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Inverness Area Command

Newsletter – December 2023

Introduction:

We are pleased to present the latest edition of our community newsletter, designed to keep you up-to-date about the activities and initiatives of our local police officers. This newsletter serves as your window into the ongoing work of officers in your area, featuring insights from the City Centre Policing Team and the Community Beats team.

Our goal is to provide you with a closer look at the dedicated efforts of our police officers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your communities. We understand the importance of keeping our community members informed and appreciate your continued support as we work together to make our streets even safer and more welcoming.

Thank you for being engaged and informed members of our community. Together we can continue to create a better and safer place for all.

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Community Beats Team

Your community beat team and their areas of responsibility:

Inspector David Mcalpine: Team leader of City Centre Policing Team (CCPT) and Community Beats (CB)



A/PS Keith Whitelaw: Acting Sergeant / Community officer for; **Merkinch and South Kessock.**



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PC Katie Johnstone: Community officer for; **Dalneigh, Torvean, Bught, Scorguie & Kinmylies**



PC Laura Kerr: Community officer for; **Smithton, Culloden, Balloch, Ardersier & Croy**



PC Jo Barclay: Community officer for; **Raigmore, Drakies, Milton of Ley, Crown & Millburn**



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PC Cailean Macleod: Community officer for; **Hilton, Holm, Lochardil, Culduthel and Inshes**



Road Safety

We have seen the return of parking issues in and around primary and secondary schools at drop up and pick up times. Officers have been attending as many of the local schools as they can during these times to try and assist with some of the issues that have been raised.

We would like to remind parents/carers when they are attending schools at these times to try and be considerate when parking. Local residents have been becoming increasingly frustrated by cars being parked over their access to driveways meaning they can't get out of their homes during these times. There have also been complaints regarding parking on or very close to junctions. We would remind drivers of the Highway Code, specifically rule 243 -

Rule 243

- •DO NOT stop or park:
- •near a school entrance
- •anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
- •at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank
- •on the approach to a level crossing/tramway crossing
- •opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space
- •near the brow of a hill or hump bridge
- •opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle
- •where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles
- •in front of an entrance to a property
- •on a bend
- •where you would obstruct cyclists' use of cycle facilities
- Except when forced to do so by stationary traffic.

As of the 11th December 2023 pavement parking/drop kerb parking and double parking will be enforced by the Highland Council as per The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 as Police Scotland have no enforcement powers.

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Serious Organised Crime

County Lines:

A definition of county lines is:

‘A form of criminal activity in which drug dealers in major cities establish networks for the supply and sale of drugs to users in towns and rural areas, using other people (typically those who are young or otherwise vulnerable) to carry, store, and sell the drugs.’

These are organised crime groups and are responsible for the increase in serious assaults in the city. Any information can be anonymously passed Via Crime Stoppers who are an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime. The information is passed on anonymously 0800 555 111 or contact Police Scotland 101 or in an emergency 999

Anti-social behaviour & Disorder

The community has brought to our attention several instances of anti-social behaviour. In response, we have been collaborating with various partners, including housing, the Highland Council, and the Scottish fire and rescue service, to address these issues. When anti-social behaviour is reported, we focus patrols in the affected areas to deter such conduct and make ourselves available to engage with community members who have been affected.

Many people approach us to share their concerns about what’s happening in their neighbourhood, and we are always ready to provide advice or take necessary action to assist. We actively encourage and welcome this type of community engagement.

Theft & Dishonesty

We have been actively involved in addressing drug offences and several cases of dishonesty. Working closely with partner agencies, we’ve been dedicated to identifying suspects to ensure offenders are held accountable. We have conducted regular patrols in targeted areas to act as a deterrent against such activities and have made ourselves easily accessible to anyone in need of advice or wanting to report any concerns.

Protecting Vulnerable People

Our commitment to protecting vulnerable individuals extends to actively engaging with all members of the community, regardless of age. We readily offer assistance whenever the opportunity arises, from helping parents with challenging toddlers on their shopping trips to having a blether at the local knitting club. The community actively points out vulnerable individuals, enabling us to provide necessary support and prevent exploitation.

