This month I am targeting **AVOIDABLE and PREVENTABLE CRIMES.**

Key areas that must be at the front our prevention work under that heading are as follows.

Vehicles, Sheds and Garages (in rural areas we add Barns and Stables)

We must win the constant battle to ensure residents leave nothing whatsoever on show in a vehicle when parked especially last park up for the night.
When parking I am asking drivers to adopt Pete's 10 second rule". Park a vehicle, lock it and stand and look inside the vehicle. If you can see something so can a criminal and your vehicle is at risk, and you could be a victim of crime!
Areas for residents to risk asses are....

1. Outside your home address
2. Parking at somewhere like a Railway Station where criminals will tour around as they know vehicles are there for some time. Parking in rural areas and going off for walks.
3. Visits away from home in shopping centre car parks/cinemas etc.



The worst example I can give however is the next time you attend a funeral look what is says in the car park. THIEVES OPERATE IN THIS CAR PARK.
Why? because we are not at our best at funerals, we dread a mobile phone going off albeit we checked it is off 10 times. We leave it in the glove box. Ladies leave handbags under the front seats. Criminals know this and they know the car will be left for about 45 minutes. AVOIDABLE and PREVENTABLE!
Please try to keep all outbuildings, sheds, garages, barns, and stables as secure as possible.
Especially look at shed security. Do not keep expensive items in a shed with just a nail holding the door shut.

Criminals especially in dark winter hours will be looking for easy targets like sheds and garages. Good locks and lighting can help. Chain items together in sheds, anything to slow down “chancers and opportunists”.



Sadly, many of the shed break ins are carried out to steal items to fund a drug habit. Items often targeted are bikes, golf clubs, expensive fishing tackle and tools.

The next **AVOIDABLE and PREVENTABLE CRIME is**
Theft of internet shopping parcels off of doorsteps.

Firstly, you are vulnerable to a passing “chancer and opportunist” who is passing and there is a parcel to pick up! We now must accept that delivery vans are followed so the most rural and outlying properties can be a victim of crime.
Please try to ensure safe delivery are made.



CRIME

Parcel thefts rise from doorsteps as gangs follow courier vans



You will recall that last year a series of high-end keyless cars were taken across East Kent. Approximately 40 vehicles. Thankfully several of the criminals were arrested and put before the courts. Vigilant work by Neighbourhood Watch members assisted those arrests and were thanked by the crime squad.

Recently that crime has returned to Ashford District, so I am alerting all communities to be alert and vigilant and ensure the safety and security of your keys is a number one priority.



Above shows criminal approaching a keyless car. The backpack contains a form of reading device for the car keys.
It is essential that anyone seeing these events calls 999 immediately. These events were failed attempts thankfully however on this occasion these criminals toured about 10 other roads nearby.
These events were in recent weeks in Kennington and a keyless car was taken in Bethersden over the weekend 27th/28th January.

Community assistance

> Detective Constable Scott Drake, Kent Police's investigating officer, said: 'These three men were relentless in their targeting of cars to steal and quickly take out of the county.
>
> 'I would like to thank the local Neighbourhood Watch coordinators who worked tirelessly to obtain crucial CCTV footage and for the support of the local communities in providing important evidence in this case.
>
> 'I am pleased our meticulous investigation saw these men arrested and charged, and they are now no longer at liberty to steal people's property.'

The sentences come two weeks after two other men were jailed for a total of five years for similar offences.

Advice

Following the cases, drivers of cars with keyless entry systems are advised to take steps to ensure their vehicles are secure. Motorists should:

- Check if their entry fobs can be turned off overnight and store them away from any household entry points.
- Drivers can also store their fobs in special foil-lined bags, which can be bought from retailers, to prevent any unwanted communication between the vehicle and its keys.
- Make sure you don't leave your car keys visible from the outside of your home and park in a garage, secure car park or well-lit area covered by CCTV if possible.
- Consider having windows etched with the vehicle registration number or use an invisible ink marker pen to mark these details and your postcode on the underside frame of the vehicle.

