

Adur NHW Newsletter



Lancing & Sompting Issue

February 2024

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Households who are struggling with the cost of living

A range of extra support is being provided which will be paid to eligible individuals automatically - including the Energy Price guarantee which restricts the amount that you can be charged per unit of electricity and gas, and the Winter Fuel and Pensioner cost of living payment, whereby all those born before the 25th September 1957 will get an extra £300 on top of their Winter Fuel payments.

In addition, there is the UK Government-funded Household Support Fund which is available up to the 31st March this year. Local county councils have been allocated funding by the Department of Work and Pensions to support residents in need. If you are in receipt of benefits, these will not be affected if you receive a payment from a Household Support Fund scheme. Those households seeking further details, or who believe that they meet the criteria for funding, can apply online via the Community Hub application-based element of the scheme on westsussex.gov.uk.

Furthermore, tax-free childcare up to £2000 a year is available (depending on eligibility) for all children in your family to help with the cost of approved childcare. This rises to £4000 a year for disabled children and covers the cost of childminders, nurseries and nannies, plus after-school clubs and play schemes.

Please note that your childcare providers must be signed up to the scheme before you can pay them and benefit from tax-free childcare, so do check with them to ensure that that is the case.

Lastly, don't forget that council tax support is available from local councils and personalised job support is available through Job Help (jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk); also, that tax relief and work-related expenses can always be claimed from HMRC.

www.lancingnhw.org.uk

Domestic violence

Crime statistics for Adur and Worthing in December showed violence and sex offences accounting for more than a third of all crimes recorded. And, given that the Christmas period typically sees a rise in Police responses to domestic abuse incidents, it is likely that women and girls will have been the victims in many of these cases. Domestic violence or abuse is a crime that has a devastating impact on individuals and the community, accounting for a quarter of violent crime in West Sussex. It is estimated that one in every four women (and one in every six men) have been the victims of abuse at some point in their lives.

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

If you feel unsafe in your home because of violence or abuse, or are concerned that someone you know may be at risk, call the Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency (or, if you think it unsafe to speak, you can press 55 on your mobile phone to be transferred to the Police). Other means of support available include:

- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hrs - 0808 2000 247)
- Safe in Sussex (Monday to Friday, 10.00 - 15.00 Hrs - 0330 333 7416)
- WORTH Specialist Domestic and Abuse Service (Monday to Friday, 9.00 - 17.00 hrs - 07834 968539)
- Respect (men's advice line - 0808 8010327).

Sussex Police are currently conducting a survey aimed at collecting information about violence against women and girls (<https://sussexpolicewelcomesyourfeedback.net.vawg23>). The survey is completely anonymous and does not take long to complete, but harassment, threats and verbal abuse on the street remain urgent issues and the results of the survey will be used to improve Police response to them.

Tim Drew

Romance scams

The need to beware of romance scams has never been greater. According to Lloyds Bank, romance scams increased by 30% last year, with victims losing £8,234 on average.

Men represented 53% of reported cases last year, with the South East of England reporting an average of 15% higher than that of other regions. Those aged between 45 and 54 were the most likely to fall victim. But this year, those aged between 65 and 74 have proved most likely to be defrauded; the number of cases amongst this group rising nearly 75% year-on-year, averaging losses of over £12,000.

Romance scammers work by exploiting their victim's emotions, setting up false profiles on dating websites, apps and social media. They try to appeal to the victim's sympathies when asking for money, giving reasons such as having a sick mother who needs an urgent operation but cannot pay for it.

Fraudsters often go to great lengths to win your trust (sometimes sending gifts) and usually ask for lots of your personal information but reveal very little about themselves. Some tell-tale signs that you may be dealing with a fraudster include the following:

- They seem to have fallen in love with you rather quickly
- They soon want to leave the dating site or app for instant messaging, email or text instead
- They claim to be from the UK, but say that they are away working or travelling
- They tell you that they're planning to visit you, but something comes up at the last moment to prevent them from coming

One of these points on their own might be considered innocent. But more than one, together with a request for money, may be a sign that it's a romance scam.

If they send you a photo, you can check that it is really them by using a free reverse image search website and following the advice given. This kind of site searches the Internet to find if an image appears elsewhere with a different name. If it does, then your friend is probably a fraudster.



Lancing Community Hub - Lancing Parish Hall

Thursday 7th March 2024 - 10:00 Hrs to 12:00 Hrs



Memorandum of Understanding

Sussex Police have long extolled Neighbourhood Watch as being the “eyes and ears of the community” when it comes to reporting and sharing information with the police. Only this month, PCC Katy Bourne described Neighbourhood Watch as “an invaluable partner of the police”. But this partnership is one that should work both ways and, at the moment, it does not.

The reason for this is that NHW members have not been receiving any Crime Update Alert messages since June 2023, when the Engagement Officer responsible for collating and sending those messages retired and has not been replaced. These messages are of vital importance as they enable Co-ordinators to warn their members about criminal activities so that they can safeguard their property and neighbourhoods. In addition, when we know that criminality has occurred, our members can report on any suspicious incident, which they would not ordinarily do if they were unaware of such activity.

