



## Extra Police Patrols This Halloween As We Urge People To Ensure They Are Following Covid-19 Restrictions

Wiltshire Police will be putting on extra patrols this weekend to help ensure people comply with the Covid-19 restrictions during Halloween.

Dedicated teams of police community support officers are continuing their proactive work out and about across Swindon and Wiltshire, both responding to concerns from the public and providing a visible presence to remind people about the importance of the Government's restrictions and the supporting regulations.

They will be joined by additional police officers and staff over the coming weekend, working alongside licensing colleagues at Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, to make sure people are enjoying the Halloween celebrations safely and responsibly.

Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills said the feedback from the Force's community policing teams was that the overwhelming majority of the public were complying with the Covid-19 rules.

He said: "We have been working hard to proactively engage with the public, and across the county have dedicated teams of ten PCSOs allocated to identifying any potential breaches of the regulations, so we can deal with them swiftly but proportionately.

"Overall we can see that most people have adapted to this "new normal" and understand that the restrictions are in place to protect us all."

He added: "As we approach the Halloween weekend, we will have additional dedicated resources in place to proactively patrol in our communities. We are also working very closely with our partners, including both local authorities, to ensure we are engaging with businesses, particularly those linked to the night-time economy to ensure that people can socialise safely if they wish to do so.

"The threat from Covid-19 remains very real in our communities and I would encourage everyone to continue to play their part in helping to stop the spread of the virus."

If you are planning to celebrate Halloween this weekend, then we would ask you to remember the following:

- Remember the rule of six - please do not host or attend large parties indoors or outdoors, it is safer to celebrate at home with your family.
- Please avoid trick or treating where treats are handed out and children go door-to-door.
- A Halloween mask is not a substitute for a face covering.
- Remember to wash your hands, cover your face and make space - social distancing remains important so stay 2m apart.
- Finally, if you have tested positive for Covid-19, are experiencing symptoms or have been in contact with anyone with Covid-19 then you must self-isolate.

Police and Crime Commissioner Angus Macpherson said the work that PCSOs were doing to support the policing response to the Covid-19 pandemic proved what a vital part of the workforce they were.

He said: "I have always been passionate about the role of PCSOs and the need to have a strong officer/staff balance within a police force.

"We know that police officers and PCSOs have different roles to play in policing, and these dedicated teams of PCSOs focusing on the Covid-19 response has enabled us to have a strong community presence while ensuring police officers remain free to focus on those tasks which require a warranted police officer.

"This confirms the importance of my approach, outlined in my Police and Crime Plan, to increase police officer numbers, while protecting the number of PCSOs - something which is not replicated by other police forces across the country."

He added: "I would urge everyone to stay safe this Halloween - please remember to follow the rules and mark the occasion responsibly, taking note of the Hands, Face, Space guidance."

***Message Sent By***

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