



October 2024

October saw the re-launch event for the Witham Skate Park as part of the District Councils investment, but this month also includes Halloween which has always been a challenging event in the calendar due to a sharp increase in anti-social behaviour. We still need to receive reports if you are affected by any concerns and although this may appear to be quite minor, it can affect people and businesses in the community which make it a significant problem that we want to address. If you are interested in finding out about becoming a Community Special Constable and providing reassurance, a visible presence, and a deterrent against crime in your local neighbourhood and town, then please see the link below.

[Community Special Constables | Essex Police](#)

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

October 2nd

I began my patrol on a very wet Tuesday afternoon and after retrieving my favourite vehicle, the marked police carrier from the workshop I was able to use the time to target patrols in key areas that had been identified for activity associated with drug dealing. We still need more information to take positive action against the people involved in drug supply and you can report this to us at the regular Community Beat Surgeries in the town at either the Town Hall or outside the Witham Hub every other Saturday. If you are concerned about sharing this information publicly then you can also report online (links below) or completely anonymously to Crimestoppers...but please do report.



I visited the Lodge Farm estate, also known as the Redrow estate on Hatfield Road before visiting Allectus Way & King Edward Road. There were very few people out and about, but I hope that my vehicle could be seen, and I did drop into the store on Wulvesford to provide additional visibility. My next location took me on to the ASDA store and unfortunately, they had seen a continuation of the anti-social behaviour with groups of children causing a nuisance over the previous days and evenings. The persistent rain was making a difference and there were no signs of the group in the area. With the rain unrelenting I next called into Bramble Court where I spoke to staff and a couple of

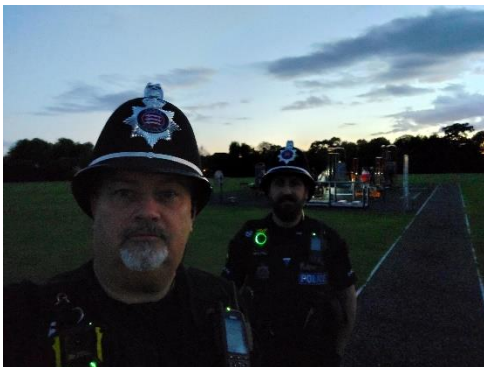


the young adults staying there to again, provide some visibility and reassurance before I finished my shift and headed home.



October 4th

I was on patrol with Braintree Special Inspector Winton, and he had recently passed his response driving course which enables him to respond to emergency calls using the emergency lighting and sirens to make his way at increased speeds when justified. It didn't take long until the first incident came over the airwaves and it was for a disturbance in the Newlands Precinct, we made our way and attended the Dance Studio where a group of children had tried to access the building but were being prevented by staff and a member of the public. This was a familiar group to me, and we were quickly able to establish the root cause of the issue and resolve it, moving the children on and reassuring the informant. We revisited several locations reported for activity believed by residents to be associated with drug supply but pleased to report that there were no concerns. We visited nearby Hatfield Peverel and spoke to people utilising the new gym equipment on the Strutt Memorial Recreation Ground before providing visibility in Swan Close, Weale Close & Butchers Way before returning to Witham.



On arriving back in Witham, we were alerted that the group of children we had sent away from the shopping precinct had now descended on the ASDA store and were causing a nuisance outside and so we headed to the location. When we entered the car park they initially dispersed and ran off which left us to find two cars parked up with a strong smell of cannabis in the air. A stop search was carried out and drugs, in highly coloured packets, were seized and due to the admission of use and discovery of the drugs the driver was prevented from using his vehicle.



Drugs can stay in your system for a several days after the short-term effects wear off and you are driving under the influence of drugs and provide a positive sample you are committing a serious offence putting other road users, yourself, and pedestrians at serious risk. The penalty if you are stopped is likely to cost you your driving licence, which may impact your employment and family life. For more information, please use the link below.

[Alcohol and drug driving | Essex Police](#)

After providing reassurance to ASDA staff, we returned to our patrols and visited Dorothy Sayers Drive to check on the derelict flats. Fortunately, these were securely boarded up and there were no other concerns.



