



Avon and Somerset Police
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Taunton

Policing Newsletter

August 2026

NEWS FROM ACROSS TAUNTON

Hello and welcome to the Taunton Policing Newsletter for the month of August 2026. As always, the newsletters contain a snapshot of some of the work the Taunton Policing Teams have been involved with in the previous month.

Community Engagement with 1st Wilton Squirrels

We were delighted to visit the 1st Wilton Squirrels group after receiving an invitation to speak with the children about policing and staying safe.

PCSO's Will & Sean spent time chatting with the youngsters about the role of the police and how we help keep our communities safe. While the children showed plenty of interest in learning about policing, it quickly became clear that our police vehicles were the main attraction! The opportunity to explore the cars and press some of the buttons proved to be a real highlight for the group.

It was a fantastic visit, and a pleasure for us to engage with such an enthusiastic and curious group of children. Thank you to the 1st Wilton Squirrels for inviting us along, and we look forward to supporting more community events in the future.

Pictured below: PCSO Will Raisey with members of the 1st Wilton Squirrels group during the visit.



Retail Crime Offender Jailed Following Multiple Shoplifting Offences

We are pleased to share a successful outcome in tackling retail crime within our community.

In early July, officers arrested Dale Fussell in connection with 23 shoplifting offences committed across businesses at the Hankridge Retail Park. The offender had repeatedly targeted local retailers, stealing goods of significant value and impacting both businesses and staff. Following his arrest, Dale Fussell appeared before the court and was sentenced to 26 weeks' imprisonment. This result demonstrates our continued commitment to tackling retail crime and supporting local businesses. The successful prosecution not only holds the offender accountable for his actions but also helps protect

MEET THE TEAM



OFFICER

PCSO Lewis

Matthews

POLICING AREA

Taunton Central

YEARS SERVICE

4 months

HOBBY

Football

FAVOURITE FOOD

Nandos

ABOUT ME

This month's 'Meet the Team' is PCSO Lewis Matthews.

Hello, my name is Lewis, and I am a PCSO for Taunton Town Centre.

I wanted to become a PCSO because I am passionate about helping people and making a positive difference within the community. I enjoy working with members of the public, building relationships, and being someone people can approach for support, advice, or reassurance.

The role appealed to me because it combines problem-solving, community engagement, and partnership working. I was looking for a career where no two days are the same and where I could have a direct impact on improving the quality of life for local residents.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is being visible within the community, listening to concerns, and helping to address issues such as anti-social behaviour. By working closely with residents, businesses, and partner agencies, I can contribute towards creating safer neighbourhoods and stronger communities.

I also take great pride in supporting vulnerable people and helping them access the right support when they need it. Working alongside local organisations allows me to build positive relationships and help strengthen trust and confidence in policing.

Every day brings new challenges and opportunities, and I am proud to serve the people of Taunton, helping to make the town centre a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

retailers, staff, and shoppers across the area.

We would like to thank the businesses involved for their support throughout the investigation. This sentence sends a clear message that persistent offenders will be pursued and brought before the courts.

Working together, we can continue to make our communities safer places to live, work, and shop.

Police Helicopter Supports Investigation into Motorcycle Thefts

On Saturday 4 July, many residents noticed the National Police Air Service (NPAS) helicopter circling over the Monkton Heathfield area. The helicopter was deployed at our request as part of an operation targeting the theft of motor vehicles, particularly motorcycles.

Thanks to information provided by members of the community, our Roads Policing Team had identified a vehicle and its occupants believed to be linked to a number of motorcycle thefts. On the 4th July, officers located the vehicle travelling in the Monkton Heathfield area and carried out a successful stop using tactical containment methods.

As a result, a juvenile male was arrested in connection with the investigation.

The investigation remains ongoing, and we would like to thank everyone who has come forward with information and evidence to assist officers in identifying those involved. Community intelligence continues to play a vital role in helping us tackle crime and bring offenders to justice.

Your support is greatly appreciated and demonstrates the importance of working together to keep our communities safe. We encourage anyone with information about crime or suspicious activity to continue reporting it to us.

Swift Teamwork Leads to Three Arrests Following Crime Spree

In the early hours of 22 July, our officers received multiple reports of theft from motor vehicles and burglary across the local area.

Through quick-thinking and proactive work by attending officers, combined with invaluable assistance from members of the public who provided high-quality CCTV footage, images of three suspected offenders were swiftly identified and shared with our partners at the Somerset Council CCTV Control Room.

Approximately eight hours later, CCTV operators in Bridgwater spotted the same three individuals walking along a local road and immediately alerted police. Officers responded quickly, locating and arresting all three suspects.

