

# Colin's Blog

21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

## In Focus



Whilst passing Harlow Fire Station on my way to Sainsbury's, last weekend, I noticed this line up of Fire appliances at the front of the Fire Station, and it

reminded me of the many years that I have worked alongside so many fire fighters, since I first joined Essex Constabulary (as it was then), way back in the 1960's. In those days, and infact many years before then, I was, and indeed still am, a keen photographer of Fire Appliances, and have a good collection of photographs of Appliances from my early visits to Fire Stations across London, before I moved to the country.

In my childhood, I can remember, when Walthamstow Fire Station had around ten appliances, many of which were AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) appliances, and parked out the back of the station.



Picture: Green Goddess used by the AFS.

At this point, you might ask, why I am relating all this to you. Well, you may have heard, that the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, is soon to oversee both the Police and the Fire Service, bringing both services closer together.

Over the past ten years, and during my role as an Essex Watch Liaison Officer, before I retired,

I have had the privilege of working alongside my friends from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service at various events, and on joint Police and Fire service information stands, and, of course we already work together formally under a Partnership agreement. The work that we, as Emergency services undertake, often compliments each other, and, in part, helps towards addressing, some of the issues that both services have, in trying to compensate for the horrendous cutbacks that we have both endured.

On Wednesday 12th July, I facilitated at the Essex County Neighbourhood Watch Association's AGM and Conference, held in the Millennium Hall, Great Baddow.

The event was attended by more than seventy delegates from across the county, and the awards were presented by the Deputy PCC and ACC Andy Prophet, both of whom spoke during the conference.



Before I commenced the presentation of awards, I was taken completely by surprise by Clive Stewart, Chair of Essex County NhW Association, when I was presented with an award for my work with Neighbourhood Watch during my time as an Essex Watch Liaison Officer, up until I retired in May. For once, I was almost lost for words!

Here is a breakdown of the Essex County Neighbourhood Watch awards: -



## ECNHWA ANNUAL AWARDS 2017

Platinum	Clive Stewart	Braintree
Platinum	Peter Salmon	Brentwood
Platinum	John Wright	Tendring
Gold	Basil Woods	Brentwood
Silver	Kathy McGowan	Basildon
Bronze	Mary Jupp	Thurrock
Bronze	Melinda Ballard	Thurrock

### District Co-ordinator Awards

Norman Taylor	Chelmsford
Grahame Stehle	Colchester
Joan Bowerman	Epping Forest
Rosie Springall	Rochford
Bernard Hetherington	Southend
Debbie Sampson-Scott	Tendring
Beverley Lum	Uttlesford



**Why these fake WhatsApp emails and texts will catch people out**

Posted by ACTION FRAUD on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017

## WhatsApp stopped charging users in 2016.

- Emails and text messages claim that your subscription has expired.

**Fraudsters are sending out messages claiming to be from WhatsApp, in order to steal banking, and personal information. Here is why they might catch people out: -**



### Your subscription is ending soon

Please update your payment information now

#### UPDATE YOUR PAYMENT INFORMATION

Our records indicate that your WhatsApp trial service is exceeding the one year period. At the completion of your trial period your WhatsApp will no longer be able to send or receive message. To continue using WhatsApp without interruption, we need you to subscribe for any of our subscription periods.

**To avoid service interruption, please subscribe by visiting your account page below.**

Sign in to the [customer portal](#) with your Number:

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and look forward to continuing to meet your communication needs.

Sincerely,  
The WhatsApp Team

#### Account information

Service: WhatsApp Subscription

#### Helpful resources

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[Sign in to the service portal.](#)

Have Questions? [Visit the Community.](#)

Long term users of WhatsApp will remember paying a 0.99p annual fee to use the messaging service. In 2016, this was scrapped by Facebook who took over running of the company after **buying it for £11.4bn.**

**That means since 2016, the service has been free for every user.**

Whilst late adopters of the service might look at the email below and simply brush it off, long term users will remember paying and could quite easily think the app has gone back to its subscription model and get caught out.

The emails claim your “subscription will be ending soon” and are after your banking information. We have been getting an increasing number of reports about them over the past couple of days.

Fraudsters have realised that this is a clever way to dupe people and earlier this month we warned people about the same style of WhatsApp subscription message being sent by text.

Last year users were being tricked into downloading a **fake 'gold' version of WhatsApp** which infected Android devices with malware.

If you receive one of these emails or text messages, do not click on any links. Instead, delete it and **report it to Action Fraud**. **If you have clicked on one of the links, run antivirus software to ensure your device has not been infected with malware.**

**Report online:** [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud)

**ActionFraud**  
Report Fraud & Internet Crime  
**0300 123 2040**

It's also worth checking out: <https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk/> for further advice.



