

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 12th April 2026

Cheshire News & Appeals



Latest Cheshire News

Aurin Makepeace jailed for murdering Steven Rothwell

Aurin Makepeace from Tan Y Don, Prestatyn has been jailed for murdering Steven Rothwell at his home in Macclesfield.

Makepeace was found guilty of murder on Wednesday 25 March 2026 following a trial which began at Chester Crown Court on Monday 3 March. The 43-year-old appeared at Chester Crown Court on Friday 10 April 2026 to be sentenced and was jailed for life with a minimum term of 27 years to be served in prison.



<https://youtu.be/lxKwRu-yZk>

The court heard that Makepeace tried to cover her tracks after stabbing Steven Rothwell at the 41-year-old's flat on Cross Street, Macclesfield in August 2025 following an argument. Makepeace and Steven were former partners having initially met in prison. Whilst their relationship had formally ended around 2023, they had remained in regular contact with one another and had been in relationships with other people.

On the 15 August 2025, Makepeace had travelled from her home in Prestatyn to stay with Steven at his flat for a few days. During her visit, on Monday 18 August 2025, a recent ex-girlfriend of Steven revealed in a phone call that she had recently slept with another man which caused Steven to become angry and leave his flat to confront her. Steven argued with his ex-girlfriend in the street nearby to his flat. Makepeace, who was also present, assaulted her by slapping her in the face and was verbally abusive to her. The arguing in the street was seen by a passing motorist who reported the incident to the police, and an officer attended a short time later. Police spoke with his ex-girlfriend, and then with Steven at his flat, where Makepeace was present. At that time Makepeace was irate and claiming to be distressed over the incident and frequently stated how angry she was with Steven's ex-girlfriend.

A number of hours after the police left, on the same evening, Makepeace fatally stabbed Steven in the chest. Makepeace stayed at the address overnight and then left the following morning. During the day on the 19 August 2025 Makepeace made a number of calls to different friends making disclosures that she had stabbed Steven and to one person sent a voice note saying 'I've murdered my boyfriend'. Later that night on Tuesday 19 August 2025 at 10.19pm Makepeace rang 999, and having given the name of 'Katie' to the call operator, stated she had stabbed Steven and that he was dead in the address. Makepeace claimed to still be at the address when she was in fact clearly back in rural North Wales. Makepeace stated to the operator that she needed help and that Steven had attacked her and in self defence she had stabbed him. Police then attended at 1A Cross Street, Macclesfield at 10.43pm and discovered Steven deceased in the address. Steven had a single stab wound to his chest and a yellow blanket had been placed over his body. It was clear to officers and

medical experts that this violent attack had not taken place minutes or even hours before the 999 phone call.

No one else was in Steven's flat, and an investigation was launched to find the girlfriend called 'Katie'. She was subsequently arrested alongside another man, but following further enquiries, they were released without charge and extensive CCTV and phone analysis led detectives to Makepeace in rural North Wales. During police interviews Makepeace stated after the police left, Steven had argued on the phone again with the man who had been having the affair with his ex-girlfriend and made more threats, Steven then picked up a knife and was intending to leave the flat to stab the man. Makepeace claimed she tried to stop him leaving the address and the knife accidentally went in him. Makepeace claimed she was too upset and scared to call an ambulance and when she left, Steven was still alive.

Dr Medcalf Forensic Pathologist testified that Steven would have died within 10 minutes of the injury and that in his opinion the account of Makepeace was very unlikely. Forensic investigation within the scene identified the knife, and forensic science showed that the knife had likely been washed and placed amongst other items in the kitchen – Steven's blood was found on the knife and Makepeace's DNA was found on the handle.

Detective Inspector Simon Mills said: *"From the outset Makepeace's account of how the knife 'accidentally' entered Steven's chest was not plausible. Evidentially we proved that Makepeace was lying, and we proved that she stayed the night in the address which again completely contradicted her account in interview. The Jury saw straight through Makepeace's lies and delivered a unanimous guilty verdict with less than two hours deliberation time. Makepeace is paying the price of her actions and lies now that she has been sentenced to life with a minimum of 27 years to be served in prison. Makepeace put Steven's family through the stress and heartache of the trial, I just hope this sentence brings some closure and justice for his friends and family."*

