



April 2023

April saw an increased focus on the Safer Streets initiative with visible policing from the Community Policing team alongside the Witham Special Constables. There had been a recent survey available to residents of Witham to capture their current perception about crime and safety in the town and we look forward to the results. We will be conducting speed checks and focusing on anti-social hotspot areas while maintaining our presence at community events and the beat surgeries.

April 1st

I was out on foot patrol in the town and due to the threat of more rain I was wearing my high visibility jacket which seemed to attract more people to come and approach me while I was walking through the Newlands Precinct and the Grove Centre. I was set to attend the Community Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub between 11:00 & 13:00 but the hour before provides me a great opportunity to engage with local businesses and the market traders. When I arrived at the Hub, I already had several people waiting to see me regarding local issues and we made use of a private room upstairs at the Hub to discuss their concerns. You can discuss any policing issues with officers at the Hub and this can include crime recording, information about local anti-social issues e.g., drug dealing or use, nuisance vehicles, etc or request some visibility in your specific area to provide reassurance to residents. We can also offer advice and directions to other services including fraud advice and domestic violence.

[Action Fraud | Essex Police](#)

[Home | Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline \(nationaldahelpline.org.uk\)](#)

[Domestic Violence & Abuse · Emergency Injunction Service \(ncdv.org.uk\)](#)

Outside the Hub I had some great engagement with several people asking for photos and thanking me for providing reassurance and visibility. During the rest of my time on foot in the town centre I recorded information on a nuisance vehicle, visited The Centre at the United Reform Church on Newland Street and provided advice to a victim of crime. I returned to my vehicle for my mobile patrols and started on Guithavon Street before visiting the Humber Road estate where I disrupted drug related activity which also included a stop search. I patrolled near to the underpass on Spa Road following recent reports of suspicious activity. I then crossed the town to Allectus Way, the Redrow estate and Gershwin Boulevard.

