



## **March 2024**

March brings about the brighter mornings and evenings and this enables us to be seen out on patrol in different areas around the town. We are still focusing on anti-social behaviour which is being reported in the town centre or around the Lidl & ASDA stores. The use of privately owned E-Scooters throughout the town and on the RiverWalk has not stopped and we have been asked to look at more direct action to prevent their illegal and unsafe use. At the end of the month the Easter Trail was the first of this year's free events organised by Witham Town Council and we provided a visible and reassuring presence for everyone attending.

To report to Essex Police then please use the information at the bottom of this report. Thank you.

## **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

At the recent Community Committee meeting in the Town Hall, residents voiced concerns over the perceived speed of vehicles on Hatfield Road and specifically close to the junction with Maltings Lane. I was already aware that the stretch of road between the roundabout near to ALDI and Augustus Way is often used for speed checks and previous results have indicated speeds exceeding the 30mph limit, but I wanted to check the speeds closer to the junction as requested, so I set up with the measuring device and conducted a 100-vehicle check. I began the check at approximately 9:45am and by 10:20am I had completed this survey with some very poor results. 25% of the vehicles measured were exceeding the speed limit with the highest speed measured at 44mph in the 30mph limit. This is not acceptable and reinforces the residents' concerns. There is a footpath from Allectus Way which opens onto the road opposite the SPAR shop, and this is a regular crossing point – these speeds make this very dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists – Please Kill Your Speed! I will be conducting further surveys and the results will be passed to the Casualty Reduction & Roads Policing Teams. I will also feed these surveys back to the Town Council to determine if there are any actions, they can support to improve road safety.



Have you considered applying to volunteer for Community Speedwatch in your area? You can contact Witham Town Council information centre for further information.

I next parked up in the town centre and after a short foot patrol around the market I set up for the Community Beat Surgery outside The Witham Hub in the Grove Centre. Once again it was lovely to see so many people and I was able to offer advice and provide reassurance and visibility to shoppers and local businesses in the area. If you have any concerns or issues to report in your neighbourhood then please come and see us and we will be able to listen and look at addressing these. I concluded the Beat Surgery and conducted another foot patrol around the town centre



before heading back to my vehicle and moving up to The Avenue to carry out a second speed survey. I started my check at around 2:40pm and once again measured 200 vehicles passing my location near to the entrance of The Paddocks. Although I was wearing high visibility clothing and could be clearly seen there were still 8 drivers who exceeded the 30mph limit with the highest recorded at 40mph. All drivers were visually warned in this instance but for future checks we will look at positive enforcement.



I completed my patrol with visits to the Rickstones Recreation Park, Forest Road, Church Street & Spa Road.

### March 4<sup>th</sup>

I was able to volunteer on the Monday afternoon and into the evening and I began with targeted anti-social behaviour patrols around the ASDA store on Highfields Road. This continues to be a focal point for local children to congregate and cause issues with their behaviour and language towards staff and customers. With the group dispersed from the area I headed into the town to ensure that the shops in town had not been suffering the same issues but disappointed to hear that it was also a daily problem in the Morrisons store on Newland Street. We would like to reiterate that the staff and customers need to report their concerns to Police to ensure that we can respond to stop this occurring. I returned to my vehicle following reports of nuisance motorbikes that were being ridden dangerously using Forest Road, Cypress Road and Rickstones Road as a circuit. I headed straight over to the area and although I covered the area extensively, I was not able to locate them and there were no further reports. I did support Police colleagues following a call for assistance from the Ambulance Service and I was able to attend quickly due to my presence in the area. Fortunately, with a significant Police presence the patient responded positively and was calmly assessed by the paramedics.

After this incident I carried out foot patrol around Motts Lane and the top of Cut Throat Lane after sighting a person known to me involved in drug supply who appeared and then quickly disappeared on an electric bicycle. Please continue to report suspicious activity in your area so that we can take positive action. I returned to my vehicle and patrolled around Church Street before exiting out onto Chipping Hill and up towards Powers Hall End. When I turned into Spa Road, I became aware of a motorbike behind me that then overtook at high speed down Spa Road towards the railway bridge. I put on my emergency lights to signal it to stop, however, it continued at speed, and I then notified our Force Control Room of the Fail To Stop incident. Two other Police units in the area did carry out an area search but we were unable to locate the motorbike, the rider or passenger. I did wait in the area for a short while to see if they would return but this also gave me the opportunity to provide visibility near to the ASDA store again. I finished my patrol on foot along the pathway leading to Lockram Lane following reports of drug related activity and although there was nothing seen on this occasion we will be checking again.



