

Worthing NHW Newsletter



May2026

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Reform of Policing

The Government's White Paper on police reform, if implemented in full, will be the most significant reform of policing in over 60 years. There is little doubt that major police reform is required, as the nature of crime and criminality has changed significantly since the coming of the Internet.

Findings from the Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2024 showed that 50% of businesses, and around a third of charities, reported experiencing some form of cyber security breach. And during a sustained period of constrained budgets and increased pressure on reduced police resources, confidence in the police has deteriorated accordingly.

The White Paper confirms the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners and also details a set of proposals for consultation. The key proposals are:

- A reduction in the number of police forces (39 in England, 4 in Wales) to between 10 and 12. This has been widely welcomed as the current number and size disparity of forces has long been criticised as inefficient and as creating differences both in police provision and how police policy is interpreted.
- Setting up a National Police Service responsible for national capabilities and crime areas such as counter-terrorism and serious organised crime. Currently, counter-terrorism is led by the Metropolitan Police Force, cybercrime and fraud by the City of London Police, while there are also Regional Organised Crime Units. But tackling serious crimes such as drug importation and distribution and cybercrime requires specialist knowledge and experience, so bringing these teams together could improve coordination and results.
- Introducing a National Licence to Practice for all warranted officers, who would have to undertake ongoing training and learning throughout their careers, and meet a minimum standard in order to retain their status.
- Increasing the number of neighbourhood officers by 13,000, ensuring that every community has a named, contactable officer, with a wider emphasis on community engagement (for which Neighbourhood Watch has long advocated).

The potential savings from centralisation and increased efficiency will take time to materialise. But, if additional resources are made available for implementation, the reforms offer significant scope for modernisation and improvement in policing.

Tim Drew

The next Neighbourhood Police meeting will take place at the Ardington Hotel in Steyne Gardens on Wednesday 3rd June at 18.30 for 19.00 hrs.

To Join : <https://worthingnhw.ourwatch.org.uk/Content/Pages/Join-Us>

Theft

Dog theft remains a significant concern across the UK this year and is likely to have increased since 2024, with 1,808 dogs that year recorded as having been stolen.

Urban areas, busy walking routes, and public parks are common sites for dog thefts, so vigilance and informed actions are essential for every dog owner, especially in these areas.

The puppies of certain breeds attract thieves due to high demand and resale value. In 2024, the puppies most targeted were French Bulldogs, English Bulldogs, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Chihuahuas, and German Shepherds, but other breeds such as Rottweilers and Labrador Retrievers are also frequently targeted.

The majority of thefts occur during walks or when dogs are temporarily unattended. To protect your dog, bear in mind the following tips:

1. Use a secure, well-fitting lead and harness - proper fittings prevent escapes. Choose reflective gear for visibility in low light.
2. Choose busy, well-populated walking routes - avoid quiet or isolated areas where thieves may act unnoticed.
3. Never leave your dog unattended outdoors - even momentary absences can lead to theft.
4. Attach a reliable GPS tracker to your dog's collar - this aids rapid recovery if theft occurs.
5. Avoid leaving dogs alone in vehicles - this exposes them to theft and health risks such as heatstroke.
6. Vary your walking times and routes - making your routine unpredictable reduces vulnerability.
7. Stay alert to strangers showing excessive interest - keep distractions like phones away and be observant.
8. Train your dog for reliable recall - this skill helps prevent potential theft during off-lead exercise.
9. Ensure your dog is microchipped and details are current - essential for identification and recovery.
10. Keep recent clear photographs accessible - useful for reports and identification if your dog goes missing.
11. Limit sharing detailed location info on social media - avoid posting anything that thieves could exploit.
12. Report suspicious activity promptly to authorities and shelters - early reporting facilitates recovery and deters criminals.

Whilst the Pet Abduction Act 2024 represents a significant legal deterrent against theft, it is always advisable in the meantime to follow these guidelines, the better to protect your pet.

Shoplifting

Police have been robustly tackling shoplifting and targeting the worst offenders to reduce incidents in Worthing following concerns raised in our communities.

In 2024 Sussex Police pioneered the use of One Touch Reporting, a scheme focused in Adur and Worthing allowing staff to immediately report offences at the touch of a button. This has led to an expected and significant increase in the total number of "stop theft" reports.

Incidents are now recorded more accurately and officers are able to target police resources more effectively, while working with businesses to identify the most prolific offenders through Operation Apprentice which has led to a significant drop in shoplifting in Worthing as well as more arrests and convictions.

The most recent data shows that police quadrupled the rate of shop thefts being solved last year, compared to 2022, and figures also show that the total number of shoplifting offences has declined by 8 per cent in the past 12 months, compared to the same period a year earlier.