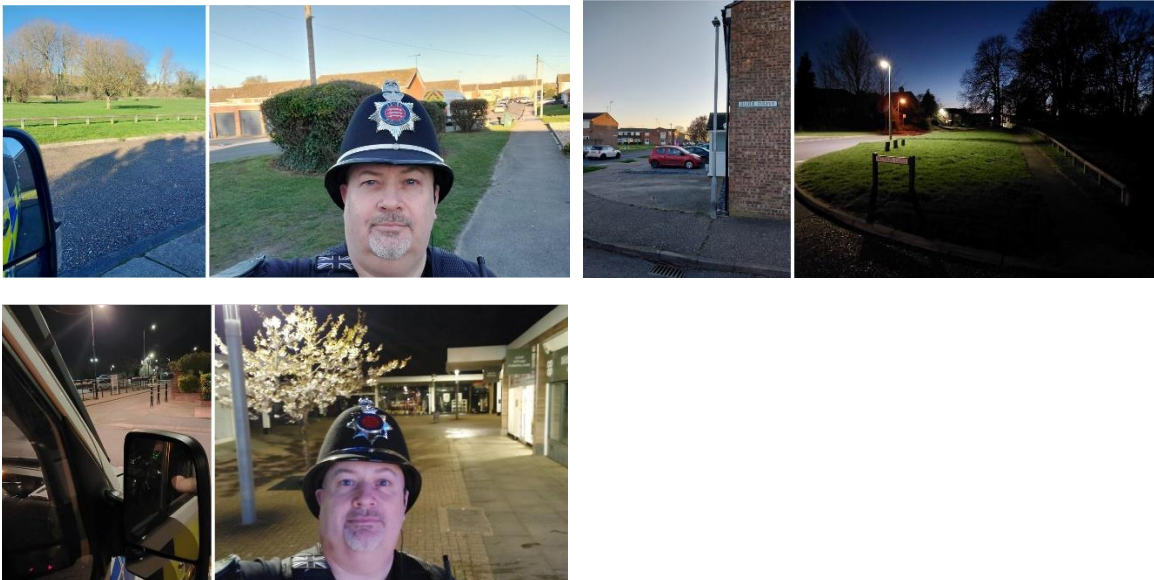




April 3rd

I was out on my patrols and initially I had arranged to meet up with a community member who had reported that they had been put in fear while out walking in the evening around the Howbridge Road & Gershwin Boulevard area. Although the Police were called on the night of the incident the person had fortunately been assisted by nearby residents and therefore officers were not dispatched. At the time there was limited information and I not only wanted to check on the welfare of the person involved but also try to understand what had happened and how it had made them feel. After sitting down and listening to the victim I was able to go out and make some enquiries in the local area and address at least one aspect of the concern straight away which I then fed back to the victim. As a Community Special Constable, I am also a member of the public and I know that if I was in the same position as the victim, I would like to receive some feedback about a potential ongoing concern, and they were thankful for my follow up. I promised to continue my patrols in the area and encouraged them to be vigilant and report any further issues.

I then headed to Pattison Close, Laurence Avenue and Maldon Road before continuing round to Greenfield and Barleyfields, before parking up in the town centre and carrying out foot patrols. There have been several reports recently on anti-social driving on Newland Street and Collingwood Road concerning excessive speed and noisy exhausts. During my walk through the Newlands Shopping Precinct, I had positive engagement with a group of teenagers and walked up and down Newland Street, but I was pleased that there were no noise or speed issues observed. I called in at The George Public House, where I spoke with the landlady and several of the regular customers and after a bit of light-hearted banter, I continued my patrol. I returned to my vehicle and revisited several previous locations before returning to the town centre where I stopped a cyclist who had lost their rear light. Fortunately, I carry some spare lights from the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERPS) and the rider was extremely happy as they continued their journey in safety.





April 5th

I arrived in Witham and my first location was the Templars estate and the park area. With the school break there can be an increase in anti-social behaviour and the central park area is a prominent gathering space. Fortunately, even though there were several groups of children and teenagers in the park they were all enjoying themselves. I spoke with one group of children, and it was reported to me that several others had been climbing on top of the shops. This is extremely dangerous and CCTV in the area will be reviewed to identify the people involved. There is a risk of committing criminal damage to the roof but more critical is the obvious safety risk of falling which could result in serious injury or death. I left the estate to my next appointment which involved collecting a selection of knives that had been carefully packaged for disposal. The person had spoken to me previously at a Beat Surgery and not being able to drive did not want to make the trip on the bus to the nearest knife amnesty bin for their safe disposal. If you have knives at home that are no longer needed or are now considered illegal to own, then they can be deposited in the marked knife bins outside police stations without fear of prosecution. Unfortunately, there is currently no knife bin in the Witham area, but I am happy to collect and dispose of them for you.

My next task was to conduct a speed survey on Flora Road which had recently been highlighted as a particular issue for children crossing to get to the large park area. I conducted a check, monitoring 100 vehicles travelling from Faulkbourne Road towards Powers Hall End. The results were very poor with many drivers exceeding the 30mph limit with many over 40mph. The survival rate of a pedestrian (particularly a child or elderly person) involved in an impact with a vehicle exceeding the speed limit at 40mph or more is extremely low. Essex Police are supporting the National campaign Vision Zero [Vision Zero – SERP \(saferessexroads.org\)](http://Vision Zero – SERP (saferessexroads.org))



With the survey complete I then conducted a foot patrol through the park area and into the estate walking along Bryony Close and Honeysuckle Way and back around onto Bramble Road where I engaged with residents concerning drug activity and nuisance motorbikes. I was able to update two residents on the seizure of one of the nuisance bikes in the last two weeks which has made a difference to the neighbourhood. I returned to my vehicle and continued my visibility patrols across Witham including Howbridge Road, Dengie Close, Gershwin Boulevard, Haygreen Road before heading out to James Cooke Woods where I checked on the welfare of a person resting in their car and stopped a driver on Maldon Road who was driving along without their lights.



April 9th

It was the Annual Easter Trail organised for the Witham Community by Witham Town Council. This free event uses the RiverWalk from Guithavon Street to Maldon Road to provide a trail of clues to collect leading to an Easter Egg at the final location. This year Easter Eggs were donated by local supermarkets & local residents which allowed over 500 children to be registered for the event. Our role was to provide visible reassurance along the trail to ensure that the road crossings were safe and there were no other concerns along the way. We were fortunate with the weather which turned out bright and warm for the event and we were also able to field our whole Witham Community Special Constable Team. While we had two patrols available, we also made sure that we provided extra visibility in the town centre.



