



December 2023

We approach the end of 2023 and preparations begin to celebrate the holiday season. There is always an increase in foot fall around the shopping centres in the town and increased activity at the local supermarkets and we wanted to increase our visibility and reassurance across this time. We have been experiencing a small increase in anti-social behaviour involving children around Highfields Road & Spa Road and we will continue to look to identify the people responsible and address their ongoing behaviour. We also attend several Community engagement events over the festive period with the Witham Fayre and the Templars Estate Annual Christmas Lights competition. We will continue to focus on tackling crime and road safety over the month.

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

[Would you report a drink driver this Christmas? | Essex Police](#)



December 2nd

Before we began our visibility patrols for the Witham Christmas Fayre, I attended The Witham Hub where I supervised another of the children who were carrying out community service following their involvement in a graffiti incident in the Grove Centre which was captured on CCTV. Fortunately, the parents came forward to identify the children responsible and we were able to take a positive action to demonstrate the impact of their vandalism. While I was at the Hub, Special Constable Eaketts & Penrose conducted high visibility foot patrols around the town centre until the road was closed for the Christmas Fayre. As the stalls and performing acts prepared, we carried out vehicle checks and visited local businesses that were also supporting the event with brightly decorated window displays. With the event under way, we were joined by Acting Chief Inspector Campbell of the Witham CSC team so we could provide 2 double crewed foot patrols across the town, this also allowed us to extend our patrols to include the River Walk and we called at ASDA to provide reassurance to staff & customers following recent reports of anti-social behaviour. With the crowds gathering around the stage at the top of Guithavon Street we engaged with children and families and provided further visual reassurance. This year the Witham Town Council had extended the size of the event to include The Grove Centre, and this provided extra space for a visit from reindeers Blitzen & Steve!

The event concluded in the early evening and as the darkness fell the Christmas lights were switched on and provided a fantastic festive backdrop. We concluded our patrols as the last of the performers and stalls packed away and we were pleased that there were no reported incidents associated with the event.



December 6th

I had just arrived in Witham, and I headed towards ASDA along Spa Road, as I entered the car park, I was alerted by staff members that a person had just left the store with a significant amount of alcohol. Unfortunately, the male had got into a waiting vehicle and was driven off at high speed towards Spinks Lane. I returned to the store to record the crime and collect CCTV images relating to the suspect and the investigation is ongoing. Before I left the station at Braintree, I had collected three items of property to return to local residents and this also provided me with an opportunity to obtain further intelligence and check on their welfare. When this was complete, I parked in Newlands Drive and headed out on foot patrol where I visited several of the pubs and checked local business premises. With very few people out on the streets in the town I headed back to my vehicle to conduct mobile patrols around the REDROW estate, Augustus Way and the Hatfield Road estate before finishing my patrol.





December 7th

I had the privilege to be invited to attend the New Rickstones Academy Christmas Concert to represent a member of the Witham Community and I joined the Mayor of Witham, Susan Ager and Chairman of Braintree District Council Dianne Garrod. It was a fantastic show with a combination of very talented individual performances and high energy groups which involved lots of the schoolchildren performing songs from musicals & Christmas carols. With a short intermission we were provided with freshly prepared food by children from the catering department before we returned to the main hall for the remainder of the show. It was a very well put together showcase involving lots of the school children and staff members and I left feeling very entertained and festive!

Following the event, I visited the Town Hall to review CCTV following several previous incidents and this is an invaluable service provided by Witham Town Council as we continue to combat crime across the area.

December 9th

It was a Saturday, and I attended The Witham Hub for the Community Beat Surgery, during the event I was able to record intel reports concerning drug related activity from concerned residents. The Beat Surgery is your opportunity to come and speak to a Police Officer if you have any issues in your local neighbourhood. With the surgery completed I set off on foot patrol around the town before heading along the River Walk. Due to the recent heavy rainfall the river was swollen in some areas and can be dangerous with hidden dangers below the surface so please take care with children and pets. Due to the persistent rain, I did not see many people on my travels until I reached ASDA. After checking with the store manager, I returned to the town centre and called in at several businesses to provide visibility and reassurance and popped into the library. The final part of my patrol was on the Templars Estate where I initially engaged with a group of children who had been seen climbing on the local shop roof and after giving them some words of advice, I joined a few others for a quick game of football in the park.



December 10th

Every year the Witham Community Special Constable team are invited to the neighbouring village of Hatfield Peverel for their significant community events, and we joined them for Christmas In The Park at the Village Hall. During the event we got to meet the Parish team who put on a great array of stalls, a Santa's Grotto & Christmas Movie as well as a performance by children from the local school who sang a selection of carols in the main hall. Outside there were rides and food stalls and we met reindeers Blitzen & Steve! With the event in full swing, we took the opportunity to conduct high visibility foot patrols around the village and recorded information regarding drug related activity before returning to the Village Hall. We had lots of positive engagement with children and families who attended, and we were thanked for our presence and approachability.