Community officers regularly patrol selected areas in a car, on a bike or on foot. This approach is designed to enhance the approachability of the Police and foster open lines of communication with the community.

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Other Duties

Members of the team continue to perform their specialist duties; Police negotiator, mountain rescue team member and sexual offence liaison. They have aided in urgent response policing, including handling calls for housebreakings, missing children and officer assistance incidents. They have provided cover for protecting crime loci. Their primary focus remains on areas with elevated crime rates and recurring incidents, even though additional hours per shift without abstractions would be desirable for broader coverage of their designated areas. Priority is consistently given to areas with the highest crime levels.

Given the rising demand on police resources, they have provided essential cover in various areas, including Dingwall and Ross-shire where duties have been redistributed to ensure continued cover.

From the team:

A/PS Keith Whitelaw: Acting sergeant / Community officer for; **Merkinch and South Kessock.**

Over the past month, my role as acting sergeant has been all encompassing, demanding a significant portion of my time. My responsibilities have extended well beyond my designated area to cover the entirety of Inverness, Drumadrochit, Fort Augustus and Beaully. I've endeavoured to support my colleagues in their respective areas while also ensuring the smooth operation of my own responsibilities. As community police officers we aim to be in out in the community as much as possible, listening to what people are telling us, and responding appropriately.

In addition to the core duties of a police officer, I have been involved in the following;

- Engaging with vulnerable persons and making third party referrals.
- Drug Searches / intelligence development.
- Assisting response policing and court officers with various duties.
- Co-ordinating missing person enquiries.
- Licenced premises checks.
- Engaging with students and staff in primary and secondary schools.
- Assist team members to progress and conclude enquiries.
- Meetings with various partner agencies.

PC Katie Johnstone: Community officer for; **Dalneigh, Torvean, Bught, Scorguie & Kinmylies**

During the past month I have been continuing with patrols in the above areas, and assisting A/PS Whitelaw in covering his beat. Unfortunately most will be aware of the murder that occurred in Dalneigh, and its effect on the community. Due to this I have carried out numerous patrols in the area along with assisting in guarding the address while investigations continue. The property has now been boarded up, and the suspects have been arrested and reported to the Court.

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I have visited the local community shops where I can, to engage with them, listening to any concerns they may have.

I have assisted response Police with urgent ongoing incidents, such as high risk missing people, and also more routine incidents, such as shoplifting.

I have been able to deliver school talks to Central Primary in relation to bullying and harassment. I was also able to interact with the children during their break time, letting them try out the handcuffs and show me around the playground. I have also attended Charlston Academy on numerous occasions, giving a talk on the structure of Policing, the intention is to follow this up with a station visit in due course.

I have also carried out duties within my specialism within the mountain rescue team, carrying out searches for missing persons.

PC Laura Kerr: Community officer for; **Smithton, Culloden, Balloch, Ardersier & Croy**

This month I have been able to be in my beat carrying out mobile and foot patrols, engaging with local businesses and working with the secondary school to tackle any issues that have been arising.

Although it's not my beat, I have worked together with my colleague to tackle the ongoing issues that have been occurring at Inshes Retail Park involving large amounts of anti-social behaviour. Together we have collated evidence, talked to youths and parents and reported over 30 crimes of disorder. This has also led us to attend at the secondary schools and primary schools to deliver school talks about anti-social behaviour and what is acceptable behaviour in their local community.

I have also liaised with local councillors regarding issues that have been arising with the beat area and working with partner agencies to try and resolve them.

I also dropped in to visit the new SNAP building in Smithton to introduce myself to the staff and stopped by to speak with the staff in the café. The new facility will be a brilliant asset to the community.

I have also been tasked to cover other stations out with Inverness due to staff shortages and have utilised to protect the locus in Dalneigh while investigations were carried out into the murder.

Throughout the month I have carried out –

Court officer duties

Response shift cover

Licensed premises checks

School visits and talks

Youth anti-social behaviour duties

Mobile and Foot Patrol

Negotiator call out

Liaising with other agencies

Speed checks

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Attended Careers Fayre at Millburn Academy



PC Jo Barclay: Community officer for; Raigmore, Drakies, Milton of Ley, Crown & Millburn

In the month of November we have reported a number of youths who were responsible for the majority of anti-social and criminal behaviour at Inshes Retail Park and have worked closely to the retail premises who have been targeted. I have carried out patrols within the shops, spoken to members of the public and shop workers.

