

Worthing NHW Newsletter



February 2026

Your Committee:

David Hansford	Acting Chair
Timothy Drew	Secretary - Treasurer
Peter Callard	Committee Member
Alan Murrell	Committee Member
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Report Fraud replaces Action Fraud



reportfraud.police.uk

Did you know that Report Fraud has now replaced Action Fraud, offering a new online hub for reporting cybercrime and fraud?

The new site is designed to be clearer and easier to use, offering step-by-step guidance, quicker reporting tools, and improved assistance so people can act confidently when something doesn't feel right. It also provides better information on what to expect after making a report, helping victims feel more informed and supported throughout the process.

You can report online via the new Report Fraud website or speak to a specialist by calling:

0300 123 2040.

<https://www.reportfraud.police.uk/>

A brief introduction into Artificial Intelligence

By Staying Safe Online - West Sussex County Council

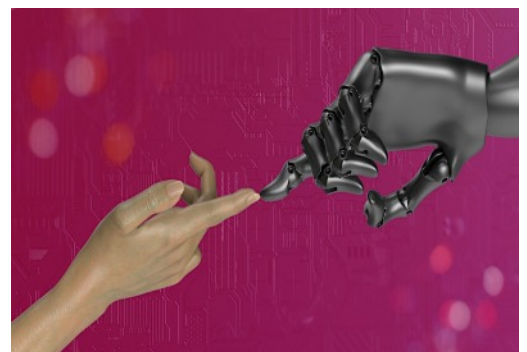
Online event

Curious about AI? Join us on Tuesday 17 March at 1.30pm for a beginner-friendly online session which breaks down AI concepts simply, with no jargon!

This webinar will cover what it is, how it works, how it's used and is perfect for anyone who wants to know more about AI, its impact and how it's shaping the future.

To book your free space, use the link below:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-brief-introduction-into-artificial-intelligence-tickets-1898486557399?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=1



<https://worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/>

Firefighters issue warning after wheat bag fire in Worthing



West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is reminding residents about the fire risks associated with microwavable wheat bags following an incident in Worthing last week.

On 14 January, crews were called to a domestic dwelling fire in Offington Lane, Worthing after an alert was received through a careline system. Firefighters arrived to find the property heavily smoke-logged.

The fire was traced to a wheat bag that had been overheated in a microwave, causing it to ignite. Crews quickly extinguished the fire and ventilated the property to clear the smoke.

Wheat bags are commonly used for warmth and comfort, but if excessively heated or used incorrectly they can pose a significant fire risk. West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is urging residents to follow manufacturer instructions carefully and to remain vigilant when heating the bags.

Crew Manager Stuart Williams said: "Wheat bags may seem harmless, but as this incident proves, if they are overheated, they can ignite. We encourage everyone to take extra care and ensure they are using these products safely.

"Always follow the heating times and guidance provided by the manufacturer. Never exceed the recommended microwave time and allow the bag to cool completely before reheating.

"Avoid using wheat bags in bed or under blankets where heat can build up. Check your wheat bag regularly for signs of wear, scorching or a burning smell.

"Consider placing a cup of water in the microwave when heating to reduce the risk of the bag drying out."

Find out more about keeping warm whilst keeping safe:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/home-fire-safety/electrical-and-heating-appliance-safety-advice/m>.

Join Neighbourhood Watch at :<https://worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/Content/Pages/Join-Us>

Romance Fraud

Last year, West Sussex saw significant cases of romance fraud, highlighting the emotional manipulation used by fraudsters when targeting vulnerable individuals.