December 16th

I was joined by Witham CSC Office Acting Chief Inspector Campbell for foot patrols and to attend the Witham Hub to support the community service being carried out by the last of the three children responsible for the graffiti in The Grove Centre. Before we were able to get into the Town Centre, we were asked to carry out a welfare check at an address on Homebridge Court. The Fire Service had recently attended and although there was nobody present at the time when they attended the address, they were concerned for the potential resident. We often work with our emergency service colleagues to ensure the safety and welfare of residents and properties in the community. With our checks completed and information gathered for follow up visits we then attended an abandoned vehicle on Snowdrop Close, in this instance the vehicle had been involved in an incident a few days earlier at another location in the Braintree District but had been driven back to Witham and had been left in a residents parking bay. Unfortunately, our powers are limited by law and with the vehicle not causing an obstruction to the public highway or been seen being driven we were unable to seize the vehicle. In this instance we provided the resident to contact the Braintree District Environmental team who can have the car recovered.

[Report an abandoned vehicle – Braintree District Council](#)



We then visited the Witham Hub and while the person completed their community service, we set up an impromptu Beat Surgery. We had a lot of visitors wishing us well for Christmas and thanking us for our presence, a few photographs were taken by long distance visitors from Australia that had not seen a traditional “bobby” before. The uniform that I wear for my visibility around the town normally includes my custodian helmet which has always been synonymous with the image of a British Policeman. I like it because it is considerably warmer in the cold weather! With the surgery completed we had just enough time to have a quick photograph with Father Christmas and his Elves before we returned to foot patrols across the shopping areas. Our final destination for the day was to the ASDA store but again I was pleased to see that there were no signs of the anti-social behaviour, and we concluded our shift.



December 17th

A slightly different shift was planned for this evening, following my invite to the Templars Estate annual Christmas Lights competition, however, as soon as I left the station at Braintree, I headed for an incident on the A12 at Hatfield Peverel following a car fire. Fortunately, the driver was ok, and the road was reopened following attendance by the Fire Service. I headed back in to Witham and joined the Templars Association & Councillor Hicks, and we walked around the estate looking at this year's entries. The competition is open to all and there were some very good displays this year which really added to the festive feel and brightened up the individual Courts. With the winners determined and prizes given I returned to my duties which included the identification and seizure of a stolen moped which had been abandoned on the estate. This was originally reported stolen over 6 months ago.



December 19th

It was a very wet day but that was not going to deter my first opportunity to go on foot patrols around Witham with the newly appointed Street Warden. The role of Street Warden comes with powers to combat anti-social behaviour and provide visibility and reassurance across the town in support of the Safer Streets initiative. The street warden has already built a great knowledge of Witham and has established a number of contacts with businesses across the town. We began our foot patrols from the Town Hall and visited the shopping areas in The Grove Centre and the Newlands Precinct before checking in with Iceland to enquire about the rough sleepers that had been discovered several times outside the rear doors. We then moved into Lockram Lane where I noticed an insecure premises and we were able to contact the owner. Fortunately, there were no signs of forced entry and we moved on to the library where we met the staff and discussed the rough sleepers who had been using their "warm space" to grab a hot drink



and respite from the cold. We will continue to try and engage with the people and the Town Hall have been out several times to try and assist with referrals to CHESS through Streetlink

[StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services \(thestreetlink.org.uk\)](http://thestreetlink.org.uk)

We returned to my marked vehicle and headed over to ASDA at Highfields Road and set off on foot patrol along the RiverWalk, visiting the Duck Pond before continuing onto Armond Road. During the patrol we met several people along the route who were pleased with our presence, and I received some intelligence regarding drug use and supply in another location in Witham. The final part of our patrol together involved a visit to the Powers Hall Academy where our presence made a significant difference to the usual parking concerns with many parents having to find alternative parking locations. When vehicles are parked illegally around school gates at entrance and exit times it creates a very dangerous environment for the children so, please consider alternative solutions to prevent any future accidents.

I continued my duties alone into the early evening and visited several other areas of Witham including foot patrols around Wickham Road where I disrupted suspected drug related activity before attending a high-risk missing person incident on Blunts Hall Road.





