

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Wantage and Abingdon

1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras in Wantage and Abingdon contribute towards deterring crime, reducing the fear of crime, increasing crime detection and protecting vulnerable people in the district.

The report is produced using information provided by the CCTV monitoring suite based in Abingdon. It is based on information drawn from the record of occurrences. A record of occurrence is reported each time a CCTV camera is used proactively to monitor a specific incident.

We aim to provide this report on a half yearly basis to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses. We have 23 cameras operational in Abingdon and six in Wantage.

DATA SUMMARY

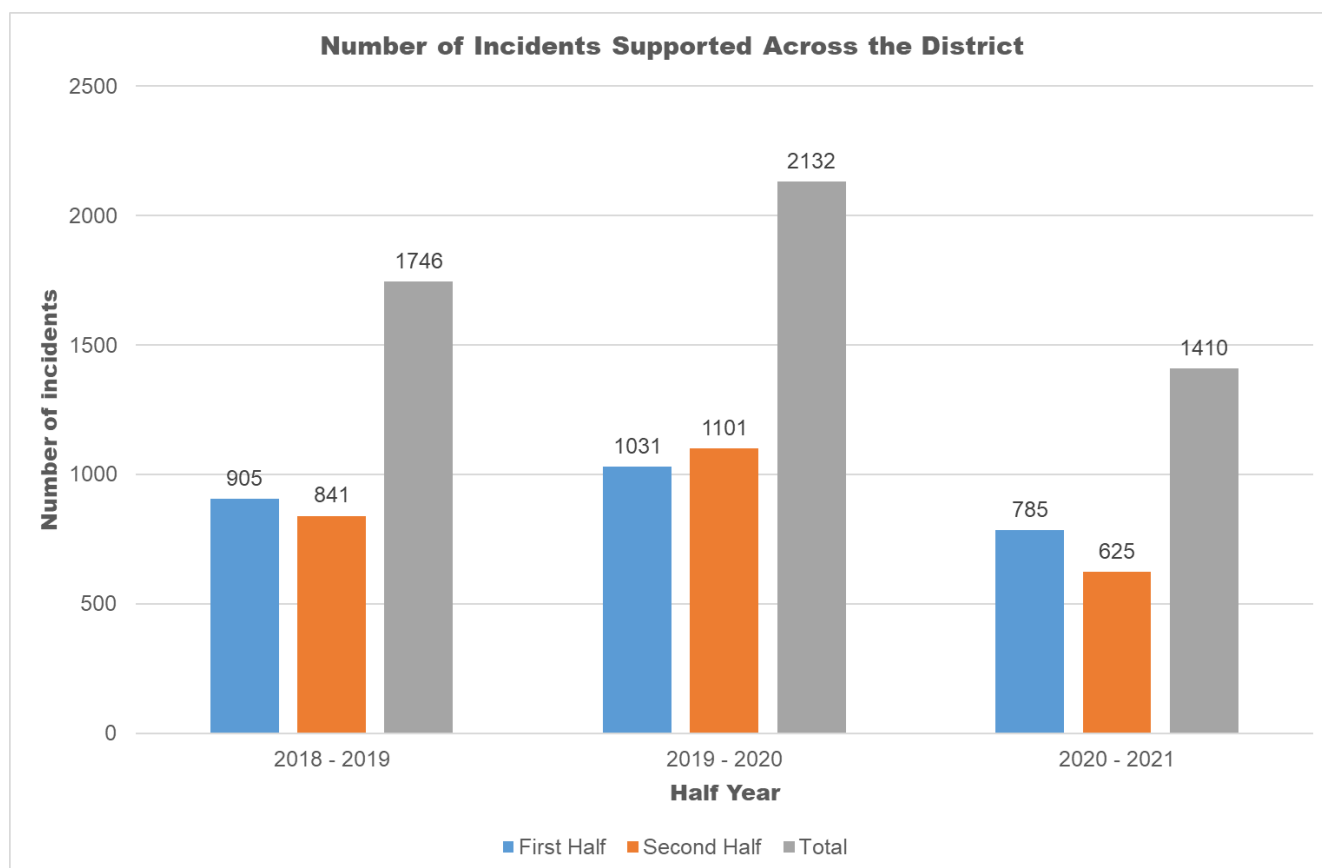
Across the Vale, CCTV operators supported 642 incidents during the second half of 2020-21.