### March 6<sup>th</sup>

I was back on Hatfield Road for another speed survey in my series at a different day and time to help provide an average assessment and reflect driving behaviour. This time was Wednesday evening at approximately 6pm. There was a significant amount of traffic which did impact the speed on the road and generally the data measured for 100 vehicles was consistent and within the 30mph limit. When the stream of traffic did dissipate however, the speeds started to increase and the highest recorded was 41mph, this combined with the darkness would be a real hazard for pedestrians or cyclists crossing the road at either the crossing island near to Augustus Way or nearer to the SPAR shop.





Following the check, I then attended a disturbance on the Templars Estate involving a group of teenagers and a family and I was assisted by Witham Town Officers PC Davies & PCSO Williams to defuse the situation. Two crimes were recorded, however, before our arrival the teenagers had all disappeared from the area. With safeguarding advice given I then returned to my community patrols and visited the ASDA store to enquire on any anti-social behaviour issues. Although there had been no issues over the last two days, I did record a shoplifting incident for further investigation. With mobile patrols in different locations across the town I discovered a broken-down vehicle on Chipping Hill, and I was able to assist in clearing the road and escorting the driver to a safe location.



### March 9<sup>th</sup>

In company with fellow Witham Community Special Constable Claire Eaketts, we headed through Witham to Hatfield Peverel for a report of an abandoned vehicle. On our arrival we examined the van and found out that both the number plates and the vehicle identification number (VIN) were incorrect for the vehicle. Further checks on the Police database highlighting that it was untaxed and without a valid MOT and had been previously involved in the theft of a motor vehicle, this provided grounds for us to seize it for further examination. While we waited with the vehicle, we received attention from a motorcycle rider who continued to loudly rev their engine and tried to entice us away from the location. They did eventually move off when I approached them on foot but did cause quite a noise disturbance in the area. With the van recovered we returned to Witham and headed to Newlands Drive to carry out foot patrols through the market, Newland Street, Witham Town Park, and the Grove Centre where we had lots of positive engagement.





Our next visit took us over to ASDA and we set off on foot again around the River Walk to the Duck Pond and then crossing Armond Road and all the way through to Chipping Hill. We continued up onto Spa Road calling in at the COOP to provide visibility and reassurance before returning back down to our vehicle at ASDA. Due to a recent distraction style burglary we patrolled on Forest Road, Cypress Road and several others to provide a visible presence before visiting the home address of two teenagers to talk with them regarding ongoing bullying at school which had been reported to the Police. The last part of our shift took us towards the industrial areas following an activation of the Automatic Number Plate Camera which had indicated a vehicle on “cloned” plates was travelling down the A12 towards Witham. The “cloning” of plates is used to disguise the true vehicles identity which may have been involved in crime or been stolen. Unfortunately it did not activate anymore of the Witham cameras and after circling the Eastways Industrial estate we completed our patrols for the day.



### **March 11<sup>th</sup>**

With the proposed closure of St. Peter’s Hospital in Maldon which would have an impact on Witham Residents who regularly utilise the clinics and services it offers, the Witham Town Council had organised a Public Meeting at the New Rickstones Academy. Unfortunately, a previous meeting in Maldon had resulted in Police attendance required due to high running emotions and I was in company with Community Policing Team Inspector Jackson to provide a presence inside the hall and there was another Police unit in the vicinity. The meeting was attended by Town Councillors and local MP Dame Priti Patel, with representatives from the NHS. For more information on the outcome of the meeting and the ongoing consultation please contact Witham Town Council or visit their Facebook page or Website.

### **March 13<sup>th</sup>**

I was joined by Witham Officer PC Sahin and we wanted to dedicate the next two patrols to anti-social behaviour and increasing visibility in the town centre and on some of the larger residential areas that had seen an increase in criminal damage and other concerns. We began in the town which gave me the opportunity to engage with several business owners and staff to understand their concerns. During our time in the town centre, we did not see any of the groups of children that they had spoken of, but we do understand that the issues span several hours most days between school leaving time and early evening. Please continue to report any issues to us and the Street Warden who can collect information to support our investigations. After carrying out foot patrol around the town, including the main shopping areas and the town park we headed over to the ASDA store. This has been another focal point for