I have been working closely with Milburn Academy and their pupils and have delivered a number of talks including “Under the Bonnet, Behind the Wheel” which is directed to young new drivers, teaching them the law and road safety. Milburn Academy had two scrapped vehicles to work with, so it was a hands on experience for the pupils. I delivered talks to S4 Modern Study classes in relation to policing, crime trends and statistics. We also attended Milburn Careers Fayre, however, due to an ongoing incident which we had to deal with, we were not there for the length of time we hoped.

I also visited Crown Primary to talk to P6/7 pupils about anti-social behaviours in the community.

I am aware that there are a number of issues raised regarding parking in and around Drakies, with vehicles being parked on junctions and grass verges being damaged due to poor parking habits. Parents parking inconsiderately near to Drakies Primary School at drop off and pick up times. To address this we have taken our “parking buddies” to Drakies, they will be out and about to try to put a stop to people parking at junctions, on pavements, obstructing driveways.

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As a community police officers we listen to the community to identify their policing concerns and rely on members of the public to help.

- Assisting response policing and court officers with various duties.
- Foot and mobile patrols, speaking with members of the public

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- Reassurance patrols for retailers in the Inshes retail park.
- Licenced premises checks.
- Locus protections.
- Engaging with students and staff in primary and secondary schools.
- Assist team members to progress and conclude enquiries.
- Meetings with various partner agencies, social work, housing.

PC Cailean Macleod: Community officer for; **Hilton, Holm, Lochardil, Culduthel and Inshes**

I have made extensive foot patrols in the Hilton and Inshes beats in order to deter person/s from engaging in vandalism, drug misuse, street drinking and wayward antics. Good old fashion foot patrols allow me to speak with members of the community and engage with youths. Positive community engagement and building trust and respect with all who live in the area is the bedrock of community policing. As well as the core duties of a police officer I have carried out the following duties;

- Speed checks in various locations including Balnakyle Road, Dores Rd, Stratherrick Road, Culduthel Road, Old Edinburgh Road and Balloan Road
- Assisting in arrests of priority wanted persons in Hilton beat
- Assisting response policing with 999 calls and court officer duties
- Missing person enquiries.
- Licenced premises checks.
- School visits – primary and secondary
- Progressing ongoing criminal enquiries.
- Mountain rescue call-outs / training.
- Engaging with local businesses
- Collaborating with other Police units to disrupt organised crime activities.
- Partner agency working – SFRS, housing, Highland Council, schools, etc.
- Community engagement – signposting vulnerable people to partner agencies.



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Daviot, Farr, Strathdearn and Rural Beats – No assigned beat officer

The team have received complaints regarding vehicles speeding through the village particularly first thing in the morning and then again later in the afternoon. Officers have been in the local area when duties allow to monitor the issue and carry out speed checks. Enquires have been carried out to trace the responsible persons.



Statistics

Crime statistics for your community council area can be found using the following link –

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/>

Specialist Units Deployments / Incidents of Note:

There has been incidents in the past month involving the use of specialist police units within Inverness. These have all been dealt with quickly and come to a safe conclusion. Local Community councils have been informed of any of these incidents within their areas.

Some areas have required an increase in police presence due to the serious nature of crimes. Whilst the increase of officers may cause alarm to local residents, please be reassured that the increase of officers is to allow police to carry out thorough investigations into these incidents and have them concluded as soon as possible.

We will always try and contact local community councillors if an incident occurs that generates a lot of police activity in the area for an update and reassurance.

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Operation Respect



A long-standing initiative aimed at keeping Inverness a safe place to live, work and visit over the festive season has been launched.

Operation Respect sees agencies and local voluntary partner's pool together their wide ranging and varied skills to tackle street disorder, anti-social behaviour, retail crime and other forms of criminality. Crucially it is also designed to provide assistance to vulnerable people – whether that is a result of mental health concerns, alcohol or substance abuse – and provide a safe environment and the provision of pastoral care to those who are in need.