October 5th

I had dedicated my volunteer patrol to support the re-launch of the Witham Skate Park in Spa Road and I had been communicating with the event organiser to attend and provide some positive engagement and visibility. We had received information that there may have been an attempt to disrupt the day by vandalising the new course but fortunately there were no issues, and it was already busy when I arrived. With planned activities of the day including lessons and competitions for all ages and skill levels to participate, it was great to see that it was a family event as parents came to watch their children take part. Witham Town Mayor Lucy Barlow officially opened the re-launch event and took to the slopes and ramps. On hand to entertain us all was renowned close up magician Oliver Ward, food stalls, music from local group Poison Youth and a DJ to keep the atmosphere upbeat all day. There were other important volunteers on hand with the Essex Community First Aid Volunteers but except for a few bumps and twists they did not have any serious injuries to deal with. With Councillors and representatives from Braintree District Council it was a very positive event to put the skate park back on the map as a modern activity centre. Over the course of the day, I was also joined by fellow Witham Town Officer PC Davies and PCSO Stranger to offer additional visibility and positive engagement.



October 13th

I was joined by fellow Witham Community Special Constable Claire Eaketts for our patrol which included the Community Beat Surgery and we began with foot patrol through the Newlands Precinct and into the Grove Centre. We were aware of two recent incidents of shoplifting and visited both stores for reassurance and to let them know that we would be in the town centre if they needed our assistance. The Community Beat Surgery outside the Witham Hub in the Grove Centre is your opportunity to come and talk to us about issues in your neighbourhood and this week the main topic was the persistent anti-social behaviour by a group of children who had been throwing eggs, damaging shop displays and causing a general nuisance with staff at different locations across the town. Over the past few weeks and Summer holidays this group have been reported on local social media groups but very rarely reported to the Police. It is only by reporting to Essex Police that you will see additional resources sent into the town to disrupt this behaviour and take appropriate action. Towards the end of the Beat Surgery we were asked to check on a suspicious vehicle located on the Freebournes Industrial estate and we headed to the location. When we arrived we located the vehicle which was secure but with no person associated with it. We carried out checks to see if it had been stolen but it was all in order and we continued on our patrol.

Our next task was to conduct a speed check on Chipping Hill near to Spring Lodge. At the previous Beat Surgery I had been approached by a resident who was concerned at the aggressive driving over the bridge and was concerned that speed was a major factor in many near misses. The main issue is the narrowing of the road by the bridge which requires drivers on one side of the road to give way to oncoming traffic and due to the visibility this has resulted in a number of drivers becoming impatient and forcing their way over the bridge. While we were there we measured 100



vehicles travelling in both directions and although we did not have to stop any drivers it was very clear that many had to quickly apply their brakes to slow down which demonstrated the concern raised. We did verbally warn some drivers and we will be looking to carry out further checks here in the future. Unfortunately the weather took a turn for the worse and we returned to our vehicle to conduct mobile patrols on Lawrence Avenue, Constance Close, Maldon Road and then across town to Dorothy Sayers Drive and Forest Road, where we conducted a short foot patrol to the blue bridge over the railway line.



October 16th

I began my patrol heading into the town centre for foot patrol in the Grove Centre to provide visibility and reassurance following a firework incident and an assault which had happened the previous evening. I did have some positive engagement in the centre with many thanking me for my presence.



I returned to my vehicle and visited Lawrence Avenue, included a brief foot patrol around Pattison Close and visited the shop to provide reassurance to staff. I then drove over to the Domino's store on Highfields Road to speak with staff following yet another incident of anti-social behaviour. This had included the theft of a fire extinguisher which had been taken from inside the service delivery door. This continuing pattern by the same group of children is now disrupting their business and I am pleased to see that the store is now reporting all the incidents to Police. With no sign of the group in the area I headed up to the Witham Hangout to say hello to the children and staff before I was called over the air to assist with the search for a person in a mental health crisis near the A12. When I arrived in the area, I was spoke to an ambulance crew who were on the garage forecourt and 2 concerned members of the public who had seen the person on the bridge, walked the young person down to us. With the person now in the care of the ambulance crew they arranged to take them off to hospital for assessment and help. I headed back towards Allectus Way checking for another vehicle reported driving dangerously. In this instance there was no trace during



my patrol, but I will return to follow up on this. It was at this moment that a storm broke with extremely heavy rain, thunder, and lightning. I stopped to visit the derelict property on Hatfield Road, where once again there was evidence of unlawful access with the lower windows open. I didn't see or hear anyone in the premises, but it is important that anyone seen here is reported to Police due to the condition of the building which could be dangerous. I next called in at the Spar shop on Maltings Lane to catch up with staff before heading back towards the town centre.

Unfortunately, my next incident was very unpleasant after I discovered a driver and their young child stopped dangerously on Guithavon Road following anti-social behaviour where a dog poo bag was thrown at their windscreen. Luckily, the driver stopped safely but this could have resulted in an accident. I positioned my vehicle with emergency lights to provide protection while I helped clear the vehicle windscreen so that they could continue their journey.

I continued round to ASDA where a group of children had been challenging staff to access the store and although they were all sitting outside in the trolley bay, sheltering from the rain I moved them on to avoid any further issues.



