

REPORT TO GREAT CHART with SINGLETON PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2026.

I must start by reiterating my report of April as the Middle East situation has not eased.

Nationally fuel thefts especially drive off thefts from garages with false number plates has really spiked. There has also been a rise in number plate thefts linked to these crimes. This has also been reported as a National issue.

I feel in all areas we need to be alert and vigilant but as important when you drive to visit further afield or park in long stay car parks.

My advice and alerts remain the same as April but even more so.

FUEL THEFTS

1 Fuel syphoned at night from parked cars and vans.

2 Theft of fuel from parked HGVs

3 Theft of fuel from storage tanks ie. Farms plus and from Farm machinery.

4 Thefts of number plates to assist drive off thefts from garage forecourts.

5. Theft of domestic heating oil from residential storage tanks.

I am hoping these crimes will not apply in in your area but we need to be alert, vigilant and on the front foot.

A concern with my ex fire service head on is if a fuel shortage or panic buying occurs people will purchase fuel in correct containers but decant into wholly inappropriate plastic containers and store them in vehicles, sheds and garages.

A simple shed fire suddenly becomes a napalm inferno.

In other rural areas there have been Rogue Traders, and reports of vehicles” scouting properties”. Again, the need for Barns, Sheds, Stables, External storage, outbuildings and garages need to be secure.

I have been alerted by Rural Task officers of the recent thefts of gates and fencing in rural areas. I have to say I was staggered at the cost of fencing and gates that had been stolen. I did report to the community there is a free marking system for gates and machinery on offer from the Rural Team.

I continue to slowly grow the NHW membership especially as new residents are now moving into areas of Chilmington that have been at a standstill. I reported last meeting on this issue.

I continue to work on matters like the Singleton Lake to try and deal with Anti-Social Behaviour, catapults. And general littering issues.

The battle, and it is a battle is to get everything reported to the police and crime numbers obtained. Then we are in business and can issue the best possible crime prevention advice and of course assist operational officers with investigations and help to scoop up evidence like cctv that could be lost to the police.

Then issue better crime prevention from the lessons learnt.

My work continues at a pace on Violence Against Women and Girls and the Facebook group I have launched is progressing very well.

200 mainly women joined in the first 24 hours, 400 in the first week and I have passed 666 members to date. I would anticipate 640 of those are women. I have been delighted by the response I have had.

CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

As always, I am constantly looking at matters that may not trouble us today or next week but could arrive suddenly.

I call much of this work as “Pete’s clouds on the horizon”

FIRE COVER

Clouds on the horizon are the proposed consultations by the Fire Service on future fire cover. They never consult on upgrades!!

We need to be alert and ready to make a response and remember it is not just about your area but the knock-on long-term growth and expansion of nearby areas. I understand June will be about the time consultation will start.

Key points are

1. Lack of personnel at on call fire stations like Aldington, Charing and Wye (these were once called retained fire stations where people in the villages were alerted and respond to the fire station to make a turnout to an incident. (I am not saying these stations have problems just using it as an example.)

The second appliance at Ashford is crewed by on call fire fighters, I have no knowledge of the levels of personnel at present times but that would be information we would request.

2. Provision for water for firefighting. I would anticipate the service increasing their bulk water carries fleet from the existing 2.
(Thankfully, one at present is station at Ashford)

Provision of water for firefighting will clearly be an issue.

There will be several more aspects of the consultation and I will of course be able to assist the council on any responses you should wish to make.

I will of course prepare a paper should you so wish when this matter becomes clearer, and the fire authority publish what they hope to do.

If I could just share with you a small detail. When I retired as Assistant Chief Officer Head of Operations for all of Kent in 1999, I commanded 66 fire stations, there are now 56. In a nutshell in 27 years with all the expansion and growth in Kent there are 10 less fire stations. Of course, we will need to lobby our KCC representatives who form part of the Fire Authority with elected members from Medway.

Thank you as always for your fantastic support for the work and me personally, I appreciate it and never take it for granted.

Stay safe.

Peter

Peter New. Community Neighbourhood Watch