



February 2023

The cold weather continued but does not deter our patrols or engagements and we continued to target anti-social behaviour around the town. This has mostly been in two categories with anti-social driving and a recent increase in a door knocking game which has become frightening to some residents with doors being kicked or items thrown at them – this is no longer a game and persistent actions against the same resident can turn into harassment. We also continued the #SaferStreets campaign with increased visible patrols and revisited a number of locations where drug related incidents were being reported.

February 2nd

I was out on duty for foot patrols to target specific anti-social behaviour areas and provide a visible presence. My first location was on the Templars Estate where several residents had become victims of repetitive and aggressive door knocking which was causing alarm and distress. During my walk around the Courts, I was able to speak to a few children and provide them with words of advice to share amongst their peers. I also spoke to one of the victims and informed them that I would be issuing a letter to houses on the estate to make sure that everyone was aware that this behaviour is not acceptable. I then moved across Rickstones Road and followed the pathway leading down to Forest Road following information about motorbikes & E-Scooters using the path that had been shared at one of the Community Beat Surgeries.



I then moved into the town and again headed out on foot, where I called in at The George & The Red Lion before walking through The Grove Centre and over to Greenfields. I continued around the field onto Blackman Way and across Maldon Road to Helen Court, before crossing the river towards Pattison Close to address drug related activity around Dengie Close I then concentrated foot patrol in that area before returning back to the River Walk and exiting onto Bridge Street. I visited The Swan to follow up on the recent knife-arch deployment and then continued back up Newland Street to my vehicle. My final patrol location was into Lime Tree Place where there had been reports that teenagers had been accessing the grounds due to the controlled entrance gates being left insecure. Fortunately at this time there were no concerns but I was thanked for my visibility and reassurance.



February 4th

It was the Community Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub but before this started at 11:00am I began to deliver my awareness letters on the Templars Estate, this also gave me an opportunity to be visible across many the Courts. I arrived at The Hub and remained outside to talk to people passing by and had many positive interactions with young children with their parents, these really help in breaking down any worries the children have about police officers. Approximately halfway through I was joined by an officer who was on attachment with the Community Policing Team. We stopped a group of teenagers, one of whom was riding an E-Scooter through the Grove Centre and I then arranged for this to be collected by a parent. The E Scooter had been borrowed so in this instance words of advice were given in relation to the fact that it is illegal to use in a public place. We were also approached by Witham MP Priti Patel who came over to talk to us outside The Hub and we had a positive discussion about local issues. Following the Beat Surgery, we headed out on foot patrol around the town and visited the market in the Newlands precinct and called in at Charlie's Bar to catch up with the landlady. We next visited Michelle Floral Design to follow up on damage caused to the shop over the Christmas period before returning to our vehicle.



Due to recent reports, there has been a perceived increase in speeds in different locations across Witham, my colleague had recently carried out a 100-vehicle survey on Spa Road and another road mentioned frequently was Rickstones Road. There are several locations on Rickstones Road due to the length that can be checked but, in this instance, we wanted to focus on the pedestrian crossing near to the junction with Dorothy Sayers Drive. With the Marked Police Carrier parked in a visible location and wearing our high visibility clothing (which is a requirement to carry out these checks) we then positioned ourselves to be able to monitor traffic from either direction. We then measured 100 vehicles; however, we did need to stop 4 vehicles, 3 of these were offered words of advice but one vehicle was measured at 39mph in the 30mph limit while approaching the crossing!



This driver was issued a ticket for excess speed. Further checks will be carried out in the coming weeks to promote road safety across Witham.

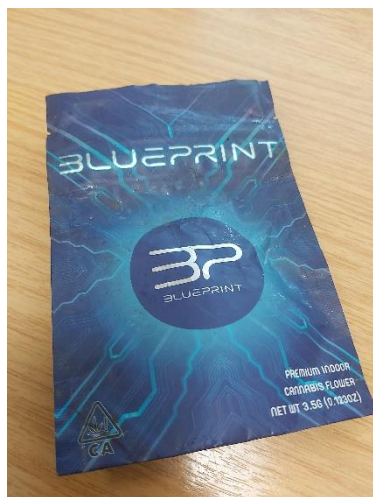


While we were in the location, several residents spoke with us about their speeding concerns, and we were also approached by a lady who had lost her mobile phone in the area. With our checks complete we carried out a search and fortunately found the phone and returned it to a grateful owner.