For more information, visit **the advice page on our website**.

Preventing car and vehicle theft

Don't let thieves get an easy ride. Follow these simple rules to protect your vehicle from thieves.

1. Lock your vehicle

Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open.

It is actually illegal to leave your vehicle running unattended while you de-ice it or warm it up in cold weather. If someone takes it while it's left like this, your insurer won't pay out because you won't be covered.

If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

2. Keep the keys safe

Vehicles today are by and large more difficult to steal than ever, unless the thief can access your key or fob to clone them. Keep your keys safe, out of view when at home, and away from your front door. It's not uncommon for car keys to be stolen from inside your home by thieves fishing for them with a stick and hook through the letterbox.

If you're selling your car and you meet up with a potential buyer, do not allow the keys out of your sight. Your keys may be cloned by thieves and used later to steal your vehicle.

Keyless entry

Cars with keyless entry unlock automatically when the key comes within a short distance of the car. This can be from inside a pocket or bag. If you have to push a button on your car key to open your car, you don't have keyless entry.

Keyless car theft or 'relay theft' is when a device is used to fool the car into thinking the key is close by. This unlocks the car and starts the ignition.

Thieves only need to be within a few metres of your car key to capture the signal, even if it's inside your home. This means that even if your car and home are secure, thieves can still unlock, start and steal your car.

How to protect your keyless entry car

- When at home keep your car key (and the spare) well away from the car.
- Put the keys in a screened or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag and check if the bag or pouch is still working every few months.
- Reprogramme your keys if you buy a second hand car.
- Turn off wireless signals on your fob when it's not being used.

Additional physical security such as locks and immobilisers are still highly recommended. Section six on this page has more information about this.

Additional physical security can help to prevent your vehicle being driven away even if a thief gains entry. There are a range of security rated products tested by **Sold Secure** that can help, such as steering wheel locks, pedal boxes and gear stick locks.

Some of these products, tested to Sold Secure Diamond, can even resist a small hand-held angle grinder.

It's also worth speaking to your vehicle dealership about installing an aftermarket immobiliser approved by the manufacturer.

Immobilisers prevent a vehicle from starting unless the correct fob, key or activation process is used. They can be personalised so that you're the only one who knows how to unset it via a number of dashboard controls.

The above guidance will be helpful and safe storage of keys for keyless ignition cars are essential.

A key part of the Action plan for 2024 is to ensure ALL CRIMES ARE REPORTED.
It allows proactive patrols to be planned. It allows the best possible crime prevention advice to be issued. It allows us to help plot crime trends and warn areas nearby. It allows us to assist officers with investigations and builds a full picture of the crime trends and extent of the crimes.

By phone

Emergency **999**

Call **999** if:

- a serious offence is in progress or has just been committed
- someone is in immediate danger or harm
- property is in danger of being damaged
- a serious disruption to the public is likely

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000.**

Or text us on **999** if you've pre-registered with the **emergencySMS service**.

British Sign Language (BSL) users please use our **video relay service** where an interpreter will help you report the crime to us.

Silent 999 calls

If you're in danger but you can't talk on the phone, you should still call **999**, then **follow these instructions** depending on whether you're calling from a mobile or a landline.

Non-emergency **101**

Call **101** for non-emergency enquiries.

Please use **01622 690 690** if you're calling from outside of the UK. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service on **18000**.

Anti-terrorist hotline **0800 789 321**

Call the UK Anti-Terrorism Hotline on **0800 789 321** if you've seen or heard something that you think could suggest terrorist activity.

The three main methods for reporting to the police are 999, crimes in progress or have just happened or about to happen.

101 non urgent calls to Police Force Control

Report online/live chat to Force Control.

However, in rural areas and considering travel times I urge residents to use 999 and let Kent Police Force Control room prioritise.



Thank you for your support,
Peter

Peter New
91725 Peter New Kent Police Volunteer & Community neighbourhood Watch.