

Letter from Isle of Wight Superintendent Sarah Jackson 30/07/2020 12:17:21 [332595]

alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk <alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk>

Thu 30/07/20 12:17

To



HAMPSHIRE
CONSTABULARY



Letter from Isle of Wight Superintendent Sarah Jackson

Dear fellow island resident,

In recent weeks, we have seen a number of restrictions lifted, allowing much greater interactions with friends and family, which I know personally, has been very welcomed. As before, the overwhelming majority of the public have complied with health regulations and the wider guidance. This has meant our police officers have rarely had to resort to enforcement.

The changes earlier this month, which saw licensed premises and other settings opening again largely saw people behaving in line with the regulations. Both the Local Authority and our own police licensing teams, in advance of the changes, worked with those licensed premises to support the changes.

Compliance with the regulations to manage the spread of Coronavirus has always been high on the Island and this must continue.

There is evidence to suggest that, when used correctly, face coverings may reduce the likelihood of someone with the infection passing it on to others, particularly if they are asymptomatic i.e. have no symptoms.

The government is telling the public to play their part and wear face coverings in order to help fight the spread of the virus, enabling further easing of national restrictions. The responsibility for wearing a face covering sits with individuals.

Whilst we are confident people will abide by the new rules around face coverings, we will expect retailers to take responsibility for the safety of staff and customers as well as communicating the requirements to customers.

This is a joint effort between the retail sector, customers, and the police. This is particularly important as demand on the police increases as the lockdown eases. In England, you must wear a face covering by law in the following settings:

- public transport
- indoor transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- shops and supermarkets (places which are open to the public and that wholly or mainly offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- indoor shopping centres
- banks, building societies, and post offices (including credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses)

You are expected to wear a face covering immediately before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave.

You are also strongly encouraged to wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing may be difficult and where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Face coverings are also needed in NHS settings, including hospitals and primary or community care settings, such as GP surgeries. They are advised to be worn in care homes. Individual settings may have their own policies and require you to take other measures

As with other Coronavirus regulations, we will follow an approach of engaging, explaining and encouraging, only using enforcement as a last resort. There are occasions where there may be a reasonable excuse for not wearing a face covering and my officers will establish this as they engage with the person concerned.

We have continued with our directed patrols plans and we use intelligence and calls from the public to inform these plans and help us identify issues, but as the restrictions ease this becomes more challenging, particularly as the demand for policing services is returning to normal levels for this time of year.

We continue to work closely with our partners through the Local Resilience Forum structure and indeed in terms of the Local Outbreak Plans, which are being led by the Local Authority through the Director of Public Health, Simon Bryant.

We are keen to ensure the things we have learnt through this period are not lost, one of which has certainly been how best to communicate with our communities. One of the resounding successes appears to have been our Facebook page with the infamous Insp Matt and others. We now have a number of officers who keep you updated and whilst I appreciate not everyone uses Facebook, we do have now have in excess of 15,000 followers and the feedback is that people are feeling far more connected so thank you for engaging with us. Don't forget you do not need a Facebook account to follow us.

Whilst we will look to re-instate our traditional engagement methods, in a Covid safe way, we will also look at how we can do this online as well.

Despite the pandemic, policing will still always carry on as usual, as our priority is to keep you protected. I want all Islanders to be reassured that we have not lost focus on the issues affecting our communities, or that we have become complacent to the fact that other forms of crime still continue to be committed by those who seek to cause us harm.

My officers work tirelessly through all hours of the day and night, and I could think of countless examples of the excellent work they have conducted and the things they have achieved recently.

Here are just a few examples. Our teams have been carrying out regular drugs warrants across the Island, which have resulted in numerous arrests and seizures of illegal substances. Disrupting drugs supply and the associated violence that comes with it is a priority on the Isle of Wight, so you can expect to see much more of this work being carried out.

This is not just limited to warrants, however. There is a lot of partnership work that wraps around this, and in terms of policing activity, our officers also use stop and search powers, as well as vehicle search powers, under section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act. It is vital that we are accountable for the use of this power. This is why members of our Independent Advisory Group scrutinise a proportion of the searches on a regular basis to ensure that the search has been conducted with the appropriate grounds.

The Independent Advisory Group is made up of members of our community who provide scrutiny, challenge and the community perspective on policing here on the Island. If you are interested in becoming a member then you can find out more on our website. Visit www.hampshire.police.uk and search for 'Independent Advisory Groups'.

Notable charges we have secured recently include for offences such as GBH, assaults on emergency workers, and a man who was charged with a raft of offences including shoplifting, using counterfeit currency and drugs offences.

Turning to the courts now. David Berridge, a 27-year-old man from Gurnard, was jailed in July for more than two years for robbing a convenience store in Cowes. Meanwhile, 40-year-old Dean Norris from East Cowes was brought before the courts and admitted being threatening and abusive towards our staff at the front counter in Newport Police Station.

Our Station Enquiry Officers are here to assist the public and do not deserve to be subjected to this kind of behaviour. No emergency worker does, and we have a zero tolerance stance to this type of offending.

As we began to move towards summer, concerns were raised to the police about the standard of driving on the Island, particularly in light of serious and, sadly, fatal collisions that have occurred on our roads.

Our dedicated roads policing/armed response officers teamed up with mainland roads policing officers to carry out a traffic operation. The aim was to tackle dangerous driving and speeding, particularly in the Military Road and West Wight area.

It was a great piece of work, with 52 tickets handed out to motorists, as well as a couple of drug driving arrests, vehicle searches, and an opportunity for officers to engage with some of the local motorcycle groups.

This was not just a one off, however. There will be more to follow from this team and we intend to update you on this in the near future. Keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages and the local press.

Whilst the changes involving licensed premises was largely complied with, in the Shanklin area in July, we did need to utilise our powers under Section 35 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which gives officers the power to disperse groups of people. Fortunately, we found that officers did not have to resort to using these powers, as the groups generally complied with police and dispersed without issue, but this gives you an insight into the sort of tactics we have at our disposal to respond to the issues you report in to us.

In July, the investigation into the death of Yvonne Copland, who was killed in a collision on Forest Road in April 2019, finally concluded through the courts. A lot of hard police work went into bringing the prosecution, and I was humbled by the words of Yvonne Copland's family who were quoted in the press thanking Hampshire Constabulary for the thorough work that was carried out.

This case was tragic, and it is sometimes forgotten that these sorts of cases have a profound emotional impact on the police officers and staff involved in these investigations and, as in this case, on all the emergency workers who were involved in the response on the day itself. Having met a number of them, I can truly say that the professionalism and commitment to working together was exemplary with the aim of helping to save lives.

Finally, I do want to emphasise that whilst there has been a welcomed easing of restrictions, it is important to remember that we must all continue to do all we can to

protect each other from the spread of the disease. This includes continuing to maintain social distancing and now the wearing of face coverings.

Yours faithfully
Sarah Jackson
District Commander
Isle of Wight

Message Sent By

Jack Backwell (Police, Corporate Communications Officer, Hampshire Corporate Communications)