

Report from Police Community Support Officer Ali Blood.

Abingdon Town Neighbourhood Team

I continue to serve as a member of the Abingdon Neighbourhood Team, with responsibility for policing the town centre. I have been in post for more than 18 years, and my role remains part funded by Abingdon Town Council.

Until August last year, the team operated as two smaller units; however, these have since been merged into one larger team. The number of Police Officers increased from four to six, although we saw the departure of four PCSOs during the year. Only one of these posts has been filled, with the newly appointed officer due to start on area next week. We were incredibly sad to say farewell to PCSO Susie Morley, who worked alongside me in the town centre for over 15 years.

Our team covers an extensive area, including Abingdon town, surrounding villages, and the Botley / Kennington area of Oxford.

Our primary policing priorities – particularly relevant to the town centre – continue to be:

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Retail Theft and Financial Scams.

Anti-Social Behaviour.

The team continue to undertake proactive work within the night time economy, focusing on improving safety and maintaining strong engagement with licensed premises, takeaways, and taxi firms. Recently, I worked with licensing partners to address concerns relating to a problematic premise. I collated reports evidencing areas of non-compliance, liaised with the Vale of White Horse CCTV team and our licensing officer, to gather comprehensive material, to progress enforcement action. This collaborative approach resulted in the closure of the premise and the work undertaken received a formal recognition through an award.

We maintain excellent working relationships with the local businesses and regularly engage with management and staff. I also coordinate the 'Shopwatch Radio Link,' an effective communication channel used by the neighbourhood team, Vale of White Horse District Council CCTV operators and local shops and businesses. This system enables the rapid reporting of suspicious activity and criminal offences; it continues to deliver strong results.

PCSO Maddie Highmoor and I have been focusing on addressing issues of anti-social behaviour in the town centre, particularly after school hours. Working with local secondary schools and the District Council CCTV operators, we have been able to identify a number of young people involved in these incidents. Those identified have received home visits, been issued Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

(This is our lowest level of intervention) or have been requested to attend police interviews. Teachers from John Mason and Larkmead schools have also joined us on foot patrols as pupils pass through the town centre.

Several members of the team have undertaken enforcement activity in response to an increase in the use of e-Scooters & off-road bikes. A number of seizures have taken place, and all the PCSOs are now trained in the procedures required for seizing e-Scooters.

Alongside our core priorities, the team - particularly the PCSOs, conduct significant foot patrols, concentrating on areas of high foot fall, and locations known for ASB and/or drug related concerns. These patrols aim to maintain a strong visible policing presence.

I continue to hold a monthly Have your Say meeting in the town centre, alternating between weekends, daytime hours, and evenings to ensure accessibility for as many residents as possible.

The enjoyable aspect of neighbourhood policing is attending local events whenever possible, which helps build positive community relationships.

Daily police demands continue alongside the above. The team respond to calls for service, supporting our emergency response colleagues, with incidents ranging from, missing persons to crimes in progress such as assaults, shopliftings, and criminal damage.

This report represents only a snapshot of the work carried out over the past year. It is difficult to fully convey the breadth of activity undertaken by the team each day. I greatly value the strong working relationship built between Abingdon Town Council and myself over the past 18 years, and I hope this partnership will continue.