



Avon and Somerset Police
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Taunton

Policing Newsletter

MAY 2026

NEWS FROM ACROSS TAUNTON

Hello and welcome to the Taunton Policing Newsletter for the month of May 2026. As always, the newsletters contain a snapshot of some of the work the Taunton Policing Teams have been involved with in the previous month.

Spring Finally Arrives!

After a long, wet winter that seemed to stretch on forever, we were finally treated to some much-needed sunshine over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend — and it couldn't have been more welcome! Making the most of the warmer weather, our officers dusted off the push bikes and got back out on cycle patrol.



PCs Fitzgerald and Shipton (pictured) were out and about by 8am, targeting our high-priority areas and engaging with members of the public along the way. While the photo below wasn't taken in a priority location, it was captured enroute to one.

By the end of their shift, they had covered an impressive 12 miles, all while progressing investigations and strengthening community engagement. A great example of proactive policing — and a sure sign that spring is finally here!

Taunton robberies – two arrested

In April, we made two arrests following two reported robberies of women on Taunton streets which happened within thirty minutes.

Between 3:30pm and 3:45pm on Monday 27th April a woman in her sixties had several necklaces snatched from her in Hammet Street, causing injury to her neck. About 10 minutes later, a gold chain was pulled off a lady in her nineties nearby Victoria Gate. Thankfully she did not report any injury. Two men were reported to have made off in a car. Officers attended and investigations led to the arrest of two men in Newport, Gwent, by 5:20pm the same day, thanks to support from Somerset Council's CCTV staff, our roads policing units, Gwent Police and the National Police Air Service Helicopter. We also seized a quantity of suspected stolen gold jewellery.

A man in his twenties from Bristol was arrested on suspicion of robbery and driving offences.

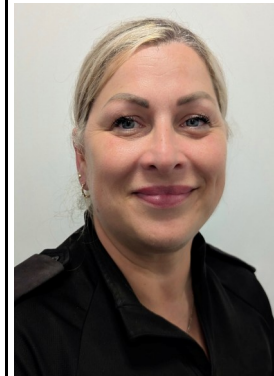
A second man in his late teens, also from Bristol, was also arrested on suspicion of robbery.

Neighbourhood Inspector Steve Jones said:

"This sort of crime causes concern in our communities, but it's highly unusual to see older people targeted in this way."

"Thanks to prompt action from members of the public calling 999 and support from Somerset Council's CCTV team we do now have suspects in custody, so if you have any information and are yet to speak with us, do

MEET THE TEAM



OFFICER

PC Iwona Baird

POLICING AREA

Taunton West

YEARS SERVICE

16

HOBBY

Walking the Dog

FAVOURITE FOOD

Fish and Chips

ABOUT ME

This month's 'Meet the Team' is PC Iwona Baird.

I began my journey with Avon and Somerset Police 17 years ago as a volunteer, working closely alongside the Hate Crime Officer for the Taunton area. That experience inspired me to take the next step, and with the support and encouragement of those around me, I successfully applied for a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) role.

I was proud to be one of the first officers from a diverse background to be employed in Taunton. Over the years, I worked tirelessly to build positive and trusting relationships between local communities and the police across Somerset. One of my proudest achievements was initiating the Taunton Together event nine years ago—an event designed to bring communities together and celebrate unity.

Nine years ago, feeling ready for a new challenge and the next chapter of my career, I applied to become a Police Constable.

Today, I am part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team in Taunton, a role I am deeply passionate about. I care about people, value helping others, and believe strongly in making positive change. Looking back, I truly feel that I have made a difference and built lasting, positive relationships within our local communities. I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone considering a role as a PCSO, Police Officer, or in any civilian position within Avon and Somerset Constabulary to apply—because you really can make a difference.

From the very start of my career, I have felt supported and welcomed by my colleagues. I am extremely proud to be part of the Avon and Somerset Police family and the local policing team, who work tirelessly to support our communities and make things better for everyone.

please get in touch”.

Scam Awareness Week

Scam Awareness Week began on Monday 27 April, and to mark the occasion PCSOs's Andru and Imran (pictured) partnered with staff at Nationwide Building Society following an invitation from the branch.

Together, they offered customers practical advice and guidance on how to recognise scams and take steps to protect themselves. The engagement was extremely well received, with many members of the public showing a keen interest and expressing appreciation for the information shared.

Both PCSOs reported that these conversations helped raise awareness and left customers feeling more confident and informed — hopefully reducing the risk of anyone falling victim to a scam in the future.