The operators also produced 39 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 19 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 61 arrests.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the second half of 2020-21 where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Missing Persons (53)	Missing Persons (14)
Suspicious Behaviour (49) Anti-social Behaviour (49)	Fear for Welfare (7)
Fear for Welfare (48)	Assault (6) Disturbance (6) Drunkenness (6) Fighting/Affray (6)

The chart below compares this half yearly total with previous half years:



For further breakdown please see table below:

	2018 - 2019			2019 - 2020			2020-2021		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	741	735	1476	873	908	1781	662	542	1204
Wantage	164	106	270	158	193	351	123	83	206
Total	905	841	1746	1031	1101	2132	785	625	1410

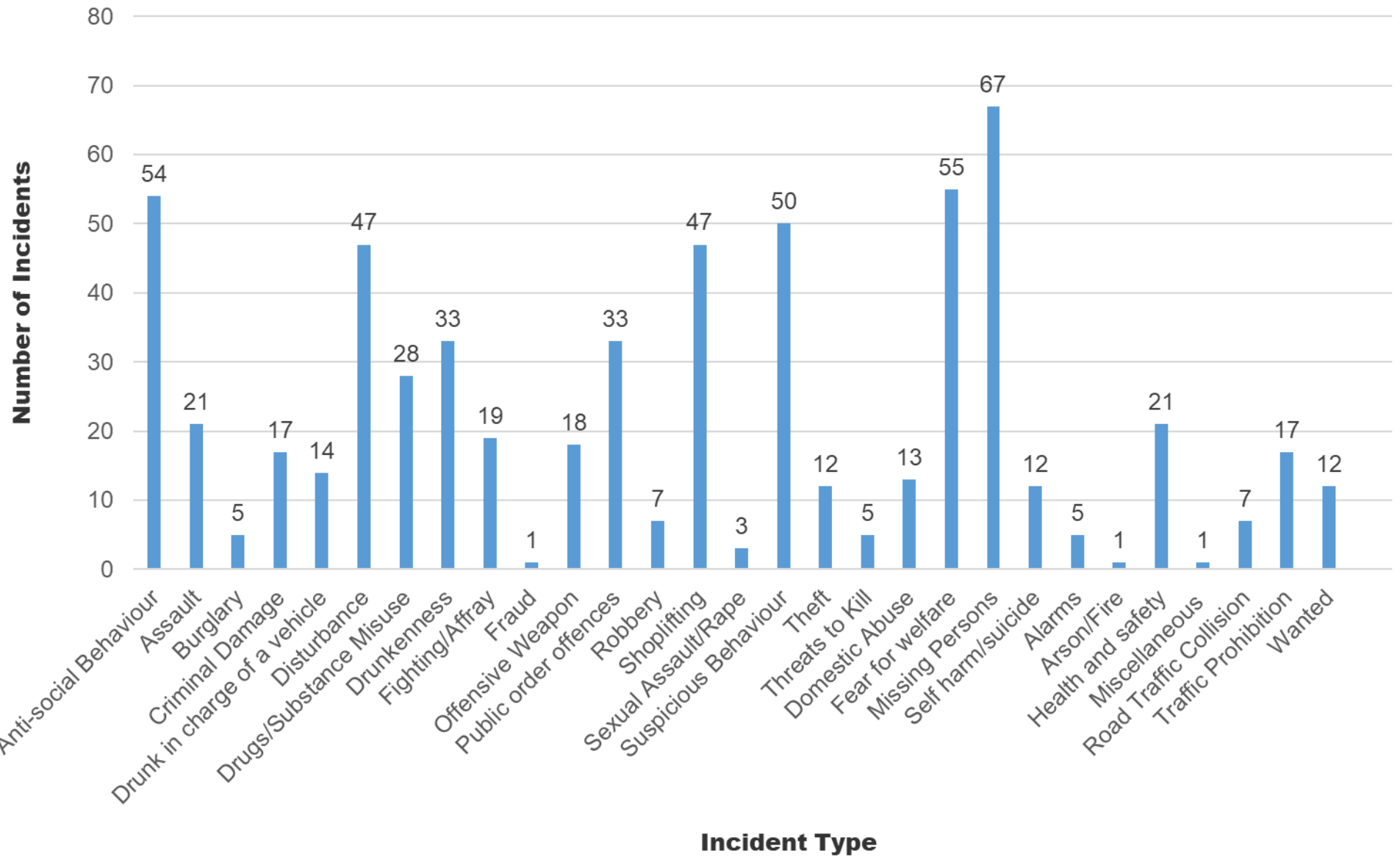
Demands on the CCTV service changed during the second half of 2020-21 as a result of the government restrictions introduced to help tackle Covid-19. The chart below compares the number of incidents monitored between January and March with the same period in 2020. During lock-down there was some variety in the type of incident monitored by our operators. For example, the need to monitor incidents relating to the night-time economy reduced as pubs and bars were closed but 'Missing Persons' and 'Fear for Welfare' were prevalent.

