



James Vaughan QPM MSt (Cantab)
Chief Constable

Martyn Underhill
Police & Crime Commissioner

DORSET POLICE
FORCE HEADQUARTERS
WINFRITH
DORCHESTER DT2 8DZ

DORSET POLICE
FORCE HEADQUARTERS
WINFRITH
DORCHESTER DT2 8DZ

29 May 2020

Dear Colleagues

We are writing to you this week to provide you with an update about how the Force and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) are responding to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and other policing issues in the county.

The previous relaxation of lockdown legislation, coupled with a long period of warm and sunny weather, has seen a huge rise in the number of people travelling into Dorset to visit beauty spots, nature reserves and coastline.

We fully expect this to rise further from Monday 1 June following the Prime Minister's announcement about the public being able to spend more time away from home, undertake more activities and meet up with more people.

As changes are made to our freedom, the police's responsibility in the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced. We cannot enforce Government guidance or advice but still have a responsibility to work with the public with regards to mass gatherings and overnight stays. The onus to do the right thing is very much down to personal responsibility.

Dorset Police is continuing to work alongside our partner agencies to ensure we remind the public to remain alert to avoid further spread of the virus.

Using our 'think twice' campaign, we are urging the public to do the right thing when out and about. We are asking the public to go home or elsewhere if an area looks too busy, keep 2m apart from others and protect and respect Dorset's communities from litter and inconsiderate parking.



www.dorset.police.uk

The county has experienced a number of devastating heath and woodland fires over the last few weeks and Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service has declared the risk of further devastating wildfires as extreme due to current conditions. We are supporting them in asking the public to resist having any form of barbecue or outside fire in these areas.

We were saddened to hear about the tragic deaths that occurred off the coast of Cornwall last weekend and the news of a missing teenage boy who was diving off Portland on Tuesday. In support of the RNLI and HM Coastguard we are reiterating the sea safety message to the public.

We have continued to receive increased reports of people staying overnight in campervans, motorhomes and second homes and our officers will continue to patrol hotspot areas, engage with the people involved and encourage them to go home.

As things slowly return back to normal we expect to see a return of things we have come to experience in the past. We have already seen a rise in reported crime since the lifting of the first phase of the lockdown measures. We would like to reassure you that we are ready to meet any increase in demand, at whatever pace it comes.

We are also waiting on information from the NPCC and the Home Office with regards to the new border restrictions that are due to come into force and what that means for policing.

Monday 1 June marks the start of Volunteers' Week and National Specials Weekend.

The Force's 136 police support volunteers cover 42 different roles and have given up over 9,000 hours of their time since April 2019. Our volunteers support our Force in a broad variety of capacities, ranging from animal welfare to neighbourhood engagement and CCTV operatives to victim support.

In the same period, the Force's 126 Special Constables have contributed in excess of 24,000 hours helping tackle crime in their local area, supporting regular officers by going out on patrol and engaging with the communities.

We are both hugely grateful for the dedication and commitment our Special Constables and volunteers give to the Force and are delighted that the country will be coming together to recognise what they do for Dorset Police and our communities.

The OPCC has now announced that it has issued more than £65,000 of funding to charities that are struggling as a result of the coronavirus pandemic so they can continue providing their existing services or launch new projects.

The funding, provided by the Safer Dorset Fund COVID-19 grants, is intended either as an emergency stop gap for charities struggling financially due to the effects of the virus, for them to help with the emergence of new issues due to social isolation measures or for issues which arise as the UK begins recovering after lockdown measures are lifted.

A total of 21 charities have now successfully applied for the grants, which were announced at the end of April.

Many charities, both here in Dorset and across the country, are providing services which people have relied upon, or are planning work which will prove essential as we slowly ease lockdown measures, and we are both glad that the OPCC team has been able to meet the challenge presented by the pandemic and provide these funds so quickly.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our message that we are now entering a challenging period as the UK begins to emerge from lockdown, and we would ask everyone to consider their actions carefully, respect our local communities, and do their best to ensure there is no spike in cases.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Vaughan'.

James Vaughan
Chief Constable

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martyn Underhill'.

Martyn Underhill
Police & Crime Commissioner