October 18th

I had taken a day off from my main employment to spend the day volunteering as Witham Community Special Sergeant to support a meeting with the Essex Police Business Crime Team. We had seen an increase in the reports of shop lifting across town and wanted to look at different methods of crime prevention, shop to shop support and improving reporting methods. We met with the Town Clerk, Streetwarden and one of the shopping centre managers where a Town Link radio system was discussed, this links businesses together to tackle the movement of potential offenders and helps the Police to pinpoint them so action can be taken. There is already a very good CCTV system across the shopping areas and Newland Street and with some minor changes to store or product layout this can have a positive impact on reducing retail crime. After the meeting we went out to speak with some of the local retailers who have been reporting incidents of shop lifting and the Essex Business Crime Team officer received feedback which he has used to engage with the Community Policing Team Inspector for an increased visible presence in the town centre.

In the afternoon I continued to patrol the town with the Street Warden Paul, and we also visited the ASDA store and Dominos so I could share their current anti-social behaviour concerns. We returned to the town to speak with the Grove Centre Manager and requested the CCTV for the incident earlier in the week. The footage has been uploaded securely to support our investigation. I left Paul at the Town Hall and on my way back out of Witham I stopped at the Morrison's Store on Braintree Road following an incident involving several cars, where one car had crashed into a



trolley bay before hitting other vehicles. There was a Roads Policing Officer on scene, but I was able to offer an extra pair of hands to manage the situation by arranging recovery of the involved vehicles and offer reassurance and advice to one of the vehicle owners. Fortunately, there were no injuries, and the area was made safe by the Fire Service who had attended alongside the Ambulance Service.



October 19th

I was out to patrol in Witham, and it was raining again, so I began by visiting Constance Close and Market Lane, Lawrence Avenue and Dengie Close where there had been reports in to the Community Beat Surgery of activity suspected to drug dealing. Although I did not see anything at the time I hope that the visibility of the marked Police vehicle does offer some reassurance and a deterrent in the neighbourhood. I next visited ASDA & Dominos on Highfields Road following reports from the previous evening of children causing disruption in and around the stores. As the weather dramatically improved and the sun appeared I headed into the town centre to conduct foot patrols and parked in the Newlands Drive car park to make my vehicle visible. When I walked through the Newlands Precinct, I was asked by a member of public to assist with a medical emergency in a nearby store, where a lady had collapsed. Using my first aid training I was able to assess the patient and update emergency services who arrived at the location within 20 minutes. Fortunately, one of the staff members at the store was first aid trained and this had made a significant difference to an injury that had occurred. If you are unsure about First Aid, then you can find out about course online and some of these are held in local community locations.





October 21st

I was out for my patrols in Witham but due to the increased level of anti-social behaviour in the evenings the local community policing team were also in Witham which provided additional visibility to act as a deterrent. Initially I carried out mobile patrols around Constance Close and Lawrence Avenue where I called in to speak to a staff member at the shop before continuing around to Dengie Close. I had been previously helping with an ongoing investigation for a hit and run incident on Spa Road and the suspect vehicle had been located around Forest Road. I had received information the previous night that it seemed damaged and abandoned in Poplar Close but it was found a short distance from this location and seized. The vehicle had no insurance or owner details and is now likely to be disposed. I would like to thank the concerned member of the public who assisted by reporting

I then headed across to Highfields Road and this is where we met with a large group of approximately 20 children gathered around the car park entrance. With another Police unit already in the Dominos car park I joined them for some engagement and to follow up on a previous incident. While we were present there were no signs of poor behaviour, and we had some good positive engagement. I left the rest of the team and then drove back into the town centre to carry out a foot patrol, where I visited the Grove Shopping Centre, Newlands Precinct and the Witham Town Park.





October 24th

I was back out on patrol, and I began with a speed check on Spa Road, I have been conducting a number of these in this specific area to determine if there are any significant speed issues. With the skate park attracting more children and the increase in children out in the evenings it is important that road users are aware of the children who often cross the road at the most dangerous location. The main reason appears to be the 'straight line direction' between the skate park and the Dominos and ASDA store and without a controlled crossing this is hazardous for drivers and pedestrians. During the speed check several drivers were visually warned to slow down and 2 drivers stopped with the highest speed recorded at 40mph in the 30mph zone.



With the check complete I then drove to the other side of town to revisit several locations for suspected drug related activity. Hopefully the repeated visits have increased the visibility and are providing a deterrent because I have had no further reports from concerned residents in these areas.

