

1.0 MAJOR INCIDENTS AND POLICING DIARY

MURDER / ATTEMPTED MURDER

1.1 Murder – Torpoint

On 3 March, police and paramedics attended an address in Torpoint where, a one-month-old baby boy was found in a critical condition. He was taken to Derriford Hospital and transferred to Bristol Children's Hospital, but died on 7 March. A 30-year-old man was arrested in connection with the incident and released on police bail to return to Charles Cross police station on 24 June 2008. On 13 March the same 30-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman were arrested. The woman was released with no further action, the man was charged with Murder. He was remanded into custody at HMP Exeter to await trial.

VIOLENCE

1.2 Serious Assault – Plymouth

On 17 February, a 25-year-old woman from Reading suffered a broken jaw in an incident in a city centre bar. A 25-year-old local man was arrested on suspicion of causing Grievous Bodily Harm on 22 February and was released on police bail until 14 May pending further enquiries.

1.3 Assault – Seaton

On 17 February, police were called to a disturbance in Harbour Road, Seaton where 40–50 youths had gathered following an altercation between three men. During the arrest of the three men a police officer was assaulted. The three arrested men – a 47, a 36 and a 19-year-old all from the town – were interviewed and later released. The 19-year old man was charged with Actual Bodily Harm and appeared at Central Devon Magistrates Court on 4 March where he was given a community curfew order for three months between 8pm and 6am, electronically tagged, 100 hours community service order, costs of £60 and ordered to pay compensation of £150. The 47-year old man was charged with Assaulting a Police Officer in the execution of his duty and with Affray. He was bailed and appeared before Central Devon Magistrates Court on 4 March where he received a 120-hour community service order, costs of £60 and ordered to pay compensation of £100. The 36-year-old received a police caution for Affray.

1.4 Stabbing – Wadebridge

On 18 February, police and paramedics attended an address in Wadebridge following reports that a woman had suffered a head injury and a stab wound to the neck. The 56-year-old local woman was treated at Treliske hospital. A 17-year-old local man was arrested at the scene and released on police bail to return to Launceston police station at a later date.

1.5 Serious Assault – St Agnes

On 15 March, police were called to Churchtown, St Agnes having received a report that a 43-year-old man, covered in blood and carrying a kitchen knife, was running down the road threatening people. Police deployed Captor Spray in the arrest of the male for Public Order, Assault and Criminal Damage. The man had assaulted a 42-year-old man and a 35-year-old woman, in a nearby house. The assaulted man sustained a serious head wound which, he was treated for at the Royal Cornwall Hospital. The suspect was charged with Wounding, Possession of a Knife, Common Assault and Affray and on 17 March was remanded into custody at HMP Exeter to await trial.

1.6 Assault – Bideford

On 24 March, an assault occurred in the Old Town area of Bideford, leaving a 17-year-old man with nose, arm and leg injuries. Two 16-year-old youths were arrested on suspicion of Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and released on police bail to return to Barnstaple police station on 8 May.

1.7 Disorder – Camborne

Two men were arrested following a disturbance in Camborne on 26 March. It was alleged that an 18-year-old man had suffered a serious injury to his nose as a result of being hit with a cricket bat. Officers stop-checked four people, one of whom was carrying a cricket bat, near to the victim's home address. One of the men, a 17-year-old from Truro, was arrested on suspicion of Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm and released on police bail until 28 May 2008. The second man, 29 years, from Camborne, was charged with Causing Alarm, Harassment or Distress and bailed to appear before West Cornwall Magistrates Court at a later date.

1.8 Stabbing – Okehampton

A 39-year-old man from Okehampton was arrested in Tavistock following an incident on 27 March where a 43-year-old man was reported as being stabbed at an address in the town. The victim was found with three small non-life threatening puncture wounds. The suspect was charged with Causing Grievous Bodily Harm with Intent and remanded into custody at HMP Exeter on 31 March to await trial.

1.9 Serious Assault – Barnstaple

On 27 March, a 24-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman were arrested following a stabbing incident in the town. A 24-year-old man from Barnstaple had received a serious stab injury to his body. The male suspect, from Barnstaple, was arrested and charged with Grievous Bodily Harm with Intent and Possession of an Offensive Weapon in a Public Place. He was remanded into custody at HMP Exeter to appear before Exeter Crown Court on 4 July. The 19-year-old woman was released with no further action.

