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Inverness Area Command

Newsletter – January 2024

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)



PC Keith Whitelaw: 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**



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



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



PC Sara Hamilton: Community / response officer for; **Ft Augustus, Drumnadrochit, Beaully, Whitebridge and Dores**

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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.

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.

Other Duties

Members of the team continue to perform their specialist duties; Police negotiator, mountain rescue team member, sexual offence liaison officer and wildlife crime officer. 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.

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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:

PC Keith Whitelaw: Community officer for; Merkinch and South Kessock.

This month has been a dynamic and diverse period of activity, marked by a range of responsibilities in my role. Extensive foot patrols in the Merkinch area of Inverness allowed for a hands-on approach to community engagement. Alongside this, delivering citations, conducting welfare checks, and addressing emergency calls showcased the multifaceted nature of police work in the area.

Collaborating with local licenced premises reinforced commitment to community safety, while dealing with persistent offenders attempting to exploit vulnerable individuals underscores the need for vigilance. Arresting individuals on warrant and working in partnership with housing demonstrated the comprehensive efforts to help within the community.

In initiatives, assisting colleagues at Culloden Academy and planning to extend this program to Inverness High School highlights the importance of proactive engagement with the younger generation. Embarking on the early stages of an initiative involving police information broadcasts on MFR to help more digitally excluded individuals access pertinent information.

As well as attempting to be a continuous presence in the area, I have visited craft groups and had meetings with volunteers at the Treehouse, emphasizing the importance of grassroots connection.

I have carried out court officer duties, attended sudden deaths and provided support during emotionally challenging times showcasing the compassionate side of policing. On the other hand, the apprehension of a prolific shoplifter with controlled substances, a knife and stolen goods underscored the necessity of swift and decisive action.

I am also engaging with the Highland council about motorbike use around Inverness, particularly in the nature reserve in South Kessock and at the Torvean quarry.

Within the past month there has been some incidents involving large scale police presence within the area. Please be reassured that actions taken are necessary and proportionate in relation to the circumstances presented.

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

During the past month I continue to patrol in my beat, with focus on the areas which have been highlighted due to disorder/crime/antisocial behaviour.

There was unfortunately a house fire within Dalneigh that destroyed a property. However, luckily there were no injuries as a result. I was able to liaise with council housing officers to ensure local residents affected were able to arrange suitable accommodation and support.

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I along with the community beats team attended Culloden Academy as part of an initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour and drug use. This has created the framework to roll this out at all the high schools within Inverness.

As part of the Mountain Rescue team I have attended numerous incidents including calls due to the inclement weather, one consisting of members of the public stranded on the A9 due to the snow making the road impassable.

I again have been required to assist with response teams in Inverness and the surrounding area. This will continue as officers are due to operational necessity for essential cover.

I have worked closely with highland council housing officers, in relation to areas that have been highlighted for anti-social behaviour and drugs misuse. We have met with residents affected in order to create a joint approach to tackling these issues.

I was able to assist my rural colleague in holding a 'street surgery' in Beaully. This gives residents in the local area an opportunity to speak to me about any ongoing issues within the village. I intend to hold further 'street surgeries' or coffee with a cop within my allocated area. I would invite local community councilors to arrange a this with me, as I believe this would be of benefit to be able to speak with not only the police but engage with the community council. This enables us to cover a wider range of issues that may be highlighted.

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

This month I have been keeping busy in the Culloden, Smithton and Balloch areas.

This month we have been carrying out high visibility reports in and around the school at both break and lunchtime in response to concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and drugtaking. Officers carried out foot and mobile patrols in these areas at peak times and were able to gather intelligence which will help with our policing plans later down the line.



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I have continued to gather information about what current trends are amongst the younger generation and one thing that is becoming increasingly popular is the use of cannabis edibles. These at a glance have the appearance of everyday crisps/sweets however contain high volumes of THC that can be found in cannabis and is illegal to purchase/have in your possession. I have included some images of some items we have seized just to show what the packaging for these items is like.



I have also worked with other agencies this month such as the SSPCA to deal with high profile cases involving a puppy farm, the dog warden and housing to deal with ongoing neighbour issues and the local schools tackling anti-social behaviour and giving school talks. I have also been working at different stations throughout the division providing staffing cover as and when it has been necessary.

