



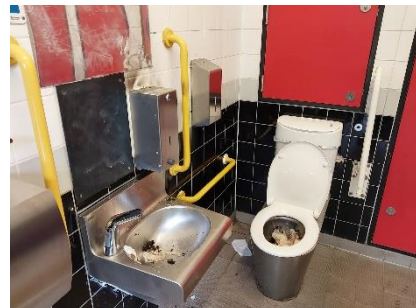
April 2024

April showers and lower temperatures have been prevalent throughout the month with heavy rain leaving many of the parks deserted and has had a positive impact on some of the anti-social behaviour seen throughout the previous month. We continue to investigate the recent graffiti around the town with many of the people responsible now identified and we have been working with the local stores to ensure that cans of spray paint are monitored to prevent theft and misuse. We have continued to focus on anti-social behaviour, but this is still being posted on local Facebook groups and not reported to Essex Police. If these incidents are not reported to us through the correct methods, then we will not be able to help victims, identify suspects or plan appropriate resources to try and prevent further occurrences. The use of privately owned E-Scooters throughout the town and on the RiverWalk is still a significant topic raised at our Community Beat Surgeries and talking to people as we walk the beat.

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

April 3rd

I was crewed with a Detective Constable, and we started off with foot patrols in town with a visit to several shops that sell spray paints. There had been a recent incident where the public toilets in the Witham Town Park had been sprayed and vandalised and we wanted to check if the cans had been purchased or potentially stolen from the stores. With the cans identified from a store we provided some words of advice to them concerning awareness of potential shoplifting and some suggestions about placement and storage of the tins. We walked through the Grove Centre and into the Witham Town Park where we saw two different groups of children on E-Scooters. Although all of them tried to escape the park, we were able to secure one and confiscated this from the two very young girls that were both riding on it. Privately owned Electric Scooters (E-Scooters) are illegal to use in public places and these can be seized. If you don't want to lose it – then don't use it unless you are on private land! We were also alerted by the Braintree District Council cleaner that once again the toilet facilities had been abused and taken out of service for everyone. These mindless acts can have a huge impact on families with young children visiting the play area as well as any other visitors to the park and of course the cleaner who must deal with the subsequent mess left behind.





With the E-Scooter dealt with we visited the Rosebay Close play area due to reports of bullying, where we spoke to young children in the park and gave them advice about reporting any issues to their parents or Police. As we approached the park, we caught sight of a male known for drug related activity make off from the play area and therefore we encourage everyone who attends the park to report any suspicious activity immediately. With an area search completed with no further trace of the male we were called across town to an (RTC) Road Traffic Collision on Maltings Lane, although this was a hit and run incident with the other vehicle driving off it was fortunate that nobody was hurt and with the assistance of a Roads Policing Unit, we were able to maintain traffic flow and move the vehicle to safety. We carried out further mobile patrols around the town to complete our shift.

April 6th

I was crewed with my fellow Witham Officer Claire Eaketts and due to the Easter Trail, to carry out our Community Beat Surgery. We initially set off with a foot patrol around Dengie Close to Town End Field, following the footpath where it had been reported that there had been suspicious activity along the hedgerow, and it was believed that this could have been a drop off or collection point for drugs. Although we thoroughly searched the edge of the footpath to the ditch, we were unable to find any evidence, but this will be looked at again in the future. We headed back into the centre of the town and conducted foot patrols in the main shopping areas, stopping to engage with stall holders on the Saturday market and with local businesses. We began the Beat Surgery, and we provided a visible presence for all the people passing through the Grove Centre, discussing local neighbourhood issues with residents. We followed up on another recent spray paint graffiti incident by visiting local stores, where we provided further advice on the control of these items and the potential risk of shoplifting. We did manage to identify the specific brand, but the store was unaware that some of the cans had been taken.

As we continued our visible foot patrols around the town centre, we identified a large group of young children with one of them using an E-Scooter in the town centre. This was confiscated to prevent further use and the parents were informed.



