

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 18th August 2024

Cheshire News & Appeals



Latest Cheshire News

Man who evaded justice jailed for his part in burglary series

A man who evaded being sentenced for his part in a series of burglaries across Cheshire and North Wales has been jailed.

Tomasz Monkowski, 51, fled to Poland prior to the strike day conducted by Cheshire and North Wales. His three co-accused were sentenced in 2021. Due to him fleeing to Poland, a European Arrest Warrant was authorised for his arrest. He was identified after coming to the attention of the authorities in Poland, and Cheshire Police were alerted to his whereabouts. Once he was dealt with by the courts in Poland, he was then transferred to the UK to be sentenced. He appeared at Sheffield Crown court on Friday 16 August to be sentenced to eight years in prison.



Monkowski was part of a gang who targeted properties in the rural areas of Cheshire and North Wales. Their crime spree came to an end following an 18-month operation by Cheshire Police and North Wales Police. The gang stole property with a combined value of £450,214.98 between 23 July 2018 and 2 July 2019 targeting high value items such as quad bikes, motorbikes and horse tack. In total there were 75 offences – 47 in North Wales and 28 in Cheshire. As the net closed in on the gang, officers raided addresses in North Wales and arrested Korybolski at his home address, Lawin and Knapik had fled back to Poland so were extradited back to the UK to face justice. The men were subsequently charged and sent to court.

Lukaz Lawin, now 39, Patryk Korybolski, now 31, and Patryk Knapik, now 28, had pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit burglary and money laundering. They were subsequently sentenced in 2021. Lawin was sentenced to five years eight months in prison. Korybolski was given a five years and three month sentence and Knapik was sentenced to four years and four months.

DC Gareth Yates said: *"Monkowski thought he could evade justice by fleeing to Poland and deny his victims complete justice. But by coming to the attention of police in Poland they were alerted to the fact he was wanted in the UK. Now he is finally facing the consequences of his actions and will spend time behind bars."*

Three men charged following Crewe fire

Three men have been charged with arson with intent to endanger life following an investigation into a large fire in Catherine Street in Crewe.

James Evans, 19, from Welles Street in Sandbach, Justin Evans, 18, from Catherine Street in Crewe and Peter Lord, 19, of no fixed address were remanded into custody to appear at Crewe Magistrates on 16 August. Justin Evans was also charged with committing an act with intent to pervert the course of justice. The charges related to the fire at a disused building in Catherine Street on Friday 9 August. The 12-year-old boy who was arrested and bailed has since been eliminated from the enquiries.

Warning following thefts and illegal use of e-bikes and e-scooters

Cheshire Police is warning of the consequences of stealing and illegally riding e-bikes and e-scooters following an increase in thefts across the county.

In recent years there has been an increase in the popularity of owning electric vehicles, and during the past few months, police have seen a spike in thefts and robberies of e-bikes and e-scooters. Officers are also seeing a rise in the illegal use of these vehicles in public places across Cheshire. It's not currently possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it is illegal to use them on the road or in public spaces. If you're using a private e-scooter you risk the vehicle being seized. You can however use them on private land with the permission of the landowner. However, if you own an e-bike, you can ride it if you're aged 14 or over, and as long as it meets certain requirements and has not been modified in any way. If you don't have the correct licence or are riding without insurance you could face a Fixed Penalty Notice, which could include:

- a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for having no insurance
- a £100 fine and three to six penalty points for riding without the correct licence

You could also be committing an offence if you're caught:

- riding on a pavement
- using a mobile phone or other handheld device while riding
- riding through red lights
- drink driving

If you're using an e-bike or e-scooter in a public space and in an antisocial manner, you also risk the vehicle being seized.

