported for careless driving. As we cleared the scene there was another emergency call and this time for an incident on the Hatfield Road estate. I was able to assist at this incident with an area search and due to the presence of the response units from Braintree the incident was resolved quickly. I continued my patrol and revisited the Witham Town Park with no concerns, I spent some time checking out a previous place of interest in the Cypress Road area for anti-social behaviour, providing a visible deterrent with repeat visits to the location both on foot and in my marked police vehicle.



December 12th

I started patrols in Witham with a Special Constable from Braintree to carry our speed checks on Flora Road, with the cold and rain the conditions required drivers to take additional care. Over the past few patrols, I have seen an increase in speeds along this road and with the schools breaking up for the Christmas holidays I had a genuine concern that there could be an accident. Previously speeds have been recorded at 48mph which are far in excess of the 30mph limit. Following a check of 100 vehicles we issued 5 tickets which are then passed on to the Casualty Reduction Section for the appropriate action. We then moved in to the town centre to carry out visible foot patrols, these provide an opportunity for residents, business owners and visitors to speak with us directly. We covered the Newlands Precinct, The Grove Centre, the Witham Town Park and Newland Street. After spending time in the town, we then headed up Hatfield Road and in to the estates. During this patrol I spotted two figures in an area previously known for drug related activity and after stopping and searching one of them a small quantity of class B drugs were found. Due to other existing ongoing

investigations the person was reported for the offence and this will be taken in to consideration later. The drugs were seized for destruction. Patrols will continue in the area to provide a visible deterrent and disrupt this behaviour. We then moved on to the Maltings estate, Gershwin Boulevard, Holst Avenue before driving over to the Forest Road estate and Cypress Road before heading back to Braintree. On our way home we were diverted in to Silver End we were first on scene at a domestic incident where we helped to secure the arrest of a suspect.

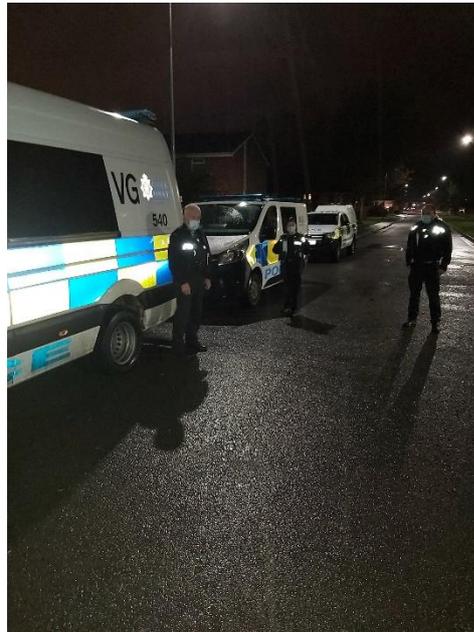




December 13th

An evening patrol with a colleague from Braintree, we initially started our patrol on the Templars estate with foot patrol throughout the Courts, there were a significant number of houses decorated with lights and displays which was great to see. We also spoke with the shop owners about recent incidents in the play area where equipment had been damaged by fire as part of anti-social behaviour and I stated that I would be increasing visible patrols in the area. We returned to our vehicle but before we could commence further patrols, we had to attend an incident on the A120 near to Stansted. I have included this to demonstrate that although we try to spend most of our time in Witham there are occasions when we are required to support critical situations elsewhere in the area. Fortunately, this was resolved quickly and we were able to head back to Witham within the hour, on our way back we were alerted to a group of young people that were gathered near to Cypress Road and were causing a disturbance to local residents. This area has been a recent focal point for this kind of behaviour and therefore we decided that we would coordinate our action with additional units. Following a planned approach, we did detain all people that were still at the location and due to the report of drug use we carried out stop searches. Details were obtained for each person before they were instructed to leave the area and not to return. We hope that this proactive policing will reduce this behaviour and we can help to improve the lives of the residents. We would still like to encourage residents to report any concerns to Essex Police by reporting online (<https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/>) or calling 101 non-emergency or 999 in an EMERGENCY.

Later in the evening during our mobile patrols we discovered a large hole that had opened due to burst water pipe on Hatfield Road and we waited until the Water Board emergency response team arrived to repair the damage.





December 16th

I was single crewed this evening to provide visible mobile patrols on all the main housing estates, this gives me the opportunity to focus on previous key areas to gather intelligence. With the current restrictions there were very few people out during the patrol and even though I revisited several of the areas previously mentioned, there was no further intelligence to record. On the Hatfield Road estate, one vehicle was stopped due to defective lighting at the front and rear, I attended a concern for welfare and carried out patrols in the industrial areas due to a potential vehicle of interest coming in to the area that activated a nearby ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera.



December 18th



The day patrol started with an early morning warrant in Braintree and we support these positive actions to assist with searches, arrests or seizures. Many of the warrants are linked to drug related activity and this may lead on to local distribution, they also provide an insight in to the methods used by criminals so we can utilise this knowledge during our patrols in Witham. I was only able to spend a short time in Witham due to the earlier actions, but I was able to deliver presents to some vulnerable children who were to benefit from the huge generosity of the people of the Braintree Policing area. In combination with the Salvation Army, residents have donated presents to an initiative across Essex to ensure that even in this challenging year, some less privileged children will still have a smile on their face this Christmas. Following this, there had been an incident in The Grove Centre with a large group of teenagers and although I was not able to attend at the time I did engage with the group and disperse them as they left town.