	January – March 2021	January – March 2020
Abingdon	257	400
Wantage	32	118

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incident the CCTV operators monitored from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021 across both towns.

Incidents by Type - 1 October 2020 - 31 March 2021

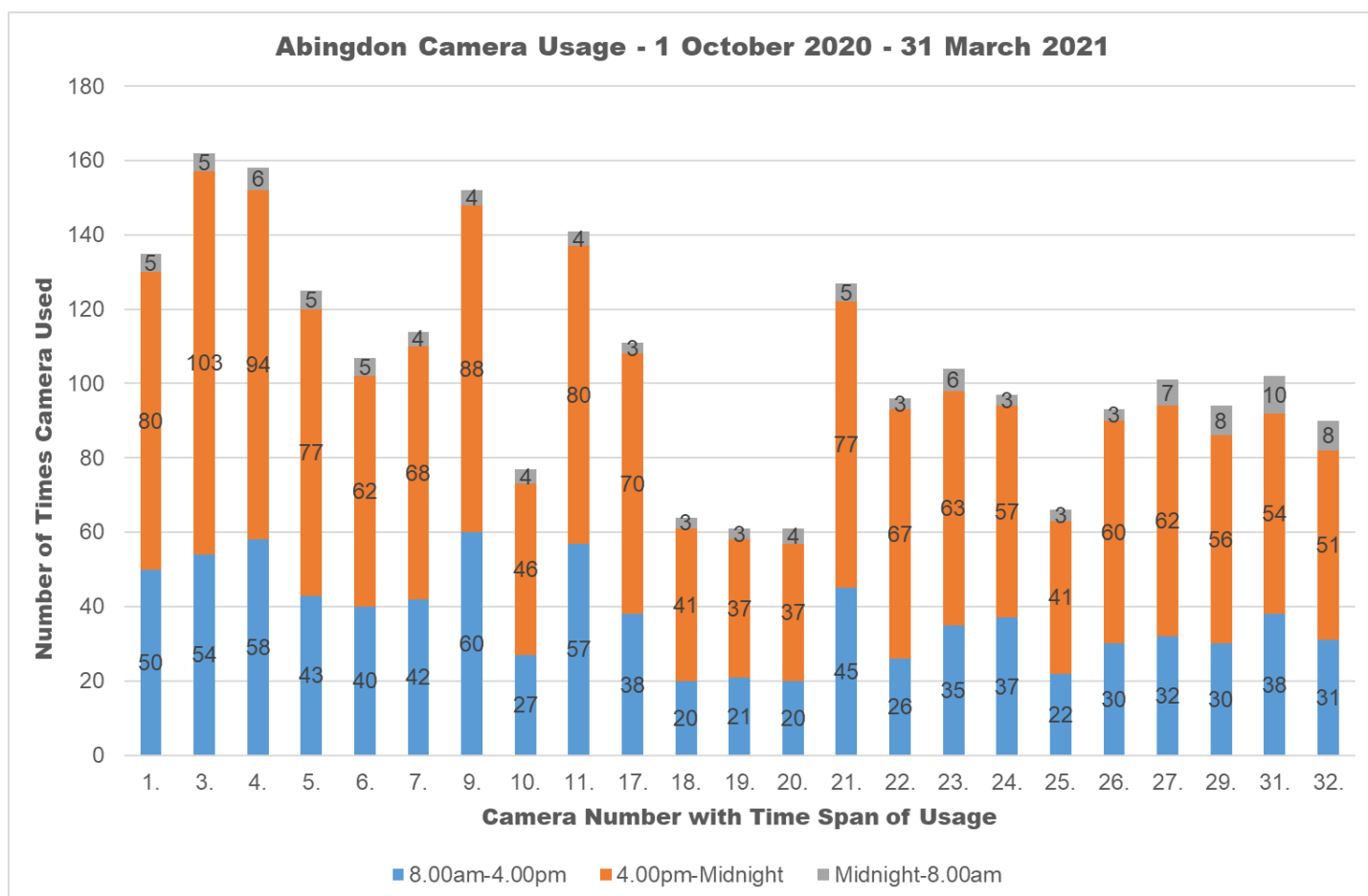


CAMERA USAGE

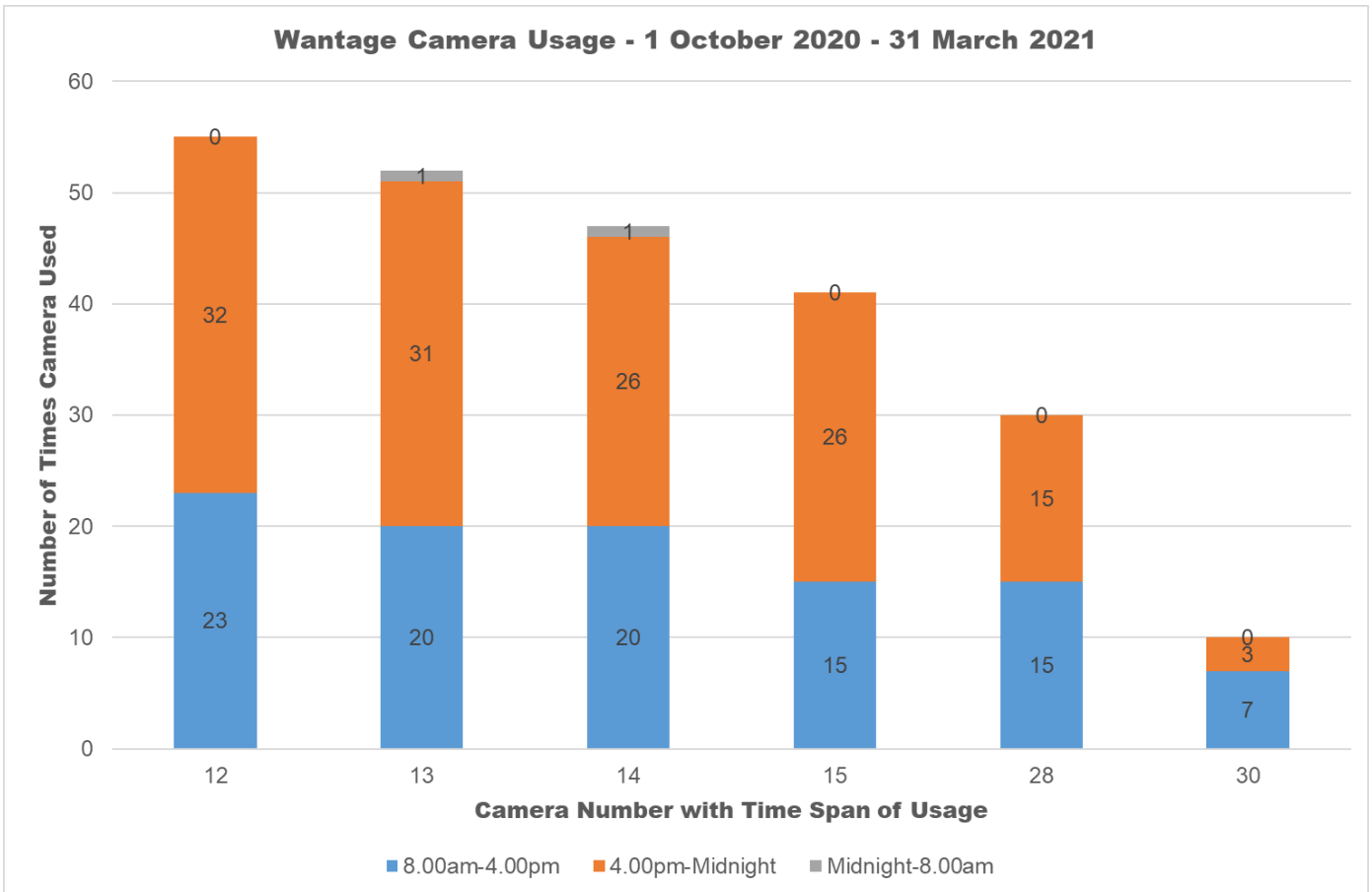
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras are deployed in recorded, monitored events.

