

“It is with apologies that I can’t be with you tonight as Zoom has not passed security certificates for use by the Police. I would be happy to meet via MS Teams and Skype for future meetings and as always I am happy to accept questions and comments outside of this meeting as appropriate.

As we come out of the Summer period (although the weather this week suggests otherwise!) it is fair to say that we’re still learning about the effects of Covid and the ever changing picture of the impacts around the pandemic. We now move into the next phase ‘Rule of 6’ and the College of Policing (CoP) received the new regulations last night with a list of detailed exemptions, and is currently completing the various stages of work to draft the national guidance and conduct the associated legal checks. We expect to receive the new guidance tomorrow and until we do, officers will continue to enforce the previously established regulations. All officers and staff are advised to follow the new ‘Rule of 6’ principles from today in terms of providing advice to the public; for their own safety and that of others. The 4 E’s (Educate, explain, encourage and enforce) should continue to be our guiding approach. I expect in the days to come some real focus on enforcement as concerns raise about local infection rates and how we should seek compliance from the public.

We met the challenge of gatherings at Unlicensed Music Events (UME’s or previously referred to as ‘Raves’) head-on in Swale with just one reported in Leysdown back in June; you will have seen the National reporting and impacts across the county around UME’s. What was not heavily reported was the huge amount of work in the background to disrupt and cease at least two other gatherings over August in Leysdown. Alongside this, Operation Paris appears to have been a success, increased patrolling and focus at the east of the island has reduced crime reporting there and (as is often a good sign) limited reporting of issues from the local residents.

Domestic Abuse remains a challenge, with reporting up by circa 19%, but we are attending and arresting more people at Domestic Abuse incidents than ever before.

Burglary reporting is now less than 1 a day across the district. Robbery reporting remains low.

Violent crime has always been a focus and we have been regularly deploying a ‘knife arch’ to detect carrying of weapons at key locations such as railway stations. This is supported by analytical reporting and the deployment of officers into ‘hot spot’ locations. The Violence Reduction Unit (a joint unit funded by the Home Office and led by KCC and Police) is reporting low numbers for Swale, which is good news and reflective of the work we have been doing locally.

We have been tackling anti-social riding in Rushenden, Perry Woods and other places across the District with the Community Safety Unit. New signage has gone out to those locations this week with the catch phrase ‘Don’t be an idiot’ and warnings of the risk of vehicle seizures. We do not under-estimate the impact of off-road bikes has on the community. This summer saw a challenge with anti-social jet ski riding as well and our marine unit are deploying when they can to Queenborough.

Lastly our focus and targeting of identified Organised Criminal Gangs (OCG’s) across the district has seen a high degree of success. Both Spade Lane and Raspberry Hill Park Farm have seen a lot of police and partner activity. A multi-agency Warrant took place on Raspberry Hill last week where drugs and stolen vehicles were recovered and there is much to do around environmental enforcement. I am aware, for example, of the continued unlicensed activity at Raspberry Park Farm and are working with our partners in the Environment Agency and SBC to tackle this. The investigation around the criminal activity on Raspberry Hill Farm has only really just begun.

As always I am happy to accept questions outside of the formality of KALC and my contact details are below if required.

Stay safe
Kind Regards

Chief Inspector Alan Rogers