recent poor behaviour, but we were pleased to hear that there had been a recent reduction in issues, and we were thanked for our continual presence in the area. We carried out mobile patrols on the Humber Road, visited the shopping area near to the COOP on Spa Road before moving on to Bramble Road, Honeysuckle Way, Rosebay Close and Calamint Road. With no concerns found we wanted to follow up on an incident where there had been recent damage to the defibrillator cabinet on the Templars estate and headed to the location. On arrival we did speak with a small group outside the shop, but they were not causing any concerns and we spoke with both the shop keepers about the ongoing behaviour which had resulted in all of the CCTV cameras damaged, the defibrillator cabinet vandalised so it could not be used and a burglary from one of the businesses. The criminal damage to the CCTV cameras had not been reported to Police and it is imperative that you report any incidents as soon as possible. We do understand that in a close community that some residents may be concerned about reporting suspects that they might know but it is possible to report anonymously to CrimeStoppers or request your details to be withheld when reporting to the Police. If you do not report – we cannot investigate and take positive action.

**CrimeStoppers.**  
Speak up. Stay safe.

**0800 555 111**  
100% anonymous. Always.

For the final part of our patrol, we focused on suspicious vehicle activity around the town before seeing a vehicle heading out towards Terling before turning back towards Witham on Blunts Hall Road. In this instance all checks were in order and the driver continued their journey.





### March 14<sup>th</sup>

I was out on foot patrol for my second night dedicated to targeting anti-social behaviour hotspots in the town centre and the Templars estate a little later in the evening this time due to an earlier incident that I attended but I covered the same areas without identifying any issues before I headed over to ASDA on Highfields Road. Following a catch up with staff there stated that there had been no specific issues during the day from the previous group of children and I switched my focus to visible mobile patrols around Maltings Lane, Purcell Way, Holst Avenue, Dengie Close and Constance Close. I returned to the Templars estate but I did not see anyone out and about and after a short foot patrol around the Courts I concluded my shift.



### March 15<sup>th</sup>

I had been asked by the Templars Community Association if I would be able to attend a meeting at the location of the damage to the defibrillator on the estate after they had raised the issue with both the Town Council and Witham MP Dame Priti Patel to discuss the damage and ongoing concerns over anti-social behaviour. I arrived with Community Support Engagement Officer PC Draper and as a group we reviewed the recent incidents and we also spoke and listened to both nearby business owners about the anti-social issues. There are currently investigations ongoing for the damages and the associated burglary, however, when we were asked about the perceived increase in anti-social incidents, we were able to clearly show that Essex Police had not been receiving reports and therefore there had been no resources deployed to previous incidents. This highlighted that offering different reporting methods including the ability to report anonymously would be important to tackle any ongoing issues and to engage and bring offenders to justice. The Templars Community Association identified some opportunities in the area to try and encourage residents to report concerns in a drive to improve the appearance and safety of the community. Within the role of the Witham Community Special Constables, we will be patrolling as often as possible, and the Witham Town Street Warden will also be visiting the area.



### March 16<sup>th</sup>

I arrived in the town centre to take advantage of the improved weather and carry out high visibility foot patrols and reassurance and with the sunshine there were a lot more people in the town. Over the past 5 years I have tried to be as visible and accessible during my volunteer role and this was one of the busiest shifts for me as I spoke to many people as I walked through the Newlands Precinct around the market. I visited a number of the shops to hear about any ongoing issues but in general the news was very positive with very few issues. I continued my foot patrol around the town until it was time for the Community Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub. Every fortnight we provide a visible presence at The Hub to allow people to come and speak with Essex Police Officers and discuss any issues in their neighbourhood. We are also happy to come and see you if you are unable to make it to the town so, please feel free to leave your contact details in The Hub or on the weekdays at the Town Hall Information Centre. There were many visits from children, and I received an early birthday card from a young man who often comes to speak with us when we are on duty at The Hub. I did record some information regarding speeding, and this helps me to focus future speed checks based on your evidence.



With further foot patrols around the town during the afternoon including the Witham Town Park and parts of the RiverWalk I finished my day cleaning the marked Police Carrier.