The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24 hour period.

It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am, the vast majority of camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



Cameras three, four, nine and eleven cover the High Street, Market Place and shopping precinct and show the greatest amount of use.



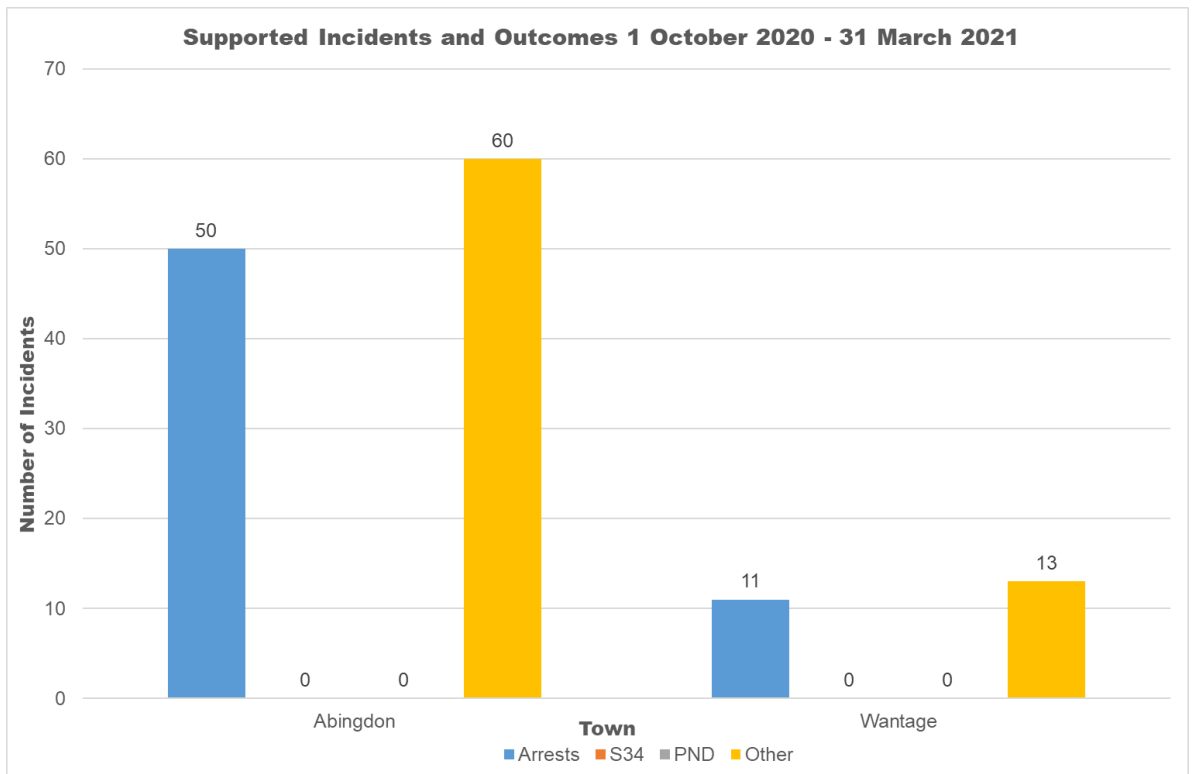
The chart shows little usage of cameras after midnight, due to the lockdown and lack of night time economy during the period covered by this report.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart on the next page shows the outcomes the CCTV operators supported while involved in monitoring an incident. The police use their discretion on how an incident is resolved based on experience, the gravity of the offence, the resources that are available to them at that time and so on. Whilst we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34 or a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND), we do know the cameras alert police to incidents they may not have known about. CCTV also gives the police the ability to assess and allocate resources and priorities in real time e.g. should the situation allow, leaving CCTV to monitor incidents or offenders while officers attend other incidents.

