

Police Update April 2016

A 37 year old local female has been arrested and charged with a number of offences relating to the thefts of charity boxes from shops and unattended purses/wallets from various locations in Brackley and surrounding villages. This arrest came after she was identified by local officers from description and CCTV footage. A number of other offences then came to light that had not been initially reported to Police. The female appeared at Northampton Magistrates Court on 28th April and was given a 12 month Community Order and a drugs rehabilitation order. Whilst this sentence may be disappointing given the nature of the offences it does seek to address the cause of the offending and prevent future offending via the rehabilitation order.

There have been a number of reports of purses/wallets stolen from elderly persons whilst shopping in supermarkets or via distraction techniques in the street. The female mentioned above is not connected to these offences and they are largely believed to be committed by males and females of Eastern European origin. Offences of this nature are a growing national issue and Northamptonshire officers have been working with other forces sharing images and details with a view to identifying these offenders.

There is no pattern to when these offences will occur and these criminals would appear to travel widely around the country. They visit many locations in a day looking for opportunities where elderly members of the public either do not sufficiently secure their possessions whilst shopping or can be distracted with a request to help out with directions. The image of a male was circulated following a theft of purse in Tesco in Brackley in February. Officer research, via the internet and with other forces, has found the same offender committing at least 8 other similar crimes around the country. He is yet to be identified by name. There are a large number of different people all committing the same type of offences and as such it is difficult for supermarket staff to also be vigilant.

We strongly encourage you to be vigilant whilst shopping or in the street. Many elderly residents do not use email or social media so we need your help in spreading the message, amongst this part of the community, to secure all purses, handbags and wallets etc. If stopped and asked to help out with directions on a map then politely refuse and if possible make a note of description of the persons asking and details of any vehicle they may be using. Ring 999 as this is a crime in progress. The persons committing thefts/pickpocketing in supermarkets will appear as any normal shopper, most likely carrying a basket or pushing a trolley. Once they have identified a victim they will follow that person around a shop until an opportunity presents itself to remove an item. In both types of offence, once stolen, credit/debit cards are used very quickly at nearby cashpoints. Also be aware of persons 'shoulder surfing' at pay point looking to obtain a pin number prior to then distracting a person for their purse.

Please visit the Brackley Sector section of the Police website to see further personal safety and crime prevention information on the above topics. This can be copied and sent out via your own networks: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackleyUpdates>

Finally we are experiencing some rural crime in villages surrounding Brackley, including Middleton Cheney, Wappenham, Helmdon, Marston St Lawrence and Chacombe. Outlying properties have been targeted for thefts from sheds/barns of miscellaneous items. There are no specific items targeted and it seems that offenders are breaking in on the off chance of finding something valuable. Please report any unusual vehicles seen driving off road, up farm tracks where they are not expected to be or parked in gateways during night-time hours. The following link contains information on home and shed/garage security: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/Protectingmeandmyhome/4231>

Please contact us in confidence via 999 in an emergency, 101 for non-emergency or to arrange to speak directly to a local Brackley officer then via our email address: SCT-SouthNorthantsBrackley@northants.police.uk Follow us on Twitter: @BrackleySctSgt or alternatively you can visit the Northants Police website for updates, events and local team details: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackley>

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