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Inverness Area Command Newsletter – May 2023

This newsletter features updates on the work carried out across the Inverness area command area of the following teams and officers:

- Community Beats Team
- City Centre Team
- Divisional Alcohol & Violence Reduction Team
- Inverness School Link Officer
- Inverness Rurals – Beauly/Fort Augustus

These teams work alongside the response '999' shifts in addition to other Police teams and units based in the Highlands, examples – child protection, roads policing and firearms licensing.

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Community Beats

Community Beats Team

Your current community beat team is, from left to right –

Sergeant Brian Bisset, PC Jo Barclay, PC Laura Kerr, PC Cailean MacLeod, Inspector Stuart Fitzpatrick, PC Keith Whitelaw (school link officer) PC Katie Johnstone and PC Stuart Connell.

Community Beat officers cover the whole of the city of Inverness area and the rural beats of Ardersier, Daviot, Tomatin and Strathdearn.



Road safety

The community beats team has been working closely with various schools across the city during 'drop off' and 'pick up times'. Utilising our parking buddies and patrols at peak times, Bishops Eden Primary have noticed a significant improvement with less cars parking on the zigzag lines. However this remains an issue with parents rushing in at the last moment and parking without care and attention to the safety of the children and ignoring parking restrictions. This has a direct impact on the safety of children entering or exiting a school. We will continue to focus our efforts on dangerous parking outside schools.

PC Whitelaw joined Dalneigh Primary's school walk to provide assistance with road crossing and meet with the students.

Following reports of speeding the following areas have had a Police presence with the Pro-laser 'speed-gun': Old Edinburgh Road, Leachkin Road and Balnakyle Road.

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The community beats team has received various complaints about parking issues in Drakies, Raigmore and Hilton. Whilst enforcement of parking specific offences is a matter for the Highland Council and their traffic wardens to enforce as they were decriminalised several years ago, Police will tackle instances of dangerous parking which is a specific offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988. Examples of dangerous parking – parking on zig zags outside schools at end of school day or parked right across a road junction.



A lot of the parking issues reported to the community beat officers are inconsiderate and annoying parking rather than specific offences. Whilst there was a law made by the Scottish Government regarding parking on pavements it is yet to come into force legally. The community beat team has received various reports of abandoned motor vehicles, Police

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Scotland has no jurisdiction to remove abandoned motor vehicles, this is a matter which Highland Council who have the powers to remove and dispose of abandoned motor vehicles.

Anti-social behaviour

There has been a number of reports of vandalism in Whin park, Walker park, Macdonald park and park at the rear of the Raigmore community centre. Community beat officer have increased their patrols on cycle and foot and will continue to mount high visibility patrols during the summer months.



There has been ongoing anti-social behaviour within Glenurquhart cemetery, this has consisted in fire raising causing damage to green bins and a bench, and also knocking over grave stones. Extra patrols have been carried out as a result and with assistance of the dog section, and response teams. The community beats team is working with the HQ based preventions and interventions team to make contact and assist with any advice to prevent/deter anti-social behaviour. A social media appeal has been released by the cemetery and shared to our Facebook page. We are actively working with PC Whitelaw (school link officers) and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in order to deliver fire safety inputs to older high school students.

PC Macleod has continued to engage with local shops and businesses across Inshes, Hilton, Raigmore and Drummond areas of Inverness in particular those selling alcohol and tobacco to ensure the shops are complying with relevant licensing laws whilst reassuring the staff that Police will deal effectively with those who are abusive towards shop staff asking people for age identification.

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PC Barclay has been making extensive foot and cycle patrols in the Raigmore estate following several complaints of anti-social antics including vandalism and underage drinking of alcohol near to the community centre. PC Barclay has engaged with the Raigmore community centre staff, youth worker and the local residents to work together to tackle the roots causes of the anti-social behaviour.



Drugs

Following reports of drug dealing activity in the around Glendoe Terrace, Wyvis Place, Esk Road, Oldtown Road and Kintail Crescent community beat officers we have provided extra patrols in that area in addition to the Divisional Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit carrying out uniform and plain clothes patrols.



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The following areas continue to highlight higher levels of drug activity; Merkinch, Hilton and Raigmore Estate. We continue to target patrols to areas highlighted by the community and rely on information provided as the 'dealers' will often move from one area to another following continued Police presence, for example lanes and other areas not immediately visible from the road.