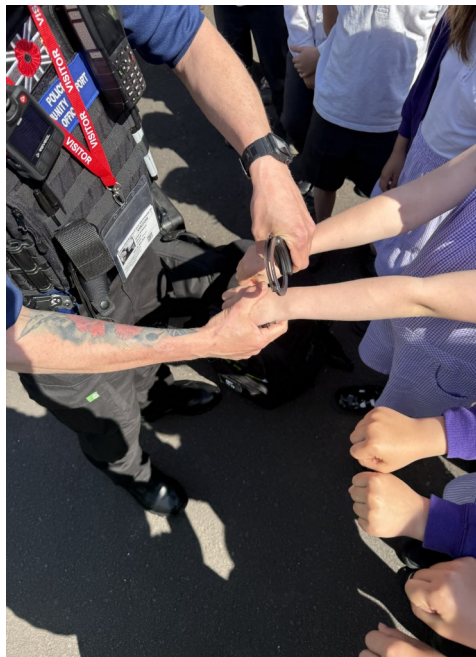


Bishop Henderson School Visit

PCSOs Marshall and Sean recently visited Bishop Henderson Primary School to spend some time with Year 4 pupils.

During the visit, students had the exciting opportunity to explore a real police car and learn about its special features. They also took a closer look at police uniforms and equipment, including the stinger and speed detection device, sparking plenty of curiosity and questions.

Marshall and Sean shared an important message with the children: the police are not just here to catch criminals, but to protect, support and help the community. They encouraged pupils to feel confident saying hello if they see an officer while out and about. The highlight for many was getting to experience being handcuffed with real police handcuffs – an activity that certainly caused lots of excitement and smiles all round!



POLICE EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

Early Warning Signs of Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation can affect any young person, regardless of background. Offenders often use grooming tactics; building trust, offering gifts or attention to gradually pull a child into situations that become risky or criminal. Many young people don't realise they are being exploited, which makes early awareness essential.

Recognising the Signs

While every child is different, certain changes may indicate they are being groomed or exploited. These can include unexplained items or gifts, going missing or staying out late, regularly missing school, or losing interest in activities they once enjoyed. For more information on signs of exploitation, please visit [Protecting children from child criminal exploitation | NSPCC Learning](#)

What You Can Do as a Parent or Carer

Parents can feel powerless when something doesn't feel right, but there are practical steps you can take that will make a difference.

Keep Communication Open

Start conversations gently and avoid blame or confrontation. Approaching a young person in this way helps them feel listened to and safe, which can make them more willing to open up. Keeping communication open also gives you the opportunity to support them and help them navigate the situation.

Strengthen Digital Safety

Grooming is increasingly happening online, making digital safety an important protective factor. You can support your child by:

- Enabling built in phone safety features, including location tracking (Find My iPhone, Google Family Link).
- Setting screen time limits and content filters using parental control settings.
- Using reputable monitoring tools that help identify concerning patterns such as messages from strangers, explicit content, or manipulative behaviour.

- Reviewing social media privacy settings to ensure they only communicate with people they know.

For more digital safety guidance, visit: [Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#)

Trust Your Instincts

If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts. You know your child better than anyone. Try to keep communication open and keep a note of any signs that concern you. Over time, these small details can help safeguarding professionals build a clearer understanding of what may be happening. If you are worried, please reach out for help early. Early intervention can make a huge difference. You can contact:

- Police (non-emergency 101) or report online via [Report a crime or incident | Avon and Somerset Police](#).
- Children Social Care, information can be found here [Report a Concern - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- Your child's school safeguarding lead and charities such as the NSPCC, who offer confidential advice and guidance.

FRAUD AWARENESS

⚠ Cash Safety Reminder – Spotting Counterfeit Bank Notes ⚠

Most people who encounter a counterfeit bank note do so without realising. Unlike the note above, it can be really hard to spot counterfeit notes. We have recently seen a rise in reports of the use of counterfeit notes. Knowing a few simple things to look for can help protect you from financial loss and worry.

Trust Your Senses

Genuine UK bank notes (now made of polymer) have a **distinct feel**:

- They feel **slick and flexible**, not waxy or overly smooth
- Raised print can be felt on areas like the main wording and the Queen/King's portrait. If a note feels unusual, it's worth taking a closer look.

Check Key Features

How to Spot a Fake Bank Note

- **Look at the clear window**—Real £20 notes have a clear plastic window with a picture of the King or Queen in it. The edges should be sharp and clear, not cloudy.
- **Tilt the note**—A shiny silver patch on the front should change words when you move the note, such as changing from “Twenty” to “Pounds”.
- **Feel the note**—Some parts of a real note feel slightly raised, especially the words “Bank of England” and the number.
- **Don't trust marker pens**—Fake note pens don't work properly on modern plastic notes and shouldn't be relied on.
- **Compare if unsure**—If something feels wrong, compare it with a note you know is real. Differences are easier to spot together.
- **Use safer payments if you can**—Bank transfers can be safer than cash. If you do take cash, check each note carefully before handing anything over.

