



December 2022 Patrols

As the holidays approach there is an increase in shopping activity, and we will be providing advice about protecting yourself while shopping. We will also be seeing a number of people going out to celebrate the end of the year and attending work parties or getting together with friends. This is typically the time of year where some drivers take a chance and gamble with not only their lives but the lives of innocent people by drinking excess amounts of alcohol or taking illegal drugs before getting behind the wheel of their vehicle. We will be supporting the National Awareness Campaign #OPLimit while still providing high visibility and reassurance patrols in Witham.

December 3rd

I began the day with foot patrols in Witham concentrating in the shopping areas to provide visibility and reassurance, before seeking out the two homeless people that had been reported on social media and for whom there was growing concern due to the change in temperature. I was able to find and speak with the couple and provide signposting to The Witham Hub & the United Reform Church who offer hot food and other facilities to help.

During the afternoon Witham Community Special Constable Eaketts & Woollett joined me to support the Witham Christmas Fayre organised and run by Witham Town Council. Within a few minutes of our arrival SC Eaketts & SC Woollett were on hand to help an elderly gentleman who had fallen in the road between the Grove Centre & Newlands Precinct. With the assistance of St. John's Ambulance medical staff who were also attending the Christmas Fayre they were able to administer first aid before an East of England Ambulance arrived to take the person off to hospital for precautionary checks. It was a great team effort, and I would also like to thank staff at The Team Rooms & The White Hart for their assistance and the public for their patience while the extra road closure was in place.

With the gentleman safely off to hospital I then met up with Witham MP Priti Patel before she headed into the Christmas Fayre, and we then resumed our patrols throughout the event. It was great to see so many of the Witham residents out in the town and with the road closed between Mill Lane & Maldon Road it made a safe environment for the mixture of rides and stalls for everyone to enjoy. The focal point was the large stage, where dancers, singers, performers and a pantomime provided entertainment throughout the event. We were also joined by British Transport Police Special Constable McGough to help provide reassurance and visibility; it is almost a year since we established a working relationship with BPT in Witham which allows us to share information & assist each other in investigations.

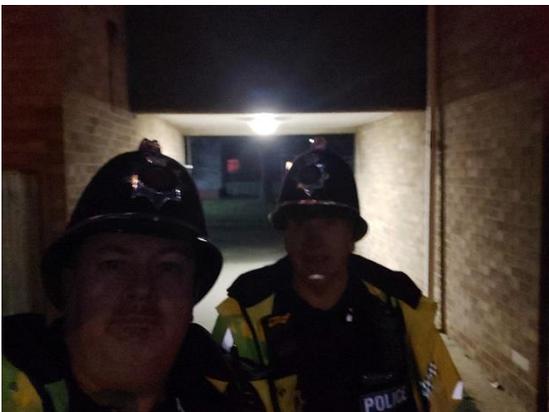




With the Christmas Lights switched on illuminating the tree, the Town Hall and Newland Street we concluded our patrols without any further incidents.

December 6th

I was crewed with Special Constable Symonds, and we began with foot patrols on the Templars Estate, we have been receiving reports of anti-social behaviour involving children knocking and kicking peoples doors and running away. This seems to be popular across the town at the moment, but it is causing significant distress to the occupants with many vulnerable, elderly or families with young children feeling scared. Our patrol intended to provide visibility and reassurance and we went to investigate one occurrence of this in the Courts. We were able to obtain CCTV of two young girls at a house, one then kicks the door and runs off but not before leaving a footprint on the door. We carried out an area search speaking with a number of children in the park area and hopefully this will spread the message that this behaviour is not acceptable. During our search we saw two young girls riding two up on an E-Scooter and although they tried several times to evade us, my knowledge of the Courts layout has improved significantly for me to cut them off and seize the scooter. This owner has been spoken to and the E-Scooter has now been removed from the streets of Witham.





Following this we then headed over to SwanVale industrial area to assist with a vehicle recovery following a seizure by a Roads Policing Unit for no insurance. We then carried out mobile patrols in the town centre, Hatfield Road, Allectus Way, Lodge Farm estate, Haygreen Road, Purcell Road, Dengie Close and Pattison Close.



December 8th

I started my patrols in Witham by meeting up with Gemma Engall who is the Intervention & Enforcement Officer for Eastlight Community Homes. Our targeted patrols together provide a united front in tackling anti-social behaviour concerning tenants at different locations across Witham. Our first visit to a property on Flemming Way, concerned potentially dangerous dogs and drug use, however, we did not detect any issues at this time. We then drove across town to Humber Road where we checked on another address following concerns for welfare and potential drug use. In this instance there was no answer at the address, and we will be returning for future checks. The final location was Allectus Way where I was following up on anti-social behaviour that was being carried out on Bradshaw Gardens. The teenager involved was part of a small group involved in persistent knocking and banging on doors causing distress to residents. As a representative of the landlord, Eastlight Community Homes, Gemma Engall was able to communicate that causing anti-social behaviour in the local community breached tenancy requirements and could result in direct action. Fortunately, this seemed to resonate with the teenager and their parent, and I hope to see this activity stopped. I then left Gemma to go and attend another address to speak with another involved teenager and once again had a very positive conversation with them and their parent. To complete the enquiries, I also visited the victims of this anti-social behaviour and updated them about the actions we had taken.



