Avon and Somerset Police
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Taunton

Policing Newsletter JULY 2026

NEWS FROM ACROSS TAUNTON

Hello and welcome to the Taunton Policing Newsletter for the month of July 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.

Celebrating our volunteers in National Volunteers Week

The first week of June marked National Volunteers Week, a time for us to recognise and celebrate the incredible contributions of volunteers across Avon and Somerset.

Our organisation is supported by a diverse and dedicated network of volunteers who play a vital role across many departments. This week, we took a moment to say thank you to those who give their time so generously.

A special mention goes to Bruce Inglis our Community Speedwatch Coordinator and Kieran Vile, our Community Speedwatch Data Processor for Taunton, West Somerset and Sedgemoor. Bruce & Kieran are both a familiar and valued presence at Taunton Police Station, where they volunteer twice a week.

Bruce supports Community Speedwatch volunteers across the area, ensuring they are equipped with the right tools and training to carry out their duties safely and effectively but also to act as a direct liaison between the Community Speedwatch Volunteers and the Police. Kieran supports Community Speedwatch by processing the captured data by our volunteers and ensures it is recorded properly and swiftly.

Bruce and Kieran, thank you as always for your continued support — it is truly appreciated by us all.

Neighbourhood Policing Week Highlights

Monday 15th June marked the start of Neighbourhood Policing Week — a dedicated time to celebrate and highlight the vital work carried out every day by our neighbourhood teams.

Throughout the week, we used our social media channels to give the public a glimpse into what Neighbourhood Policing is all about. From community engagement to proactive problem-solving, the aim was to showcase just some of the important work that often happens behind the scenes.

It also provided a valuable opportunity within the organisation to pause and recognise the hard work, dedication, and commitment of our officers and staff.

MEET THE TEAM

OFFICER
PC James Bullock
POLICING AREA
Taunton Central
YEARS SERVICE
20 Months
HOBBY
Golf & Crossfit
FAVOURITE FOOD
Burger

ABOUT ME

This month's 'Meet the Team' is PC James Bullock.

I joined Avon & Somerset Police in 2024 through the Degree Holder Entry Programme, starting my career in Neighbourhood Policing. After an unsuccessful application to Dorset Police due to my BMI, I joined The Goat Shed CrossFit gym to improve my fitness—a decision that not only helped me join the police but also led me to meet my fiancée.

Before policing, I studied at the London School of Theology, worked as a Youth Pastor, and spent eight years as a restaurant manager. Wanting a career that combined helping people with an active role ultimately led me into policing.

Outside of work, I enjoy playing golf with my dad and brother, spending time with my mum, and being part of my close-knit family. This year, I'm especially excited about getting married, and I'm grateful to my fiancée for her constant support throughout my journey into policing.

From theology and hospitality to neighbourhood policing, my journey has been an unusual one, but every step has helped shape who I am today. I am proud to be serving our communities and excited to see what the future holds, both professionally and personally.

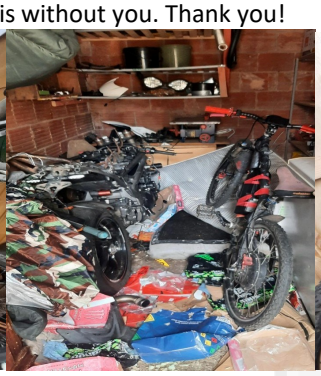
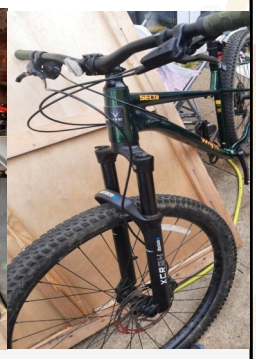
Every day, our Neighbourhood Policing teams play a crucial role in supporting and protecting our communities, and this week was about saying thank you for those ongoing efforts.

As part of the week, PC Bella Fitzgerald and PCSO Supervisor Sam Bushen were joined by Natalie Box from the Corporate Communications team to capture some of the behind-the-scenes activity. These insights help bring to life the breadth of work undertaken and offer a closer look at the people behind the roles. You can watch these videos on our Facebook page: West Somerset and Taunton Neighbourhood Policing.