We actively engage in proactive measures to ensure that the city is a safe place to be, whether you live and work in the city, a visiting group enjoying our hospitality, or simply a lone person walking home at night.

Although Operation Respect is a Police Scotland initiative led by Inverness area command, it is very much a partnership between organisations dedicated to providing expertise in multiple areas, contributing towards the wellbeing of those in our community.

The combined efforts of those involved have enabled us to provide trained first aid teams walking within the city centre to combined police, paramedic and mental health practitioners on mobile patrols and responding to those in crisis.

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There is also immediate access to pastoral care and a heightened level of stewarding within the City.

Operation Respect commences on Friday, 1 December, 2023 and runs every Friday and Saturday until the last Saturday evening – Saturday, 30 December, 2023.

Inspector David McAlpine said: “We are once again preparing for a busy festive period. We are delighted to be working alongside partner agencies to keep people safe over the festive period in Inverness.

“We aim to ensure everyone has a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year.”

Participants in this year’s festive campaign are:

Police Scotland
Highland Council
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Scottish Ambulance Service
NHS Highland
BID Inverness
Highland Third Sector Interface
Highland Drug & Alcohol Partnership
Street Pastors
Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT Highland)
Community Justice Partnership
Mikeysline
Trading Standards
The Discovery College- Centered Scotland

City Centre (CCPT)

With Christmas approaching fast the City Centre Police Team aim to have a prominent presence within the City Centre along with colleagues from our response policing during Operation Respect.

The Team continue with their commitment to tackle the youth disorder issues within the City Centre by engagement and attempting to divert them from this behaviour. We are having some success with this approach but acknowledge that some issues remain. We are also utilising the power of the law when we can and submitting reports to the Children’s reporter and Procurator Fiscal when crime has been detected.

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The national issue of shoplifting is still a prominent issue within the City Centre and is something we continue to deal with on a daily basis. We have had some positive results with shoplifting incidents in the past few weeks which has led to arrests and several reports being submitted to the Procurator Fiscal. The City Centre team is fully committed to continuing this with the assistance the Loss prevention Officers, BID Task Team and the CCTV operators.

The festive campaign Operation Respect are now in full swing with our aim being to keep people safe when they are celebrating the festivities within the City Centre. Our main objectives during the operation will be to reduce anti-social behaviour, incidents of violence and disorder. This Operation will see a substantial increase in Police resources being deployed into the City Centre and will commence late November. Further to the increase in Police numbers we will also have a welfare vehicle in place.

Hot spots for anti-social behaviour remain the same as previous months namely Falcon Square, Farraline Park Bus Station and Rose Street car park. We continue our commitment to patrol these areas as much as possible and engage with businesses affected by this issue. We also continue to work with all partner agencies within the City Centre by utilising the shop safe radio link which continues to be a valuable tool.

In the last few weeks we have experienced some vigils outside the Town House with regards to the support of Palestine. We have had positive engagement with members of this group and have had no significant issues as a result.

Contact us

Police Scotland can be contacted via a variety of ways. In an emergency and/or when a crime is ongoing, please dial 999 otherwise please use the 101 phone number to report any other crimes or matters.

For non-urgent routines matters or to highlight issues or make contact with specific officers then the following email addresses can be used:

Inverness rural beats – Beaully / Cannich / Drumnadrochit / Fort Augustus / Foyers:

HighlandsandIslandsBeaullyFortAugustus@scotland.police.uk

For concerns and issues in the city of Inverness area and the rural beats of Ardersier, Daviot, Tomatin and Strathdearn:

HighlandsandIslandsCommunityBeatsInverness@scotland.police.uk

Please be aware that this e-mail address is not monitored 24/7 and is a contact email. Specific crimes should not be reported by these email addresses. Crimes should be reported via the telephone systems 999 or 101.

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Any matters raised at community council meetings or specific community concerns should be emailed in and include the following details to enable your enquiry to deal with efficiently:

- Contact name
- Contact phone number
- Details of the issue – times/places/people/history of the issue

Policing Survey

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/research-and-insights/your-police/>

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