

Hastings And Rother Weekly Bulletin - 20.03.20

News And Alerts

Scott Starr Receives 26-Week Prison Sentence

Scott Starr, 40, of no fixed address in Hastings, has been sentenced to 26 weeks in prison for two counts of assault, two counts of receiving stolen goods, possession of class A drugs and theft.

This has been a good result for Hastings Police, the Hastings community, and businesses in the town centre who have been affected by his crimes.

St Leonards Man Sentenced Over Indecent Images Of Children

A St Leonards man has gone to prison after a Sussex Police investigation found that he had been making some of the most degrading of indecent images of children available to others on the internet, including one video lasting 17 minutes.

Mark Oak, 45, of Cloudesley Road, St Leonards, was given a prison sentence totalling 32 months at Lewes Crown Court on Monday (16 March), after pleading guilty to eight counts of making and distributing 5700 indecent images of children, possessing 1270 extreme images and possessing 14 prohibited images, all relating to children.

He will be a registered sex offender for life and was given a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) to last indefinitely, severely restricting his access to computers and other digital devices.

Detective Constable Gary Baker of the Sussex Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) said; "Our investigation started when we received intelligence that Oak had been accessing indecent images of children, including videos, from the Internet, and had made hundreds of them further available by online recirculation.

"We arrested him at an address at which he was then living in Hastings, and seized laptops and hard drives which were his personal property. Once we interviewed him and confronted him with the evidence he had little option but to admit what he had been systematically doing over a period of years.

"Each one of the images represents a child being abused and this was reflected in the court's sentence."

All the images were taken from the Internet and there is no evidence that any were of local children. All Oak's offending took place at the address in Hastings where he was living when he was arrested.

Witnesses Sought After Motorcyclist Dies In A21 Crash

Police are appealing for witnesses after a motorcyclist sadly died in a crash on the A21 at Sedlescombe.

The incident occurred about 5.59pm on Wednesday 18th March.

A motorcycle travelling south collided with a Seat Altea which was stationary in a layby just south of the junction with Marley Lane.

Sadly the motorcyclist - a 66-year-old man from Hastings - was pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver of the car - a 46-year-old woman from Etchingham - was taken to Conquest Hospital with minor injuries.

Anyone who saw what happened or saw either of the vehicles in the area prior to the collision - particularly anyone with dash cam footage - is asked to email collision.appeal@sussex.pnn.police.uk quoting Operation Holbrook.

Police Appeal For Witnesses Of Hastings Sexual Assault To Come Forward

Sussex Police would like to speak to this man who may hold vital information to a Hastings sexual assault.

A woman was stood outside a cinema in Queens Road, Hastings, around 8.20pm on Saturday, 22 February, when she was approached by a man. The man said his name was Eddy then proceeded to stroke her arm, kissed her face and then kissed her on the lips.

The victim ran away from the suspect unharmed.

The suspect is described as Asian, in his mid 20s, with dark black hair and brown eyes.

Anyone who may have witnessed the assault or recognises the man in the photograph, please report <https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/us/contact-us/provide-more-information-to-be-added-to-a-crime-report/> or call 101 quoting reference 1326 of 23/02.

Dangerous Driver Caught By Police Using Stop Stick

A man has been disqualified from driving after carrying out a series of dangerous manoeuvres which were captured on camera.

This footage has been released by Sussex Police to demonstrate the risks associated with such actions and the steps taken to target those who commit crimes on our roads.

Officers became aware of the blue Ford Focus after it performed an illegal right turn in St Leonards on the evening of 10th May last year.

The vehicle failed to stop and a pursuit ensued into Old Roar Road, where it was faced with a dead-end barrier. However, it mounted the kerb and drove through a hedge measuring approximately four feet high.

The officers in pursuit called for assistance and the Focus was intercepted by other units The Ridge, Hastings, where it continued to drive at speed in an attempt to evade police.

At this point a Stop Stick - a tyre deflation device - was used and tactical contact made to bring the car to a halt.

Crime Summary

Burglaries this week:

Rother: 9

Hastings: 6

Please visit our crime prevention pages on www.sussex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/residential-burglary/, for ways you can protect your homes and belongings.

Action Fraud Scam Watch

Did you know scams cost the UK economy £5-£10 Billion a year, with over 50% of people over 65 having already been targeted by scams; and only 5% of all scams reported?

This week's scam and fraud warnings from Action Fraud:

Coronavirus-related fraud reports increase by 400% in March

Recently the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/coronavirus-scam-costs-victims-over-800k-in-one-month> a new trend in fraud related to Coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Updated figures show there have been 105 reports to <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> since 1st February 2020, with total losses reaching nearly £970,000.