With the upcoming Halloween week approaching and combined with the school Autumn half term we have been visiting stores that could be frequented by children intent on buying eggs, which have caused a lot of recent disruption during the anti-social behaviour throughout the town. Fortunately, all the stores have been very supportive and have either made stock difficult to access for the children or will remove them temporarily. We have continued to visit stores to provide reassurance and encourage them to report any incidents to us so that we can take action to protect them.



October 26th

It was the Witham Town Council Annual Halloween Trail and we wanted to do something a little different this year following on from the successful engagement we had during the Easter Trail. With my fellow Witham Community Special Constable Claire Eaketts we set up the Police car and decorated it to be part of the spooky trail. The Town Council supported us with sweets and other giveaways, and we were positioned near to Chipping Hill. The weather was very typically autumnal and following a few spots of rain it did just about stay dry for the duration of the event. With over 500+ children with their families taking part on the trail we provided some fun games for the children to try and then they could collect their sweets. Over the course of the day, it became extremely busy at times, and we were very thankful for PC Roper & PC Hammond from the Witham Community Policing team to come along and help. We also had visits from the mayor and a future Police Officer and saw some amazing costumes.



October 28th

I was crewed up with Witham Town Team officer PC Trower and we arrived to carry out high visibility mobile patrols in the town centre and surrounding area to focus on the persistent anti-social behaviour. Initially the town appeared to be ok, and we headed down to Highfields Road where only a few children were close to the ASDA store, however, they were pleased to see us and came over and engaged positively before moving on. We stopped outside Domino's to provide them with some reassurance and visibility before heading up to the COOP on Spa Road to discuss the upcoming Halloween preparations, especially with the control of sale of eggs to children. This has been synonymous



with many of the reports on the social media groups and to Police, and the shop is ready to support with temporary restrictions. The pattern of the shift allowed us to alternate between Highfields Road and the town centre and on our next return we found a larger group of children near to the Newlands Precinct that we encouraged to move on. During our patrol we also visited several areas of the town to follow up on suspected drug related activity once again and we did not see anything of concern. Although we covered a large area across the town there were no reported incidents of anti-social behaviour, and we concluded our shift as the stores began to close for the night.



October 31st

It was Halloween and due to information, that we received involving organised anti-social behaviour a dispersal order was authorised for Witham. The order allows Police Officers to break up, disrupt and remove individuals from the area who are involved in anti-social behaviour. I was crewed with PC Roper, and we arrived in Witham in the early evening and visited the Honeysuckle Way estate. There were already lots of young children out with their parents 'trick or treating' and it was lovely to see all the costumes and makeup! We were able to engage and take part in handing out some treats as we went round the estate which also provided some reassurance to the parents. During the patrol we were alerted to some older children in the main park area letting off fireworks and so we headed off to investigate. In this instance there were no sightings of fireworks or other anti-social behaviour, and we continued our patrols onto Rosebay Close and the nearby roads, where I stopped for a quick photo on Highfields Road where the Halloween decorations attracted a lot of attention!





We next drove into the town centre, and it appeared that there were no immediate concerns here, but we then began to receive reports of fireworks being let off around customers in the ASDA car park on Highfields Road. As we arrived on scene with several other police units, we could see a group of approximately 30 teenagers running towards the entrance of the RiverWalk and gave chase as yet more fireworks were let off and aimed towards the ASDA store. With my local knowledge of the cut throughs and alleys we were soon in the middle of the group, and several were detained for stop searches for fireworks. Details for each of the children were obtained and they were then issued with a notice to leave the area with conditions not to return and were either collected by parents or returned to their homes.

With the group initially dispersed PC Roper and I were called to assist with a male, threatening suicide, who had gone missing in the town centre. While we waited at the traffic lights near to The George, I recognised the male walking through the town, and I was able to exit the car and engage with him where we eventually took him to hospital for professional assistance.

Unfortunately, while we were trying to help this male, the remainder of the children from the ASDA incident had reformed in the town centre setting off more fireworks in the road, the Grove Centre and the Newlands Precinct which endangered road users, other members of the public and themselves. A video, which has since been shared on social media, highlighted the size of the group and the danger that they created with the fireworks. Due to 2 serious incidents in Braintree the remaining police units were called to assist for the remainder of the night which also included us on our return from the hospital bringing an end to our visibility in Witham.

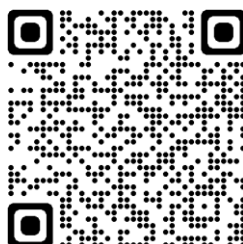
This concludes the monthly report for October 2024.

CrimeStoppers.
Speak up. Stay safe.

0800 555 111
100% anonymous. Always.


You can find Witham Community Special Constable patrol updates on Twitter / X 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/>