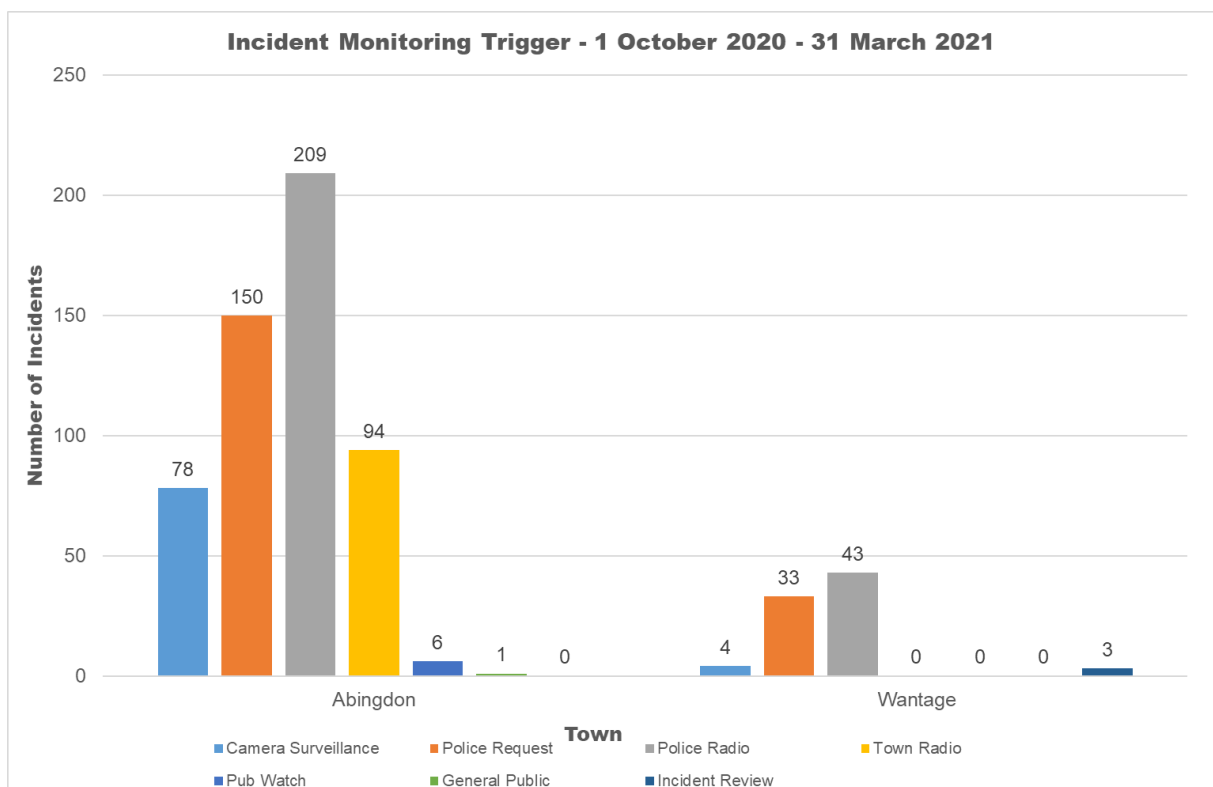
A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social behaviour disorder. A PND is an ‘on the spot fine’.

Actions on the chart designated ‘other’ usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or admonition or a non-recordable sanction, for example; replace items in a bin that had been kicked over. For this period, it includes advice relating to Covid restrictions.



HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart below shows how many of the incidents monitored by CCTV were as a result of the following: a direct request from the police (police requests); the CCTV operator hearing about an incident on a police radio (police radio); request to review footage at the time of an incident (incident review); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance). Only Abingdon has a shop radio scheme.



REVIEWS AND EVIDENCE PACKS

When not tasked by police, the operators patrol all the cameras and focus on 'hotspot' areas. All cameras are recording 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are set in 'default' positions which are agreed with the police as the areas most likely to experience problems.