ASSAULT ON POLICE

1.10 Officer Injured – Torquay

On 16 February, during the arrest of a male suspect for assault in Torquay an officer received minor bruising to her lower leg and arm, the suspect received a dog bite injury to his left arm from a police dog. The 47-year-old Torquay man was arrested at the scene of a domestic incident in the town. During the arrest he threw the officer to the ground which left her with minor injuries. The man attended South Devon Magistrates Court on 13 March where he pleaded guilty to the charge of Resisting Arrest and was given a 60-day suspended prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, a license premises exclusion order for three weeks excluding him from all licensed premises in Devon, ordered to pay compensation of £300 and costs of £55.

1.11 Disorder – Paignton

A police officer sustained chest and rib injuries while arresting a suspect in Paignton on 22 February, when officers attended reports of a domestic violence incident at an address in the town. Initially the man could not be located so upon returning to the address later that day, officers gained access to the property and arrested a 28-year-old man on suspicion of Assault. The man was released on police bail to return to Torquay police station at a later date.

1.12 Concern For Welfare – Berry Head

Police, coastguard and lifeboat resources attended the cliffs at Berry Head, Brixham on the evening of 8 March, where a 34-year-old woman was threatening suicide. The woman had been situated less than a foot from a 100-foot sheer drop before she was hauled up the cliff face, following a lengthy dialogue with police negotiators. After being seen at Torbay Hospital for a suspected overdose, she was arrested and later charged with two offences of Assaulting a Police Officer. She appeared before the South Devon Magistrates Court on 31 March where she, pleaded guilty to one charge of Assaulting a Police Officer. She was given a 12-month community order and a 12-month supervision requirement. She pleaded not guilty to the second charge of Assaulting a Police Officer and was found not guilty.

FIREARMS

1.13 Firearms Incident – Torquay

On 27 March, police were called to an address in Torquay where it was reported that a man had been threatened with what appeared to be a handgun. Officers executed a warrant in Paignton where authorised firearms officers arrested three people. No firearms were recovered. A 40-year-old man from Paignton, a 40-year-old woman from Paignton, and a 15-year-old girl from Torquay were released on police bail to attend Torquay Police Station on 7 May 2008.

ROAD TRAFFIC ISSUES

1.14 Operation Vortex

With increasing road casualty rates and the Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) RTC part of the Force Control Strategy, Operation Vortex was first launched in November 2007, attracting very substantial media attention. In order to address complacent behaviour, which evidence illustrates contributes to collisions and injuries on the road, a step-change in the level and nature of enforcement was supported.

A dedicated team of roads policing officers was equipped with unmarked video cars and an unmarked motorcycle. They worked together for the month on specific stretches of the strategic road network for one day at a time, across the Force, undertaking enforcement activity for offences, which compromised road safety. Almost 1,000 motorists were stopped and action taken against 728: 425 for speeding (32 were travelling over 100mph); 161 for use of mobile telephones and 52 for not wearing a seat belt. The operation's success was supported by the resulting casualty data analysis as November 2007 compared to the November 2006 saw a 16.4% drop in KSIs and 19.4% drop in significant injuries. Such reductions had not been seen in any of the previous five years for the month of November.

Operation Vortex also ran during March 2008, again preceded by significant levels of publicity. A similar number of motorists were stopped and action will be taken against 831, including 413 for speeding (21 over 100mph); 162 for using a mobile telephone and 167 for not wearing a seat belt. Again significant reductions were seen in the resulting casualty data for March 2008 compared to March 2007, with a 17.1% drop in KSIs and 19% drop in significant injuries, the biggest reduction seen in any of the previous five years for the month of March.

The next Operation Vortex is planned for July 2008.

1.15 New Initiative Reduces Road Closure Times

The Force is using new equipment to help reduce road closure times at serious collision scenes. Mobile GPS equipment will help officers gather evidence at collision scenes when measuring items such as road markings, vehicle positions and highway layouts. This development means the collision investigation team will be able to gather collision evidence quicker and so reduce inconvenience to other road-users. The Force has been given a free long-term loan of around £225,000 worth of equipment by the Highways Agency, in the partnership initiative.