Motorcycles and bicycles recovered during Warrant

On Wednesday 17th June, Officers executed a warrant at an address in Taunton as part of an investigation into suspected stolen motorcycles and bicycles. During the search, we recovered a significant number of items believed to be stolen. Our teams are now carefully examining these items to identify their rightful owners, so they can be returned as quickly as possible.

During the warrant, we arrested two individuals. This operation was made possible thanks to information provided by members of the public. Your support plays a vital role in helping us tackle crime and keep our communities safe. We truly couldn't do this without you. Thank you!

Community Engagement—June Highlights

June proved to be an exceptionally busy and rewarding month for community engagement, with the team attending a wide range of local events. From vibrant primary school summer fetes and welcoming church gatherings to bustling independent markets and more, our presence was felt across the community. *But why do we prioritise attending these events?*

These occasions provide a valuable opportunity for meaningful, face-to-face engagement with members of the public. They allow us to listen to concerns, answer questions, and offer reassurance where needed. Just as importantly, they help us build positive relationships—particularly with young people—fostering trust and connection with the next generation.

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

Courier Fraud Warning

In 2025, criminals stole £21 million from victims of courier fraud. In Avon and Somerset alone, there was a financial loss of £346,000.

City of London Police are issuing a renewed warning to the public as courier fraud continues to evolve across the UK, with criminals using increasingly sophisticated and persistent tactics. A key feature of this threat is the disproportionate targeting of older people, particularly those aged 70 and above. This group makes up majority of victims, with those aged between 76 and 96 alone accounting for around 62 per cent of all reports.

Courier fraud typically begins with an unexpected phone call. A criminal impersonates a police officer, bank official, or fraud investigator and convinces the victim that their money, account, or identity is at risk. The victim is told they are helping an investigation and is instructed to withdraw cash or purchase high-value goods such as gold or jewellery.

A courier is then sent to collect the money or items. They may also be asked to hand over their bank card and PIN. They may instead be asked to transfer money or send items in the post. The victim is promised that everything will be reimbursed once the investigation concludes. In reality, both the caller and courier are part of a coordinated criminal network. Once handed over, the money or valuables are gone.

Criminals are becoming increasingly persistent, sometimes staying in contact with victims for days or weeks, guiding their actions step by step. In many cases, victims are coached on what to say to bank staff or shop employees to avoid raising suspicion.

How to protect yourself from courier fraud:

- **Transferring money:** Your bank or the police will never ask you to transfer money to a safe account.
- **Couriers:** Your bank or the police will never send a courier to your home to collect bank cards, cash, or other valuables such as jewellery.
- **Check if it's genuine:** For any contact you are unsure of, hang up and contact the organisation directly using contact details you know are correct, such as those on official websites, the back of your card or by calling 159 for your bank.
- **Caller ID:** Don't trust the Caller ID display on your phone - it's not proof of ID.
- **Report suspicious calls:** You can report suspected scam calls by sending a text to 7726 with the word 'Call' followed by the caller's number.

If you think you have been a victim of fraud contact Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via the website: reportfraud.police.uk.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

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 June

Out of the 14 active Community Speedwatch schemes in the area, **6** schemes were operational, carrying out **13** monitoring sessions across various locations.

During these sessions, volunteers observed an impressive **4,192** vehicles, demonstrating the scale of community engagement and commitment. As a result of these efforts, **109** 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 - May 2026

(Latest information available to the public online)

Category	Crimes Recorded
Anti-social behaviour	186
Bicycle Theft	12
Burglary (Including Commercial Burglary)	29
Criminal Damage & Arson	64
Drugs	4
Other theft	40
Possession of weapons	5
Public Order	50
Robbery	11
Shoplifting	135
Theft from the person	2
Vehicle Crime	27
Violent Crime	342
Other Crime	13

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.

- **Trull Party in the Park—11/07**
- **Independent Market at Castle Green—12/07**
- **Somerset Interfaith Event, Minster Church—15/07**
- **Trull Community Centre — 18/07 10am—11am.**
- **Taunton Carers Information Day, Taunton Football Club—22/07**
- **Independent Market at Castle Green—25/07**
- **Pride in Priorswood, Lyngford Park—28/07**

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