Steven's family said following her conviction: *"We'd like to thank the judge, jury and counsel for the verdict reached on Aurin Makepeace today, and a huge thank you to the team who have been working behind the scenes. The support and guidance we have received from Cheshire Police has been a huge comfort during this trying time. Ste was so resilient, mischievous and had the gentlest of hearts and we're going to miss that strength he brought. He found a lot of comfort in literature and spent many moments behind a book, either sat in a coffee shop or at the library. He will be forever thought about and we're going to miss his witty sense of humour."*



Nearly 20 illegal firearms handed over to police following month-long amnesty campaign

Cheshire Constabulary joined fellow forces and the National Police Chief's Council and National Crime Agency in supporting a month-long amnesty operation to prevent easily convertible blank-firing weapons from falling into the hands of criminals.

The amnesty campaign to remove BRUNI-manufactured Side/Top-Venting Blank-Firing (TVBF) firearms from our streets ran from Monday 2 February until Friday 27 February. The aim of the operation was to prevent these illegal firearms from being used within criminal circles. Recent

testing by the National Crime Agency has found that BRUNI-manufactured Side/Top-Venting Blank-Firing firearms can be converted to discharge lethal ammunition. Even in cases where the weapons have not been converted, they have been used in criminal activity. Many of the firearms recovered from criminals have had their typically bright-coloured exteriors painted black to imitate real firearms.

Following the conclusion of the amnesty, these weapons are now illegal to possess in England and Wales. Anyone found in possession of a TVBF firearm could face a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. In Cheshire, gun-related crime remains low. However, Cheshire Police can confirm that following the county-wide amnesty, 19 of these now-illegal firearms were handed in to police. Since being handed over, these firearms have been made safe by specialist officers within the Constabulary and will be destroyed, permanently preventing them from falling into the wrong hands.



Detective Chief Inspector Danielle Knox, of the Force Intelligence Bureau, said: *“This amnesty was run with the sole purpose of allowing the public to safely dispose of any of these now-illegal firearms without judgement or repercussions. With that in mind, BRUNI-manufactured Side/Top-Venting Blank-Firing firearms are now illegal, and anyone found in possession of one will face the full extent of the law.*”

“We are very fortunate that, as a county, Cheshire has some of the lowest rates of gun-related crime in the country. Now that these weapons have been handed over to officers, we have taken further steps to make our streets even safer. On a local level, your neighbourhood officers will continue to work with partner agencies and organisations across the county to provide education around the dangers, rules and regulations surrounding firearms, ensuring that gun crime remains low and does not become a prevalent problem for the people of Cheshire in the future.”

Crime continues to fall in Cheshire for the fourth year in a row

Crime continues to fall in Cheshire for the fourth year in a row, with an overall reduction of 14% and with more offenders being charged than anywhere else in the country.

Residents across the county are being kept even safer thanks to the efforts of Cheshire Constabulary, who are cutting crime and making sure that those who are intent on committing offences are held accountable. Initial figures for the last financial year show that total crime in Cheshire fell by 1.4% and that the force has the highest charge rate for crime in the UK.

Reductions were seen across many categories of crime, including criminal damage (-5.5% compared to the previous 12 months) and burglary (-9.4% compared to the previous 12 months), which is the fifth lowest in the country. Shoplifting and theft offences have also fallen in Cheshire by 10.2%, which is in stark contrast to the national picture around shoplifting.

Chief Constable Mark Roberts said: *“These figures reflect the hard work of our officers and staff, who are continuing to keep Cheshire residents even safer by making the county hostile to criminals. We continue to carry out cross border operations to deter those who travel into Cheshire to commit crime. We have a real focus on neighbourhood policing and our officers work closely with their communities they serve by launching initiatives to not only catch offenders and prevent criminal behaviour but also offer advice and public reassurance to residents and businesses.*

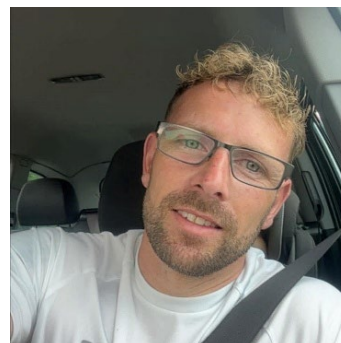
“I am proud that Cheshire has the highest charge rate in the UK, and one of the highest charge rates for burglary. This success comes despite crime continuing to fall in Cheshire and is a result of our officers’ commitment to bringing offenders to justice. All of this sets a strong example to anyone who thinks they can come and commit crime in Cheshire and get away with it. I hope members of the public will also be reassured of the action we carry out to prevent our residents, businesses and communities from becoming victims of crime. Overall, these latest figures highlight Cheshire as one of the safest places to live in the country. Crime is falling and we are charging more people than ever before, which is testament to the hard work of everyone across the Constabulary.”