February 6th

I arrived in Witham to follow up on an incident of suspicious circumstances on the field next to Haygreen Road. The report concerned three men who had not been seen in the area before. After speaking with the informant to gather a little more information I carried out an area search but there were no signs of the people involved. A subsequent follow up on this incident by an officer was able to determine that there was no further action to be taken at this time. I had a meeting with the Town Council in the early part of the evening, but I was still able to get round to Dengie Close & Howbridge Road following a recent story on a local social media group. There were no police reports in relation to the story, but I wanted to provide some visibility and reassurance in the area. At the Council meeting I provided an update on our recent patrols and issues that we have dealt with and discussed ongoing plans to support the #SaferStreets campaign.

Following the meeting I arrived at an address in Witham where a concerned resident had found a sealed bag that was believed to contain the Class B drug cannabis. I was able to recover this, and it will be destroyed. The bag was sealed and stated clearly on the packing that its contents were cannabis. These types of packets are usually sent illegally through the post so please be vigilant, especially if these packets could be intercepted by young children or pets that could become very ill or result in death. Normally the packets are highly coloured with attractive graphics and could easily be mistaken for sweets.



With this collected for destruction an urgent request came over the radio following a robbery which had just taken place in Witham. As the closest officer I headed straight to the location arriving just a few minutes after the call from the victim. As I arrived on scene there was no sign of the suspects, but I quickly found the victim and was able to offer immediate reassurance while another unit was on route. The victim had arrived at home and was in the process of parking their car when 2 men approached and demanded the car keys, when the victim refused one of the men assaulted the victim. The victim was able to scream out loud which alerted neighbours but also caused the suspects to run away. A SOCO (Scenes Of Crime Officer) attended to capture potential evidence while the other unit searched the area for the suspects. Unfortunately, they were not located during the search, but the investigation is ongoing.

February 9th

I was on duty with Braintree Special Constable Penrose, and we started out with foot patrols around the Greenfields and Barleyfields areas following reports of suspicious activity relating to drugs. During our patrol we did notice a group of teenagers on bicycles on the footpath leading from The Grove towards Greenfields and they quickly disappeared when they saw us on patrol. If you are aware of activity in your area, then please make sure that you report this to Essex Police. The information you share (even anonymously through Crimestoppers) helps us to build a picture of concentrated activity that we can then target with positive actions. We returned to our vehicle and continued our mobile patrols around the town centre before driving up to Gershwin Boulevard to begin a series of speed surveys in the area. This road primarily has a 40mph speed limit until it enters the built-up area near to Holst Avenue where the limit reduces to 30mph. There have been several reports that speeds on this road appear to significantly exceed the limits.





Over the course of approximately 1 hour, we measured the speeds of 100 vehicles and there were only a few vehicles exceeding the limit with the highest of 51mph in the 40mph limit and 36mph in the 30mph limit. Both speeds are unacceptable, and drivers were made aware visually of their behaviour. Due to the night-time road conditions and safety considerations, we were not physically stopping vehicles for the purpose of the survey. The information will be collated with subsequent surveys to determine if there is a requirement for a planned operation with the appropriate resources to safely stop vehicles for action against drivers.

On completing the check, we then continued our mobile patrols visiting the Hatfield Road estate, Lodge Farm estate, Dengie Close, Pattison Close before heading to Humber Road. We finished our patrol at Morrisons car park where we continue to monitor actions by drivers causing anti-social behaviour.