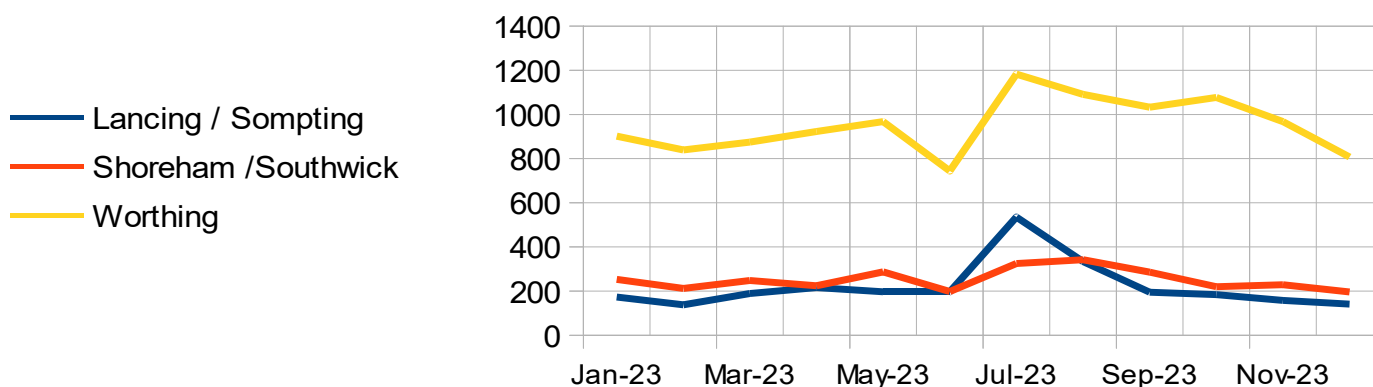
S.34(2) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states that “a Chief Officer of Police must make arrangements for providing persons within each neighbourhood in the relevant Police area with information in that neighbourhood (including information about how policing in that neighbourhood is aimed at dealing with crime and disorder there”. But, in April last year, a report by HM Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services judged Sussex Police “inadequate “ for its recording of data about crime and responding to the public. And the new Memorandum of Understanding between Sussex Police and Neighbourhood Watch is unspecific about Police commitment to providing information.

The loss of the Crime Update Alerts has led to many NHW Co-ordinators becoming disillusioned and leaving Neighbourhood Watch, and it would appear that Sussex is the only county in the country where timely crime reports are not being received. Whilst acknowledging that Sussex Police are handicapped by a heavy workload and a dysfunctional criminal justice system, NHW members could be excused for wondering whether Sussex Police regard them as an irrelevance at best or a nuisance at worst.

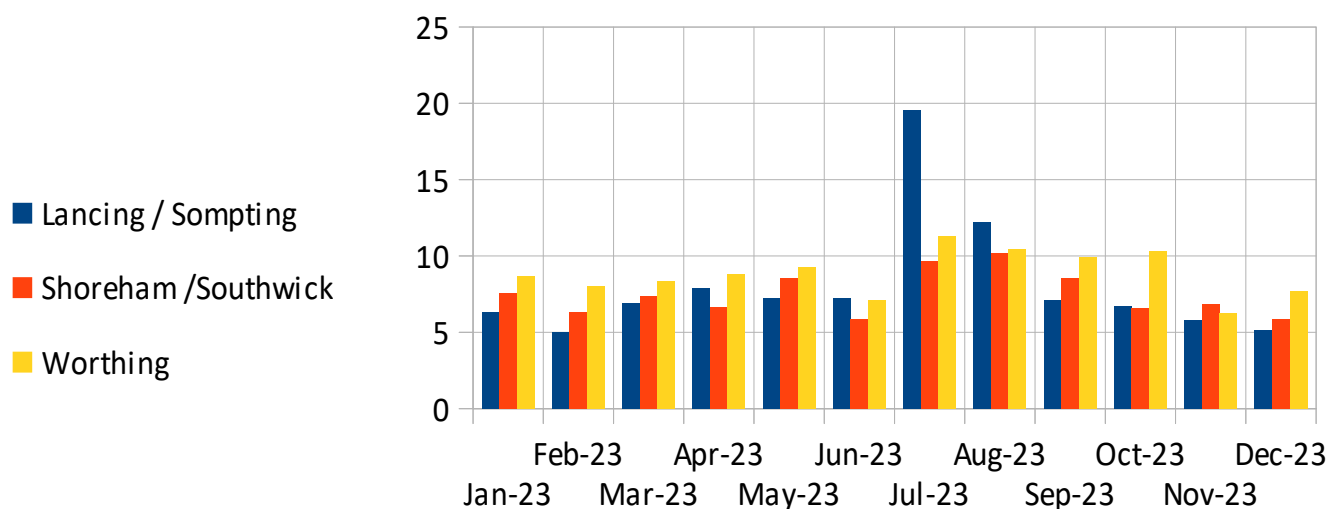
Crime Statistics for December 2023

December 2023	Churchill	Cokeham	Manor	Mashbarn	Peverel	Widewater	Sub Total
Antisocial Behaviour	3	0	4	6	1	5	19
Bike Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary	0	1	0	0	3	0	4
Criminal Damage	4	1	0	3	5	2	15
Drugs	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Other Crime	1	2	1	0	0	1	5
Other Theft	1	1	3	1	2	1	9
Weapons	0	0	0	3	0	2	5
Public Order	3	0	2	1	1	1	8
Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft Shop	2	0	0	5	2	0	9
Theft Person	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Vehicle Crime	1	0	1	1	0	1	4
Violence & Sex Offences	16	4	9	12	6	12	59
Totals	31	9	20	34	20	27	141

Crimes January 2023 to December 2023



Crimes per 1000 of Population



See the latest Alerts at : [https:// worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/](https://worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/)