

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

16 February 2021

Report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

This report will provide an update of some of the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership.

1.1 Latest crime statistics and crime trends

- 1.1.1 The latest crime statistics (to the end of December 2020) show that there were 8,803 crimes reported to the Police, compared to 9,851 in the previous year (a 10.6% reduction). There was also a reduction in victim-based crime (12.8%) and violent crime (6.8% reduction). This reduction could be due to the ongoing Covid pandemic as pubs and the night-time economy are closed resulting in fewer violent incidences.
- 1.1.2 However, there has been an increase in some crime types and there was an increase in both criminal damage (0.9%) and drugs offences (33.6%). There was also an increase in anti-social behaviour reports to the police from 1,731 last year to 2,622 this year. This increase is also reflected in the number of anti-social behaviour reports to the Borough Council and we have seen increases in the number of neighbour disputes reported as people spend more time inside due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.1.3 Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and the lockdowns there has been an increase in domestic abuse reports. Reports to Kent Police have risen from 2,938 to 2,995. The organisations working with victims of domestic abuse are also seeing an increase in referrals to their services, as well as an increase in the complexity and severity of cases as victims find it harder to access support due to the perpetrator being with them more of the time.
- 1.1.4 The Police have also reported that locally there has been a number of shed breaks in the Malling area (particularly in West Malling, Larkfield and Leybourne areas). The Police are reminding residents of crime prevention measures they can take and high visibility patrols have taken place and will continue to do so.

1.2 Puppy Farming Enforcement operation with Kent Police

- 1.2.1 Over the last few months TMBC Licensing has been receiving intelligence over puppy trading within the Borough, based in Hadlow and Yalding. In addition, Licensing Services received complaints from people who have purchased a puppy recently, an example being after purchasing a puppy and then had to spend £5,000 vets bills, resulting with the puppy dying, after becoming very seriously ill.
- 1.2.2 The Head of Licencing, Customer Services and Community Safety raised this information at the Serious and Organised Crime meeting held with Police and other partners in December, which coincided with an arrest made by West Mercia Police, of members of this family during a separate operation.
- 1.2.3 As a result of this intelligence and information three premises (one house and one farm in Hadlow and one farm in Yalding) were subject to Kent Police Search Warrants. This was a joint partner operation with Kent Police, RSPCA, Trading Standards and Licensing.
- 1.2.4 The results from this operation were:
- One person was arrested for Public Order offences and assault on an emergency worker.
 - Two people were arrested for possession of a firearm (taser) and Amphetamines.
 - 10 puppies without a mother were located at the Yalding address. They appeared to be in good health and were checked by a vet.
 - 20 further dogs were located at the Yalding address and were checked with the scanner by RSPCA to establish if they were stolen – none were.
 - Numerous phones, iPads and paperwork relating to the sale of puppies was seized.
- 1.2.5 The true extent of this operation will not be known for some time, however the actions taken have been a serious set-back to the sale of puppies being sold by this family, and has clearly highlighted this is a huge cash rich illegal operation.

1.3 Neighbourhood Engagement Meeting (NEM)

- 1.3.1 We ran an online Neighbourhood Engagement Meeting on the evening of Wednesday 27 January which offered residents the chance to speak to representatives from Kent Police, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and KCC about Community Safety issues. On the evening over 25 residents joined us virtually to discuss issues such as boy racers, nuisance youths and drug offences. We hope to run similar events during the year, as feedback has been very positive.

1.4 Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop

- 1.4.1 The domestic abuse One Stop Shop is usually held each Wednesday in Tonbridge and allows victims of domestic abuse the chance to access support and advice in a safe way. Unfortunately, due to the Covid pandemic the face to face support is not able to be offered at present, however, an online One Stop Shop has been established via Zoom.
- 1.4.2 The Weekly Zoom meetings held every Wednesday from 9.30am until noon, allow clients to access support from police and legal experts and get advice on housing, home security, refuge living, money matters and more.
- 1.4.3 The Zoom details can be found on the Borough Council's website - [Domestic Abuse - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Any funding requirements are provided through the Community Safety Partnership.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 All risk assessments are under taken as appropriate.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Community Safety

Background papers:

Nil

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