

# Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

## Week ending 21 April 2024

### Cheshire News & Appeals



#### Latest Cheshire News

#### **Detectives investigating a serious assault in Crewe have charged an 18-year-old man in relation to the incident.**

Ellis Welsby, of Mill Street, Crewe was arrested on Wednesday 10 April.

He has since been charged with threatening a person with an offensive weapon and section 18 assault. The 18-year-old was also charged with being concerned in supply of a Class A drug (cocaine) and possession with intent to supply a Class B drug (Cannabis). The charges relate to an incident on at an address on Mill Street, Crewe, at around 9.36pm on Wednesday 10 April.

#### **A 36-year-old man from Widnes has been charged with a number of offences following an incident at an address in Eversley.**

At 8.32pm on Tuesday 16 April police attended the address following reports of an assault.

While arresting the occupant officers were threatened with weapons and a struggle ensued. The man was tasered and taken into custody, after being checked over at hospital. Andrew Anders from Eversley, Widnes was subsequently charged with battery, attempted section 18 assault, two counts of assaulting an emergency worker, and three counts of threatening with a bladed article in a private place. He is due to appear at Warrington Magistrates Court today (Friday 19 April).

#### **Badger cull costs 2023**

Police costs incurred for the badger cull in Cheshire Constabulary during 2023 amounted to £52,487.00

These costs are covered in full by Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Badger culling is part of a Defra policy, licensed by Natural England, to carry out culls in selected rural areas to eradicate Bovine Tuberculosis by 2038.

## A man from Northwich has been jailed for assault and dealing class A drugs.



Callum Finlay appeared at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 18 April where he was sentenced to five years and six months in prison.

The 23-year-old, of Golden Nook Road, Cuddington, Northwich, had previously pleaded guilty to –

- Section 20 assault
- Two counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs (heroin and crack cocaine)
- Two counts of being concerned in the supply of class A drugs (heroin and crack cocaine)
- Possession of class A drugs (cocaine)
- Possession of class B drugs (ketamine)

The court heard how on Friday 10 February 2023 officers searching for Finlay for an unrelated matter conducted a warrant at an address on Britton Court in Moulton. When searching the address officers discovered 43 wraps of heroin and over five wraps of crack cocaine, one wrap of cocaine, one wrap of ketamine, anabolic steroids, along with a red iPhone and almost £500 cash.

Finlay was arrested at the property on suspicion of Possession with Intent to Supply Class A drugs before being released on bail pending further enquiries. As enquiries continued, at around 2pm on Saturday 11 November 2023, police were made aware of an assault outside a pub on Crown Street in Northwich that had happened in the early hours of 11 November.

The victim of the assault was a customer at the pub who was not known to Finlay, the victim reported that they had suffered a broken jaw after being punched in the face a number of times by Finlay.

Finlay was arrested on suspicion of assault later that day and at the time of his arrest, he was found in possession of a Nokia mobile phone. Examination of the phone revealed that it was being used to send flare messages to sell illegal drugs in the Northwich area.

Following his arrest Finlay refused to answer any questions, but despite his silence he was charged possession with intent to supply drugs in relation to the warrant and being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs as a result of the information found on the mobile phone. He was also charged in relation to the assault.

Following his sentencing Detective Constable Lara Hill, of Northwich CID, said: "I welcome the sentence handed to Finlay and I hope that it acts as a warning to others. During our investigation it became clear that Finlay had no regard for the law. Despite his initial arrest he continued to deal drugs while on bail. On top of this he also went on to assault an innocent member of the public without provocation. Thankfully, as a result of the evidence we were able to gather, Finlay was left with no option but to plead guilty to all of the offences and he is now facing the consequences of his actions."

### **A man who stalked the Member of Parliament for Chester has been jailed.**

Benjamin Scott-Thrale appeared at Warrington Magistrates Court on Friday 12 April 2024 where he was sentenced to 6 weeks imprisonment. The courts also issued a two year restraining order and a 12 month post sentence supervision he must comply with.

The 32-year-old of Griffin Close, Chester, was found guilty of Stalking involving serious alarm/distress. During the trial at Warrington Magistrates Court, the court heard how Scott-Thrale had first contacted their MP for help regarding an ongoing legal dispute.

