REPORT TO GREAT CHART with SINGLETON PARISH COUNCIL 2026

Dear Council
I can report a very positive meeting with the new CH INSP at Ashford, Jennifer Bassan. It was a very proactive meeting and a much better climate and working relationship appears on the cards from the last holder of the post, time will tell.

I attended on Tuesday 6th October one of my normal one to one meetings with the Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott. He has over the years been a solid supporter of my work and to me personally.
The meeting updates him on all my NHW work and especially features my close work with councils like yourself.
We discussed my opposition the 43 police forces down to 12 as I personally feel it does not bode well for neighbourhood policing based on "Peelian Principles " in communities.

I also voiced my opposition to the government's proposal of the removal of the posts of Crime Commissioners. With my work I need an independent person I can go to when the police fail to meet public expectations. The thought of no PCC and the police reassuring the police all is well causes me great concern.



I spent time in deep discussions with the Commissioner about the **Governments Early Release Scheme of prisoners.**
This has the makings of a disaster, and I do not say that to alarm you. We will not be remembered for the thousands that go right but will be haunted by the one catastrophic failure of the system. It must not happen in our area and district.

We must all make ourselves available if approached to signpost victims towards the police if problems occur, especially Domestic Abuse victims.
You will see I posted considerable guidance that the PCC sent to me immediately after the meeting.

I am still disappointed that no formal statement has been put out over the scaling back of the Police School team. I understand it will just be 2 x PCSOs to cover all schools in the District.
For me I believe in a prevention-based approach as you know, and being in schools discussing the types of crimes that concern the community. Catapults, Scooters, ASB and even issues like Violence Against Women and Girls etc etc are classic examples.

The police are poor communicators and there was no formal announcement of the CLO's posts going, now the school's team and even the lack of announcement of a new CH Inspector for Ashford.

That said, if we are close and tight in our partnership, clear in our communications and focused on the business we press on serving the residents of your parish.
You will recall I said the strength for the community is in you all and the council in the room tonight. The debacle of LGR is a classic example of we battle on together.
The period of HALF TERM SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, HALLOWEEN and NOVEMBER the 5th. All had the chance of causing Anti Social Behaviour and to date they have!

EARLY RELEASE OF PRISIONERS GUIDANCE

Early Prison Release: Information & Support for Victims

Changes to prison release arrangements may understandably cause concern for victims and their families.

Information is available explaining the changes, what they could mean for victims, and where you can turn for support if you are affected by or worried about the release of an offender.

Find out more and access support: Understanding the Sentencing Act 2026 changes and accessing support

Understanding the Sentencing Act 2026 changes and accessing support

1. Ministry of Justice - Changes to prison release arrangements

2. Support for victims in Kent and Medway

3. National Support

4. Victim Contact Scheme

5. Support for children and young people

Changes to prison release arrangements

The following information has been provided by the Ministry of Justice to explain the changes introduced through the Sentencing Act 2026.

The Government is introducing changes to prison release arrangements through the Sentencing Act 2026. These changes are intended to help ensure there is enough space in prisons, while making sure there is tough supervision of offenders when they are released to keep victims and the wider public safe.

The Sentencing Act 2026 makes changes to the amount of time some offenders spend in prison before being released to serve the rest of their sentence on licence.

A new three-part model will be introduced for standard determinate sentences called a 'Progression Model'. Protecting victims remains a priority. All offenders released through the Progression Model will be subject to strict licence conditions and a period of intensive supervision.

The changes do not apply to more than 18,000 offenders. For a list of offences that this model does not apply to visit **sentencing act offence exclusions (opens in new window).**

More information about the Progression Model, what is changing, how victims can be informed and what support is available can be found at: **A guide for victims about the changes to prison release arrangements – GOV.UK (opens in new window)**

How to access support

If you have been affected by these changes or are worried about the release of offenders, local services are available to support you. Find out how to access support below. The information below has been provided by the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and sets out the support available to people in Kent and Medway.

Support for victims in Kent and Medway

In Kent and Medway, the PCC has made available additional support for people affected by early offender release arrangements. This has been possible through an additional grant from the Ministry of Justice.

The Kent Victims Advocacy and Support Service, delivered by Victim Support will provide an **Early Offender Release Victims' Champion.** They will provide dedicated support, helping those impacted feel supported and informed**.**

The Victims' Champion can:

- listen to concerns and provide emotional support;
- help those impacted understand information about the criminal justice process;
- speak to relevant organisations to help secure the information needed;
- help consider individual support and safety needs; and
- connect with other services that may be able to help.

To access the Early Offender Release Victims' Champion call the national helpline on **0808 168 9280**.

For general enquiries email **kentsupport@victimsupport.org.uk**.

Please note: all referrals for support must be made through the national helpline and cannot be accepted by email.

kent-pcc.gov.uk

National support

The Ministry of Justice has commissioned Victim Support to provide a dedicated national helpline.

The helpline provides information and support for people affected by early offender release across England and Wales. Specialist Victim Support advisers will listen to concerns, provide general information about the offender release processes, and help people understand what support may be available to them. Advisers can also provide emotional support, practical guidance, an assessment of needs, safety planning, signposting, and referrals to other services where appropriate.

The Offender Release Helpline can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0808 168 9280

Website: **Offender Release Helpline homepage - Victim Support**

Victim Contact Scheme

Some victims may be eligible for the **Victim Contact Scheme (VCS)**. It is available to victims of specified serious sexual or violent offences where an offender received a custodial sentence of 12 months or more.

Victims who opt into the scheme are assigned a Victim Liaison Officer, who can keep in contact during the offender's sentence, answer questions and provide information about how the justice system works. Victims can also request additional conditions relating to them or their family to be attached to an offender's licence.

If you previously decided not to join the scheme, you can change your mind and make contact at any time.

Contact and further information:

- **Email:** VCSenquiries@justice.gov.uk.
- **Online:** **Find out more about the Victim Contact Scheme on GOV.UK**.
- If you have received contact from someone in prison or are worried about their release, GOV.UK also lists the HM Prison and Probation Service victim helpline on **0300 060 6699** or **victim.helpline@justice.gov.uk**.

Support for children and young people

Specialist support is available for children and young people affected by offender release arrangements.

Victim Support's children and young people's practitioners can provide emotional support, information and guidance, help finding other support, and advice for parents, carers, guardians and professionals supporting a child or young person.

This service can be accessed by:

- **Telephone:** 0808 168 9280. When calling the Offender Release Helpline, choose the option for children and young people's support to speak to the specialist team.
- **Online:** Find out more about offender release support for children and young people.

In closing I am pleased to inform you that I was invited to be a key note speaker at the English and Welsh National Neighbourhood Watch Conference in October and I am pleased to report it went very well and received good feedback.
Much of my presentation reflected the working relationships with people like yourselves and the councils you serve on. I hope my presentation steered others along the same route to help their communities.

I am starting to build my plan for 2027 which will be ready for another challenging year ahead.

As always, thank you for your great solid support for Neighbourhood Watch and indeed for me personally, I am very grateful.

Stay safe, secure, alert and vigilant
Peter

Peter New
Community Neighbourhood watch