The three juvenile males, who are originally from the Devon area, were subsequently released under investigation. However, they have been issued with bail conditions prohibiting them from entering Somerset while enquiries continue.

This successful outcome highlights the excellent partnership between Avon and Somerset Police, Somerset Council CCTV operators, and our local community. It also demonstrates how vital public support, technology, and effective teamwork are in helping us identify offenders and keep our communities safe.

Thank you to everyone who assisted with this investigation.

Swift Action Leads to Custodial Sentence for Repeat Burglar

Towards the end of July, our patrol teams responded to a report of a burglary in progress at a business in the town centre during the early hours of the morning. Thanks to a rapid response, officers identified and arrested a suspect within an hour of the incident, and the stolen money was successfully recovered. The following day, the individual appeared before the court and received a suspended sentence. Unfortunately, after being released from court later that same day, the offender went on to commit three further burglaries in the town centre. Our teams acted quickly once again, carrying out prompt enquiries, gathering evidence, and re-arresting the suspect. The individual was brought back before the court, where they were sentenced to a term of imprisonment. While it is disappointing that three additional burglaries occurred, we are extremely proud of the professionalism and dedication shown by our officers. Their swift response, thorough investigation, and efficient case-building ensured that the offender was brought to justice quickly and that further offending was prevented.

POLICE EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

Early Warning Signs of Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation can affect any young person, regardless of background. Offenders often use grooming tactics; building trust, offering gifts or attention to gradually pull a child into situations that become risky or criminal. Many young people don't realise they are being exploited, which makes early awareness essential.

Recognising the Signs

While every child is different, certain changes may indicate they are being groomed or exploited.

These can include unexplained items or gifts, going missing or staying out late, regularly missing school, or losing interest in activities they once enjoyed. For more information on signs of exploitation, please visit [Protecting children from child criminal exploitation | NSPCC Learning](#)

What You Can Do as a Parent or Carer

Parents can feel powerless when something doesn't feel right, but there are practical steps you can take that will make a difference.

Keep Communication Open

Start conversations gently and avoid blame or confrontation. Approaching a young person in this way helps them feel listened to and safe, which can make them more willing to open up. Keeping communication open also gives you the opportunity to support them and help them navigate the situation.

Strengthen Digital Safety

Grooming is increasingly happening online, making digital safety an important protective factor. You can support your child by:

- Enabling built in phone safety features, including location tracking (Find My iPhone, Google Family Link).
- Setting screen time limits and content filters using parental control settings.
- Using reputable monitoring tools that help identify concerning patterns such as messages from strangers, explicit content, or manipulative behaviour.
- Reviewing social media privacy settings to ensure they only communicate with people they know.

For more digital safety guidance, visit: [Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#)

Trust Your Instincts

If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts. You know your child better than anyone. Try to keep communication open and keep a note of any signs that concern you. Over time, these small details can help safeguarding professionals build a clearer understanding of what may be happening. If you are worried, please reach out for help early. Early intervention can make a huge difference. You can contact:

- Police (non-emergency 101) or report online via [Report a crime or incident | Avon and Somerset Police](#).
- Children Social Care, information can be found here [Report a Concern - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- Your child's school safeguarding lead and charities such as the NSPCC, who offer confidential advice and guidance.

FRAUD AWARENESS

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Amazon Scam Warning

Avon and Somerset Police are witnessing an increase in cases where fraudsters are purporting to be from Amazon. They will claim that someone is purchasing expensive items on their Amazon account, such as a phone, and that they wanted to check it was actually them. The panicking victim states that it is not them making the purchase, and the fraudster says that this means that their account has been hacked. The fraudster will then take the victim through steps to “rectify” this, which usually involves them gaining remote access to their device. Once they have remote access, they are able to access the victim’s online banking and make transfers, often claiming that are helping to move their money to a “safe account”, which is actually just an account belonging to the fraudster. They may also access the victim’s Amazon account and place orders to themselves. This will often include the victim receiving a one-time passcode (OTP) to their phone and being requested to read this out to the fraudster so that they can gain access to the Amazon account.

Advice:

- If you receive an unexpected phone call and they ask you to download a remote access app, it will be a scam
- Hang up and check your purchase history on your Amazon account
- If you are still unsure, contact Amazon through the genuine website or app
- Never provide anyone with your one-time passcode (OTP)
- Don’t be pressured – fraudsters will create a sense of urgency to convince victims to do what they are asking
- Hang up the phone, give yourself time to think, and speak to a friend or family member about it
- If you believe your bank account has been accessed/money has been sent to a fraudster, you can get through to your bank’s fraud team quickly by calling 159
- Fraud needs to be reported either online or over the phone to Report Fraud 0300 123 2040

Many of you may have heard of *Community SpeedWatch* (CSW), but for those who are new to the initiative, it’s a local volunteer-led effort aimed at improving road safety across our neighbourhoods.