The victim and her team did what they could to assist Scott-Thrale, but when they informed him there wasn't anything more they could do, his communications became increasingly threatening and intimidating. Dissatisfied with the response, Scott-Thrale began making multiple attempts to contact the victim via calls and emails, demanding that she intervene in his situation.

It was clear in June 2023 that Scott-Thrale was not going to stop until he got the outcome he wanted, despite there being nothing further his MP could do for him. Scott-Thrale's contact continued to be of a threatening nature towards his MP, resulting in him being spoken to by officers in August 2023 and warned to cease all attempts to contact, but he was not deterred. The threats and barrage of abuse continued, and on Wednesday 24 January 2024, Scott-Thrale attended the victim's constituency office demanding to see her.

On Tuesday 20 February 2024, officers attended Scott-Thrale's home address and he was arrested on suspicion of Stalking and remanded into custody. Despite Scott-Thrale admitting all of the attempts to contact the victim, he plead not guilty to the charge of Stalking. Despite his denial, Warrington Magistrates Court found him guilty.

Following the sentencing, PC Morgan Bower, of Cheshire Constabulary's Harm Reduction Unit, said: "Scott-Thrale became fixated on the victim and chose to intimidate her when not getting the

outcome he wanted. Scott-Thrale reached out to the victim for help with his legal dispute, and she did all she could to assist him, before informing him that sadly there were no further ways she could help on numerous occasions.

“Instead of expressing appreciation for her and her team’s time and efforts trying their best to assist him, Scott-Thrale chose to view this as an injustice against him, and embarked upon a campaign of abuse, bombarding her with emails, calls, and turning up at her office.

“Scott-Thrale has shown no remorse for his actions throughout the course of this investigation or any appreciation for how his actions affected the victim and her team. Scott-Thrale has now been held accountable for his actions and I welcome sentence handed by the courts.

“This case highlights how anyone can become a victim of stalking, and the psychological and emotional impact it can have on those it affects. This type of behaviour will not be tolerated in Cheshire, and I hope that anyone who thinks they may be a victim of this crime to come forward.”

Throughout the investigation the victim was supported by Specialist Victim Advocates within the Harm Reduction Unit who support victims through the criminal justice process.

The Harm Reduction Unit is a specialist risk management service delivered by Cheshire Constabulary in conjunction with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and the Probation Service.

Since October 2023 the Harm Reduction Unit has included a dedicated investigation team taking primacy for the most serious and complex stalking investigations.

## **Officers investigating a burglary at a restaurant in Chester have charged two men in relation to the incident.**

Darren Reeder, 49, and Robert Halford, 53, both of Derwent Road, Chester, were arrested on Monday 15 April.

They have been charged with burglary other than a dwelling and have been bailed to appear at Chester Magistrates’ Court on Tuesday 14 May. The charges relate to a burglary at a restaurant in Northgate Street, Chester, at around 7.55pm on Monday 15 April.

## **Physiotherapist who sexually assaulted a woman in Willaston has been jailed.**

Richard Hughes was sentenced to 12 months in prison at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 2 April.

The 54-year-old of Crewe Road, Willaston, had previously pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual assault. The court heard how at around 12pm on Monday 21 August, the victim, a 70-year-old woman, had attended an appointment with Hughes for help with her back problems.

During her appointment, Hughes sexually assaulted the victim three times as she lay face down on a treatment table. The victim got up from the table and challenged Hughes before fleeing the clinic. She then called 999 and reported Hughes to police. Officers attended the clinic that day and arrested Hughes on suspicion of sexual assault.

In addition to his 12-month prison sentence, Hughes was handed a lifetime restraining order and ordered to sign the sex offender's registrar for ten years.



*Richard Hughes*

He was also subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for ten years.

Following the sentencing Detective Sergeant Rob Bushell, of Crewe CID, said: "The victim was seeking treatment for her back problems and put her trust in Hughes to help but instead, she was subject to a terrifying ordeal. Hughes held no regard for how his actions would impact the victim and took advantage of her while she was in a vulnerable position, all for his own perverse sexual gratification.