In the evening SC Keyse took over and with a colleague from Braintree carried out patrols in the following areas, Cypress Road, Forest Road, Humber Road, Allectus Way, Haygreen Road, Rosebay Avenue, Powers Hall End, Witham Football & Rugby Club, Newland Street and the Witham Town Park, where they carried out foot patrols. SC Keyse also spoke to four teenagers gathered at the park reminding them of the social distancing requirements, a further three teenagers in the Tesco car park before, attending an incident reported in the Elms Hall Primary School car park where cars were meeting up for drug related activity. Following this they also attended a mental health incident near to Calamint Road before visiting the industrial areas and completing their shift with checks at the car park near to Bluebell Woods in Rivenhall.





December 20th

We carried out mobile patrols on the Flora Road estate, including Honeysuckle Way, Bramble Road, Rosebay Close, Calamint Road, Speedwell Close & Foxglove Close to provide visible reassurance before heading down through Powers Hall End to the Humber Road estate. While here we checked Douglas Grove and the Surgery, Ness Walk and Yare Avenue. We then attended ASDA car park following a driver to provide some advice on his vehicle and then checked up Blunts Hall Road. After this we went on to the Hatfield Road estate and up to the ALDI store. From this location we visited Haygreen Road, where a quick flash of the lights for some children in the park brought a smile and a wave and then in to the Maltings estate, Mortimer Drive, Holst Avenue, Greenwell Avenue and Elgar Drive. We crossed over in to Maltings Court and round to Dengie Close. We received some local information regarding potential drug dealing and use of drugs which will be submitted as a police information report. We then attended an incident in town following a report of criminal damage and theft. On attendance we located a suspect and the investigation is ongoing. During the incident, equipment which was used for the cultivation of drugs was removed for destruction.





December 21st

I crewed with PC Wilshire from the Witham Town Team and we carried out high visibility patrols. The focus was to provide a presence on the estates and in the park areas to engage and encourage the social distancing rules to protect the residents of Witham from the spread of the virus. In addition to this, there had been several posts on local Facebook groups which had highlighted suspicious activity around different neighbourhoods which is more prevalent at this time of year due to the likely rewards of presents and gifts in residents' homes. We were pleased to say that during our patrol there was no evidence of this, and we only had to speak to a small number of people concerning social distancing. We also visited the focal areas previously identified on Cypress Road, the park area on the Templars estate and Blunts Hall Road.

December 25th

Returning to patrol again with PC Wilshire we came across a significant number of people that were not adhering to social distancing under the Tier 4 guidelines. Multiple reports of people gathered required us to attend and provide the necessary advice to return home. We carried out vehicle checks and once again checked on the key locations for drug related or other anti-social behaviour. These repeated checks hopefully provide reassurance to residents and a proactive deterrent to others. After a brief spell in Braintree to support a critical incident we were back in Witham where we were able to spend a significant amount of time covering most of the town centre, parks and estates multiple times during this extended shift. We were also very pleased that by half past ten on Christmas Eve, there were very few cars on the road and no further issues.



December 31st

I was out on patrol with PC Thorndyke, who has just joined the Witham Town Team. A typical New Year would see the town full of people ready to celebrate, however, due to the current pandemic we were patrolling to ensure that people were staying safe and adhering to the guidelines.

Unfortunately, as soon as we arrived in Witham, we found two teenage girls from Chelmsford that had come to Witham to meet up for a party in one of the local parks. We immediately returned them to Chelmsford with a warning to their parents for the breach of social distancing and then headed back to Witham. As we travelled down the A12 we followed and then stopped a vehicle in Hatfield Peverel with no working lights on the front or rear of their car on the driver's side! This driver was not only spoken to regarding the lights but also on the purpose of their travel which was not essential. When we returned to Witham, we visited the shop on Honeysuckle Way to advise the shop keeper that they may be targeted for young teenagers trying to buy alcohol for the party. We carried out patrols around the park area, but we were unable to locate any other persons. On our patrol around the shops on Spa Road we disrupted suspicious activity, before moving on to the Humber Road estate where we stopped a cyclist who was pleased with the free lights we provided for his bike. This initiative was started by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) & comprises Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Thurrock Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Highways England and Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust, East of England Ambulance Trust and The Safer Roads Foundation. I have been working with them over the last two years to continue to provide support for the safety of cyclists in Witham.

<https://saferessexroads.org>



We then headed in to town where a quick check on the Witham Town Park saw a further two young teenage girls sent home due to them both not understanding the social distancing guidelines. Following this we headed out to Cypress Road, Forest Road and Laburnum Way before driving round to the shops in the Templars estate. As we exited our vehicle to speak with three young people sat by the park, one tried to evade us resulting in an officer being assaulted before the individual was detained and arrested. Following a search of the individual a quantity of class B drugs was found and other paraphernalia which provided evidence for the suspected supply of drugs. This was a visible situation with several officers arriving to provide back up.



The officer was taken to hospital for checks but was able to return to the station later that night with minor injuries. The person was taken to custody.



This concludes the monthly report for December 2020.