

**Local Crime Meeting held at Alderton Village Hall on
Tuesday, 8 July 2025 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Attendees:

- **Councillors:** M West, M Davies, N. Broderick, J Kettle, P Woodman
- **Attendance:** Parish Clerk, 43 members of the public, County Cllr Agg & Borough Councillor Gray

1. Introduction

Cllr. Davies opened the meeting, acknowledging community concerns about rising local crime raised at the Parish Council Annual General Meeting and welcomed Inspector Grant White (Tewkesbury Neighbourhood Policing) and Nick Evans (Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner)

2. Opening Remarks from Nick Evans

- Deputy Commissioner Evans explained his role: setting the police budget and strategic priorities (not operational policing).
- Six core priorities are in place, with a major focus on building public trust and delivering effective policing within current constraints.

3. Policing Overview – Inspector Grant White

- Cover a large area including Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Maisemoore, Brockworth, through to Alderton and Winchcombe.
- Staffing includes:
 - 2 Sergeants
 - 5 Police Constables (+2 new recruits)
 - 4 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
- Neighbourhood policing teams do not respond directly to 999 calls but provide vital local intelligence and liaise with response teams based at Tewkesbury Borough Council.

4. Local Crime Statistics – Alderton (Since January 2025)

- Theft of Motor Vehicle: 2 incidents (Feb & May)
- Burglary (non-dwelling): 2 incidents (garage & shed – Feb & May)
- Theft from Motor Vehicle: 1 incident (March)
- Attempted Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents (March & May)

Inspector White urged all crimes and suspicious behaviour be reported via:

- **Online:** Gloucestershire Police website
 - **Non-Emergency:** 101 (average wait now around 2 minutes)
 - **Emergency:** 999
- Reporting helps allocate resources where they are most needed.

5. Questions & Community Discussion

- **Q: Are there enough PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) for this area?**
- **A:** No. Inspector White acknowledged that more PCSOs are needed to adequately cover the area. However, funding and staffing are limited due to the national police funding formula, which often disadvantages rural areas like Alderton. He noted that only a small portion of funding comes from council tax, and urged residents to contact MP Cameron Thomas to push for a fairer funding formula.
- **Q: Are neighbourhood officers ever pulled away to cover other areas?**

- A: Generally, no. Neighbourhood teams stay in their assigned areas unless there's a major incident elsewhere that requires additional support.
- **Q: What is the burglary detection or success rate?**
- A: Currently, only about 3% of burglaries are solved. Burglars are often highly skilled, forensically aware, and know how to avoid detection. Visibility is a strong deterrent, and reporting all incidents (even suspicious activity) helps build intelligence that can lead to arrests.
- **Q: Is there support from the Police and Crime Commissioner in dealing with these low success rates?**
- A: Yes. While the Commissioner supports efforts to improve outcomes, Inspector White acknowledged ongoing frustrations—especially with court processes. The force is investing in better technology to help officers do their jobs more effectively, but resource constraints remain a challenge.
- **Q: Can the police offer crime prevention advice for residents?**
- A: Yes. Inspector White will be providing a list of 15 crime prevention tips and is open to conducting residential security surveys. He emphasized that while no system is foolproof, simple steps like securing doors, using good lighting, and installing cameras can deter opportunistic criminals.
- **Q: When will we have a visible PCSO in Alderton again?**
- A: A PCSO is expected to be recruited and in place for Alderton by the end of the month, which should improve visibility in the village.
- **Q: What role does Neighbourhood Watch play today?**
- A: Neighbourhood Watch is still valuable—it helps raise awareness, encourages reporting, and acts as a two-way communication channel. Criminals often try to avoid areas with active Watch schemes.
- **Q: Is artificial intelligence or facial recognition used in policing locally?**
- A: Yes, but with caution. Facial recognition and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems are in use and can be helpful, especially when integrated sensibly and securely.
- **Q: Do neighbourhood officers focus on patrols or just respond to incidents?**
- A: Neighbourhood teams aim to patrol and engage proactively, but they may respond to incidents in their patch when necessary. They also coordinate with wider support teams across the county.
- **Q: Are new housing developments making the village more vulnerable to crime?**
- A: New developments can attract opportunistic criminals. Specialist operations and traffic patrols have been increased where possible, and requests have been made for a new police station to improve presence.
- **Q: Are mobile cameras or ANPR systems being installed locally?**
- A: Yes. The police have submitted funding bids to the Home Office for mobile cameras and new systems to monitor vehicle registrations on main routes.

