

From: alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk
Subj: Weekly Bulletin - Chichester District 07/12/2017 08:32:57 [200966]

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Subject: Weekly bulletin - Chichester district

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Message sent by

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Thursday, 6th December 2017

News and appeals

Sussex Police would like to thank the public for identifying two burglars who have both been given prison sentences (Image attached)

The public were quick to identify the two suspects from a social media appeal and this led to the arrest of Clifford Scott, 43, and Stuart Austin, 42.

Both Scott and Austin pleaded guilty to burglary and theft after a Samsung Galaxy Tablet, a Kindle Fire and a quantity of cash and jewellery were stolen from a property in Linch Road, Woolbeding on August 14.

Stuart Austin, 42, unemployed, of Honeysuckle Lane, Headley Down, Hampshire was sentenced to 16 months imprisonment for burglary dwelling and theft and he also received a 12 month prison sentence for receiving stolen goods, to run concurrently.

Clifford Scott, 42, unemployed, of Ladygate Drive, Grayshott, Surrey received a 16 month prison sentence for burglary dwelling and theft. Both men were sentenced at Guildford Crown Court on Friday, November 24.

Georgina Matthews, 37, unemployed of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to receiving stolen goods and was given a deferred sentence until May 18, 2018, with the conditions of committing no offences and engaging with a drugs team.

Detective Constable Jon Berisford said: "Thanks to excellent CCTV footage obtained and the quick actions by the victim in this case, the vehicle and offenders involved in this residential burglary were identified.

“This led to the execution of a successful search warrant with the assistance of Hampshire Police.

“Through close cooperation with both Hampshire and Surrey forces, a large amount of stolen property was recovered which will be returned back to its rightful owners.

“The strength of the evidence obtained led to guilty pleas from all three offenders.”

National warning about phone calls from bogus police officers and bank staff

Sussex Police are supporting a national warning about the need for residents to be alert to a growing fraud in which criminals pose as police officers or bank staff and ask their victims to take part in a fake undercover operation or some other ruse.

There were 114 cases in Sussex in the year to the end of September. 47 succeeded in defrauding local people of a total of £419,414.96% of victims are over 60, and over half live alone.

UK Finance, a new trade association representing the finance and banking industry, issued the renewed warning on Wednesday 29 November.

Fraudsters are contacting members of the public, usually by phone, purporting to be from the police, or in some cases the fraud team within their bank. The criminal claims they are investigating a fraud at a local bank branch where staff are suspected of being complicit, including issuing fake bank notes, and asks their target to help in the operation.

Individuals are requested to visit the branch and withdraw a substantial sum, often thousands of pounds, of the supposedly counterfeit cash to hand over to the ‘police’ for ‘analysis’. The victim is assured that the money will be deposited back into their account after the operation is complete. However, once the money is passed over the fraudster disappears with the cash.

The criminal instructs their victim not to discuss the case with anyone in the branch, giving them plausible explanations as to why they are withdrawing the money. As a result, despite being questioned by the bank staff, the victim takes out the cash, convinced that the staff are part of a fraud.

In another version of the scam, the criminal convinces the victim to transfer money to a so-called ‘safe account’ to protect their funds from the ‘corrupt’ bank staff. However, the account is in fact controlled by the criminal.

All customers are reminded that the police and banks will never ask members of the public to become part of an anti-fraud operation or to transfer money to a ‘safe account’ for fraud reasons.

PC Bernadette Lawrie, Financial Abuse Safeguarding Officer for Sussex Police said: “This is a particularly nasty scam as it plays on people’s public-spirited nature to assist the police. We are receiving a growing number of reports of it occurring, with people often losing large amounts of money, so it’s vital that everyone is aware. Remember, the police will never ask you to withdraw money and hand it over to them for safe-keeping.”

"The good news is that of 114 attempts in Sussex more than half failed, thanks to the increasing awareness of local residents, and to shop and bank staff who recognise the tell-tale signs of this type of fraudulent activity and are blocking purchases and contacting the police.

"But everyone, especially the elderly and those who live alone, must remain on the alert for approaches like this".

Advice to consumers on how to avoid this fraud includes;

- The police will never ask you to become part of an undercover investigation or for you to withdraw cash and hand it to them for safe-keeping.
- Be wary of any calls, texts or emails purporting to be from the police asking for your personal or financial details, or for you to transfer money.
- If you are approached, or feel something is suspicious, hang up the phone and don't reply. Then report it to Action Fraud and your bank on their advertised number.

Never send or give money to anyone you don't know or trust; check people are who they say they are; don't share your personal information; make decisions in your own time; and if in doubt phone a relative or a friend.

Operation Signature is the Sussex Police campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud across the county. Fraud is becoming more complex and deceptive, and much of it is targeted at vulnerable and elderly people.

The force has a process for recognising victims of all fraud as victims of crime and providing preventative measures to support and protect them from further targeting. This can include helping them to change their phone number to an ex-directory number, contacting family to suggest Power of Attorney, mail re-direction, offering them advice on call blocking devices and referring them to other support services.

Arrest summary

Between 29th November - 6th December, more than 20 people were arrested from across the Chichester district. Offences included domestic assault, shoplifting, breach of bail, driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, common assault, breach of bail, criminal damage and failing to provide a specimen of breath for analysis.

Crime summary

Chichester and surrounding area

Vinnetrow Road - Padlock cut to premises, theft of leaf blowers reported. Ref 0375 of 29/[11](#).

Guildford Close, Emsworth - Break to property between 7:30pm - Midnight, 30th November. Entry gained via front bathroom window. Ref 0006 of [01/12](#).

Quarry Lane, Chichester - Insecure lorry entered and tools stolen. CCTV shows two males, wearing hoodies - faces hidden. Occurred at 8:45pm, 4th December. Ref 0620 of 05/12

Selsey, The Witterings and surrounding area

St Peters Church, Selsey - Damage caused to interior of church during the day, discovered 29th November. Ref 1148 of 29/[11](#).

[Seafield Close, East Wittering](#) - Honda Whacker place stolen from driveway between 9am - 12pm, 29th November. Ref 0556 of 29/11.

Selsey Road - Padlock damaged to shed and ride on lawn mower stolen. Occurred between 28th - 30th November. Ref 0716 of 30/[11](#).

Drift Road, Selsey - Theft of white goods from unoccupied new build property. Main gate lock broken to property, entry gained to rear of the property. Occurred 2nd - 4th December. Ref 0260 of [04/12](#).

[Easton Lane, Sidlesham](#) - Theft of Yamaha YZF motorcycle from shed overnight into 5th December. Entry gained by ripping lock from door. Ref 0191 of 05/[12](#).

Chichester Road, West Wittering - Garage broken into and tools stolen. Occurred between 4th - 5th December. Ref 0615 of 05/12.

Midhurst, Petworth and surrounding area

Haslemere - Two reports of theft from vehicles parked on drive ways on Heath Road and Hammer Hill. Loose change and Amazon Fire tablets reported stolen. Ref 0787 of 03/12.

Help us keep Sussex safe

If you saw or heard anything, or have any information about any incident in this message please [contact us online](#), email us at 101@sussex.pnn.police.uk or call **101**, quoting the reference number provided.

Alternatively you can contact the independent charity **Crimestoppers**, anonymously, on **0800 555 111**, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Your local teams

[Visit our Website](#) to contact your local team, view local news and follow our social media accounts. Simply type your post code in the '**Find a Local Area**' box located in the top right of the web page.