Detective Chief Inspector, Rob McLoughlin said: *"Should you be caught illegally using an e-vehicle, or stealing and selling them on, you will have a criminal record which will affect you in future. In recent months we have made a number of arrests and positive seizures of e-bikes and e-scooters being used illegally in Cheshire. Over the summer months, we will continue to patrol open spaces and provide a visible presence. Innocent people using e-bikes are often targeted and fall victim of theft by individuals who are intent to use them to assist their criminal activity. We understand how distressing it is to be a victim of this type of crime and the impact it can have. We are working hard to reduce this through targeted patrols. We would always encourage anyone who has an e-bike to take advantage of security measures such as the Bike Register, which is the UK's national bike marking and registration scheme which aims to reduce cycle theft, identify stolen bikes and return recovered bikes to their rightful owners."*

How to keep your e-bike or e-scooter safe:

- Ensure when it is not in use you are using an appropriate lock and it is secured properly.
- When being stored at home, ensure it is in a secure place.
- Consider installing a video doorbell / camera and be vigilant for any markings on your house.
- Consider using a tracking device and display labels on your bike or scooter advising that a tracker is fitted.
- Get your bike or scooter security marked.

What to do if your e-bike or e-scooter is stolen: If your bike or scooter has been stolen, contact police by calling 999 if a crime is taking place or report online. Please report the crime as soon as you notice your bike or scooter has been stolen. Give police your frame number, cycle database number, a photo and any other details and make sure you update the status on the cycle database where you registered it. The sooner officers know, the sooner they can act.

Man sentenced for possessing bladed article in Warrington

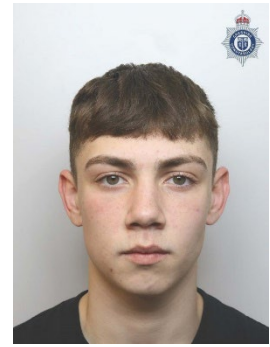
A man has been sentenced for possession of a bladed article in Warrington.

Thomas Connelly, 18, of Regency Square, Warrington, appeared at Chester Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 14 August charged with possession of a bladed article in a public place. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a total of 26 weeks in a young offender institution.

On Wednesday 7 August, at approximately 5.40pm, officers carrying out reassurance patrols in Warrington spotted Connelly acting suspiciously on Orford Lane, an area where there were rumours circulating about an alleged planned protest in relation to the ongoing national disorder. The rumours proved to be false.

Officers in Warrington had been given additional stop and search powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) to provide reassurance. The order means that officers can stop and search any person or vehicle they believe may be carrying weapons or causing serious violence in a particular area, whether or not they have any grounds of suspicion. Connelly appeared to be videoing the location and when he was approached by officers to be stopped and searched, he admitted having a folding lock knife in his pocket. Connelly was subsequently arrested for the offence and later charged.

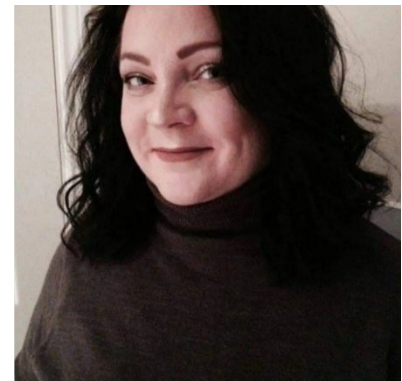
A spokesperson for Cheshire Police said: *"Since the start of the recent disorder in other areas of the UK, we have been clear that we will not tolerate this kind of behaviour in Cheshire, including those who choose to carry a weapon. Connelly was spotted in a location where there were rumours circulating about an alleged protest. While this did not prove to be true, Connelly had clearly made his way to Orford Lane after hearing this speculation. If you choose to carry a knife you are much more likely to be involved in knife crime, and I hope this serves as a reminder of how seriously we take offences of this nature."*



Family of Chester woman pay tribute following fatal collision

The family of a 52-year-old woman who died following a fatal collision in Mickle Trafford have paid tribute to her.