1.16 ANPR – Plymouth

On 31 March, more than 100 officers from nine police forces undertook a major Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operation on the city's roads. Forty officers from Devon and Cornwall joined forces with colleagues from Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire, South Wales, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gwent, Thames Valley Police and Hampshire for the first Regional Operation Utah. Support also came from seven enforcement agencies – the DVLA, Department for Work and Pensions

(DWP), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), Border and Immigration Agency (BIA), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), The Motor Insurers' Bureau and the Highways Agency. By early evening 52 vehicles had been seized and seven arrests made for offences including possession of drugs, fraud and driving whilst disqualified.

OTHER

1.17 Drugs Warrant Nets Hydroponics – Plymouth

On 21 February, police officers from Plymouth's Targeted Policing Team executed a warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act in a lock up garage in the Stonehouse area. Officers found large-scale hydroponics equipment housing numerous plants believed to be cannabis worth an estimated street value of around £15,000. A 50-year-old man from Eggbuckland and a 36-year-old man from Keyham were arrested the following day in connection with the inquiry. They were both released on police bail to return to Charles Cross police station on 16 May 2008.

1.18 Operation Taco – Torbay

An 18-year-old Paignton man was charged with buying alcohol from an off-licence in Paignton and supplying it to children. He was fined on 22 February by Torbay Magistrates' Court for a number of offences of buying alcohol for under-18s in August 2007. This conviction was welcomed by the local police who work closely with licensees across the bay to identify adults who purchase alcohol to give to children.

1.19 Fire Rescue – Brixham

On 21 February, two police officers and a police community support officer (PCSO) saved two young children from a burning house in Brixham. The children's parents were unable to gain access to the two girls' – aged four and 23 months – first floor bedroom so they flagged down a passing police car. The three officers obtained a neighbour's ladder, smashed a first floor window and gained access to the house. One officer managed to rescue the eldest child, but the ladder broke and they fell to the ground, although he shielded the girl from the blow and she was unharmed. Fire officers entered the premises with breathing apparatus and rescued the younger child from the same bedroom. The fire was later extinguished. Both PCs suffered minor injuries, which were treated by paramedics at the scene. The children were kept in hospital overnight for observation.

1.20 Drugs Warrant – Exminster

A 19-year-old woman and a 17-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of possessing a Class 'A' Drug with intent to supply, following the execution of a drugs

warrant in Gissons, Exminster on 27 February. A quantity of what was believed to be cocaine was seized and sent for analysis. Both suspects were released on police bail to reappear at Heavitree Road Police Station on 7 May 2008.

1.21 Dog Tracks Theft Suspect

A 17-year-old man from Exeter was arrested on suspicion of Theft from a Motor Vehicle after being tracked from a crime scene by a police dog. Officers were called to Shooting Marsh Stile on 28 February, when a member of the public reported seeing a man break into a London style taxi and steal a bag from inside. He was released on police bail until 24 April pending further inquiries.

1.22 Attack on Woman – Exeter

On 29 February, a 30-year-old woman was walking her dog along the footpath at the rear of Isca College, Topsham Road, when she was approached by a man who made an indecent suggestion to her, grabbed her coat and produced a knife. A second man out walking his dog scared the attacker off. A third man noticing how distressed the victim was walked her home. A re-enactment of events was made on 7 March using the woman's dog and a stand-in victim. On 20 March, a 16-year-old boy was arrested and later charged with the Intention of Committing a Sexual Offence and remanded into custody at Ashfield Youth Detention Centre in Gloucestershire. He appeared before Exeter Crown Court on 4 April where bail was refused and he was further remanded into custody.

1.23 Drugs Seizure – Whiddon Down

On Wednesday 5 March, two vehicles were stopped on the A30, in the area of Whiddon Down. A quantity of what was believed to be controlled drugs, of both Class A and Class C with an estimated street value of between £90,000 and £110,000 were found. Two men both aged 48, one from Plymouth and one from Swindon, were arrested in connection with the incident and released on police bail until 29 May 2008.