Following patrols around Haygreen Road and into the town centre I then visited Morrisons car park where there have been several reports of anti-social behaviour involving cars and there was evidence to reinforce the reported actions. Patrols will continue in this area and drivers that are acting irresponsibly and causing a problem to local residents or businesses will have their vehicles seized.



As I finished my patrol and headed out of Witham, I came across a broken down vehicle where the driver had run out of fuel. When I stopped to check on the driver and spoke with them it was evident that there was a strong smell of what I suspected to be cannabis and a roadside drug test was administered which was positive. The driver was then arrested and with the assistance of a local policing team unit from Braintree the driver was conveyed to Colchester Custody for evidential blood tests. The vehicle was recovered and moved out of the dangerous location by a Roads Policing Unit. A National Policing Campaign is currently in progress called OP Limit targeting drivers who drink or drug drive. #OPLimit



December 10th

I was joined by Witham CSC Officer Special Inspector Campbell for the Community Beat Surgery at the Witham Hub but before we attended we carried out a brisk foot patrol through the Newlands Precinct, Newland Street, the Witham Town Park and into the Grove Centre. During the Community meeting we met with residents and visitors to the Hub and people walking through the Grove Centre. We provided crime advice to not leave Christmas presents on display through windows at home which can make it attractive for thieves at this time of year. We also met a fellow Police Officer on holiday from Poland and we talked about the different policing styles and equipment. I am pleased to say that he felt that Witham was a very safe place to be. With another successful Beat Surgery coming to an end we met with a special visitor to The Hub before sampling some of the hot soup and rolls that are available from the Hub as part of their "keeping warm" initiative.





December 12th

The main patrol today centred in Hatfield Peverel to support the village Christmas event but we first carried out patrols in Witham to focus on areas that had been brought to our attentions recently concerning drug use and anti-social behaviour. We provided visibility on Flemming Way (where we put on the blue lights for a very excited child out with parents) and checked on Cypress Road, Mortimer Way, Haygreen Road and Dengie Close. During our patrol we also checked on an elderly resident who was seen slumped in their front window and did not appear to be moving but fortunately was all in order. During the cold weather please take a few moments to check on your neighbours and make sure they are ok.



December 13th

Witham Special Constable Eaketts & Special Constable Symonds attended the Town Hall for the Tuesday Community Beat Surgery. During the event they discussed crime prevention and gave out “purse bells” which are designed for shoppers to attach to purses, bags or wallets to make a distinctive sound if the item is touched. This helps to deter pickpockets and distraction thefts which increase at this time of year as more people are out shopping. Please also try to ensure that you take some precautionary actions yourselves and fasten bags and pockets to prevent this kind of crime. SC Symonds was also on hand to escort a lady to the bus stop along the pathway which was dangerous with snow and ice. Over the course of the 2 hour Surgery they recorded intelligence reports on suspected drug dealing and several people highlighted concerns on speeding along different roads in Witham. Following the Surgery they then carried out foot patrol along the very snowy River Walk from Mill Lane towards the Duck Pond and Armond Road where they assisted with an incident where 4 people had run off from a a vehicle which had been abandoned on the bridge at Moat Farm Chase.





During the evening I then took over the Witham CSC duties and I arrived on the Templars estate to carry out reassurance patrols. I followed up on recent anti-social behaviour with a previous victim but pleased to hear there have been no further occurrences. I also spoke with residents during my patrols and they thanked me for being visible even on a bitterly cold evening. I finished my foot patrol without incident and was then asked to attend an abandoned 999 Call. This is where a person has dialled 999 but then hung up or the call has terminated before the controller has had a chance to establish what has happened. Fortunately with my presence already in Witham I was able to attend in under 5 minutes and I was able to establish that there were no immediate concerns for safety. When additional officers arrived at the location we were able to confirm that it was due to a family issue and we provided advice. I returned to my patrols but was then directed to the Witham Train Station following a report of a man who had collapsed on the ground and was unresponsive. Once again I was able to get to the location quickly and establish that the male was very intoxicated and unable to move unassisted, fortunately the person was known to me and I was able to establish some communication with him. With another unit arriving at the scene we were concerned that he could not be left out in the open with the temperature continuing to drop and we placed him into the back of a Police car and returned him to his address where there was a responsible person to look after him. I headed back towards the town centre but again before I got there I was directed to an intruder alarm at a business premise near to Colemans Bridge, arriving in under 2 minutes. After checking the building and the surrounding businesses I was able to confirm that it was a false alarm and the key holder was notified. Unfortunately before I had a chance to return to my normal patrols I was called to a domestic related incident and a concern for welfare which utilised the remainder of my patrol time.