## Mayor warns that half of London's police station front counters could close

Earlier this month, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, warned in a press release, that continued Government cuts to the Metropolitan Police's budget could mean up to half of London's police

station front counters may close. The Met have had to make £600 million of savings since 2010 after the national policing budget was cut by 20 per cent\* and the number of police front counters in London dropped from 136 in 2013 to 73 today as the Met sold off buildings to cut costs and raise money.

The Met needs to make a further £400 million of savings by 2021, as a result of demands placed upon them by the Government. To mitigate some of the impact, the Mayor took the difficult decision to increase the amount raised for policing through

Council Tax, but he has made clear that if the Government – which provides the vast majority of the Met's money - continues to underfund the Met, he will be forced to make the hard choice of closing more front counters in order maintain police officer numbers and keep Londoners safe from crime.

Speaking in front of the London Assembly Policing Plenary, Sadiq Khan said: “The huge Government cuts to the Metropolitan Police Service mean we simply have no choice but to take measures like consulting on closing half of the front counters at police stations in London.

“I have repeatedly warned about this, while lobbying the government for fair funding. It is the only way we can protect the number of front line police officers in the capital. As I set out in my Police and Crime Plan, published in March, I will soon be launching a consultation with Londoners, setting out the situation we face and helping to make sure that we provide Londoners with different ways to access the Met's services whilst ensuring as much money as possible is available to go into front line policing.

“Events over the past few months have starkly highlighted how, now more than ever, the Police must receive the funding necessary to keep the capital safe. With £400 million worth of savings to be found by 2020/21 all parts of the Met are being looked at and we are aiming to reduce back office costs to 15 per cent. The police are becoming more efficient and doing their best to provide value for money. But we are in unprecedented times, with funding under serious pressure and demand continuing to increase both in volume and complexity. And the Government still haven't confirmed they will drop their police funding formula review, which could see London lose hundreds of millions more every year.

“My message is clear. We desperately need Government to give the Met the funding they need to keep us safe – these cuts are simply not sustainable.”

The cuts to the Met are compounded by the fact that Government has never fully funded the National and International Capital Cities (NICC) Grant. London spends £346m a year on activity linked to its position as a major global capital, such as policing events and protests. The Met is supposed to receive full compensation for this work through the NICC so that Londoners do not pay the cost. However, it currently only receives £174m a year – £172m short.

A further risk comes from a Government review of the formula it uses to allocate money to police forces in England and Wales, due to be published in 2017. An aborted review carried out by the Government in autumn 2015 indicated that the MPS stood to lose between £184m and £700m if funding was redistributed, which would have a significant impact on policing in London. The Government still has not confirmed whether it will proceed with this review.

**Footnote:** Sadly, as we all know, Essex Police, have already closed several Police Stations due to the harsh cutbacks imposed by central government.



Back on local issues, I am pleased to announce that, former Essex Police Officer, Paul Harris, has been employed to take on the role of Essex Watch Liaison Officer for the West Local Policing Area. I have arranged a meeting with Paul next week, so that I can start to help him familiarise himself with the role, which I enjoyed for some ten years. I wish Paul every success in his new role, and I will support him where I can.

Out and about: -



On Thursday of last week, I was asked to attend a Divisional Award Ceremony at the Royal British Legion Club in Harlow, where, I was presented with an award on behalf of Essex Police, for my work with Neighbourhood Watch, by the Chief Superintendent of the West Local Policing Area

Earlier this week, I joined Peter Salmon, chair of Brentwood Area NhW, and Daniel Cannon from Brentwood Community Safety Partnership, as we visited Grove House Special Needs School, in Brentwood, and delivered a Safer talk to three classes, alongside Graham from Essex County Fire and

Rescue Service.

On Monday evening, I attended a meeting of the new Harlow NhW Committee, whose enthusiasm, and desire to take things forward, is a joy to behold.

On Wednesday, in the absence of the chair of the Probus Club of Fyfield, I chaired the meeting, and delivered an amusing talk about 'The life and times of a village Policeman.'

As President of the Rotary Club of Ongar, and together with Vice-President Len Moss, I visited Chipping Ongar Primary School to present some Rotary community and school awards to five of the children. This was a very special moment for me, as I first attended an assembly at the school in 1978, when I began ten years as their School Liaison Officer, alongside my role as a detached beat Police Officer. During my time I also held that role in five other local primary schools and three for senior schools. It is a great shame, that the Police no longer have the resources to fund such a role, on a local level, as the opportunity for children to really get to know their local Police officers, is lost, for the foreseeable future, which will ultimately make it more difficult for what is now, 'the thin blue line,' of Police Officers and PCSO's, to communicate with children and young people.

Although the Probus Club of Fyfield has a strong membership, our Rotary Club desperately needs some new members, so that we can continue to carry out our fundraising and good work in the local community. If you would like to know more, please contact me at: [colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk](mailto:colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk)



## **DID I HEAR THEM SHOUT - SCHOOLS OUT!**

Yes, it's that time again, children jump for joy, teachers give a sigh of relief, parents and grandparents brace themselves, ready to cope with six weeks of keeping the children occupied, without becoming frustrated or exhausted. Somethings never change!