Additionally, three prolific shoplifters in West Sussex have been convicted and Adur and Worthing District Commander Chief Inspector James Davidson said: "We understand the significant impact retail crime has on our communities and shop workers, and tackling shoplifting is a priority for us. These convictions demonstrate our ongoing commitment to prosecuting the worst offenders and securing convictions where we have the evidence to do so. (The) One Touch Reporting scheme makes it easier and more efficient for shop staff to report crime, ensuring that crimes are recorded accurately and our resources are targeted more effectively.

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne said: "When examining recorded shoplifting offences in Worthing town centre using data published on Sussex Police's website, the average fell to 28 offences per month between March 2025 and February 2026, compared with 47 per month during the same period in 2024–25 (and) as of September 2025, Worthing's overall recorded crime had fallen to 1,856 incidents, alongside a 5% reduction in shoplifting offences across Sussex as a whole. This is clear evidence that our approach is delivering results".

Passwords

The National Cyber Security Centre (a division of GCHQ) will no longer recommend that individuals use passwords where passkeys are available because passwords no longer offer sufficient resilience to modern cyber threats.

Passkeys are a newer method for logging into online accounts which only require user approval instead of needing to input passwords, thereby dispensing with the inconvenience of having to remember them. This makes passkeys quicker and easier to use and harder for cyber attackers to compromise. Moreover, passkeys are at least as secure as, and generally more secure than, pairing the strongest password with two-step verification (2SV).

The majority of cyber harms to individuals start with criminals stealing or compromising login details, making the adoption of passkeys a huge leap in boosting the UK's resilience to phishing attacks. A number of popular online service providers already support passkeys, including Google, eBay and PayPal – and the UK is already leading global adoption of passkeys, with just over 50% of active Google services users in the UK having one registered.

Where a particular service does not support passkeys, the NCSC's advice to consumers is to use a password manager to create stronger passwords and keep using two-step verification, but making passkeys the default authentication recommendation is a critical step towards revolutionising the way individuals use and access their online identities.

The key benefits of passkey logins are that:

- they can be completed up to eight times faster than signing in with a username, password and two-step verification code.
- They are highly resistant to phishing attacks and cannot be intercepted, reused or guessed like passwords can.
- Users no longer need to meet additional requirements, such as creating complex passwords – or even remembering them at all. This prevents weak points and patterns developing across a user's online presence.
- Safety and savings can go hand in hand for online service providers that make passkeys available for customers, replacing SMS-based verification systems which incur additional costs.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on the 29th April, provides over 70 measures enabling police to deal more forcefully with antisocial behaviour and retail crime by:

- introducing Respect Orders to enable the police to ban repeat offenders from town centres and other locations.
- removing the requirement for police to issue a prior warning before seizing any vehicle used antisocially.
- ending the outdated treatment of theft under the value of £200 as a summary-only offence .
- introducing a bespoke offence of assaulting a retail worker with up to six months' imprisonment.

To tackle the rise in online stalking and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, the Act aims to:

- help police manage online stalkers and protect victims through new 'Right to Know' guidance on disclosing the identity of an online stalker to victims at the earliest opportunity.
- empower courts to impose Stalking Protection Orders directly when a defendant is convicted or acquitted, so as to shield victims from perpetrators.
- institute a standalone offence of child criminal exploitation with up to 10 years' imprisonment, plus accompanying orders which will allow courts to intervene early to prevent children from being harmed.
- introduce a new criminal offence of cuckooing with up to five years' imprisonment.
- introduce a new offence for internal concealment of drugs and other specified items, including forcing individuals to hide items inside their bodies.

The Act has also introduced further laws around the sale of knives online as the government aims to halve knife crime within a decade:

- tech bosses will incur personal criminal liability for not preventing illegal knife and weapons content on their platforms, and could be fined up to £70,000 for each offence.
- a mandatory two-step verification for online knife purchases at both point of sale and delivery is introduced, using photographic ID.
- retailers are legally required to report any bulk purchases of bladed articles made online.
- a new offence of possessing a knife with intent to cause unlawful violence is introduced with up to seven years' imprisonment.

