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Inverness Area Command

Newsletter – July 2024

Introduction:

We are pleased to present the latest edition of our community newsletter, designed to keep you up to date about the activities and initiatives of our local police officers. This newsletter serves as your window into the ongoing work of officers in your area, featuring insights from the City Centre Policing Team, Community Beats team and Fort Augustus / Rural Officer.

Our goal is to provide you with a closer look at the dedicated efforts of our police officers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your communities. We understand the importance of keeping our community members informed and appreciate your continued support as we work together to make our streets even safer and more welcoming.

Thank you for being engaged and informed members of our community. Together we can continue to create a better and safer place for all.

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Community Beats Team

Inspector Emma Wright: Senior officer in charge of Community Beats, Rural and City Centre Policing Team.

Sergeant Brian Bisset: Community Beats line manager and team leader.



PC Keith Whitelaw:
Community officer for;
**Merkinch and South
Kessock.**



PC Katie
Johnstone:
Community officer
for; **Dalneigh,
Torvean, Bught,
Scorguie &
Kinmylies**



PC Cailean Macleod:
Community officer for;
**Hilton, Holm,
Lochardil, Culduthel
and Inshes**



PC Nicola Bain,
Community officer for:
**Smithton, Culloden,
Raigmore, Ardersier
& Croy**

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From the team:

PC Keith Whitelaw: Community officer for; Merkinch and South Kessock.

Over the month of July, I have been involved in various aspects of policing both within and out with the Merkinch and South Kessock community, I have tried to break this down into sections.

- **Response policing support:** I aided response policing teams across Dingwall, Ainess, Tain, and Inverness to cover absences and low officer numbers.
- **Op CORRIE:** I played a part on Operation CORRIE where a number of officers and I attended the Merkinch Community Centre to host an event bringing services together. We hosted the event twice; the first was not very well attended. The second time we took the learnings and advertised the event a little better. It was received very well from those that attended. Watch out for more events like this soon.
- **Engagement with small businesses:** I engaged with small businesses for various reasons, fostering positive relationships and addressing concerns. These interactions allow me to be visible in the community and hopefully be approachable to members of the public.
- **Community patrols:** Patrolled the community in marked police cars, on the bike to engage with residents and deter criminal activity. This is to deter criminality, maintain order and to be readily available within the Merkinch / South Kessock community. We know there are hotspots of activity, I try to be in these areas as much as my duties allow.
- **Addressing drug use and anti-social behaviour:** I've been working with partners to address concerns around drug use and anti-social behaviour, focussing on known hotspots and making my presence known. This is of particular concern in the area, residents all over are being affected by this. I encourage as much reporting as possible to allow Policing to build up a more accurate picture of what's happening, and where.
- **Assisting when needed:** I, alongside other members of the community beats team, assist response policing when searching for missing persons. This month, I, and the team assisted finding numerous vulnerable people that were reported missing.
- **Scam van:** I teamed up with a colleague from another department and we patrolled Merkinch / South Kessock with the 'Scam Van' offering advice and leaflets for the community relating to Frauds / Scams.
- **Tracing wanted persons:** I have undertaken warrant enquiries to find outstanding individuals wanted by the court services. This has been directed by Line managers.
- **Belladrum:** I was tasked along with other officers, to attend Belladrum music festival for policing duties throughout the festival. This took me away from the Merkinch Community itself, however I did meet several people I know from the area who were in good spirits.

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I will be moving on from the role of community beats officer as of the 26th of August 2024. Another officer will have the excellent opportunity to be part of the amazing Merkinch / South Kessock communities.

I wish everyone all the best.

Keith

PC Katie Johnstone: Community officer for; Dalneigh, Torvean, Bught, Scorguie & Kinmylies

I have had a period of leave in July, which means I have had less days this month to be out patrolling my beat. However I have managed to get out on cycle patrol and foot patrol. I continue to focus my patrols to any areas that have been highlighted for drugs/anti-social behaviour.