February 11th

I was crewed with fellow Witham CSC Officer Symonds for our patrols, and we had two specific goals, The first of these was to continue the speed surveys and we wanted to carry out two checks at different times of the day on Gershwin Boulevard. The first of the surveys was started at approximately 10:00 and measured 100 vehicles, the highest measured speed was 49mph in the 40mph limit and the driver was visually warned about their speed. The second survey was carried out at approximately 14:30 and again measured 100 vehicles. With our high visibility and location, we did not have any drivers exceeding the limits on the road. While we appreciate that “You will never catch people if they can see you” is a common comment, our goal with these checks is to encourage drivers to slow down and adhere to the posted limit which have been set for safety for the road type. We will continue to carry out further checks over the coming months. The second goal of our shift was to provide a visible and reassuring presence in the heart of the town around the shops and the market. There had been a report the previous day that an elderly person had been a victim of a theft from their bag, and this had caused them a lot of stress and upset. We therefore conducted foot patrol and visited the shops, where we provided advice to any person we could see where their belongings could be vulnerable. Hopefully over the course of our patrol we provided some visible deterrent and some reassurance to shoppers and visitors to the town. When we popped into The Witham Hub, SC Symonds was able to assist with a competition and with the winners drawn we returned to our vehicle for targeted patrols on Dengie Close & Howbridge Road.



February 16th

I was crewed with fellow Community Special Constable Eaketts for our patrol, and we started by attending a serious incident where a scene preservation was required. I was given a crude description of the potential location but was able to determine that this was in Bluebell Woods off Rickstones Road. Although it was already dark, we set off with a description of potential items required for the investigation. As we approached the area, we could already smell smoke and on locating the source we found several smouldering logs unattended. We carried out a search in the vicinity to the incident location but to no avail and eventually the scene was stood down. We realised that we could not leave the fire unattended due to the risk to the woods and we set about extinguishing what we could at the scene before taking the larger pieces to water. Fires of this nature – even for a barbeque – are not permitted in the woods. With the location it would have been very difficult for the Fire Service to be able to access the area and the woods could have been destroyed.



We next moved on to patrols around the Fleming Way area due to reports of anti-social behaviour caused by drug use. As we pulled into Newman Crescent there were a small group of teenagers heading from the direction of Holly Walk towards the One Stop. Seeing the marked police vehicle one young male turned back on himself, disappeared behind a bush, before reappearing and joining the rest as they hurried away. Trusting my instinct, I jumped out and searched the nearby bushes, recovering a pot containing cannabis. Unfortunately, by this point the group were out of sight but a police information report has been submitted and the drugs have been destroyed. We concluded the remainder of our shift with visible patrols on the Lodge Farm Estate (Redrow), Haygreen Road, Maltings Lane, Dengie Close, Pattison Close, Greenfields before crossing the town to Spa Road, ASDA car park and Humber Road. Over the course of the patrol, we submitted 4 information reports for follow up actions.

February 18th

I was joined by another of the Witham Community Special Constables for the Beat Surgery at The Witham Hub but before we started there at 11:00am we went off for foot patrols around the shopping areas and park. We had some very positive engagement as we walked through the Newlands Precinct and along Newland Street before heading through to the town park and across Maldon Road to Greenfields to conduct a welfare check at a property. With this complete we crossed into the Grove Centre and walked up to The Hub. Over the course of the 2 hours, we engaged with residents and visitors, listening, offering advice and recording information which really does help us to tackle crime in your community. We also spoke to many children with parents, and it was lovely to see them walk off with a smile. The Beat Surgery overran this time, so we finished just before 14:00 but this was great news for us with more people coming to see us. We left The Hub to carry out further foot patrols before returning to our vehicle for mobile patrols around the Redrow estate, Gershwin Boulevard, Holst Avenue, Pattison Close and Laurence Avenue. We then parked up on Maldon Road to carry out a speed survey and very pleased that after checking 100 vehicles we only



had to visually warn 3 drivers. We are aware that there will be some drivers that will exceed the speed limit at certain times, and we encourage you to report this to us so we can plan to carry out checks at targeted times.