PC's Macleod, Johnstone, Barclay and Connell has been working closely with the Hilton, Raigmore and Merkinch communities gathering information regarding drug dealers operating in the area to enable the Community Investigation Unit to take enforcement against drugs dealers. Furthermore work to disrupt person/s involved in drug dealing via closely working with various departments of the Highland Council.

Tackling the scourge of drug dealing and the associated criminality it brings to an area such as feuds, drug debts, those armed with knives and drug fuelled anti-social behaviour is critical to improving the well-being of the communities in Inverness city.

Information regarding those involved in the misuse and supply of illegal drugs is crucial to enable Police enforcement activity. Information can be passed anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800555111 or in strict confidence to your local community beat officer.

Community Engagement

PC Johnstone had the opportunity to visit High view Care Home, and chat with the residents during their weekly 'chit chat café'. She was able to provide an insight into her work in the community and also hear some interesting stories from the residents.

PC Macleod has regularly been carrying out extensive foot and cycle patrols around the East side of the city of Inverness focussing on areas where criminal activity has occurred, anti-social hot-spots and making contact with members of the community out and about. Regular visible patrols out in the community enable the local community to easily speak with their local officer and feel reassured by seeing Police out patrolling areas where crime has and is occurring.

PC Connell has worked closely with Merkinch Primary in securing a space for a number of the pupils to attend The Ledge climbing centre. This allows children who might not be able to participate in such an activity benefit from the centre.

Further to this PCs Connell and Johnstone are looking to secure funding to allow the program to run into the summer and assist in engaging the young people positively into healthy and physical activities to deter their involvement in anti-social antics. The officers will accompany the children, building better relationships and intervening where they may be at risk of offending/anti-social behaviour. If anyone is aware of funding available for this or similar initiatives, please let us know. We are keen to be involved in early intervention as much as possible for the younger members of the community.

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PC Macleod has attended at Cauldeen and Hilton primary school and delivered drugs and substance talks to the primary 7 pupils. Educating young people regarding the perils of drug misuse and making good choices in life are the key messages in these educational inputs by community Police officers.

PC Macleod has also attended the Cauldeen primary school assembly to deliver an input on respecting people, bullying and cyber bullying. Again educating young people to respect themselves and their communities is key to diverting young people from involvement in anti-social behaviour and becoming responsible citizens.

PC Barclay has attended the youth club at the Raigmore community centre to engage positively with the local youths.

PC Johnstone has attended Merkinch and Dalneigh primary schools. The pupils got to try on Police uniform, ask lots of questions, and given age appropriate safety advice.



The community beats team will be arranging over the coming weeks and months, local community street surgeries across the city. This events are for any member of public to attend in person without an appointment to speak with their local community beat officer to discuss issues relating to crimes, anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and other Police

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related matters. These events will be advertised via the Highlands and Islands Police social media pages.

Other Duties

The team continues to support response shifts, major enquiries, court officer duties and specialism duties – child protection enquiries and mountain rescue team. These abstractions are essential in order to provide an overall Police service to all the communities across the Highlands and Islands.

School Link Officer

PC Whitelaw continues to work across the five secondary schools in Inverness city; Inverness Royal Academy, Charleston Academy, Inverness High School, Millburn Academy and Culloden Academy, spending one day in each school each week. PC Whitelaw's work involves working with the young people and building rapport with the school pupils in order to prevent them engaging in anti-social antics, drugs and crimes.

DAVRU

The Highlands & Islands Divisional Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit have been assisting throughout the division this month, including music events and serious incidents in the Skye area. In total there were 12 days abstracted elsewhere.

Their default duties remained the same, carrying out pro-active patrols around the area of South Kessock and Merkinch.

44 crimes were detected by the team in total, primarily for drugs possession. Four relate to drugs supply.

2 Drugs Warrants were executed in Merkinch, which has led to the commencement of a Class A Drugs Supply investigation.

In Hilton, a house was searched where £8000 of Class B drugs were recovered and 1 male was arrested and charged for drugs supply.

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CITY CENTRE

This is a monthly general overview of the work being carried out by the City Centre Policing Team lead by Inspector Stuart Fitzpatrick. Our officers are currently PC Alan Heap, PC Adam Wilsher, PC Mathew Cameron, PC Lucille Ritchie, PC Ryan McGill, PC Arron Mackenzie and PC Arizona Morence. We are a small team who have the responsibility of policing the city centre of Inverness and all the challenges that this brings. We are regularly supported by our Special Constable colleagues.