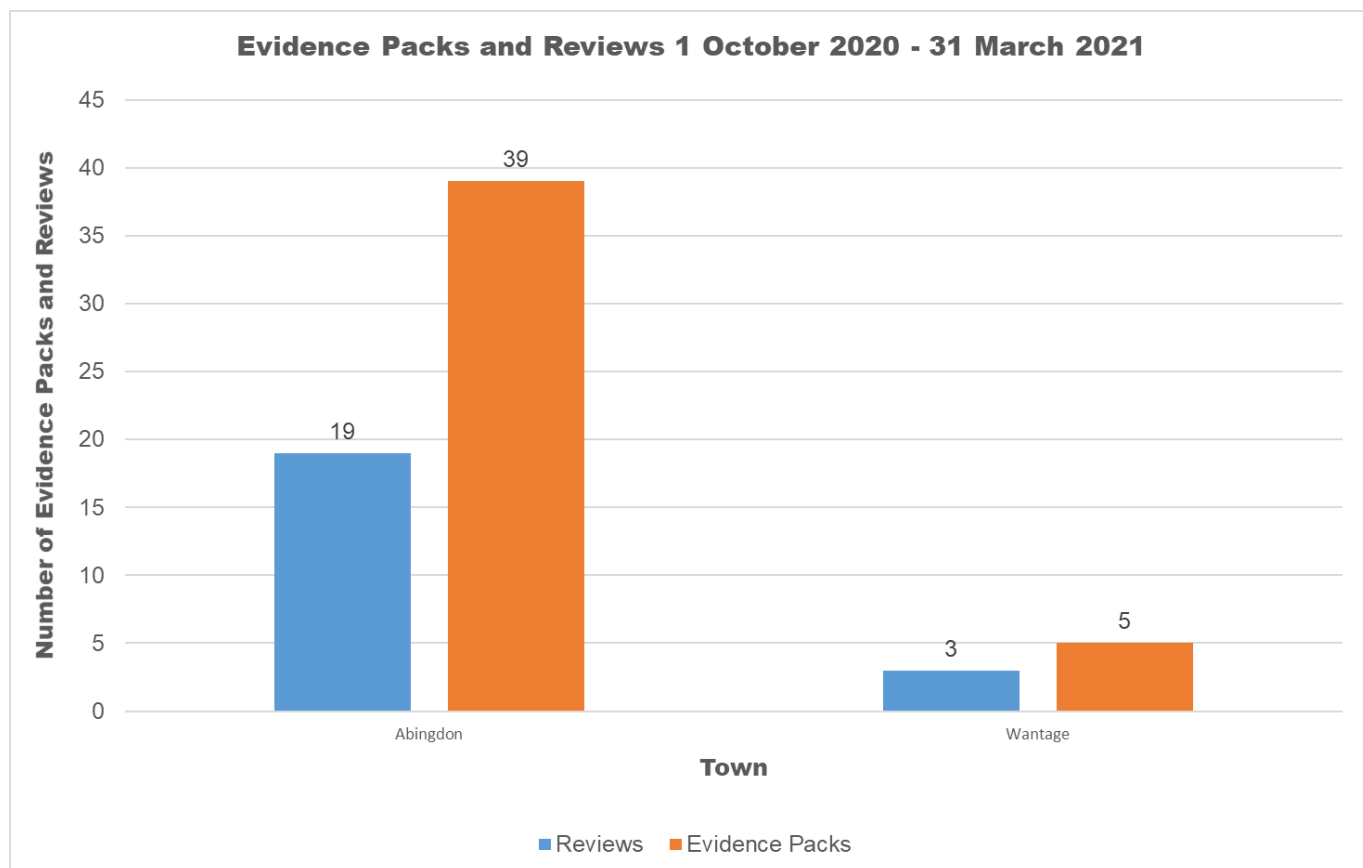
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which the complainant's car has been damaged. All such requests are actioned and replies given. Altogether we received five such requests during this half of the year. We also received three requests from town and district council departments to review footage.

The chart below shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews undertaken as a result of formal written requests.

The evidence packs are the recordings and statements which the CCTV operators produce for police, solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced is termed 'a review'. This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent DVD copy for evidential use.