December 17th

I was on my own for the day and when I arrived in Witham I attended an address of an elderly resident just off Armond Road who had contacted Police following a claim by builders that significant repairs were required to their roof. The resident was shown a piece of rotting wood and told that the builders had been onto the roof and repairs would cost around £600. Fortunately the resident thought this was suspicious and called us after the “builders” had left behind their ladders and the notice that they would be returning in the morning. I arrived at the address at the expected time but maybe due to the weather which was making driving dangerous or the presence of my marked police vehicle – they failed to show. I provided safeguarding advice to call Police if they returned and I put their ladders out in the public space so they could collect them without entering the residents garden. If you think that you may have been approached by “rogue traders” or “bogus callers” then please report this to Police, we will be able to stop them and check their credentials if we can identify them. If you are able to safely obtain the name of their company, a business card or the registration of their vehicle then please pass this on to Police within your report.

[Annoying phone calls or unwanted visits | Essex Police](#)

I then headed over to the Humber Road estate where I spoke with another resident who had some large knives that were no longer needed and was concerned for them to be in their property with their grandchildren. They had been packaged safely and I was able to return these to Braintree Police Station where they were deposited into the knife amnesty bin at the front of the Police Station.

My main role for the day however was to carry out increased visibility foot patrols in the town centre. With the large number of shoppers it was a good opportunity for me to enter the shops and to provide reassurance but also to deter any crime. I was also on hand to point out any vulnerabilities with property as people browsed through the shops to ensure their handbags and wallets were secure. While I was in the Newlands Precinct I moved on a person begging outside Savers Health & Beauty. This male had been frequenting Witham and had been specifically targeting people for money which is not permitted. I talked to staff in the shops and walked up and down Newland Street before walking into The Grove Centre. Unfortunately for the male, he had tried to set himself up near to the Amazon lockers and this time I had to warn him that if I saw him in Witham again that I would be serving him with a Community Protection Warning which would prevent him from carrying out this activity in Witham. I waited as he packed up his belongings and was pleased that I did not see him again over the course of the day. Shortly following this I was called to assist with an emergency in Silver End but was able to return to Witham to continue my foot patrols within the hour. Over the course of the day I had many people thanking me for my presence in the town and with no reports or concerns over the shift it appeared worthwhile.

My final part of the day was to head over to the large pond on Gershwin Boulevard. With the very sad news of the children in Solihull who had lost their lives after falling through the ice I wanted to make sure that local residents could see me on patrol and to check on the life saving equipment at the pond. Fortunately there were no concerns at the pond but my vehicle which was parked up in a visible location did seem to make a positive impact to slow down the speed of cars travelling in the 40mph zone.



December 19th

I was crewed with Special Constable Symonds for our patrols in Witham and we wanted to provide increased visibility in the shopping areas and on the roads around Witham as people continued their preparations for the upcoming Christmas holidays. However, our first task was to dispose of the E-Scooter that had been seized following a collision with a pedestrian. In order to dispose of them correctly due to the safe handling requirements for the batteries it had to be taken to a secure site in Colchester. As we arrived at the destination we were confronted with an incident whereby several cars in storage had caught on fire. We quickly offered our assistance before the Fire Service arrived and ensured neighbouring business premises were evacuated to ensure everyone was safe. When they arrived a few minutes later they were able to quickly extinguish the fire and take control of the situation. With the site secure we were able to finally drop off the E-Scooter and head back to Witham to commence our patrols.

On arrival in Witham we headed straight out on foot patrol, leaving our vehicle in a prominent position in the Newlands Drive car park and heading through the precinct. The weather had significantly warmed up and there were quite a few people in the town who we spoke to and businesses we engaged with. One of our stops was to the Town Hall to speak with staff and wish them well for the holiday period and Special Constable Symonds was given a Town Council pin badge to show that his role as a volunteer dedicated to the Town was appreciated to which he was very grateful. We then continued our foot patrol around the town centre and through the Witham Town Park before entering the Grove Centre. We were shown a lot of appreciation and well wishes for our visibility and it was a great feeling as a volunteer to feel you are making a difference.





One of the persistent issues that people raise to us is the use of E-Scooters in the town and we were on hand to be able to stop and seize another one on Newland Street. The use of privately owned E-Scooters is illegal and although the law around their use is now widely known with Essex Police not only seizing E-Scooters but also prosecuting riders, people are still purchasing these and using them on the roads and pavements in public. It is likely that there will be an increase following Christmas as many will have been purchased as presents but until the law changes these will still be seized and with no method of getting them insured – they will be sent for destruction.



Following the seizure we headed to the Templars Estate where we had planned to carry out foot patrols, however, we were redirected to an emergency on Bramble Road. On arrival we were met with a group disturbance but were able to gain control and resolve the issue.

The final part of our shift took us to Calamint Road where we checked on a derelict property following reports that it was insecure and that teenagers had been seen entering the premises the previous night. Sure enough the door was wide open with the security lock broken, in order to ensure that there was nobody in the premises I entered and checked each room. There was significant structural damage to the property and this made it very dangerous. Please ensure that you educate your children that if a disused property or building has been locked it is for everyone's protection!

Special Constable Watts who joined the team recently is primarily carrying out shifts for the local response policing team but has been attending a number of incidents in Witham which is helping the team to build links with the community policing element as we share knowledge between us to improve our visibility and reassurance across the town.

This concludes the monthly report for December 2022.