### March 23<sup>rd</sup>

I was joined on patrol by fellow Witham Community Special Constable Claire Eaketts and Detective Constable Trower on attachment from Chelmsford CID. We conducted mobile patrols on Forest Road, Rickstones Road and Dorothy Sayers Drive where I checked on the disused boarded up flats near to the Little Elms. There had been a recent attempt by children to break into these buildings recently, and due to their condition, this presents a real risk to their safety. Fortunately, I was able to see that the boards had been replaced and they were secure once more. One of the tasks I wanted to carry out during the shift was further speed surveys and the first of these was on Maldon Road. This road is highlighted to me regularly during the Community Beat Surgeries with concerns over the dangers at the pedestrian crossing and very high perceived speeds by some drivers. We measured 100 vehicles over a 30-minute period and only two vehicles were stopped for words of advice concerning their speed. I will carry out further checks in the area. We left the location and with visible mobile patrols around the town we continued to the River Walk where we conducted foot patrol from Armond Road down to the Duck Pond. We met several families and dog walkers along the way and with the sun finally appearing we had an impromptu photo shoot with our other





volunteer team member Chief Inspector Campbell which will be used for recruitment and visibility campaigns throughout the year. If you would like to find out more about what the role involves or how you could sign up and join us then please see the following links

[Community Special Constables | Essex Police](#)



Or alternatively you can use an internet search tool on a browser and type in “**Essex Police Community Special Constable**” and follow the link to the Essex Police website.

We returned to the town centre for foot patrols and visited each of the shopping areas and the Witham Town Park before walking through to Greenfields, Blackman Way across Maldon Road and onto the River Walk near to Helen Court.

Our next speed check took us onto Hatfield Road, and we set up close to the junction with Augustus Way and measured 100 vehicles driving towards the town centre. Unfortunately, in this location we did see an increase in the number of vehicles exceeding the 30mph limit and two drivers were issued with traffic offence reports. The highest speed recorded at this location was 40mph.



### March 25<sup>th</sup>

I started my shift with an appointment in Witham to address reports of bullying and provided words of advice which will hopefully prevent any further concerns. I was just returning to my vehicle when I was made aware of an incident that had just occurred at ASDA involving three people who had left the store with alcohol without paying. By spending all my shift dedicated in the Witham area it allows me to be able to respond quickly to incidents happening in the town and I was able to be at the location within 3 minutes of being notified of the call to Police. In this



instance the call to the Police from the store manager had been after the suspects had already left in a vehicle but I was able to watch the CCTV and positively identify the suspects and the vehicle involved. I recorded the crime and uploaded the details for a further investigation. As I exited the store there were two young teenage boys on electric scooters and on seeing me quickly rode off towards the River Walk. Unfortunately, not before one of them nearly crashed into a customer who also received verbal abuse from the young boy. In this instance both boys escaped down the path I returned to the store where I collected evidence of their actions and clear pictures of their faces and will be looking to identify them for a follow up.

### March 30<sup>th</sup>

It was Easter weekend, and this marked the first of the community events organised by the Witham Town Council on the River Walk. The Easter Trail is a free event for children and families to take part and placed along the trail beginning at Guithavon Valley towards Maldon Road there were different clues to collect on the way to an Easter Egg reward. This year we were invited to participate along the trail, and we set up near to Bridge Street. We had organised a matching game to provide some fun and asked questions to test the children's 999 knowledge. Interestingly a large percentage of children called out 911 (which parents told us is the influence of television and online videos) Fortunately in the United Kingdom a 911 call is redirected to the 999 switchboards. The number 112 is also a direct number to the emergency response switchboard. We were able to bring along one of our Marked Police Carriers (also nicknamed a RIOT van) for the children to explore and try on some uniform. Although at times we were mobbed with lots of children and families we didn't need to break out the shields! The Town Council had provided us with sweets, wrist bands and pencils and combined with our colouring books we hope that we provided a positive experience for all our visitors.



We were also available to answer questions from local residents and we had two issues raised concerning potential drug supply and electric scooters which we have taken on board for future action.

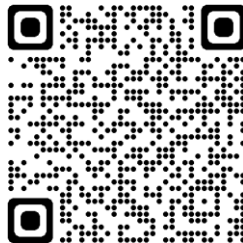


## March 31<sup>st</sup>


I closed out the month with mobile patrols in Witham alongside Sergeant Bailey & PC Sahin and we targeted all of the current anti-social behaviour hotspots across the town and housing estates. We carried out foot patrol on the Templars estate and visited the Rickstones recreation ground. Over the course of our time in Witham we checked several vehicles, stopping one for further checks and a person was searched near to Gershwin Boulevard following a strong smell of cannabis in the area. One of the positive actions we did take was a licencing check on a Pub in Witham and we were welcomed by the landlord who also asked us about a recent investigation where a member of his staff had been assaulted. With the checks complete and providing him with some further information we concluded our patrols with no reported incidents.



This concludes the monthly report for March 2024.

You can find Witham Community Special Constable patrol updates on Twitter by searching and following [Essex Police Witham \(@EPWitham\) / Twitter](#)



Contact Essex Police

Emergency call  999

Non-Emergency  101 or  Report it Online

<https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