In addition to the great engagement, we had with children and families during the event we also tackled drug related activity in another part of the town, and we were also available at the end of the day to assist with the search and successful location of a missing person from Witham.



April 12th

An addition to our role is to support the Essex Police Licence Team who request initial checks on pubs, clubs and bars in the Town to ensure that they meet the standards and conditions of their licence. This is to protect customers to ensure that they can enjoy their visit in a safe, friendly and responsible environment. These reports are then submitted to a record system for any follow up actions. In this round of checks, The Cherry Tree, The White Horse and Battersford Court were visited.



April 15th

Braintree District Council organised a mini dog show to help promote the [Safer Streets](#) initiative in Witham. There were several stalls with advice from local veterinary practices, Essex Retired Police Dog Fund and Essex Police promoted the Dog Watch scheme to visitors and their furry companions.

[Dog watch | Essex Police](#)

While this was ongoing on the green space near Guithavon Valley we attended the Community Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub. During the session we listened and provided advice to concerned parents, recorded an assault and noted down several pieces of information given to us. These will be uploaded onto our system as intelligence reports. These reports are vital to help us to identify criminal activity in your community and with sufficient intelligence reports we can take positive action.



April 18th

Witham CSC officer Eaketts and CSC Officer Symonds were on hand to manage the Community Beat Surgery at The Town Hall. They set up a table outside to help encourage residents to come and speak with them and it was a very busy session. They handed out purse bells while promoting personal safety and securing of belongings while out and about in busy areas, they provided scam and fraud protection advice, recorded a criminal damage and a theft. They had to extend the surgery by another one and half hours to ensure that everyone was seen and gathered intelligence reports concerning speeding, electric scooters and bikes causing a nuisance in local areas. When they finally packed away and headed out on foot patrol in the town they were on hand to assist at a local bank with a concern for a customer that appeared to be a victim of bank fraud. Fortunately CSC officer Eaketts is very familiar with this kind of fraud and works in the banking industry in her normal job when she is not volunteering for Essex Police. This is a great example of how as a Special Constable you are able to bring some unique skills to the role to help the local community. To finish their patrols they followed up on a property check due to some concerns raised by a neighbour who visited them at the Town Hall and a report was sent to the environment team at Braintree District Council to follow up.





April 21st

Different patrol this evening to support the #SaferStreets initiative in Witham when we were asked to go out on foot patrol in plain clothes and ask people walking through the town about their view on how safe they feel. With representatives from Braintree District Council and Regular colleagues from Essex Police we set off from the Town Hall. For our part Special Constable Eaketts and Myself set off on to the #RiverWalk which is used as a significant route connecting different areas of the town. Over the course of 2 hours, we spoke with individuals and some groups and received some great comments which we then fed back to the organiser. The #SaferStreets campaign is ongoing and if you feel that you would like to speak to someone about this you can come and speak to us at the Community Beat Surgeries or visit the following link to find out more.

[Safer Streets Programme – Braintree District Council](#)



April 22nd

I was crewed with Witham Community Special Constable Symonds for his final shift as he retires from his volunteer role. Over the past 6 months he has been integral to the team supporting the community events, community beat surgeries and providing visibility and reassurance to the town. Earlier this year he was honoured by the Mayor as part of the Witham team and he will be missed. If you think that you could spare 16 or more hours each month and want to put something back into your community then you could join Essex Special Constabulary. If you want to find out more then please follow the link below or alternatively come and see us at our Community Beat Surgeries where we can speak to you directly and share some of the experiences and successes in policing in the community.