I have been delivering training to officers in Burnett Road station which allows officers to have tools to help them process trauma. The average person will deal with 5-7 major traumatic incidents in their lifetime. Police officers throughout their career will deal with between 400-600 traumatic incidents therefore it is vitally important that police officers are provided with a toolkit that helps the brain process these incidents. I will continue to be delivering this course throughout the local policing division.

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

After years of dedicated service, Jo Barclay a valued member of the community policing team, is retiring. Her commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community has been exemplary.

As we bid farewell to Jo, we want to express our gratitude for her tireless efforts and unwavering dedication. While Jo enjoys a well-deserved retirement, we are actively seeking a qualified candidate to fill her role.

During this transitional period, the remaining officers will diligently cover Jo's responsibilities, ensuring a seamless continuation of essential services. We appreciate your understanding and support as we work towards maintaining the safety and security of our community.

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We look forward to welcoming a new team member who shares our passion for community service. We hope to make introductions of our new team member in the coming months.

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

PC Macleod has continued ongoing efforts to deal with shopliftings across several shops in the beat. All but one shoplifter has been identified at the time of writing this report. PC Macleod has dealt with two racist crimes this month. These have been swiftly dealt with as racism has no place in the community and any instances of it will be robustly dealt with by Police. Suitable intervention and education work is planned to hopefully avoid any further racist incident/s occurring.

Work is ongoing by several other departments in the Police to tackle the blight on the safety and wellbeing of the local community by drug dealing by organised crime groups aka county lines. There was a notable drug search warrant which resulted in person/s being arrested. PC Macleod continues to work to support these departments and their work.

The usual patrols both by foot and by car have continued to engage with local residents and provide a visible reassurance of a uniformed Police officer on patrol. When the weather improves cycle patrols will resume again. PC Macleod has made regular checks of licensed premises across the beat to ensure compliance with alcohol laws and to prevent disorder occurring. Road safety checks have been carried out at locations across the beat and more checks involving the use of the 'speed gun' will occur to ensure drivers are abiding by the 20 MPH limits in particular around schools.

PC Macleod has continued to support his colleagues in response Policing when their staffing levels require him to backfill to ensure 999 calls are answered promptly. This abstraction from beat duties is necessary to ensure priority is given to answering emergency calls. PC Macleod has continued to be deployed as part of his duties as a member of Highland Police Mountain Rescue team across the Highlands for missing person searches in wild and remote areas.



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PC Sara Hamilton - Response / community officer for **Ft Augustus, Drumnadrochit, Beaully, Whitebridge and Dores**

Over the past month, I've been diligently carrying out my responsibilities. I've reviewed previously reported incidents and continued with ongoing investigations, aiming to contribute to the resolution of cases.

Handling various calls, including thefts, extortions and road traffic matters, has allowed me to respond to a range of situations. I've conducted foot patrols in Ft Augustus and Drumnadrochit, emphasizing a proactive approach to community policing.

Engaging with the younger generation, I visited Fort Augustus, Kilchuimen and Glen Urquhart High School to foster positive relationships and promote community safety. During adverse weather conditions, I undertook patrols to contribute to the community's safety.

I attended court in Glasgow and have been involved in my specialist role within the mountain rescue team on various call outs.

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 several 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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City Centre (CCPT)

With Christmas feeling like a distant memory the City Centre Police Team continue to have a prominent presence in the City Centre and are assisted by our colleagues from response Policing when they are available.

The team remain committed to engagement with a number of youths who are known to cause disorder, which has had a positive effect and incidents have declined but the issue remains. The team have been assisted in this matter by the BID task team, CCTV operators and Action for Children and this partner agency work will continue. Engagement with the youths has resulted in arrests, reports submitted to the Procurator Fiscal and the Children's reporter.

As mentioned in previous newsletters the national problem of shoplifting is an ongoing issue and occurs multiple times daily within the City Centre. Although we have seen a dramatic increase with this type of crime, we have had a good level of success which has led to arrests, recovery of property and custodial sentences being handed down to repeat offenders. The team remains committed to addressing these issues with the assistance of our retail partner agencies.

Although reports of anti-social behaviour have decreased recently the team remain committed with the continuation of foot patrols in all areas affected, and along with engagement with businesses this would appear to be having a positive effect.

The vigils outside the Town House each Saturday by supporters of Palestine continue. The Police Team have a positive relationship with the members of the group who continue to air their support in a peaceful manner.

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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 – Beaulay / Cannich / Drumnadrochit / Fort Augustus / Foyers:

HighlandsandIslandsBeaulayFortAugustus@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.

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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