It is with great sadness that we say good bye to A/PS Ali Macrae and PC Alan Macdonald who having served in the City Centre for a considerable period of time. I hope you will all join us in thanking them for all their considerable efforts over the years. PS Louise Hay is due to pick up where A/PS Ali Macrae left off and she is looking forward to getting to know her new beat.

Operation Respect

Operation Respect is traditionally associated with the summer and Christmas period's in Inverness when the footfall in the city centre is increased greatly with tourists and the festive celebrations.

The Police Scotland led Operation Respect which has been running for almost 14 years has been a catalyst for providing a focused approach to multi-agency joint initiatives across Inverness, particularly the City Centre and has evolved and expanded over a number of years.

Led by Inspector Fitzpatrick, the multi-agency planning is well underway for the summer period with our partners. This meeting of partners is to ensure that Operation Respect continues to deliver on its core principles in respect of tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, retail crime, alcohol and substance misuse and other associated criminality, supporting those in the night-time economy that require support or assistance and other enhancements to available services which support businesses and the safety and wellbeing of the general public.

We will be having an Operation Respect initiative each pay weekend over the coming months due to address anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance abuse and to support the night-time economy.

City Centre Footfall

Over the month of May there has been 21 Cruise ships booked at a Dock near Inverness and we have experienced a significant increase in footfall accordingly. We anticipate this will continue over the summer months. As always this is a welcome boost to the local economy with local officers engaging with visitors and providing advice and assistance whilst on patrol.

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There has been a marked decrease in the number of youths visiting the city centre due to the return of Schools and increase in activities available at Bught Park. Although we aren't complacent, officers will continue to be engaging with youths with advice and assistance where necessary.

Classic Car Rally

On Saturday 20th May there has been a successful return of the classic car rally which attracted visitors and families from far and wide. Officers were in attendance assisting with traffic management and advice to motorists along with high visibility presence.

City Centre Beat

Officers are routinely patrolling the city centre in an effort to detect, deter, disrupt and reduce instances of antisocial behaviour, street violence, disorder and other areas of criminality such as drug misuse and crimes of dishonesty.

As well as dealing with criminality we are routinely dealing with vulnerable people; providing the help, support and signposting those to agencies and voluntary groups that provide help and assistance. This can be a wide variety of situations from dealing with a medical emergency to missing persons.

During our routine patrols within the city centre we aim to:

- Deal robustly with criminality and pro-actively engage with known offenders in an effort to prevent and deter offences.
- Conduct highly-visible foot patrols for public reassurance.
- Assist vulnerable members of the community.
- Frequently visit licensed premises
- Engage with members of the public, businesses and statutory agencies to gather information on community issues.
- engage, educate and enforce legislation in respect of drivers who are driving irresponsibly within the city centre and those drivers who chose to ignore road restrictions.
- engage with retail, licensed premises staff and residents within the city centre.

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Inverness Rurals

Roads Policing

Roads policing unit and rural section officer continue to carry out high visibility patrols and enforcement activities with a focus on the busy trunk roads and collision 'hot-spots'.

Community Tuesdays

The rural section officers continue to engage with the local community and reach out to residents across the extensive rural beats.



Contact us

Police Scotland can be contacted via a variety of ways. In an emergency and/or when a crime is ongoing, please dial 999 otherwise please use the 101 phone number to report any other crimes or matters.

For non-urgent routines matters or to highlight issues or make contact with specific officers then the following email addresses can be used:

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Inverness rural beats – Beauly / Cannich / Drumnadrochit / Fort Augustus / Foyers:

HighlandsandIslandsBeaulyFortAugustus@scotland.police.uk

For concerns and issues in the city of Inverness area and the rural beats of Ardersier, Daviot, Tomatin and Strathdearn:

HighlandsandIslandsCommunityBeatsInverness@scotland.police.uk

Please be aware that this e-mail address is not monitored 24/7 and is a contact email. Specific crimes should not be reported by these email addresses. Crimes should be reported via the telephone systems 999 or 101.

Any matters raised at community council meetings or specific community concerns should be emailed in and include the following details to enable your enquiry to deal with efficiently:

- Contact name
- Contact phone number
- Details of the issue – times/places/people/history of the issue

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