Victims of romance scams tend to report the same behavioural pattern, as follows:

- Generally, the scammer contacts the victim via an online dating site or social media such as Facebook.
- Scammers commonly use stolen photographs of attractive people. Check whether someone's profile picture is associated with anyone else by accessing the website in Google Chrome, right-clicking on the picture and then clicking 'Search Google for image'. Google will then display any other websites showing the image. If the person seems to have a different name on other websites, you are likely being imposed upon.
- Scammers ask you many questions about yourself as gathering information is integral to their ability to manipulate you.
- The discussion turns romantic rapidly, scammers typically showering victims with flattery.
- Their stories change over time, which in itself could indicate they are lying.
- If they say they're from the UK but write as if English is not their first language, this should ring alarm bells.
- They refuse to video call you, or meet in person, always providing an excuse for not doing so.
- Eventually, they ask you to lend them money, using any number of reasons to elicit your sympathy.

Therefore:

- When using social media sites like Facebook, don't accept friend requests from people you don't know.
- Don't give away too many personal details about yourself online. Revealing your full name, date of birth and home address could lead to your identity being stolen.
- NEVER send (or receive) money or give away your bank details to someone you've only met online. If anyone asks for your financial details, stop communicating with them immediately and report them to the dating site.
- Use reputable dating sites. Fraudsters will soon want you to switch to using text messages, social media or telephone to avoid leaving evidence on the dating site of their asking you for money, so keep communicating through the dating site messaging service.

Tim Drew

Retail Crime

Retail crime in England and Wales has reached its worst level since 2003, with shoplifting incidents up 20% year on year to more than 516,000 recorded cases in 2024. According to data from Get Licensed's UK Retail Crime Report, retailers lost £2.2bn to theft in 2023/24, alongside £1.8bn spent on security and £200m in insurance costs, bringing the total annual bill to £4.2bn.

The research shows that over 20 million shoplifting incidents were logged by UK retailers last year, averaging 59 per hour.

Shoplifting is often viewed by professional and amateur thieves as a low-risk versus high-reward business, but shops and stores can take positive steps - including the following towards mitigating this risk by dissuading either category from stealing from them:

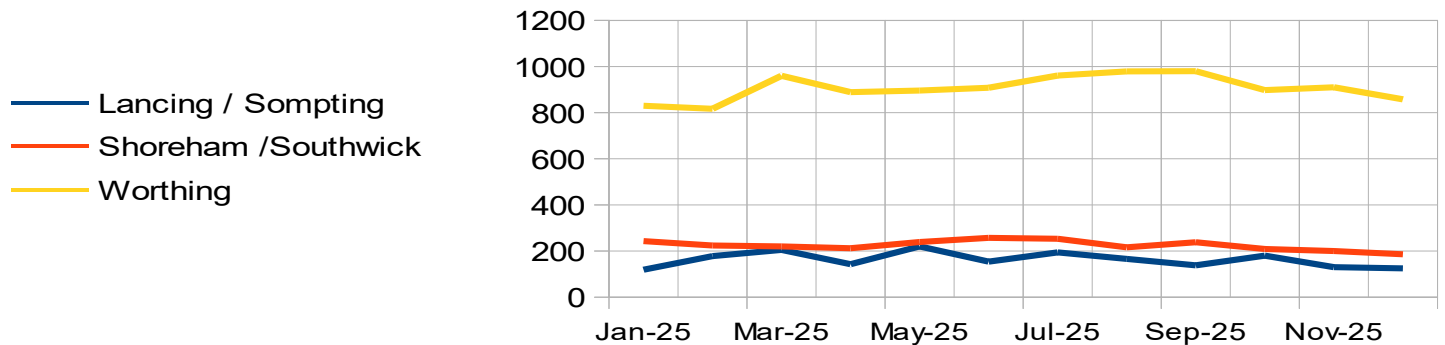
- A correctly installed and security-accredited anti-theft terminal (and tagging system) at a store entrance is a statement to potential shoplifters that 'this store is protected'. Thieves will often target premises that don't have this equipment. Most shops see a marked drop in shoplifting once they install an anti-theft terminal on the door, so this would be an effective deterrent in itself.
- A clean and tidy retail outlet with clear visibility across the shop floor tells a thief that everything is in order and that surveillance is also probably first class. If the shop floor is kept security friendly, with uncluttered, wide aisles where possible, this makes it extremely difficult for thieves to steal unnoticed.
- If the till is placed as close to the door as possible, it reduces the likelihood of potential thieves being able to enter or leave the store unobserved. Make sure any high value items, or any items that you think thieves are most likely to target, are within sight of the main till. You could also install security mirrors to let your staff see as much of the store as possible without leaving the till area.
- Get CCTV coverage for your store's front entrance, for the till area, for your stock rooms, and for any areas where you store or display high value items.