April 10th

I was joined on patrol by Special Inspector Wintin, and we visited each of the recent areas where anti-social behaviour involving graffiti had caused damage to property, fortunately there were no signs of any suspicious activity and we continued on to the ASDA store on Highfields Road. After I checked with staff for any recent issues, we then parked up in the town centre and began a short foot patrol through the Newlands Precinct and the Grove Centre which had seen shop premises covered with tomato ketchup. While not permanently damaging the shops this has a big impact on the staff who need to arrange cleaning and it looks unsightly to people walking through the shopping areas. If you see any behaviour that may be linked to this kind of anti-social behaviour, please report this to Essex Police, the Witham Town Council, or the Street warden so we can target the people responsible. We continued through the Witham Town Park and headed down towards the River Walk near Pattison Close to ensure that there were no groups of children causing damage to the area. We did engage with several residents who had seen previous damage being committed and saw the Police presence where several suspects were apprehended. We were able to offer reassurance and encourage them to report any future issues. We carried on along the River Walk before reappearing on Bridge Street and heading up Newland Street before returning to our vehicle.

An emergency incident took us to Rivenhall and the BP Service station following a person who had collapsed in the shop. Over the next couple of hours, we provided medical assistance before the ambulance arrived on scene and we then carried out a preliminary investigation at a nearby location to establish the circumstances.

We returned to Witham to complete our visible patrols and once again visited several of the know anti-social behaviour hotspots but there were no concerns found.





April 13th

I headed into Witham with a plan to try and be out on high visibility foot patrol for the majority of my shift and I began in the Town Centre walking through Newlands Precinct and engaging with the market traders and members of the public. I headed across Newland Street and in to the Grove Centre before continuing through to Tesco car park and crossing Maldon Road into the Witham Town Park. As I reappeared on to Newland Street from Kings Chase, I walked up to the Town Hall to begin the first of my enquiries for the day. With the additional CCTV cameras that were installed as part of the Safer Streets funding, we now have a much better opportunity to review incidents and determine if there is evidence that would support our ongoing investigations. In this instance I had been asked by CID (Criminal Investigations Department) to see if a suspect from a distraction burglary could be seen on any of the cameras in the Town Centre. After a bit of effort, I was able to find the suspect and then track them back to a vehicle which was previously unknown to be involved and I passed this information on to the team and submitted the CCTV download request to Witham Town Council.

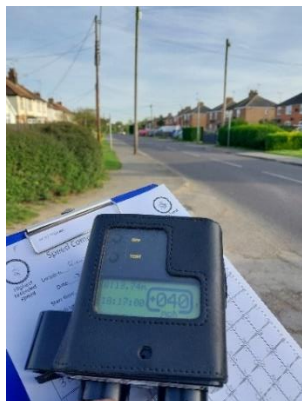
Keen to get back out on to the streets I returned to the Grove Centre and made further enquiries with a store concerning spray paint that had been used in recent graffiti incidents across the town and on the River Walk. The investigations for these incidents are still ongoing but most of the suspects have been identified. I headed back across Newland Street and into the Newland Precinct before cutting through Newlands Drive car park into Lockram Lane and down on to Guithavon Valley. I picked up the River Walk on Armond Road and walked past the Duck Pond and on towards Spa Road. Unfortunately, there was clear evidence of the new graffiti over the buildings near to the weir which had destroyed much of the memorial murals and under the viaduct arch and along the fence line towards Chelmer Road. If you see anyone defacing the walls around Witham or suspicious activity, then please report this to us as soon as possible so we can stop it before it ruins the look of the Town and the surrounding area. Graffiti that has already happened can be reported to the Witham Town Council. I carried on my foot patrol, visiting Humber Road before continuing along Spa Road and round onto Stevens Road and into the back of the Hatfield Road estate via Alan Road play area. With a patrol around several of the roads towards the top of the estate I cut through to Wolvesford and popped into the shop to promote my presence. I continued my walk once more heading down "White Path" towards Spinks Lane and then down Guithavon Road before returning to my vehicle in Newlands Drive.