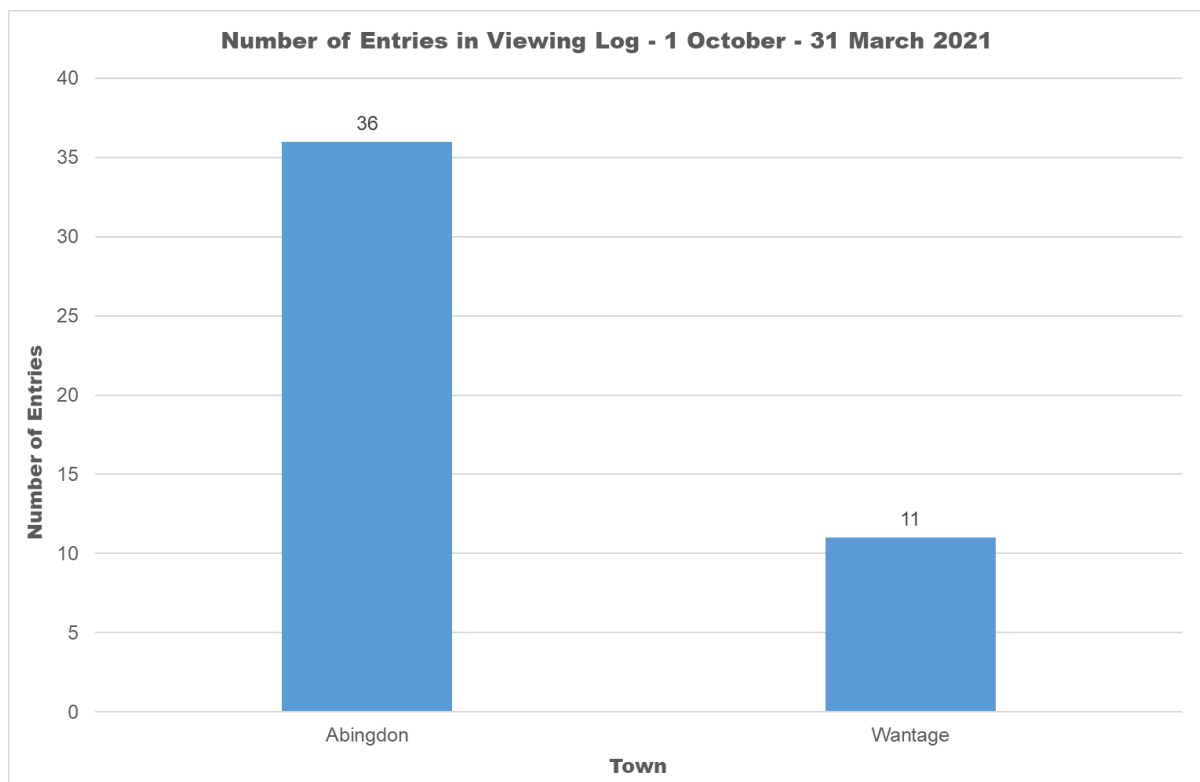
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

At present, we are unable to accommodate visitors in the control room due in the Covid-19 situation (with the exception of CCTV maintenance staff). Therefore, when police officers ask to view footage, these requests are carried out by our operators on their behalf. The following chart reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021 across the two towns.

Please note that the viewing of footage may or may not be followed by a formal written request for footage.



CASE STUDIES

The following are examples of incidents dealt with by CCTV operators during the second half of 2020–21. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Abingdon

Our operator received a call via the Shop Watch Radio Scheme; one of the town centre stores had reported a theft of high value items. They were able to review footage and monitor two men, matching the description given, running through the shopping precinct. From this review, our operator monitored the men getting into a car and quickly passed details to the police control centre as it pulled away. Having received the registration and direction of travel, nearby officers were able to intercept the car and search it. Several thousand pounds worth of goods were found and all five occupants were arrested on suspicion of theft.

The police control centre requested that our operator look out for a woman riding a bike at people and using foul and abusive language. Having used several cameras, moving outwards from the woman's last known position, our operator located an individual matching the description in the town centre. Officers were alerted and our operator advised them as they were on route. The woman was stop checked and given very strong words of advice regarding her future behaviour in public.

The police control centre requested that our operator monitor for a young woman who had been reported missing, with concerns over her welfare. Our operator located a person matching the description and relayed information to the police. Officers quickly attended the location and were able to confirm that the young woman was indeed the missing person and returned her to a place of safety.

Wantage

Reports came in over the police radio of a man who appeared to be very intoxicated and was about to drive off in his car. From the description given, our operator was able to locate the vehicle and confirmed that the man was preparing to drive off. As a matter of urgency, our operator streamed images to the police control centre so that their operator could give running commentary to officers attending. The vehicle was stopped, and the man subsequently arrested on suspicion of driving offences.

The police control centre asked our operator to review camera footage; an assault had just recently taken place and officers were seeking to gather evidence as they had detained a suspect. Our operator was able to report back on footage from the review and subsequently produced an evidence pack for officers to use in moving their case forward.

A group of six/seven young teenagers were reported to be intoxicated in the Market Place and their behaviour was such that it was putting themselves, pedestrians and passing motorists in danger. Although they were no longer in the Market Place, our operator located the group by reviewing camera footage and noting their direction of travel. This was relayed to the police control centre and officers attended. As no offences had taken place the group were sent on their way with strong words of advice and our operator monitored to make sure they complied.

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