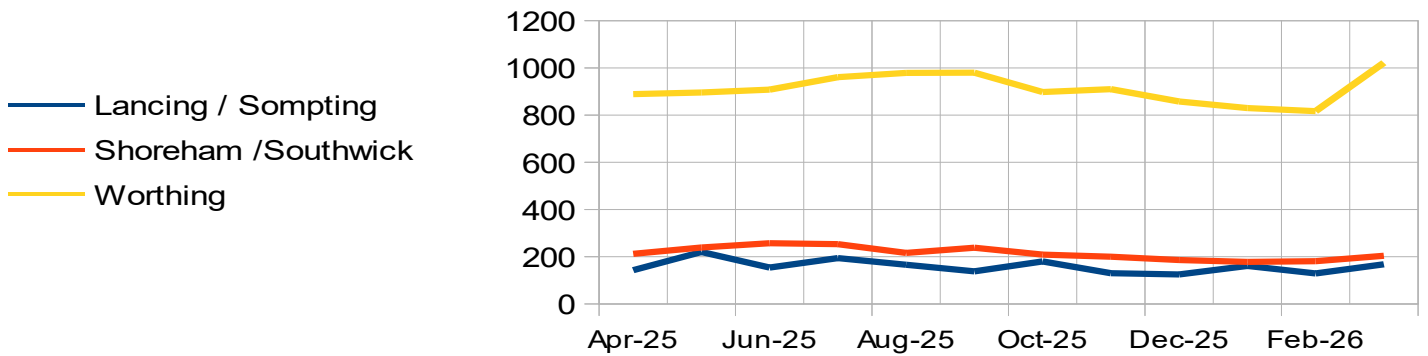
Tim Drew

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

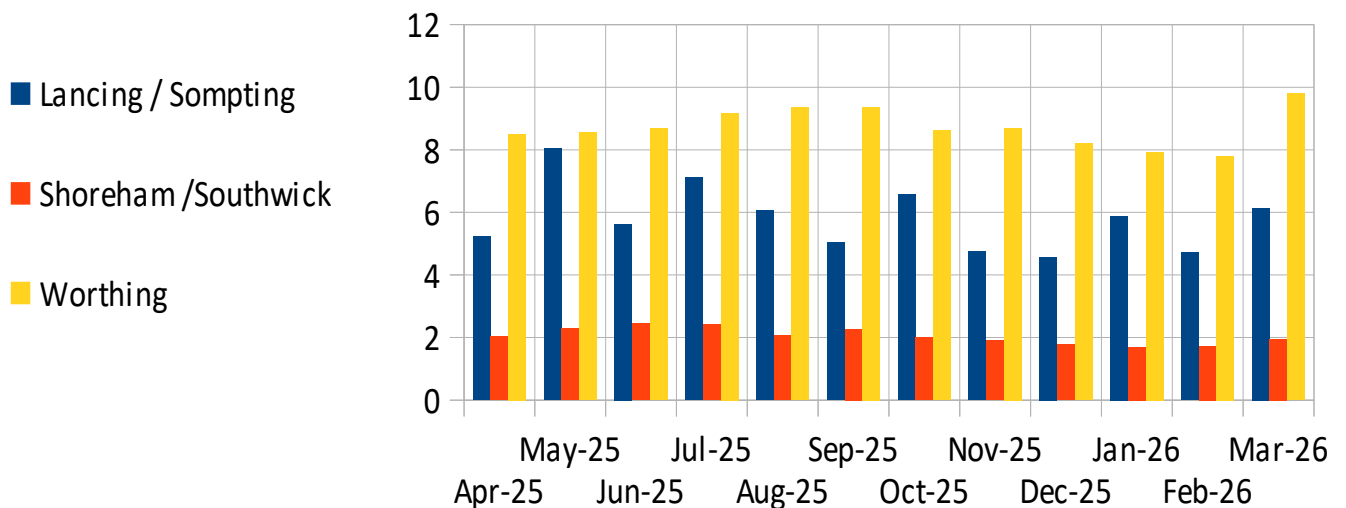
Crime Statistics for March 2026

March 2026	Broadwater	Castle	Central	Durrington	Findon	Gaisford	Goring	Heene	Marine02	Northbrook	Offington	Salvington	Selden	Tarring	Sub Total
					BN										
Antisocial Behaviour	9	16	58	1	3	8	14	25	12	22	5	4	17	13	207
Bike Theft	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	2	11
Burglary	0	3	6	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	15
Criminal Damage	4	12	24	4	3	5	5	6	3	9	3	7	8	3	96
Drugs	0	1	4	2	0	3	1	4	4	5	1	1	0	1	27
Other Crime	1	4	3	3	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	2	21
Other Theft	1	2	14	3	1	2	4	8	2	4	3	3	4	6	57
Weapons	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	8
Public Order	1	7	27	0	1	11	0	5	3	10	2	0	7	11	85
Robbery	1	1	8	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	13
Theft Shop	0	4	28	0	0	2	3	30	9	4	13	0	11	19	123
Theft Person	17	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	26
Vehicle Crime	1	3	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	3	1	3	19
Violence & Sex Offences	25	21	75	8	5	18	17	28	15	19	13	20	25	27	316
Totals	61	76	259	21	14	55	45	117	53	74	42	39	80	88	1024

Crimes April 2025 to March 2026



Crimes per 1000 of Population



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