I am aware of a few lanes within the area of Dalneigh that have become a target for drugs misuse, drinking, vandalism. I have raised this with the community council by email. I am looking to arrange a walk through to highlight their condition. I was hoping to work with the community council to arrange a 'clean up' of the lanes, taking away rubbish, weeding and painting over graffiti. I've also invited an officer from the Preventions and Interventions team to attend the walk through and provide practical advice for deterring criminal activity. I am awaiting a further response from the Community council to arrange this.

I continue to get reports about dirt bikes/ scrambler bikes being used on the canal and surrounding areas. This presents a danger to not only members of the public but also the riders. I would encourage if any bikes are seen in these areas for the Police to be contacted. As you can imagine there are difficult to trace, however we continue to patrol the area.

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I traced a group of youths jumping off a boat on the canal. First and foremost they were warned about their behaviour being on someone else's property. They were also given some safety advice surrounding the water.

I have been advised of an empty property on Lilac Grove, I have been in touch with the empty homes officer. This appears to be attracting antisocial behaviour and I have increased patrols in the area. I would encourage anyone to report any issues coming from the property to both the council and the Police.

During the month I have also being required to carry out other duties. These included child protection enquiries, mental health related incidents, missing people, and court officer.

PC Cailean Macleod: Community officer for; Hilton, Holm, Lochardil, Culduthel and Inshes

Hilton Beat Report – July 2024

Amongst periods of duties elsewhere I have managed to get out and about in across my beats with a focus on the following areas of work:

Drugs & Organised Crime

I continue with a focus on gathering information to enable other departments in Police to carry out enforcement activities. Again, this month, Police have carried out enforcement activities including search warrants focussed on those involved in county lines, organised crime, and the supply of controlled drugs across my beats.

Dishonesties

Unfortunately, some shops in my beats have been subject to a spate of thefts. I have undertaken detailed enquiries which has resulted in two individuals being reported to the Procurator Fiscal for a total of seventeen separate shoplifting offences. I have also managed to engage positively with one of the individuals in attempt to tackle the underlying issues to divert them away from reoffending. Community Policing is often about seeking long term

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solutions for individuals and the community which can't always come about by just arresting a person.

Road Safety

I have managed to carry out a speed check this month at Old Edinburgh Road and will hopefully have more time next month to carry out additional checks in other locations across my beats which have been highlighted as problem areas with speeding motorists.

Community Engagement

I have continued to work closely with housing officers to work together to engage with and manage instances of repeated anti-social behaviour. I have attended the Hilton warm spaces / lunches and linked in the organisers regarding people who require extra support to access the foodbank and have also delivered food. I have managed to get out on foot patrol several times this month alas the weather sometimes has been very wet!

Other duties

I was deployed to Aberdeen for several days to cover a climate protest camp as part my protest liaison officer specialism and have other duties such as covering gaps on response policing shifts, Belladrum music festival and mountain rescue coordination. July is always a very busy month with additional events which place many demands on the Police service.

PC Nicola Bain, Community officer for: Smithton, Culloden, Raigmore, Ardersier & Croy

I have enjoyed my first month working on Beats and have been racking up my step count walking the streets and chatting with the local residents. I have received a positive vibe from everyone I have spoken with about having a community officer in their area.

Sadly the day after I first met with the volunteers at The Barn Church, Culloden they experienced a break in to the community fridge with a substantial amount of food stolen. This had a detrimental impact on the families who appeared the following morning looking for food. The same suspects have now broken in three times and a further attempted break in last week. I arranged for our Preventions and Interventions Team to attend and offer advice on security. We have now identified the suspects and a report is being submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

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Some worried Culloden residents highlighted an issue that lorries which are currently attending at Culloden Academy construction site for the new astroturf are trundling through the 20mph zone on Keppoch Road going past the Primary School and park as opposed to using the 40mph zone on Barn Church Road. I engaged with Morrisons Construction so hopefully the impact of this should reduce with lorries using Barn Church Road instead.

Another traffic worry in the communities is speeding. I carried out a patrol in the 40mph zone in Croachy and hope to continue attending there and in other areas of my Beat.