- **Q: Are home security cameras helpful to the police?**
- A: Yes. They serve as both deterrents and evidence sources—especially when footage includes clear timestamps or suspicious activity. Simple measures like locking doors and using Faraday boxes (to block keyless car theft) are strongly recommended.
- **Q: Is there a pattern to when burglaries happen?**
- A: Yes. Burglaries often occur in summer when windows and doors are left open, especially in the afternoons when homes are empty. Criminals tend to target affluent areas and high-value items like performance cars (main cars Audi RS3 and 6, Golfs, RSs. Car trackers are removed. Adding a secondary hidden tracker could be helpful.
- **Q: Are suspicious vans or vehicles tracked by police?**
- A: If reported, yes. Officers gather intelligence and build evidence packages to trace vehicles. While not all suspicious vehicles can be immediately acted upon, the police have successfully recovered stolen goods and made arrests using this method.
- **Q: Are suspicious vans and vehicles with false number plates being tracked? Are they linked to local traveller sites?**
- A: Yes, suspicious vehicles are tracked—but it requires evidence and proper intelligence. The police build detailed intelligence packages to trace these vehicles. In some cases, this has led to successful operations where stolen goods were recovered and arrests made. While some suspect vehicles have been seen near known sites, the police do not automatically associate these with traveller communities unless there is clear evidence. They avoid assumptions and operate based on verified intelligence. Multiple agencies—such as Environmental Health, HMRC (for tax offences), and wildlife officers (for poaching)—are sometimes better equipped to act, depending on the nature of the issue. Police collaborate with these partners to address concerns when appropriate.
- **Q: Are building sites at higher risk of theft?**
- A: Yes. Sites often attract criminals targeting tools, boilers, and building equipment. Contractors are encouraged to invest in extra security where possible.
- **Q: How should rural crimes, like poaching or fly tipping, be reported?**
- A: For rural crime, contact the Rural Crime Officer or report through the usual police channels. Fly tipping should be reported to Tewkesbury Borough Council. Always take photos if safe to do so.
- **Q: Is crime actually increasing, or does it just feel like it is due to social media?**
- A: Crime is up slightly from a low base. Social media can make crime feel more prevalent by amplifying reports. However, actual reported crime remains relatively low.
- **Q: Has police funding increased with the growing population?**
- A: Only partially. While council tax contributions rise with housing, funding for police services is still based on outdated formulas and doesn't account for population growth. Emergency services were not consulted in some recent developments, which limits the ability to fund additional resources.

- **Q: Why was the mounted police unit removed?**
- A: The unit was disbanded due to cost. It was not seen as essential, and the funds were redirected to other areas. Sponsorship options were explored, but not viable.
- **Q: What's being done about road safety on the B4077, especially near Black Sheds?**
- A: The issue is on the radar of Gloucestershire Highways. A previous scheme was being developed but stalled due to staff changes. Councillor Agg has been asked to press for progress. Speed checks have been carried out, and new road safety schemes are in development.
- **Q: Can residents use barbed wire to protect their property?**
- A: While technically legal in some cases, barbed wire can lead to civil liability if someone is injured, even a trespasser. It's best to use safer, police-approved deterrents.

6. Communication & Community Involvement

- Residents are encouraged to sign up for:
 - Gloucestershire Community Alerts
 - Tewkesbury Police Facebook Page
 - Neighbourhood Watch
- Community surveys will be circulated to gather feedback specific to Alderton.

7. Next Steps

- Quarterly meetings planned with representative from the parish council to receive updates, advice and crime stats/trends.
- Residents encouraged to continue providing feedback and suggestions.

8. Closing

Cllr. Davies thanked Inspector White and Deputy Commissioner Evans for their attendance and ongoing support.