Look for Consistency

If you're handed multiple notes:

- Compare them with each other
- Genuine notes should look and feel **the same**—A single note that looks different from the rest is worth checking.

If you're unsure about a note

If something doesn't feel right:

- **Don't spend it or accept it**
- Take it to **your bank**, who can check it safely and advise you
- Banks deal with this regularly and can help without judgement
- Be conscious when selling things via social media or taking cash payment for any item.



COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

For those that don't know what 'Community Speedwatch' is, it is where volunteers from the local community carry out speed monitoring checks on specific roads across the community.

The aim of Community SpeedWatch is to make motorists who speed through residential neighbourhoods aware of the impact their actions have on local residents, or the danger they pose to other road users and pedestrians. This is something we are working with communities to address.

The 14 CSW groups in the Taunton area operate in a variety of environments with different speed limits and traffic flows. The urban sites that they operate at have far higher traffic flows with typically 500 to 1400 vehicles per hour whereas the rural sites have approximately 50 to 200 vehicles an hour. However the rural sites have a higher proportion of speeders. Unfortunately the 20mph limits have a higher proportion of speeders whether they are an urban site or rural.

Activity during April

Over the month of April, **7** out of the **14** Community Speedwatch schemes in Taunton have been visibly active across the different communities. From the **27** sessions that took place, **6,817** vehicles have been monitored by our Speedwatch volunteers. From those, a total of **189** letters have been sent out to drivers that have not adhered to the speed limit.

The Community Speedwatch is a great service that greatly assists the Constabulary in reducing speed across the communities. Should you wish to join an existing Speedwatch, or would like to set one up for your area, you can find more information here:

[Community SpeedWatch | Avon and Somerset Police](#)



CRIME STATISTICS - MARCH 2026

(Latest information available to the public online)

Category	Crimes Recorded
Anti-social behaviour	89
Bicycle Theft	14
Burglary (Including Commercial Burglary)	28
Criminal Damage & Arson	51
Drugs	9
Other theft	44
Possession of weapons	10
Public Order	83
Robbery	13
Shoplifting	110
Theft from the person	1
Vehicle Crime	30
Violent Crime	365
Other Crime	19

You can access and find out more about crime statistics for a specific area by clicking either of these two links:

[Your area | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

[Avon and Somerset Constabulary | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

What I would like to reassure you all with regards to these statistics is that certain crime types are grouped together in one category. On our systems we can see far more detailed information, but for what we are allowed to share with the public, crime types are grouped together.

For example one of the categories above is '**Violent Crime**'. Domestic incidents fall within that category and Domestic incidents are one of the most common type of incidents we as the Police attend. If you would like to know the definition of what a Domestic relationship is, you can find it here:

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Hopefully this somewhat reassures you of why the number of crimes within that category are high.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events where you can speak with a member of the Taunton Neighbourhood Policing Team.

- Rural Crime Prevention — First Saturday of the Month 12pm-2pm Unicorn Saddlery in Hatch Beauchamp
- Trull Community Centre — Saturday 23rd May 10am—11am.
- Beat Surgery and Bike Marking — Priorswood Community Centre — 28th May 10am—11am.

“To recognise always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.”

TAUNTON POLICE STATION

The Deane House, Belvedere Road,
Taunton, TA1 1HE

Opening Times

Monday: 08:30—16:30

Tuesday: 08:30—16:30

Wednesday: 08:30—16:30

Thursday: 08:30—16:30

Friday: 08:30—16:30

Saturday: CLOSED

USEFUL LINKS

STREET SAFE

StreetSafe is an online tool that can be used by anyone to anonymously tell us about public places where they have felt or feel unsafe.

You might have felt unsafe in your local area due to anti-social behaviour or environmental factors, such as a lack of street lighting. We encourage you to share your experience using the StreetSafe tool.

The information you provide will be considered alongside evidence already gathered by police forces and will be used to inform policing and local authority safety activities within your community.

Link to Website to report:

[StreetSafe | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](#)

KEEP UP TO DATE



Facebook is a great way to keep up to date with your local Neighbourhood Policing team. Follow us on:

Facebook: [West Somerset and Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)

GET IN TOUCH

In an emergency always call 999

For non-emergency matters call us on 101 or report online via

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report](#)

Contact the Neighbourhood Team directly:

[SomersetWest-](#)

[NPT@avonandsomerset.police.uk](#)

To report a crime anonymously, contact

Crimestoppers on

0800 555 111 or visit

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](#)

