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Dispatch Essex Police
Chelmsford Edition

Latest news from Essex Police in the Chelmsford district

News 12 March to 18 March



Special Superintendent retires after more than four decades of public service

Special Superintendent Howard Rayner is handing in his warrant card and retiring after an extraordinary 41 years as a volunteer police officer.

Howard, 68, joined Essex Police in 1983 and combined policing with his full-time job as the managing director of a Colchester tile company.

His exceptional public service saw him awarded British Empire Medal in 2019 and receive a Lord Ferrers letter of recognition as well as Long Service and Good Conduct accolade from the force.

Howard joined our Special Constabulary after he apprehended a man who'd kicked in a shop window and the officer who attended the scene suggested he apply. Howard and the officer have remained firm friends.

Howard has served under seven chief constables and said policing has given him unique opportunities. Despite still enjoying his role and being responsible for more than 60 officers across Chelmsford and Braintree, he believes the time is right to step down.

[Read more](#)



Step Forward for International Women's Day 2025 and beyond

On Saturday, 8 March, we celebrated International Women's Day. A global moment to reflect, inspire, and take action. This year's theme, #AccelerateAction is a powerful call to break down barriers, challenge biases, and drive meaningful change toward gender equality.

Why does this matter? Because equal opportunities alone aren't enough. True inclusion means recognising that people start from different places. Real progress requires equitable action.

At Essex Police, we believe these conversations should happen every day, not just on International Women's Day. We are dedicated to bridging the gender gap in the force by promoting an inclusive environment, amplifying women's voices, and ensuring that every officer, regardless of gender, has the support and opportunities to thrive.

On Thursday 13 March, our Women's Forum co-hosted a day of learning, listening, and celebration. The team worked alongside Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). The International Women's Day event, held at Kelvedon Park, is an annual event that gets bigger and better every year.

[Read more](#)





Jewellery appeal

Officers investigating a reported burglary in Chelmsford are appealing to anyone who may have seen or been offered items of jewellery which were taken.

We were called to the incident in Rutland Road, Chelmsford, on 13 October 2024. A large amount of jewellery was taken, including the items pictured.

The items in the photos are very distinctive and of sentimental value.

Anyone with information as to their whereabouts [should contact us as soon as possible](#).

Please quote incident 42/156335/24.

[Read more](#)



Over 4,300 uninsured vehicles taken off Essex roads in 2024

Essex Police seized 4,329 uninsured vehicles across the county between January and December last year, which is an average of 12 vehicles every day, to ensure road safety for all.

The figure is an increase of 21% on 2023 results.

Uninsured vehicles pose a significant risk to other road users. Whilst those aiming to be law-abiding motorists may fall foul of common insurance pitfalls, such as assuming their policy has auto-renewed or that they are covered to drive other vehicles, over 60% of uninsured vehicles seized are found to have links to serious secondary offences.

Operation Scalps enables the force to fully dedicate officer time and benefit from partner Motor Insurers' bureau data, in order to identify potential uninsured vehicles and maximise the impact of clamping down on these dangerous vehicles.

If a stopped driver is unable to provide any proof of insurance, the vehicle is then seized, with a third going on to be crushed. Vehicles will only be released back to the owner once they have bought valid insurance, now at a premium due to their record of uninsured driving.

Other consequences include six penalty points, a fixed penalty of £300 or an unlimited fine should the case go to court, a fee to have the vehicle released and potentially being disqualified from driving.

Driving convictions can show in background checks, impacting job prospects, whilst the loss of independence may impact on any caring responsibilities, such as the need to take children to school or elderly parents to medical appointments.

[Read more](#)



Using banning orders to crack down on shoplifters and protect retail staff

Our officers have arrested more than 260 people on suspicion of shoplifting so far this year.

And they have secured 453 charges of shop theft against 164 of them, plus a further

24 charges of assaulting a retail worker.

At court, we apply for criminal behaviour orders against persistent and prolific shoplifters. As well as banning them from the stores they target, CBOs can include conditions designed to divert criminals from the drug and alcohol addictions which can be the cause of their offending.

Bans often apply to a specific store or a specific chain of shops in Essex. Two people have recently been banned from store chains across England and Wales.

Arrests for shoplifting and associated offences are made by our officers locally but our specialist Business Crime Team has assisted teams to apply for the CBOs at court.

[Read more](#)



Dozens of blank-firing guns handed in across Essex during amnesty

Dozens of readily-convertible blank firing guns have been taken out of circulation and will pose no further risk to the public thanks to the work of our officers and staff.

Led by our Serious Crime Directorate, Essex Police played an active role in the national surrender scheme, which ran throughout February.

The amnesty related specifically to four brands of Turkish manufactured top-venting blank firearms (TVBF).

The brands – Blow, Ceonic, Ekol and Retay – have been found by National Crime Agency colleagues to be readily convertible into viable firearms.

Anyone now found in possession of these brands of TVBF could be subject to prosecution and face up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The amnesty allowed owners of these brands to hand them at police stations ahead of the ban.

During the amnesty period, those handing in a TVBF did not have to give their details and did not face sanction.