Tim Drew

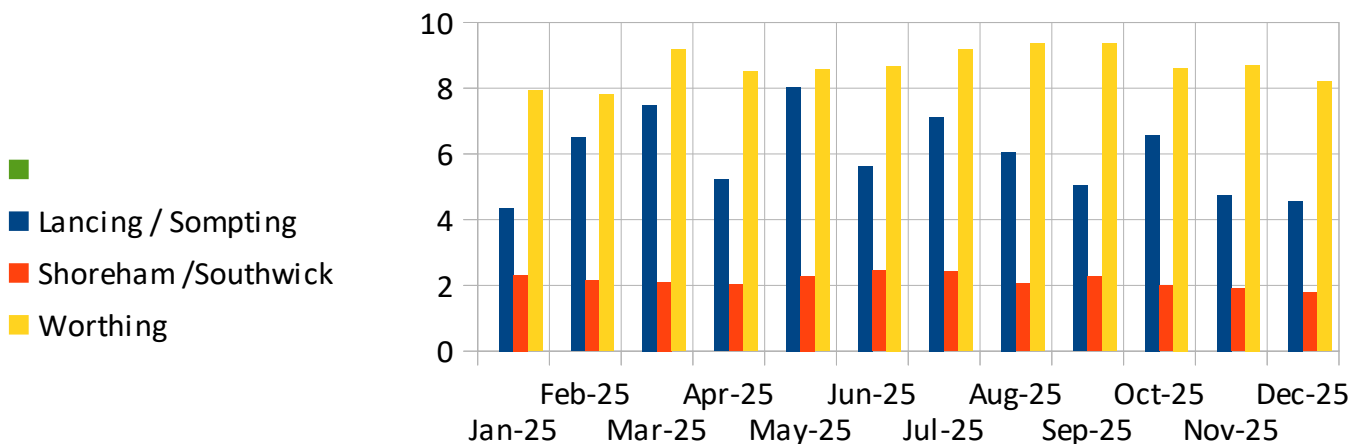
Crime Statistics for December 2025

December 2025	Broadwater	Castle	Central	Durrington	Findon	Gaisford	Goring	Heene	Marine02	Northbrook	Offington	Salvington	Selden	Tarring	Sub Total
					BN Codes										
Antisocial Behaviour	3	12	32	1	1	11	0	7	7	3	4	10	7	8	106
Bike Theft	0	2	3	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	10
Burglary	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	13
Criminal Damage	2	1	16	0	1	1	0	3	5	3	1	9	7	2	51
Drugs	1	0	8	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	2	1	0	1	20
Other Crime	0	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
Other Theft	1	2	15	2	2	1	2	6	1	2	2	2	4	2	44
Weapons	2	2	5	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	16
Public Order	4	6	28	0	2	1	1	22	2	3	8	2	4	9	92
Robbery	0	6	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	3	1	18
Theft Shop	3	30	22	2	0	3	3	41	11	3	15	2	11	55	201
Theft Person	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Vehicle Crime	2	0	2	1	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	4	21
Violence & Sex Offences	17	12	80	6	3	12	6	20	17	25	6	21	17	13	255
Totals	36	77	220	18	11	35	16	108	45	46	42	51	56	97	858

Crimes January 2025 to December 2025



Crimes per 1000 of Population



See the latest Alerts at : [https:// worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/](https://worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/)