

Crime Prevention Meeting: Monday 28th February 2022

Below are some informal, draft notes of the above meeting taken by Katherine Barbour and Nadine Johnson who attended:

KEY MESSAGES

- Report all crimes (see ways to report below);
- Leave lights on in the house if out for an evening;
- If possible, install CCTV or, failing that, a doorbell camera, as the images/footage can be used in evidence with the Crown Prosecution Service as no one can dispute that the crime has not happened;
- Crime has increased by 25% in Hampshire.

Katherine Barbour organised this meeting following a spate of thefts in the Grosvenor Road area and concerns being raised by neighbours about the police response to at least one of these incidents.

She invited PCSO Collette Craddock (Police Community Support Officer), who was accompanied by PC Kelly (trainee) and PC Gail Sally of Southampton North, the team that covers this area.

A number of members of the public attended the meeting along with Melody, a retired police crime prevention officer, and Nadine Johnson from Highfield Residents' Association. A representative from 'We make Southampton' was also present.

PC Sally described how the police service is organised in this area and her team, from Southampton North, covers Bassett, Swaythling, Bitterne Park, Harefield, Midanbury, Portswood, Highfield and St Denys. They work out of Portswood Police Station.

There are 4 teams covering the city. The Prevention and Neighbourhoods Policing Team of Southampton North consists of 5 officers and 4 PCSOs.

Note separate to meeting: Inspector Sharath Ranjan manages the above Team.

Response & Patrol Teams and other police staff are also based at Portswood Police Station and are deployed all over the city. Southampton North has additional resources across a number of other Departments, including Response & Patrol and the Criminal Investigations Dept.

Numbers of staff in the police service have reduced and the new recruits joining the service all have to undertake a degree alongside their training. Crime rates have increased by 25% in Hampshire so there are increased investigations. The police force has had to enforce the Covid regulations and deal with changes in society in this time. They are not able to be out on the beat as they used to be but on occasion can work on the streets plain clothed. They don't always get out to every incident when they receive a report, but have to prioritise. With the increasing cost of living, they are concerned there may be more shoplifting and other crimes in the city. Much of the work of the Neighbourhoods Policing Team concerns

anti-social behaviours, neighbour disputes and thefts from sheds and outbuildings. If they see a woman walking home who seems inebriated, they may intervene to assist these individuals.

Ways to report crimes:

- at Portswood Police Station, when it is open;
- on the bright yellow phone on the brick wall by Portswood Police Station;
- using the 101 phone number
- via the website: <https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/report-a-crime-incident/> *
- 999 in an emergency.

* People can go into quite a lot of detail if using the reporting crime link.

They are planning to reintroduce the community together meetings. They have a Facebook page called Southampton Cops.

There is a service called the Bobby Scheme (part of the Blue Lamp Trust) which is free. People can be referred or self-refer. The Bobby Scheme can provide free home visits to victims of crime or anyone who requests it, to give advice on steps to take to increase security. There is also the Victim Support Team for victims of crime after an incident.

When reporting for duty, PC Sally always checks the crime reports for her area every day to see what has been reported/is happening. It is really important that all crime is reported as this can help them to build up a picture of what is happening in the area. They set their priorities from everything that has been reported to them. Incident reports go through a triage system where some incidents might go to the Criminal Investigations Department and others to Neighbourhood Officers. Each Neighbourhood area also has local priorities. For example, one of their local priorities in Portswood is to reduce street drinking and begging and they work with the city welfare team to address individual issues. In Bassett, the local priority is to remove motorcycle use around the Sports Centre.

Here are a few suggestions of deterrents just to put doubt in the mind of the offender:

- It is good to install a burglar alarm or a box signifying there is a burglar alarm;
- leave lights on in the house when out for the evening;
- install CCTV or a doorbell camera if you can as the images/footage can be used as evidence and the Crown Prosecution Service can use this;
- leave a large silver (as it shines) dog bowl out full of water (not dead leaves);
- signage is a very good deterrent: for example, signs saying there is a dog on the premises or 'CCTV is in use here'.

If you own a bicycle, record the serial number on the frame and you can also register it on Immobilise - the free Property Register. This can be found at: www.immobilise.com. The police can then link the bike to the crime. Take photos of bikes and other valuable items such as jewellery etc. If they get stolen, the photos can be passed to the police.

PC Sally said the most important thing is communication and finding out what is happening in the area. If you see something suspicious, it probably is and it is worth reporting. They will follow it up.

There was some discussion of e scooters on pavements and the police have an operation planned to address this. The police will stop e-scooter riders on pavements and talk to them if they see them, but do not always have the resources to do this.

A representative from Front Gardens Plus reported the issues that she and her litter picking team find when around St Denys. They have found drug paraphernalia and have told the police about this. There are areas where groups are getting together to take drugs and it would be good to have some CCTV in this area to monitor this. PC Sally said it can take 8 weeks to get CCTV put up in an area and often by then the issue has moved on. This is the responsibility of the local authority. The local authority can also send out a street cleansing team to clear up drug paraphernalia, if reported.

Melody asked people to highlight the issues they were most concerned about and these were personal safety when walking around the city at night and thefts from sheds and garden buildings. Melody offered some advice on what one could do by looking through the eyes of a person trying to get access to your property, and what steps you can take to reduce this happening. For example, keeping hedges low and trees trimmed so that burglars cannot hide, and not leaving keys near the front door as burglars can use various devices to grab the keys through the letterbox.

She also talked about what to do when out walking at night and had brought a high pitched alarm that one can wear. This is made by SOLON and can be purchased on the internet. It is important that it is not at the bottom of the handbag but should be attached to clothing when out walking. It might be advisable to cross the road if you think you are being followed and always walk with purpose so you don't look like a victim. On occasion, you might prefer to walk in the middle of the road.

Katherine thanked the Police for their attendance and thanked Melody for her advice to the group.

Note separate to meeting: Other crime prevention advice can be found here, produced by Hampshire Constabulary:

<https://www.hampshire.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

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