Family of man who died following collision pay tribute

The family of a man who died following a collision near Crewe have paid tribute to him.

At 7.51pm on Monday 6 April, police were called to reports of a collision on Middlewich Road, Woolstanwood. The collision involved a Honda motorcycle and a Range Rover. Sadly, the rider of the motorcycle, Kerie O’Donnell, 34, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Kerie’s family said: *“Kerie will be sadly missed. He was a devoted, hard-working father of four, who lived for nothing but his children.”*



The family have requested privacy at this time of grief.

The driver of the Range Rover, a 64-year-old man, suffered serious injuries and was taken to hospital. Any witnesses or those with dashcam footage should contact Cheshire Police on 101 or through the Cheshire Police website, quoting IML-2303757.

Over 200,000 illegal cigarettes seized in western immigration operation

Officers from the Western Protecting Vulnerable People and Exploitation (PVPE) team have seized quantities of counterfeit cigarettes during an retail operation across the Northwich area, with 200,000 illicit products recovered from one shop alone.

On Wednesday 2 April, officers from the Western PVPE team and Northwich Beat Team, with the assistance of local Trading Standards teams, launched Operation Accommodate, a multi-agency investigation targeting retailers believed to be linked to organised immigration crime. Officers, supported by community partners from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) and specialist detection dogs, visited four retailers in the Northwich Road, Chester Road, Station Road and Market Street areas of Northwich.

At all four retailers, officers found large quantities of illicit tobacco and cigarettes concealed in a number of sophisticated hides, out of view from the general public. More than 200,000 cigarettes were recovered from an adjoining property linked to the Station Road retailer alone. As a result, closure orders were served on the stores on Market Street and Station Road. The property linked to the Station Road retailer was also served with a prohibition notice by CFRS colleagues. A 27-year-old man was also arrested at the Station Road retailer on suspicion of money laundering. He has since been released under investigation.



Detective Sergeant Paul Huxley, of the Western Exploitation Team, said: *“Today’s Operation Accommodate deployment has recovered well over 200,000 fake cigarettes from four stores, which is one of the largest seizures in the Cheshire West area to date and will have considerably disrupted the efforts of those looking to benefit from criminal activity. We often find links between the sale of illicit and counterfeit goods and the exploitation of vulnerable people under modern slavery offences. It is for this reason, paired with the impact the distribution of illicit goods has on honest, law-abiding retailers, that our officers conduct operations such as this so regularly across the county. The policing presence throughout the day was also highly impactful, with members of the public engaging with our officers during the deployment and discussing how the sale of fake cigarettes and tobacco is a significant issue in their local areas.”*

Anyone with concerns about organised immigration crime can contact Cheshire Police via 101 or visit: <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/soh/seen-or-heard/> and speak with a member of their local PVP Exploitation Team.

Tri-force road safety operation launches to keep road users safe

A joint road safety operation bringing together officers from Cheshire Constabulary, West Mercia Police and Staffordshire Police launched ahead of the Easter weekend to help keep motorcyclists and all road users safe.

Operation Caesar, a seasonal initiative targeting motorcycle safety, began on Thursday 2 April with a coordinated day of action across force boundaries. Officers, alongside BikeSafe volunteers and fire bike teams, were stationed at Midway Truck Stop in Prees, engaging with attending riders and members of the public.



Cheshire Bike Sergeant Andy Griffiths leads an operational briefing alongside Sergeant Dave Williams (right) from West Mercia Police

Officers, alongside BikeSafe volunteers and fire bike teams, were stationed at Midway Truck Stop in Prees, engaging with attending riders and members of the public.