The first report relating to Coronavirus, or COVID-19, was received on 9th February. There were 20 more reports that month. Since then, there have been 46 reports between the 1 March and 13 March, and 38 reports in just four days (14th March - 18th March).

What Scams Are We Seeing?

The majority of reports are related to <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/online-shopping-fraud> scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived.

Other frauds being reported include ticket fraud, <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/ticket-fraud> romance fraud, <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/dating-fraud> charity fraud <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/charities> and lender loan fraud <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/loan-scams>

Phishing Emails

We have also received over 200 reports of coronavirus-themed phishing emails. These attempt to trick people into opening malicious attachments which could lead to fraudsters stealing people's personal information, email logins and passwords, and banking details.

Some of the tactics being used in phishing emails include:

- Fraudsters purporting to be from a research group that mimic the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organisation (WHO). They claim to provide the victim with a list of active infections in their area but to access this information the victim needs to either: click on a link which redirects them to a credential-stealing page; or make a donation of support in the form of a payment into a Bitcoin account.
- Fraudsters providing articles about the virus outbreak with a link to a fake company website where victims are encouraged to click to subscribe to a daily newsletter for further updates.

- Fraudsters sending investment scheme and trading advice encouraging people to take advantage of the coronavirus downturn.
- Fraudsters purporting to be from HMRC offering a tax refund and directing victims to a fake website to harvest their personal and financial details. The emails often display the HMRC logo making it look reasonably genuine and convincing.

Superintendent Sanjay Andersen, Head Of The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, Said:

"Fraudsters will use any opportunity they can to take money from innocent people. This includes exploiting tragedies and global emergencies.

"The majority of scams we are seeing relate to the online sale of protective items, and items that are in short supply across the country, due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We're advising people not to panic and to think about the purchase they are making. When you're online shopping it's important to do your research and look at reviews of the site you are buying from."

Graeme Biggar, Director General Of The National Economic Crime Centre, Said:

"We have already seen fraudsters using the COVID-19 pandemic to scam people looking to buy medical supplies online, sending emails offering fake medical support and targeting people who may be vulnerable or increasingly isolated at home.

"These frauds try to lure you in with offers that look too good to be true, such as high return investments and 'healthcare opportunities', or appeals for you to support those who are ill or bogus charities.

"The advice is simple, think very carefully before you hand over your money, and don't give out your personal details unless you are sure who you are dealing with.

"We are working together across law enforcement, government and the private sector to combat this

Protect Yourself

1) Watch Out For Scam Messages

Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details.

2) Shopping Online:

If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, use a credit card if you have one, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.

For more information on how to shop online safely, please visit: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/shoponlinesafely>

3) Protect Your Devices From The Latest Threats:

Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats. For information on how to update your devices, please

visit: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/search?q=protect%20personal%20devices&start=0&rows=20>

For the latest health information and advice about COVID-19 please visit the NHS website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

CORONAVIRUS SCAMS UPDATE: There was a 400% increase in coronavirus-related scams in March, with victim losses totalling almost £970,000. Click here for more

https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/coronavirus-related-fraud-reports-increase-by-400-in-march?fbclid=IwAROMaWy621Ua8fONkZHYWvveCdF-AesICSlxWWPq2IICbqGme_IWU3jKQBM

Fraudsters may use the fact more people are staying at home, as an opportunity to operate doorstep scams. Remember, someone posing as a good samaritan and offering to help those in isolation with things like buying shopping, then keeping the money, is committing theft. This should be reported to local police.

SCAM WARNING



Coronavirus-related frauds increase by 400% in March

Between 1st February 2020 and 18th March 2020, Action Fraud has received **105 reports** from victims of coronavirus-related frauds, with losses totalling close to **£970,000**. The majority of the reports are related to online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived. We have also received over **200 reports** about coronavirus-themed phishing emails attempting to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal and financial information.

Watch out for scam messages:

Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details

Shopping online: If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. Where possible, use a credit card to make the payment, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.

Protect your devices from the latest threats:

Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats.

Help us keep Sussex safe

If you saw or heard anything, or have any information about any incident in this message <http://www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/>, 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

You can also visit our website at www.sussex.police.uk where you can find our easy to use online forms to report all non-emergencies to us.

You can also find police advice to keep you safe and help you understand the law, and also browse our crime prevention pages for first-hand knowledge, industry best practices and practical crime prevention advice from officers and specialist teams all across the police.

Have you ever had a policing question that doesn't actually require direct police involvement to answer?

Ask the Police is a great online source of information for the most frequently asked policing questions, visit www.askthe.police.uk/ for more information.

Your local teams

You can find your local PCSO by entering your postcode at www.police.uk