At around 9.24pm on Monday 5 August, Lorraine Hughes was riding a Vespa motorbike on Warrington Road, Mickle Trafford, when it collided with the road's central reservation. The 52-year-old of Chester was initially taken to the Countess of Chester Hospital with injuries that were not thought to be life-threatening or life-changing, being transferred to Aintree Hospital the following day. However, on Wednesday 7 August, Lorraine sadly passed away unexpectedly.



Her family have now paid tribute to her. Lorraine's family said: *"It is with both great sadness, and a very heavy heart that we announce the passing of Lorraine Jean Hughes a beloved mother, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt and friend to many. She sadly passed away on 07/08/2024 aged 52. She died doing what she loved, and unfortunately took her last breaths surrounded by the amazing surgeons and nurses of Aintree Hospital. Words cannot describe how much we will miss her. She will never be forgotten."*

Anyone with any information in relation to the incident is asked to contact Cheshire Police on 101 or visit www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us, quoting IML-1888158.

Woman jailed for hate related communications

A woman has been jailed after admitting hate related communications.

Julie Sweeney, of Lawtongate Estate, Church Lawton, appeared at Chester Crown Court on Wednesday 14 August. The 53-year-old was sentenced to 15 months after pleading guilty to sending communications threatening death or serious harm (S181 Online Safety Act 2023).

On Monday 5 August, Cheshire Police received a complaint in relation to the hateful tone of a message which had been posted on a community Facebook group in the Kidsgrove area. Sweeney was subsequently identified from her online profile and arrested. She was later charged with the offence.

A spokesperson for Cheshire Police said: *"Since the start of the recent disorder in other areas of the UK, we have been clear that we will not tolerate this kind of behaviour in Cheshire, including those who post abusive and threatening messages online. People may think that posting hateful messages on social media, instead of engaging in this sort of behaviour in person, offers them some sort of anonymity. But this could not be further from the truth. As this case demonstrates, there is nowhere to hide. If you choose to engage in this behaviour, whether in person or online, we will find you and you will be held responsible."*



Man charged linked to national disorder

Officers in Cheshire have charged a man linked to the recent national disorder.

While there have been no incidents of violent disorder in Cheshire, the force has arrested and charged several people for various offences. The latest person to be charged is Thomas Connolly, 18, of Regency Square, Warrington, has been charged with possession of a bladed article in a public place, following an incident in Warrington on Wednesday 7 August. He will appear at Chester Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 14 August.

Men jailed after posting racist messages on social media

Two men have been jailed after posting racist messages on social media.



(L-R): Christopher Taggart and Rhys McDonald

Christopher Taggart, 36, of Ceasars Close, Runcorn, and Rhys McDonald, 34, of Oxford Road, Runcorn, appeared at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 13 August. Taggart was sentenced to 32 months and McDonald was sentenced to 28 months after they both pleaded guilty to publishing written material to stir up racial hatred. Taggart also pleaded guilty to possession of an offensive weapon in a private place.

On Monday 5 August, Cheshire Police became aware of concerning messages which were openly available to view on Facebook, posted by both Taggart and McDonald. This included multiple posts containing racial

abuse and encouraging people to engage in racial hatred. Taggart posted these messages between 29 July and 6 August, while McDonald posted between 29 July and 5 August. From their online profiles, officers worked to identify and locate the pair, and they were subsequently arrested on Saturday 10 August. Upon arrest, Taggart's home address was searched, and officers located a knuckle duster. The two men were ultimately charged with the offences and pleaded guilty.

Chief Superintendent Alison Ross said: *"Since the start of the recent disorder in other areas of the UK, we have been clear that we will not tolerate this kind of behaviour in Cheshire, including those who post racial abuse online. Much of the violent disorder which has taken place across the UK in recent weeks has been fuelled by malicious communications online, something which Taggart and McDonald decided to take part in. But they were not able to hide behind their devices and online accounts - they were soon identified and are now being held accountable. This should serve as a stark reminder against posting abusive messages online – we are all responsible for our actions, including what we post on social media."*

Family of woman who died following collision in Adlington pay tribute

The family of a 54-year-old woman who died following a fatal collision in Adlington have paid tribute to her.