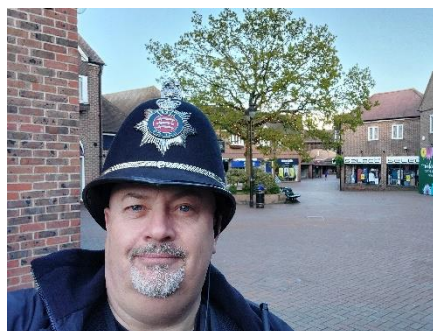
For the afternoon I wanted to carry out additional speed surveys across the town and my first location was on Maldon Road at the junction with Blackman Way. The purpose of the surveys provides an indication on driving behaviour and is also being used to establish suitable locations for a new speed enforcement camera that could be used in Witham. My first check of 100 vehicles yielded several vehicles exceeding the 30mph limit with the highest recorded speed of 39mph. A total of 9 vehicles were visually or verbally warned at this location. My next position took me to Guithavon Valley and here the maximum recorded speed was 40mph in the 30mph limit. With my high visibility clothing and prominent visible location, I am aware that drivers are able to see me and will adjust their speed to prevent being caught but this does cause them to slow down which is the principal safety reason for conducting speed checks. During the time I spent here only 6 vehicles out of 100 required a visual or verbal warning. Before I attended my final location for the day, I came across a medical emergency on Newland Street where an elderly man had fallen heavily on the pavement and was in considerable distress. Fortunately, the community had already come to his assistance providing first aid and keeping the gentleman comfortable before the paramedic and ambulance arrived. With the man safely on board the ambulance and the area cleared I drove across town to Rickstones Road, and I parked my vehicle in the track opposite the Cross Road shop. This enables me to check vehicles travelling from either direction towards my position. Unfortunately, it didn't start very well and as I was getting set up a motorcycle came past me at very high speed. This is very dangerous and inconsiderate to other road users and pedestrians and highlighted the need for these checks. A partial number plate was obtained, and I will be trying to follow up with this rider. I began the survey just after 6pm and during the next hour there were 13 vehicles that were exceeding the speed limit with the highest recorded at 43mph. These figures will be fed back to our road safety team.





April 15th

My volunteer role allows me to pick my own shifts and I planned to carry out a specific task which involved speaking to a victim of bullying in a local park. I was able to meet with the very young victim and after a short while was able to obtain details to record that they had been assaulted by other older children. We had visited several parks recently and spoken with children concerning bullying and any other concerns they may have, and we will continue to do this to provide some visibility and reassurance. I next visited the ASDA store on Highfields Road to follow up with staff about any recent anti-social behaviour and as I arrived a group of older teenagers left the vicinity. With no offences or concerns from the staff or customers I moved into the town centre where I once again conducted foot patrols which included the Grove Centre and the Witham Town Park.



April 17th

I was out on patrol in the late afternoon and early evening to provide visible presence once again in the town centre which had seen further incidents of anti-social behaviour by groups of children, some of these have resulted in shop windows being covered in tomato sauce, hanging basket displays damaged, rubbish emptied across the street and eggs thrown around the town. While these may seem relatively minor offences, they have a big impact on the businesses in town and people who visit the town, and we urge you to check where your children are and ensure they are being responsible. We have had significant success recently with identifying people involved in this behaviour and following up with parents. Although words of advice are offered in the first instance, we are looking to community action opportunities for further offences by repeat offenders. Unfortunately, during my patrol I did find a small group that had stolen a dozen eggs from the Morrison Daily store on Newland Street and not only was an egg thrown in my direction as they ran off, but Greggs window was also hit and my police car which was parked in



Newlands Drive. Details were obtained for some of the group, and we are utilising a partnership contact to establish the identity of the others involved. After I recorded the crime of shoplifting, I returned to my vehicle and then had to take it to our garage facilities in Boreham to clean off the eggs which had covered the bonnet, the windscreen, and the roof. This action alone took the police car and me off duty until it could be cleaned, and this is not acceptable. Fortunately, before the weather changed dramatically with heavy rain and a drop in temperature, I was able to get back into Witham and I carried out mobile patrols around the Forest Road area, Rickstones Recreation Park and checked on the derelict flats to ensure that they were still boarded up securely.