"I hope that the sentence handed to Hughes provides some closure to the victim, who has shown an incredible amount of bravery throughout this investigation. I'd like to take the opportunity to encourage anyone who may have also been a victim of sexual assault to please get in touch.

"We continue to do all we can to tackle any incident of violence against women and take all reports of such crimes extremely seriously and will investigate thoroughly to ensure those responsible are brought to justice."

To report any sexual offence call Cheshire Constabulary on 101 or visit the website. Information can also be passed anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

## **A man from Crewe has been jailed after he admitted sexually abusing young boys online.**



Nicholas Hatton appeared at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 16 April where he was sentenced to 18-years in prison.

The 34-year-old, of West Street, Crewe, had earlier pleaded guilty to –

- Six counts of causing/inciting a boy under 13 to engage in sexual activity
- Two counts of causing/inciting the sexual exploitation of a child aged 13-17
- One count of possession of indecent images of children
- Three counts of making indecent images of children (A, B, and C)
- Three counts of taking indecent images of children (A, B, C)
- One count of possession of prohibited images of children

In addition to his prison sentence Hatton was also ordered to sign the sex offenders register for life and handed an indefinite sexual harm prevention order.

The investigation into Hatton initially began in 2021 when officers from Cheshire Police received intelligence from a social media company in relation to his online activity. A warrant was conducted at Hatton's home in Crewe where a number electronic devices were seized and sent for analysis. During examination of the devices officers recovered over 12,000 indecent images of children, more than 750 indecent videos and 1,050 prohibited images. Following the discovery, Hatton was

rearrested in June 2022. During questioning he denied all knowledge of who the children in the images were. He was subsequently released on conditional bail.

Thanks to the help of the Cheshire Police Victim Identification Officer, detectives were able to identify two of the four victims in the case – both of whom were teenage boys in America. The victims confirmed that they had been in contact with Hatton for several years and that he had enticed them into engaging in online sexual activity.

One of the victims was 12 when the offences began, in 2014. He told officers that he had been groomed by Hatton throughout his childhood, stating that he had been coerced into sexually abusing a two-year-old family member on camera. As a result of his admissions, the teenager has since been convicted of rape and sexual assault in America and sentenced to 50 years in prison. Hatton was subsequently charged in connection with the offences and later pleaded guilty to all of the charges.

Following his sentencing, Detective Constable Faye Taylor of the Online Child Abuse Investigation Team at Cheshire Police, said: “This has been a complex and lengthy investigation which ultimately uncovered Hatton’s despicable behaviour. It was apparent throughout the investigation that Hatton is a sexual predator who preyed on vulnerable young boys and had no regard for the effects his actions would have on the victims or their families.

“Due to the grooming that he suffered as a child, one of Hatton’s victim in America has been handed a lengthy prison sentence, while his family member suffered sustained sexual abuse. While none of the victims will ever be able to forget what happened to them, I hope that Hatton’s conviction and the sentence handed to him will provide them with some closure. I also hope that Hatton’s conviction will act as a reminder that there are no borders when it comes to sexual abuse, it can happen anywhere at any time and the impact can be lifechanging.”

For advice on identifying signs of sexual exploitation visit [Child Sexual Exploitation & How to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#). To report a sexual offence call Cheshire Constabulary on 101. Information can also be given online at <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## **Detectives investigating the murder of a baby in Warrington in 1998 have charged a woman in connection with the incident.**

Baby ‘Callum’ was discovered in woodland in the Callands area of the town in March 1998.

A murder investigation was subsequently launched by detectives from Cheshire Police.

In July 2023 police arrested a man and a woman from Liverpool in relation to the incident, the pair were subsequently released on bail.



Today, Monday 15 April 2024, police rearrested the 54-year-old woman and the Crown Prosecution Service has now authorised Cheshire Police to charge Joanne Sharkey, of West Derby, in Liverpool with murder. She has been remanded in custody and is set to appear at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 16 April.

Detective Inspector Hannah Friend, of Cheshire Police's Major Crime Review Team, said: "I understand that this is an extremely emotional case which has attracted a lot of attention over the past twenty-six years, however I would ask people not to speculate. Criminal proceedings are now active against Joanne Sharkey, and she has the right to a fair trial. It is extremely important that there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings."