February 25th

A change of transport today for myself and Acting Special Chief Inspector Campbell as we took the train from Braintree to Witham. This provides visibility on the rail network supporting our colleagues the British Transport Police (BTP Essex) but also provides reassurance for travellers on the journey. We arrived in Witham and before we even left the station, provided a young person with words of advice as they were in possession of an E-Scooter. Our foot patrol took us out of the station onto Albert Road before crossing the bridge towards Collingwood Road. At the junction with Guithavon Valley we headed down Armond Road and onto the RiverWalk where we continued past the Duckpond to Bridge Street. We walked up Newland Street before entering Newlands Precinct where we engaged with stall holders on the market and visited the YMCA. We then headed across Newland Street and into The Witham Hub for an appointment with a young man and his father to explain the impact of peer pressure and being part of a group who may be committing a crime. Fortunately, he had already made some of the changes we talked about and hopefully with the continued support of his family he will stay on the right path. We left the Hub and returned to a few of the shops in Witham to provide crime prevention advice and to provide reassurance before visiting the Town Park and checking on the parking areas behind the shops on Newland Street. As it became overcast, we popped into the newly refurbished Greggs for a cup of tea and spoke with several people who thanked us for our presence in the town. The final part of our foot patrol took us to the library and then onto the Avenue and across to Cut Throat Lane following recent reports of dangerous driving on the narrow lane. This is a vital connection for many pedestrians, mobility scooters and bicycles and it is important that cars & vans that share this route take additional care. With our checks completed we returned to the train station and took the train back to Braintree finishing our visibility patrols for the day.





February 26th

The Witham CSC Team were invited to attend the Mayor of Witham – Jack Bayford’s Civic Service and we were joined by Essex Police A/Chief Inspector Richards & Essex Special Constabulary Deputy Chief Officer Hopkins for the service. The Reverend Jonathan Pritchard conducted an excellent service at St. Nicholas Church, and we were very thankful for receiving an award recognising our contribution to the community of Witham. As Special Constables we volunteer our time as Police Officers, with the same uniform, kit and powers as a regular Officer to provide a specific service dedicated to Witham. The core principles are to provide a visible and reassuring presence, to attend community events, engaging with residents and visitors to Witham and to deter criminal behaviour. The partnership with the Town Council has been running for almost 5 years with many hours volunteered over this time and this is a great opportunity to come and join the team. If you would like to find out more then please come and see us at one of the Community Beat Surgeries or you can follow the link below which will tell you about the scheme.



[Community Special Constables | Essex Police](#)

February 28th

I was crewed with CSC Officer Eaketts for our patrol in Witham and as we arrived it was considerably lighter which provided extra visibility as we conducted a mobile patrol through the town and around the neighbouring areas. With a couple of specific locations checked, we headed over to Pattison Close where we parked our vehicle and proceeded on foot. Heading over the bridge we passed Helen Court and walked on towards the Witham Town Park. We came across a small group of young children that had left behind some litter that could have been dangerous to wildlife and when we caught up with them they accepted the words of advice. The remainder of the park was now in darkness and we headed towards Newland Street via Kings Chase. We continued up to the White Hart where we called in and spoke with the landlady and then crossed the street to Charlies Bar. There had been a recent incident and I wanted to find out some further information and was able to have an informative catch up to assist in our ongoing investigation. Foot patrols like this give us a great opportunity to work with local businesses and also to show a reassuring policing presence in the town. Following this we walked through the Newlands Precinct and Newlands Drive before reappearing on Newland Street and continuing down towards Bridge Street. We picked up the River Walk back to Pattison Close to return to our vehicle.



Our mobile patrols then took us up to Dengie Close, Holst Avenue, Baker Way, Haygreen Road and over to the Redrow estate, before we were asked to attend the Train Station to check for a missing person who may have been travelling towards Witham. Unfortunately in this instance there was no sign of the person. Returning to our vehicle, we recorded an intelligence report before travelling a short distance along the A12 and into Hatfield Peverel. With a check of several areas reported for anti-social behaviour with no concerns, we next travelled to Terling. There had been a recent incident and we wanted to provide a police presence in the village, visiting several prominent locations. With this complete we headed back towards Witham and stopped and spoke to a driver who we observed driving very quickly and gave words of advice on the dangers of speeding, especially on the narrow dark roads. Patrols continued with a visit to Spa Road, Humber Road, ASDA car park & the Hatfield Road estate before we finished our duty in Witham. On the way back to Braintree we discovered an unattended fire and due to several cannisters exploding we called the Fire Service who attended to ensure there was no risk to the area.



This concludes the monthly report for February 2023.