[Read more](#)

The Maldon Town Team have been operating in the South Woodham Ferrers area

A Cannabis Cultivation was discovered and one female was arrested and interviewed in relation to the allegation. Whilst some people might think that Cannabis is a less serious drug, the exploitation and forced labour of vulnerable people to grow the drug is very serious. Vulnerable people are often held in terrible conditions by organised crime groups to produce drugs.

The team have also been conducting speed checks in relation to complaints from residents. In addition patrols of the road network within South Woodham have also been conducted. Criminals use the road networks in order to commit crime. Speed checks and high visibility patrols help to deter and catch criminals in the area. We are pleased to report that no speeding vehicles were recorded today.

We are also aware of some shop lifting incidents that have taken place in retail premises in and around the town. We have provided reassurance and the investigation into those incidents continue. There is no risk to the wider public in relation to the shop lifting incidents.



Let's talk

Upcoming community police events

Saturday 22 March 2025 9am to 10am

Chelmsford Park Run, Central Park, Chelmsford CM2 0RW

Monday 24 March 2025 11am to 12pm

Tesco Superstore, Princes Road, Chelmsford CM2 9XW

Tuesday 1 April 2025 11am to 12pm

Tesco Stores Ltd, Princes Road, Chelmsford CM2 9XW

Wednesday 9 April 10.30am to 11.30am

Chelmsford Library Chelmsford County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

[More events](#)



Crime prevention advice

Tips for making other people feel safer on the streets

Some of this advice might seem obvious, but there are some simple things we can do to help other people feel safer when they're out in public.

Keep your distance

When walking behind someone, particularly at night, try to leave a good amount of distance between yourself and the person ahead of you. Remember that the closer you are, the more threatening you might seem.

Don't stare

A stranger staring at you can be intimidating and unsettling. Focus on something else to show you're not a threat. Look out of the window, message a friend, or read a book or newspaper.

Cross the road

Somebody running up behind you, particularly at night, can be frightening.

If you're out for an evening run, or walk, and see someone walking ahead, cross the road, call out to let them know you're about to run by them or make sure to leave a good amount of space when you pass them.

Keep comments to yourself

What you might think of as just a bit of fun, or flattery, can be insulting, upsetting or even scary to someone else. Keep any comments or opinions to yourself.

Keep your friends in line

If you're in a group of people where someone is harassing another person on the street, try to calm the situation. They may just need to be told that they're behaving inappropriately.

Be an active bystander

If you notice someone is uncomfortable with another person's behaviour, show your support by being an active bystander. It can be as simple as standing between a person and their harasser to block their line of sight. Ask that person if they need any help, and back up anyone else who is intervening.

Share these tips

Sharing these tips with other people can go a long way towards making us all feel safer on the streets.

[More advice](#)

Be fraud smart

Romance fraud

Criminals lie to gain your trust and build a relationship with you. They make everything about the romance feel normal but their aim is to get money or personal information.

Romance fraudsters are experts at manipulating their victims.

They will usually:

- create a story that sounds believable and start the relationship in a normal way
- gain your trust over time
- invent a problem or situation where you may feel like you want to send money or gifts to help them
- isolate you from friends or family

[More advice](#)



What is the law relating to nitrous oxide?

Nitrous oxide is a colourless gas, also known as 'laughing gas'.

Nitrous oxide is a Class C drug and it is an offence to possess it unless it can be shown it was possessed for one of the legitimate statutory exemptions. Nitrous oxide has widespread legitimate uses, including in medical, dental, and veterinary settings and those with a legitimate reason for possessing the substance will be exempt from the ban.

However, possession with the intent to wrongfully inhale the substance or to supply to another person for it's wrongful inhalation is an offence. 'Wrongful inhalation' means inhalation for purposes other than medical or dental purposes or of nitrous oxide that has been released into the atmosphere. It includes inhalation for the substances psychological effects and the offence is designed to prevent people recreationally inhaling the substance for this reason.

The consequences for the offence of unlawful possession could include an unlimited fine, a visible community punishment, a caution and for repeat serious offenders, a prison sentence.

It is also an offence to import, export, produce or supply nitrous oxide where a person intends to wrongfully inhale the substance or where the individual knows, or is reckless as to whether, it is likely that another person will wrongfully inhale it.

There are serious health risks associated with the use of nitrous oxide, heavy use can result in neurological damage and even death due to the risk of falling unconscious and/or suffocating from the lack of oxygen.

When and how to contact the Police

We're offering more ways of reporting non-emergency crime and anti-social behaviour through the digital 101 service on our [website](#).

You can also use the service to contact your local policing team, tell us about something you have seen or heard, or request information.

We also have our Live Chat service which is available on our website 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can send and receive real-time messages with an online operator.

We still have our 24-hour 101 service which people can call if they feel it is more appropriate to speak to us or don't have access to the internet.

Always call 999 if a serious offence is in progress or has just been committed, someone is in immediate danger or harm, property is in danger or being damaged, or a serious disruption to the public is likely.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service 18000.

Or text us on **999** if you've pre-registered with the [emergencySMS service](#).

British Sign Language (BSL) users please use our [video relay service](#) where an interpreter will help you report the crime to us.

If you're in danger but you can't talk on the phone, you should still call **999**, then [follow these instructions](#) depending on whether you're calling from a mobile or a landline.

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