At around 7.45am on Wednesday 7 August, police were called to reports of a collision on the A523 Poynton Relief Road. The collision involved a silver Peugeot 208 and a blue Mercedes A Class. The driver of the Peugeot, Lindsay Shakeshaft, from Cheadle, was sadly pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. The driver of the Mercedes, a 35-year-old woman, was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving. She has since been released on conditional bail.



Lindsay's family said: *"We are deeply wounded by the news of the collision that has left us without Lindsay. She was a resolute, compassionate, and supportive woman to many people, including as a wife, mother, sister, and auntie. She will be missed by all who knew her. The family would like to thank the emergency services and members of the public for their help during this incident and ask for respect at this difficult time."*

Anyone who witnessed the incident or has any dashcam footage of what happened can contact Cheshire Police via cheshire.police.uk/tell-us, or call 101, quoting IML-1889097.

Three more people charged with hate related incidents

While there have been no incidents of violent disorder in Cheshire, nor is there anything to suggest there is any serious disorder planned in the county, the force has arrested and charged several people for hate crime and inciting hatred.

The latest three people to be charged include:

- Scott Webb, 32, of Tilston Avenue, Latchford, has been charged with racially aggravated criminal damage, possession of a class A drug – cocaine, racially aggravated common assault, and two counts of racially aggravated harassment with intent to cause alarm and distress, following incidents in Warrington on Saturday 10 August.
- Christopher Taggart, 36, of Ceasers Close, Runcorn, has been charged with publishing written material to stir up racial hatred between 29 July and 6 August. He has also been charged with possession of an offensive weapon in a private place.

- Rhys McDonald, 34, of Oxford Road, Runcorn, has been charged with publishing written material to stir up racial hatred between 29 July and 5 August.

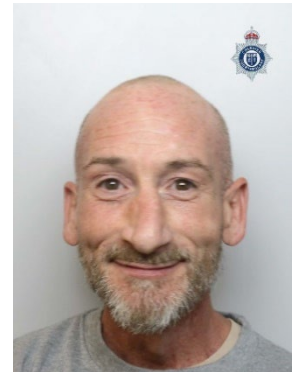
They will all appear at Chester Magistrates' Court on Monday 12 August.

Latest Cheshire Appeal

Chester man wanted on court warrant

Officers from Cheshire police are appealing to the public to help locate a man who is wanted on Court warrant.

Michael Photiou was due to appear at Wrexham Magistrates Court on Wednesday 10 July, but he failed to attend and a warrant was issued for his arrest. The 45-year-old is described as being white, of a medium build, approximately 5' 8" tall, with brown eyes and short shaved hair. He resides in the Chester area and has links to the Liverpool and Glastonbury areas. Anyone with any information about Photiou's whereabouts, should contact Cheshire Police via www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us or by calling 101, quoting 24000602764.



Appeal for witnesses and dashcam footage following attempted robbery in Widnes

Officers investigating reports of an attempted robbery in Widnes are appealing for any witnesses or those with dashcam or CCTV footage to get in touch with them.

On Thursday 25 July, police were called to reports of an incident in Prescott Road, Widnes, which occurred at some time between 3pm and 3.30pm. An elderly man had been sitting outside The Wellington pub when he was approached by an unknown man on foot. This suspect attempted to steal the elderly man's cigarettes before assaulting him. The victim suffered cuts to his face and bruising around his eye during the incident. Enquiries have been ongoing since the incident and officers are now looking to speak to anyone who may have witnessed what happened or has any relevant footage.

PC Shannon Burt said: *"This incident involved a vulnerable victim who has been targeted, and as a result he sustained injuries. If anyone was walking or driving down Prescott Road on 25 July between 3pm and 3.30pm and witnessed this incident, or has any footage to support the investigation, please get in touch with us. You can report information via 101 or through cheshire.police.uk/tell-us quoting IML-1879392."*

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