You can find some good safety advice at: -

<https://www.tes.com/articles/holiday-safety-teaching-resources>

There are many opportunities to disconnect children from PS4's, X Boxes, Tablets, Computers, Smart Phones and other such devices. You just have to be brave enough, to disconnect the gadgets, or drag the children away from them (not physically), and introduce them to the *unplugged version* of 'the world around them!'

We are surrounded by some wonderful parks and recreation areas, many with a summer holiday programme of things to do outdoors. Essex Wildlife Trust also has different activities going on at their various nature reserves across Essex, as indeed, does the London Wildlife Trust.

Summers holidays offer children, young people, and indeed, adults, the chance to appreciate the things which so many of us either ignore or take for granted, much of these are free. So, if you can, use the holidays to explore the many wonders around us. Not only in Essex, but, close by, and across London, which boasts a multitude of parks, open spaces and outdoor activities. There really is no excuse to be bored!

I know that I sent the next article out a few weeks ago, however, I think it is worth sending it out again, to serve as a reminder:-



## **SENSE & SENSIBILITY**

### **KEEP SAFE THIS SUMMER**

**Many of us will be out and about with our family and friends and, enjoying outdoor activities over the next few months.**

**Here are a few thoughts and facts to consider:-**

- A Fire can destroy a tent in less than 60 seconds.
- In the UK, around 79,000 fires are started on grass and heath land every year (This is an average of 216 every day!)
- On average, 1,400 fires per year occur in caravans.

- Avoid: open fires in the countryside. Always have them in safe, designated areas.
- Never, throw cigarette ends or matches out of car windows. (Such thoughtless actions, are the cause of thousands of fires every year).
- Don't leave bottles or glass in woodlands, or anywhere that sunlight shining through glass, can start a fire.
- Remember, Barbecues and excess alcohol do not mix. Always ensure that safety guidelines are followed, and that the Barbecue is under the control of a responsible, sober adult.

Children are naturally curious about barbecues! They want to see what's going on, how well lit it is, what's cooking and are always keen to know when it's going to be ready to eat. They're drawn to where the cooking is going on, yet that's the most dangerous place to be. In fact, each year about 1,000 people suffer injuries, such as burns, caused by barbecues.

Ensure children are supervised well at any barbecue. Tell them of the dangers of going close to the barbecue and that the person doing the cooking needs to have plenty of space to cook safely. Running about and playing in the garden may not be practical if the garden is small, and you don't want to run the risk of a child colliding with the barbecue.

Instead, organising for an adult to play games with children away from the cooking area is beneficial, such as inside the house or in a front garden. Or, if you haven't got much space, perhaps they can take them out to a park whilst the cooking is in action. This way, they could certainly use up some energy and work up an appetite before they come back and eat!

## Setting the Barbecue Up Safely

**Firstly, ensure that it is alright to light a barbecue or Fire at your chosen location. (Many open spaces such as Epping Forest are protected by Bylaws which make it illegal to do so).**

To ensure everyone stays safe when you're barbecuing, the person in charge needs to set up the cooking device correctly, on a clear flat surface, light it properly and take care as they start to cook.

- Before you start, ensure the barbecue is in good working order.
- Find a place to set it up where the ground is flat and way from any sheds, fences, trees or overhanging shrubs.
- Never light a barbecue indoors or in a garage.
- Use charcoal and cover the base of the barbecue - about two inches deep.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for lighting your barbecue, as models differ.

- If it's windy, ensure the wind is blowing away from you when you light the barbecue.
- Keep children away from the barbecue as you light it.
- Don't wear loose clothing, or anything could dangle onto the flames.
- Don't use any flammable accelerants, such as paraffin or petrol.
- Light the barbecue at arms length.
- Once the barbecue is lit, keep children away from it.
- Keep a bucket of water close at hand, in case of emergencies.
- Never leave the barbecue unattended and don't try to move it whilst it's lit.
- When you've finished cooking, don't try to move the barbecue until it has cooled down completely. Then empty the ashes onto garden soil.
- Don't put ashes straight into a dustbin or wheelie bin - if they are still even slightly hot, they'll melt the plastic and cause a fire.



**REMEMBER THIS SOBERING THOUGHT:-**

**ONE TREE CAN MAKE A MILLION MATCHES  
ONE MATCH CAN DESTROY A MILLION TREES!**



**THINK BEFORE YOU FLICK, ONE  
CIGARETTE BUTT CAN DO JUST AS  
MUCH DAMAGE!**

**SO CAN DISCARDED GLASS BOTTLES!**



Don't forget that CRIMESTOPPERS is there for you to use, and that you can report crime to them anonymously, so, don't look away – report crime today!

Well that's it, for this week, so, as always, please Keep Alert, Keep Secure and Keep Safe!  
Have a good weekend, Colin  
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