[Community Special Constables | Essex Police](#)

For his final shift we wanted to concentrate on the core element of visibility and helping the community, so we set off on foot patrol. This is one of the best ways for us to meet people, discuss local issues with residents and to search for intel. We started in the market in the Newlands Precinct before heading along Newland Street and into the Witham Town Park. There had been recent reports of drug related activity and we are keen to deter this behaviour and act against anyone committing crimes associated with drug dealing. While we were in the park, we had positive engagement with several people and caught a few minutes of the cricket match before heading across Maldon Road and into Barleyfields and Greenfield. We returned through the Grove Centre and dropped in to The Witham Hub before continuing back through the town back to our vehicle. Following a recent inquiry from a concerned neighbour we headed back over to Forest Road and checked on a property that appeared abandoned. With the neighbour's assistance we were able to establish that the property had been recently visited by the occupant and there were no concerns for their welfare. During our mobile patrols in the area, we noticed a man acting suspiciously near to Mulberry Gardens and to investigate further we parked the Carrier on Motts Lane and patrolled on foot down to the



railway crossing. With our visible presence the man had disappeared, and we believe that we may have disrupted drug related activity. If you see anything of this nature in your area, then please let us know by reporting via **101** or **999** if it's an emergency. Alternatively, you can report anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or on their website.

[Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](#)

Our next plan was to head over to Maldon Road, however, on route we noticed two mopeds that took a detour along a pavement and cut through a housing area. Fortunately, both SC Symonds and I have good local knowledge and we were in position as they appeared on Pasture Road. With both riders stopped we carried out checks on them and their mopeds and this resulted in discovering one of them had no insurance. Under Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act, we then seized the moped and permanently removed this from the road as the rider had no ownership claim.

Our final act of the day was a concern for safety for an individual and with a description provided I was able to identify this person and go directly to the address where we found them in distress. Fortunately, a family member was available to look after them and we concluded our shift.





April 26th

I headed out on my own to conduct speed checks on Collingwood Road following concerns raised by a local resident and I first set up at 1730 hours measuring traffic heading from Newland Street towards me on Collingwood Road. In general, most drivers kept within the 30mph limit, with only three drivers gestured to reduce their speed. I did need to stop and issue a ticket to one driver who didn't appear to notice my police car and high visibility clothing and continue to drive towards me at 41mph. In a 30mph limit this extremely dangerous and at this time of the evening there were many pedestrians crossing at different locations along Collingwood Road. The driver may be eligible for a speed awareness course, but this will be determined by the Casualty Reduction Section.

With an initial check completed I headed out around the town for visible mobile patrols before heading up to Constance Close to investigate reports of motorbikes using the footpaths and Blackwater Trail. During a short foot patrol along the trail, I was approached by a local resident who was able to provide me with information concerning drug dealing activity in the vicinity and this will be added to our patrols. I then crossed the town to visit Church Street which had also reported an increase in drug related activity with apparent dealing happening in the street. While I was out on foot, I popped into The Woolpack and had a chat with several of the patrons and landlord who informed me that they will shortly be installing a new Defibrillator Machine on the outside of the pub for use in the local area. This is a vital piece of life saving equipment and money was raised by regulars inside the pub which is fantastic for the community.

In order to get a different traffic perspective, I returned to Collingwood Road for another speed check and this time I was able to monitor traffic in both directions from my location. There were far fewer cars, but I am pleased to say there were no obvious speeding vehicles and with a cyclist stopped for having no lights there were no other concerns. Fortunately, I still had some of the Safer Essex Roads free bicycle lights and I was able to send the rider on their way – now clearly visible on the road.






April 29th



It was the day of the Community Beat Surgery, and I was fortunate to have the company of Special Constable Storey to assist during our time at The Witham Hub. The weather had improved, and this certainly made it more pleasant to be outside and able to greet the many people walking by. It also ended up being exactly the right place to be when a wanted man walked up to me to discuss an unrelated issue and I was able to keep them busy while other units arrived at the scene to effect an arrest. I initially assisted with securing the male during the search process and getting him into the police vehicle before I was able to return to The Witham Hub. Over the course of the 2 hours, we spoke to at many different people who all had a similar concern over the dangerous and inconsiderate riding of an electric motorbike through the town and along the footpaths. This has been recorded and we were able to offer some reassurance that we were already aware and working on resolving this situation. At the end of the surgery, we called in at The White Hart to surprise a person celebrating their 80th birthday before continuing back through the Newlands Precinct and the market to our vehicle.



This concludes the monthly report for April 2023.

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/>