December 21st

I started my shift in the mid-afternoon with foot patrol around the town. My intention was to provide some targeted visibility in the lead up to Christmas for the stores that had been suffering with shoplifting thefts. Hopefully this did have a positive effect with no reported incidents across my time in the town. I also visited the library and the Town Hall before a request for assistance in Hatfield Peverel cut short my patrol. Due to my local knowledge of Witham & Hatfield Peverel I headed off to assist colleagues following a chase on the A12 that ended up with 2 abandoned vehicles. I guarded discarded property and organised the recovery for one of the vehicles for the incident where an officer was assaulted during a traffic stop following information from ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) that the vehicle was linked to being concerned with the supply of drugs. Fortunately, the officer is ok, and several items connected with drug supply & possession were seized along with both vehicles. We would like to thank the public for their support with multiple reports that assist us in tracking down the people responsible.

The second part of my shift was very different, and I collected fellow Witham Special Constable Claire Eaketts before we headed back into Witham to begin with mobile patrols around Highfields Road and popped in to the ASDA store to provide visibility and reassurance, before crossing town to the Greenfield area. While we were driving around the area, we received notification over the radio of an abandoned 999 call from the Grove Centre with a broken message that someone that had been sexually assaulted. Fortunately, we were at the phone boxes within a couple of minutes and although there was no one in the vicinity, we did find that one of the phone boxes had been vandalised and the money collection box forced open. We carried out foot patrol throughout the Grove Centre in case the person who had made the call was still in the area or the person responsible for the damage but there was nobody seen. We will be reviewing the CCTV from The Grove Centre to see if we can identify anyone connected with the incident.



The remainder of our shift took us a long way from Witham to the other side of Great Yeldham to assist one of our Dog Units with the arrest, conveying and the booking into custody for a man wanted for a theft offence. We were unable to return to Witham for the rest of the night and this concluded our shift.



December 23rd

With this being the last main shopping day before Christmas I wanted to spend as much time as possible on foot patrol to provide visibility and reassurance around the town. I began with the Community Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub where I met the victim of a potential pickpocketing incident the previous day. This was said to have occurred in a crowded shop and it can only take seconds for a thief to strike if you have your wallet or purse easily accessible in open bags, etc. To try and support the victim I did conduct a detailed search of the area where the wallet may have been discarded after the cash was removed. The wallet also contained a bus pass and bank cards, and I checked the back of the Newlands Precinct, Newlands Drive car park and the nearby Churchyard but unfortunately nothing was found. I continued my patrols in the town and entered the Witham Town Park where there had been a recent incident of vandalism in the toilet block. There is now increased CCTV in and around the town and this will hopefully not only deter future criminal activity but also help to identify suspects. This is your town – please look after it and please report any suspicious activity. I visited many of the shops in the town before I moved my patrols up to the Hatfield Road estate and around Wickham Road.

With the intention to carry out further foot patrols in the town centre and visit the local pubs during the evening I carried out mobile patrols across Witham and it was during this period that I had a suspicious vehicle leave Greenfield at speed. With the car disappearing towards Maldon Road, I continued my drive around the area, visiting the Grove Centre before I parked up on Newland Street close to the Town Hall to provide a visible presence on the high street. A few moments later the car appeared on Newland Street, and I began to follow it with the intention of stopping the driver, unfortunately when I switched on the emergency lights to signal it to stop the driver took off at high speed down Maldon Road, dangerously crossing the roundabout and overtaking at the pedestrian crossing. I immediately called up for assistance and notified the ANPR team at Police HQ. Approximately 15 minutes later the same vehicle was seen trying to return along The Grove and again sped off along Pasture Road into the Freebournes Industrial Estate and out of sight. This reckless driving puts innocent people at risk, and we did not pursue but due to the nature of the driving the vehicle was added to the live ANPR list to highlight future activations for units to try and stop the car safely.

With no further activations I parked up and headed out to the local pubs where I called in first at The George, speaking with customers and staff before crossing the road to The Red Lion and had some positive engagement there as well. I continued down the high street to The White Hart where I spoke with the landlord before heading down to The Swan. They had an entertaining Elvis tribute act and a real party atmosphere, and it was great to see so many people present. I checked in with the door staff at the Battersford Court which was all in order before walking back up the town towards Charlie's Bar. With everyone appearing to be enjoying themselves and no reported incidents I concluded my shift just before midnight!



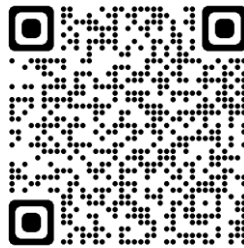


I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Witham Town Council and the Residents of Witham for their support throughout 2023 for our volunteer role and I hope that we can continue to build on the strengths of the Witham Community spirit throughout 2024.


This concludes the monthly report for December 2023.



You can find Witham Community Special Constable patrol updates on Twitter by searching and following

[Essex Police Witham \(@EPWitham\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/EPWitham)



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/>