April 20th

The weather had made a significant improvement for my duty, and this enabled me to concentrate on some speed checks and foot patrol. My first task, however, was to gather some intel for an ongoing investigation before I was able to set up for my first speed survey on Rickstones Road. I had recently been at this location and the results were very poor so I was hoping that in this check, the speeds may have improved. The last check was carried out in the early evening, so I began this one just after 9am. Over the following 40 minutes, 100 vehicles speeds were measured and recorded and although there were less drivers exceeding the limit, I still had to visually indicate for some to slow down and one vehicle was stopped. My next speed action in this area will be to directly target excessive speed and drivers or riders will receive a traffic offence report which may result in a speed awareness course, points on their licence or they could be reported to court.



With my survey complete I headed into the town and began foot patrols and headed into the Newlands Shopping Precinct. The market was in full swing, and I spoke to stall holders and visitors before walking through to the Town Hall. I met briefly with the Town Clerk to look at some new material that will help with our recruitment and engagement in Witham across the coming year, before returning to foot patrols. I then visited the Grove Centre where the mayor cut the ribbon to mark the opening of a new business and I popped into Poundland where they were making improvements to prevent incidents of shoplifting. I visited the library where I had heard reports of anti-social behaviour by large groups of children entering and causing disruption and insulting people outside the library, and with details obtained I headed back towards the Newlands Precinct, where I stopped and confiscated an Electric Scooter which was being ridden by two young girls. After taking their details and explaining why it was illegal to be riding on this in a public place, I allowed them to continue by foot and removed the E-Scooter from the centre. I continued my foot patrol heading down Guithavon Street and onto the RiverWalk where I wanted to see the repairs that Brave Arts had made to the buildings by the weir with their war memorial painting. This had been necessary due to several acts of vandalism using spray paint which had defaced the murals and angered residents. The Witham Town Council had been able to arrange for Brave Arts to return and redo the paintings and it was heart-warming to see them back to their former glory. To prevent future vandalism extra patrols will be carried out as well as other covert actions. The River Walk is an area of beauty in Witham and is for everyone to benefit from so please ensure that you report any suspicious activity or damage as soon as possible.



I continued my foot patrol under the viaduct and on to Highfields Road and Spa Road. At each location I paused for a few minutes to provide visibility before moving on and I walked round to Spinks Lane before turning onto Bridge Street back towards the town centre. I checked in at the town park via Kings Chase before returning to Newland Street and walking up past Morrison Daily towards the Newland Precinct. As I entered the precinct, I had two more girls riding E-Scooters in the centre and I confiscated these as well, taking the total for this month so far to 5 E-Scooters removed from the town centre.



[Advice on e-scooter usage | Essex Police](#)

What is an e-scooter?

Electrical scooters (also known as e-scooters) come under the category of “powered transporters”; this covers a range of personal transport devices which are powered by a motor.

E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles under the [Road Traffic Act 1988](#). Which means the rules that apply to motor vehicles, also apply to e-scooters including the need to have a licence, insurance and tax.

It's not currently possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it's illegal to use them on the road or in public spaces. If you're using a private e-scooter you risk the vehicle being seized under S.165 Road Traffic Act 1988 for no insurance.

If you cause serious harm to another person whilst riding an e-scooter the incident will be investigated in the same way it would if you were riding a motorcycle or driving a car.

For a child on an E-Scooter this could result in them receiving points on a driving licence before they even begin to learn to drive! The E-Scooter can also be seized under the legislation and without the correct insurance (which is not available in the UK) cannot be returned and therefore result in disposal. With many E-Scooters costing in excess of £300 this is could be a very expensive loss.

Please check the current legislation before purchasing these scooters, especially as presents for children to ensure that you are able to use them legally.

The final part of my shift took me to Hatfield Road, and I conducted my second speed survey near to Shortridge Court. Once again, I measured 100 vehicles and visually warned several drivers and spoke directly to 2 other drivers about their speed.