The man who was arrested as part of the investigation has since been released without charge. Officers are not looking for anyone else in relation to the death.

### **Drug dealer sentenced following successful stop and search in Northwich**

A woman who was spotted dealing drugs in an alleyway in Northwich has been sentenced.

Jenny Peake appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 15 April where she was sentenced to two-years in prison, suspended for 18 months. The 47-year-old of Porter Drive, Northwich, had previously pleaded guilty to possession of crack cocaine and two counts of being concerned in the supply of class A drugs (crack cocaine and heroin).

The court heard how at around 2pm on Monday 17 October 2023, plain clothed officers on patrol in Northwich spotted a deal taking place in an alleyway between Greenall Road and Victoria Road. During the exchange Peake was witnessed passing an item to a man who was a known drug user. After seeing the officers, Peake was witnessed dropping an item behind a wheelie while the man appeared to swallow the drugs he had purchased.

Both suspects were searched by officers and while the search on the man was negative, Peake was found in possession of a small amount of cash and a wrap of illegal drugs were also recovered from behind the wheelie bin which she admitted dropping.

She was arrested at the scene and a section 32 search was conducted at her former home on Victoria Road, where officers recovered further cash along with two mobile phones.

Messages discovered on one of the phones showed that Peake had been actively dealing drugs in the area, sending 'flare' messages to other drug users in the area offering to supply heroin and crack cocaine.



During questioning Peake admitted that the illegal drugs found in the alley were hers, however she claimed that they were for personal use. She also told officers that there were a number of messages relating to the sale of illegal drugs on her phone but claimed that she was not responsible for the messages. Despite her denial, Peake was subsequently charged with possession of class A drugs and being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs.

Following her sentencing, Detective Constable Adam Cupples, of Northwich Proactive Policing Team, said: "Illegal drugs can have a devastating impact, not only drug users, but also the community around them. Here in Northwich, we are doing all we can to stop drug activity on our streets to make the town a safer place to live and visit, while also making it extremely difficult for these offenders to operate. We will always act on any information about drug activity provided to us and would urge anyone who believes this activity is happening near to them to get in touch."

## Latest Cheshire Appeals

**Officers investigating an assault in Warrington town centre have released CCTV of a man they would like to speak to.**



At 12.25am on Friday 12 April, a 26-year-old man was assaulted by two unknown men on Bridge Street, Warrington.

The victim, who was later found to have sustained minor injuries, was left lying unconscious in the street while the two men fled the scene. Following the attack, a 24-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of assault. He has since been released on bail. Officers have now released CCTV images of a man they would like to speak to in relation to this incident.

Detective Sergeant Neil Mooney said: "Enquiries are currently ongoing and as part of our investigation, we would like to speak to the man pictured in the CCTV image. If anyone recognises this man, please contact us [via the website](#) or call 101, quoting IML 1798515. I would also like to appeal directly to the man pictured to come forward."

Anyone with any information can contact Cheshire Police by calling 101 and quoting IML 1798515 or [visit the website](#).

## **Police are appealing for witnesses and video footage following a collision in Latchford.**

At around 7.12pm on Tuesday 16 April, officers responded to reports of a road traffic collision in Latchford.

Officers attended the scene on Knutsford Road, Latchford, and found there had been a collision between two pedestrians and a grey Mitsubishi Eclipse. One of the pedestrians, a 62-year-old local woman, sustained serious injuries and was taken to Aintree Hospital. Her injuries are not thought to be life-changing or threatening and she has since been discharged.

The other pedestrian, a 34-year-old local woman, was also injured, she was taken to Warrington Hospital as a precaution, where she remains at this time. The driver of the Mitsubishi, a 47-year-old woman from Stockton Heath, was not injured during the incident. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and officers are appealing to anyone who may have dashcam footage or witnessed the collision to get in touch.

Police Constable Gary Evans, of the force's Roads and Crime Unit, said: "As part of our investigation, we would like to speak to anyone who witnessed what happened during the incident. The same goes for anyone with any dashcam or CCTV footage which may aid our enquiries. Anyone with any information or dashcam footage in relation to the incident is asked to report it to Cheshire Constabulary via [www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us](http://www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us) quoting IML-1801996 or call 101."

### **Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (CNWA)**

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