Officers from three forces came together to launch Operation Caesar over the Easter bank holiday

At the same time, enforcement activity was carried out on surrounding routes, with officers targeting those riding dangerously or at excessive speed. Officers proactively engaged with motorcyclists and all road users, offering advice on how to ride and drive safely alongside one another, promoting safer riding behaviours and encouraging attendance on BikeSafe courses, while also taking enforcement action where necessary. The operation continued across the Easter bank holiday weekend, with increased patrols in key hotspot areas where higher numbers of motorcyclists were expected as the motorcycle season gets into full swing - the teams issuing reports for offences including:

- 29 drivers found having driven at excess speed
- 19 vehicles found with non-conforming registration plates
- Five being found driving without due care and attention
- Five drivers found using mobile phones
- Two driving with no insurance or driving licences

Officers also stopped 12 drivers and issued fines for construction and use vehicle offences, which relate to the poor standards of brakes, tyres, and vehicle equipment. One driver was also stopped for contravening a set of double white lines and one vehicle was seized under section 165 of the Road traffic Act.

Sergeant Andy Griffiths, from the Constabulary's Bike Unit, said: *"Operation Caesar is about striking the right balance between engagement and enforcement. We want motorcyclists to enjoy the roads across Cheshire and beyond, but that enjoyment must not come at the expense of safety. By working together with our neighbouring forces, we're able to take a joined-up approach to tackling dangerous riding across the wider road network. Most riders we speak to welcome the advice and support we provide, but for those who choose to ignore the law, we will take action. Our message is simple - ride within your limits, ride responsibly, and make sure you get home safely."*

https://youtu.be/Fr51W0_GFq8

Man jailed for uploading indecent images of children

A sex offender who continued to upload indecent images of children has been sentenced.

Peter Stilwell of no fixed address appeared at Chester Crown Court on 7 April to be sentenced after pleading guilty to three counts of making indecent images of children. These related to 44 category A images of children, six category B images, and 2,051 category C images between 30 September 2023 and 2 February 2025. The 38-year-old was sentenced to 13 months imprisonment.



Stilwell who was previously given a 12 month suspended sentence for 12 months in May 2023 was recalled to prison on 12 March 2025 after officers from Cheshire Constabulary's Online Child Abuse Investigation Team (OCAIT) attended his former address in Runcorn following information he had uploaded indecent of images of children from the internet. Stilwell was also subject to a 10 year Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) and was also in breach of this order.

A number of digital devices were seized to be interrogated by digital forensic specialists, who later discovered thousands of indecent images and videos of children. They stopped at more than 2,000

images with a further 395,555 images and videos uncategorised. The remaining images were dip sampled finding further indecent images of children.

DC Kelsey Lee from the OCAIT team said: *“Stilwell was in clear breach of this SHPO following his similar conviction in 2023 for which he was given a suspended sentence. Despite this and the SHPO he continued his offending and thought he could get away with it. He has been in prison ever since and is now paying the price for his sickening behaviour.”*

Cheshire bucks the national trend in tackling shoplifting

Shoplifting and theft offences fallen by 10% against a national increase.

Shoplifting and theft offences across Cheshire have fallen in Cheshire by 10.2%. This is in stark contrast to the national picture around shoplifting, which has seen a national increase over the past year.

Assistant Chief Constable Alison Ross said: *“It’s clear to see from our figures that we do not operate any form of “shoplifting threshold”. Every offence reported is assessed on its merits, investigated proportionately, and pursued where the evidence allows. Just recently we launched Operation Watchmaker, a multi-agency partnership targeting retail crime and shoplifting, as part of our ongoing efforts to disrupt criminal activity across the county.*

“During the operation, retailers were encouraged to join the force’s ‘Report and Support’ campaign. This involves retailers not only reporting incidents of shoplifting and other crime but also supporting the police investigation by ensuring all visual evidence captured on CCTV or security staff’s body worn cameras are submitted to police. Officers can then use retrospective facial recognition technology to help identify those involved and hold them accountable. The Constabulary also recently deployed live facial recognition for the first time in Chester City centre to assist with this type of crime.

“We will continue with our commitment to tackling shoplifting and retail crime, reflecting the hard work of Cheshire Police officers and staff, who are continuing to make this county hostile to criminals.”

Serial thief jailed following Northwich crime spree

A serial thief from Birkenhead who went on a one-night crime spree in Northwich has been jailed.

Samuel Brooks appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 2 March where he was sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment. The 23-year-old of Cloughton Road, Birkenhead, had earlier pleaded guilty to 10 counts of theft from a motor vehicle, three counts of attempted theft from a motor vehicle and one count of burglary other than a dwelling. Brooks also admitted two counts of theft of a motor vehicle.