April 25th

I set out on my patrols to target the anti-social behaviour that has been featuring on the local Facebook community groups but is still not being reported to Essex Police. In my role as one of the Witham Community Special Constables I must highlight that Facebook is not monitored by Essex Police and the correct method to ensure that we can deal with any issues is to report by one of the methods at the bottom of this report. It was an exceptionally wet evening, and the rain kept most people inside, but I began at the ASDA store where the trolley bay has previously provided shelter for groups of teenagers, fortunately when I arrived there were no concerns and I checked in with the security officer who provided some information for some anti-social behaviour earlier in the day. With a short break in the weather, I parked in Newlands Drive and conducted a short foot patrol through the Newlands Precinct and the Grove Centre before heading through the Witham Town Park and back up Newland Street. All these locations have been subjected to various forms of anti-social behaviour but pleased to report there were no signs of new activity or the group of children that have been involved. My next location took me briefly out towards Rivenhall where I called at a local business to provide visibility and reassurance following a report, they had submitted to Essex Police concerning strange activity around their premises. In this instance there were no issues, but they thanked me for my attendance and said they would report any further concerns. I returned to Witham and headed through the town centre before turning onto Howbridge Road and continued along Lawrence Avenue. As I was exiting onto Maldon Road, I noticed a vehicle of interest and I attempted to follow this vehicle back towards the town centre. After several times where the vehicle had turned around and headed back in my direction it became obvious that this behaviour was unusual and due to previous intelligence reports, this was recorded for further development. With the rain returning I concluded my patrols for the evening.



April 26th

I had previously indicated that following several recent speed surveys where I had witnessed excessive speeds, I would be taking direct action and I positioned myself on Rickstones Road. I intended to stop vehicles and provide suitable words of advice or to issue a Traffic Offence Report (TOR) for significant speed violations. I was present in the location between 18:00 & 18:45 and stopped several vehicles to speak with them about their speed. Even at 35mph approaching the pedestrian crossing you are increasing the risk of serious injury to a person. Unfortunately, I did have to report one driver, after their speed was measured at 51mph in this 30ph limit. This speed is extremely dangerous and due to the driver's inexperience may result in their licence being revoked.



I had been asked if I would attend the Templars Community Association quarterly meeting to provide an update on the investigation into the damage caused to their defibrillator cabinet. Although the defibrillator was not in the cabinet at the time, the damage to the cabinet would have prevented it being a secure location for this life saving equipment. I had been working directly on the investigation and through CCTV and partner agencies I had been able to locate and identify the suspects. In this instance both were school children and I had worked with the Community Association on an appropriate action to benefit the community but also so that they could learn that their actions



would have consequences. During the meeting we spoke about upcoming events on the estate, and I took details for planned engagement opportunities. With the meeting concluding I carried out mobile patrols in the town centre before concluding my shift.

April 27th

I was with fellow Witham Special Constable Claire Eaketts, and we began with foot patrols in the town centre, attending the market stalls and visiting several shops to provide visibility and reassurance. We continued through to the Grove Centre and stopped by The Witham Hub before heading through to the Witham Town Park. Due to the inclement weather, there were fewer people out in the town, and we returned to our vehicle to conduct mobile patrols, visiting the REDROW estate and Maltings estate. Our next visit took us to Hatfield Peverel and a visit to the Village Hall saw us stumble across a white van surrounded by lots of plastic bags. On investigation we found that the local Slimming World group had gathered bags of clothing, and these were being collected with all the profits going to Cancer Research UK and the Irish Cancer Society. After they requested a quick photo with us we left the group to pack up the van and headed round to the library (which had recently re-opened). We wanted to follow up with the staff about the previous anti-social behaviour at the rear of the building. The updates are fed back to the Community Policing Team so that they can provide additional patrols in the area if required. We conducted a short foot patrol in the immediate area and although there were signs of littering, we did not find any other damage or signs of drug use which had been reported previously.



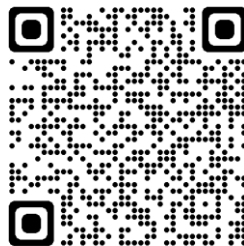
With our visit complete we headed back in to Witham and our final check was around the Forest Road estate before we called at the derelict flats on Dorothy Sayers Drive. From the road we could see that once again the boarding had been damaged and we went to check on the buildings to make sure there was nobody inside. The flats are disused but contain large amounts of broken glass, wood and unsafe flooring which makes this particularly dangerous for people to be inside. We did find new graffiti throughout the open flat which provided evidence that someone had been inside, and I submitted a request to the property owners to have the building secured again. It is very important that you tell your children that this is not a play area and that there is a real risk of serious injury in these derelict buildings.




This concludes the monthly report for April 2024.



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/>