I was lucky to come across an Ardersier Youth Event during one of my foot patrols and engaged with young persons and their families at the event. The general consensus was Ardersier has been peaceful in the last few months. However I was made aware by the Doctor's surgery that they are experiencing antisocial behaviour within their grounds at night. I arranged for a tasking for response police to pay attention to the area and I have patrolled the area when I have been working in the evenings to try and deter the behaviour.

I also enjoyed meeting with the Enable Community group which meet at Morrisons and is a youth group for children with learning difficulties. We have arranged for a station visit next month for the group.

Out with my community role I have been supporting colleagues by covering shifts as court officer, locus guards and Belladrum.

Drakies, Milton of Ley, Crown & Millburn

There is currently no community beat officer for this area. This vacancy is due to be filled in the coming months. Community beat officers from other areas will continue to try and cover this area in the meantime.

City Centre Policing Team (CCPT):

The City Centre continues to be a very busy place with visitors from far and wide. The City Centre team continue to have numerous interactions with our visitors who are all very complimentary about our city.

Our ongoing issue of youth disorder continues to be a problem and the engagement work of the police team along with all our partner agencies continues. The upcoming youth engagement event is due to take place on the 2nd of August at the Eastgate Centre and an update on this event will be provided next month. The deployment of extra police patrols continues and in time we hope this will address the situation.

The issue of shoplifting continues to be an issue as it is across the country. Over the last month the City Centre team have again had some success regarding this which has resulted

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in several persons being brought into custody and reports being submitted to the courts. This success is only achievable with the assistance of our colleagues in retail, CCTV operators and the BID task team.

During July the team dealt with a report of a stolen defibrillator from Church Street. This was subsequently recovered from the river but unfortunately was not able to be used again. During the enquiry the team identified the person responsible for this theft and they have since been charged and will be reported to the courts in due course.

Disorder and some incidents of violence continue to occur within the City Centre during the evening and during the day. There have been several unsavoury incidents dealt with by the team which has resulted in custodial sentences for those involved. The team remain committed to addressing these incidents and really appreciate the assistance of our colleagues from BID and the security teams deployed at licensed premises.

Fort Augustus/Rural Officer Report:

July has been another extremely busy month in the area surrounding Loch Ness which started with a drink driver being apprehended in Fort Augustus more than five times over the prescribed limit. They were held in custody to appear at Inverness Sheriff Court at a later date.

Following reports of erratic driving, roads policing together with local officers traced a vehicle on A82 whose driver had no insurance. A report will be submitted to Procurator Fiscal. The registered keeper (and passenger) in the vehicle has been reported for permitting his friend to drive with no insurance.

A provisional licence holder was stopped driving a vehicle in Drumnadrochit. They were unaccompanied, not displaying L plates, had no MOT or insurance. A report has been submitted to Procurator Fiscal.

Police Officers undergo annual first aid recertification and carry first aid kits in all our vehicles. We can be the first persons to arrive at incidents and may be required to provide first aid or emergency life support.

Following a multi-agency response to a workplace accident near Fort Augustus a male sadly died from his injuries. A report was submitted to Procurator Fiscal.

Officers traced a high risk missing person from another area in Drumnadrochit. They were provided first aid by police officers and subsequently conveyed to New Craigs Hospital.

After receiving feedback regarding the last 'Street Surgery' in Drumnadrochit, I carried out a second during the evening of Wednesday 24th May at Loch Ness Hub, Drumnadrochit. This was not well attended so it would be useful to hear from local people what would work best.

Finally, I am transferring to J Division (East Lothian) in early August. I have thoroughly enjoyed policing in the Highlands for the past three years, have met some wonderful people

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and have been afforded some amazing opportunities including being flown in HM Coastguard helicopter, providing cover in Skye and Shetland and working with colleagues from across the Highlands at Belladrum Festival!

pictured below



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:

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

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HighlandsandIslandsBeaullyFortAugustus@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

Statistics

Crime statistics for your community council area can be found using the following link –

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/>

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