Community SpeedWatch involves trained volunteers from within the community carrying out speed monitoring checks on selected roads. The purpose isn’t enforcement, but awareness—encouraging motorists to slow down by highlighting the very real risks and impact of speeding in residential areas. Whether it’s the danger posed to pedestrians or the disruption caused to daily life, speeding affects everyone, and addressing it is something we are committed to working on alongside our communities.

Across the Taunton area, there are currently 14 active Community SpeedWatch groups operating in a range of locations. These sites vary significantly:

- **Urban areas** typically experience **higher traffic volumes**, ranging from **500 to 1,400 vehicles per hour**.
- **Rural locations**, while quieter with **50 to 200 vehicles per hour**, tend to see a higher proportion of drivers **exceeding speed limits**.

A key finding across both environments is the ongoing challenge with compliance in 20mph zones, which consistently record a higher proportion of speeding vehicles—regardless of whether the setting is urban or rural.

The insights gathered by CSW volunteers are vital in helping us understand local traffic behaviours and identify areas for improvement. By continuing to support and expand Community SpeedWatch, we can build stronger, safer communities where everyone feels more secure on the roads.

Activity during July

Out of the 14 active Community Speedwatch schemes in the area, **6** schemes were operational, carrying out **18** monitoring sessions across various locations.

During these sessions, volunteers observed an impressive **6,433** vehicles, demonstrating the scale of community engagement and commitment. As a result of these efforts, **140** advisory letters have been issued to drivers who were found to be exceeding the speed limit. If you’re interested in getting involved or learning more about Community SpeedWatch in your area, we encourage you to get in touch. Your contribution could make a real difference.

[Community SpeedWatch | Avon and Somerset Police](#)



CRIME STATISTICS - June 2026

(Latest information available to the public online)

Category	Crimes Recorded
Anti-social behaviour	114
Bicycle Theft	15
Burglary (Including Commercial Burglary)	24
Criminal Damage & Arson	54
Drugs	6
Other theft	46
Possession of weapons	8
Public Order	41
Robbery	8
Shoplifting	135
Theft from the person	1
Vehicle Crime	27
Violent Crime	302
Other Crime	12

You can access and find out more about crime statistics for a specific area by clicking either of these two links:

[Your area | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

[Avon and Somerset Constabulary | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

We understand that crime statistics can sometimes be difficult to interpret, and we'd like to take a moment to reassure you about how this information is presented.

When crime data is shared publicly, certain offence types are grouped together into broader categories. While our internal systems allow us to view much more detailed and specific information, what we are permitted to release is simplified to make it accessible for the public.

For example, one of the categories you may have seen is "Violent Crime." This category includes a wide range of incidents, one of the most common being domestic-related incidents. These types of calls make up a significant portion of the incidents we attend as Police.

It's important to understand that not all offences within this category carry the same level of severity, and grouping them together can sometimes give a misleading impression of the overall risk within the community.

If you would like to learn more about what constitutes a domestic relationship, you can find further information here:

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events where you can speak with a member of the Taunton Neighbourhood Policing Team.

- **Pride in Priorswood 18/08**
- **Independent Market at Castle Green—22/08**
- **Trull Community Centre — 15/08 10am—11am.**
- **Coffee with a Cop at Britons Ash Community Hall—26/08**

TAUNTON POLICE STATION

The Deane House, Belvedere Road,
Taunton, TA1 1HE

Opening Times

Monday: 08:30—16:30

Tuesday: 08:30—16:30

Wednesday: 08:30—16:30

Thursday: 08:30—16:30

Friday: 08:30—16:30

Saturday: CLOSED

Sunday: CLOSED

USEFUL LINKS

STREET SAFE

StreetSafe is an online tool that can be used by anyone to anonymously tell us about public places where they have felt or feel unsafe.

You might have felt unsafe in your local area due to anti-social behaviour or environmental factors, such as a lack of street lighting. We encourage you to share your experience using the StreetSafe tool.

The information you provide will be considered alongside evidence already gathered by police forces and will be used to inform policing and local authority safety activities within your community.

Link to Website to report:

[StreetSafe | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

KEEP UP TO DATE

Facebook is a great way to keep up to date with your local Neighbourhood Policing team. Follow us on:

Facebook: [West Somerset and Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)



GET IN TOUCH

In an emergency always call 999

For non-emergency matters call us on 101 or report online via

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report](#)

Contact the Neighbourhood Team directly: [SomersetWest-](#)

[NPT@avonandsomerset.police.uk](#)

To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers on

0800 555 111 or visit

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](#)