The court heard how Brooks’ crime spree began on Thursday 16 October 2025, when he travelled to Plumpton Gardens in Widnes where he stole a grey Ford Focus. Then, just two days later, on 18 October 2025, he travelled to Frodsham from where he stole a Kia Picanto from a communal car

park outside apartments at Ashley Court. After stealing the two cars, Brooks then travelled to Northwich during the early hours of Tuesday 11 November 2025, where he went on a crime spree across Winnington urban village.

In total Brooks broke into ten cars and attempted to break into a further three vehicles. He also forced entry into a garden shed. During his rampage various items were stolen, including golf clubs, designer sunglasses, power tools, and cash. In total the estimated value of the items stolen was almost £8,800. Brooks' downfall began after officers identified a Ford Focus which had travelled to Winnington on the night of the crime spree using cloned plates. The vehicle was later recovered on Monday 24 November 2025, officers found the Ford Focus on McKenzie Road, Wirral, which was bearing the false number plates which had been used for the Northwich incidents.

Subsequent enquires revealed that the car was the same vehicle which had been stolen from Widnes. The car was empty at the time it was recovered, but DNA swabs which were taken from the car came back as a match for Brooks. The stolen Kia was also located abandoned, this time in the Harlescott area of Shrewsbury. Fingerprint marks on the back of the number plate also came back to Brooks. Brooks was later arrested in relation to the allegations, and his mobile phone was seized. Data from the device placed him in the area at the time of all the offences. During questioning Brooks answered no comment to all the questions put to him by officers, but despite his silence he was charged and later pleaded guilty to all the offences.

Following the sentencing, PC Dean Butterworth who led the investigation, said: *"Brooks truly believed that he was above the law and thought that he had committed the perfect crime spree. However, he clearly underestimated the dedication and determination of the team here at Northwich. Through our detailed investigation we were able to gather a catalogue of evidence against Brooks, leaving him with no option but to admit his guilt and he is now facing the consequences of his actions. I hope that the conclusion of this case will provide some reassurance to the victims and also act as a warning to others who are planning to come to Cheshire to commit crime."*

Latest Cheshire Appeals

Police are appealing for information after man found with unexplained injuries in Macclesfield
Police are investigating an incident where a man was found with serious injuries in Macclesfield.

At around 2.30pm on Thursday 19 March, a 61-year-old man was found collapsed on Mill Street, Macclesfield. He was taken to hospital with serious injuries, where he is currently receiving treatment. Police are now appealing for any anyone who saw anything of significance around the time the man was found to contact Cheshire Police.

Detective Sergeant Gary Thomas said: *"We have been working to establish how this man came to sustain such serious injuries and have been following a number of lines of enquiry. As part of our investigation, we are appealing to anyone with information, CCTV, doorbell or dashcam footage, which may aid our investigation, to please get in touch."*

Anyone with information or video footage which may assist the investigation is asked to contact Cheshire Constabulary on 101 quoting IML 2305000 or [visit the website](#). Information can also be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Appeal for witnesses and dashcam footage following fatal collision

Officers are appealing for information following a fatal collision near Crewe.

At 7.51pm on Monday 6 April, police were called to reports of a collision on Middlewich Road, Woolstanwood. The collision involved a Honda motorcycle and a Range Rover. The driver of the Range Rover, a 64-year-old man, suffered serious injuries and was taken to hospital. Sadly, the rider of the motorcycle, a 34-year-old man, was pronounced dead at the scene. His next of kin have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers at this time.

Sergeant Iain Condliffe said: *“As we work to establish the exact circumstances of what happened, we are appealing for anyone who witnessed the incident to get in touch with us. The same goes for anyone who may happen to have any dashcam footage or any further information which could aid our enquiries. You can contact Cheshire Police by calling 101 or reporting information via our website, quoting IML-2303757. Our thoughts remain with the friends and family of the man who has sadly died.”*

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (CNWA)

c/o Corporate Communications | Cheshire Constabulary | Clemonds Hey | Oakmere Road | Winsford | Cheshire | CW7 2UA

Email: cheshirenw@outlook.com

Website: <https://www.cheshirenw.org>

Facebook page: facebook.com/cheshirenw



In partnership with



**Cheshire
Constabulary**



Scan to visit website



To find out further information about the Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, to log into your account or for Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Literature please visit our website: www.cheshirenw.org