



Rural East Ward

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January 2026

Acting on Community Concerns

The top 3 area concerns:

Road Safety Issues, Catapults, Fly Tipping

Tackling Your Concerns

Poaching



We are continuing to target and disrupt poachers operating within the Ashford rural area. We recognise the impact these offences have on local communities, as well as the significant damage they cause to land and property. Our approach combines ANPR monitoring, intelligence-led deployments, and regular patrols by both high-visibility local officers and specialist rural policing teams. These measures will remain in place as we focus on protecting vulnerable locations and supporting those affected. We continue to work with the Rural Task Force and local communities to identify, highlight and patrol hotspot areas, including with recent signage provided to local parishes.

Road Safety



Local officers continue to target drivers who commit road traffic offences. Dangerous driving endangers everyone and will not be tolerated. This vehicle failed to stop for a patrol and was pursued through rural areas before being abandoned. It has been seized and is likely to be destroyed. An investigation is ongoing to identify the driver and ensure robust action is taken. I will also be conducting speed checks in the area to catch people flaunting the limits.

Fly tipping

We continue to focus on fly tipping into the New Year. If you have information around illegal waste collection sites, please report it to Ashford Borough Council and we will continue to work with them in tackling offenders. We have days of actions planned.

Burglary

A gentle prompt for everyone to stay mindful of home security. Recent reports of break-ins in the district make this a good moment to refresh a few basics:

1. Secure doors and windows

- Keep all entry points locked, even when you're at home.
- Use deadlocks, window locks, and security chains where possible.



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2. Make your home look occupied

- Use timer switches for lights when you're out.
- Keep curtains open during the day and avoid leaving the house in complete darkness.

3. Protect valuables

- Keep high-value items out of sight from windows.
- Mark property with a forensic marking product and record serial numbers.
- Use secure and trusted lock ups for high value items such as Jewellery.

4. Strengthen your perimeter

- Ensure gates, fences, and sheds are locked.
- Trim hedges to remove hiding places and improve visibility.

5. Install security measures

- Fit a visible alarm system and consider doorbell or external CCTV cameras.
- Use motion-activated lighting around entrances.

Fraud

Valentine's Day is coming up and this time of year leaves some people vulnerable to fraud, namely Romance Fraud. Therefore, it seems prevalent to raise awareness of this topic even if it doesn't affect you directly, it may help you recognise if someone in your life is vulnerable to it.

So, what is **Romance fraud** - Criminals lie to gain your trust and build a relationship with you. They make everything about the romance feel normal, but their aim is to get money or personal information. Romance fraudsters are experts at manipulating their victims. They will usually create a story that sounds believable and start the relationship in a normal way, gain your trust over time, invent a problem or situation where you may feel like you want to send money or gifts to help them, and isolate you from friends or family.

Spot the signs. There are some signs to watch out for.

When they contact you - They may make conversation more personal to get information from you. But they may not tell you much about themselves that you can check or verify. They may send a photo to earn your trust. This may be a real photo of them, or it could be stolen from someone else or created using technology. You can use an online tool to check if it's a stolen photo. Use Google or TinEye to do a reverse image search. They may give you an excuse why they cannot meet you in person. The excuse may seem reasonable.

If you met them on a dating website, game or application, they may steer you away from there. Instead, they may prefer to talk by email, text and phone. Fraudsters often choose encrypted messaging applications, such as WhatsApp.

Ashford C.S.U Newsletter

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They want your help - Sometimes, the fraudster will say they need money for an urgent medical operation or an ill family member. They may say they need to pay off a debt or that there's a time critical situation to encourage you to act quickly. It might feel like only you can help them and you may feel a sense of responsibility to do so.

They may ask you to invest money. Or they may ask you to buy gift cards from websites like Amazon or iTunes to send to them. In some cases, they may not ask you for money directly but instead hope you will send it out of kindness. By creating a situation where there's a limited time to act, they want you to feel responsible for solving the problem. They want you to act out of a sense of urgency in the hope that you will do something you would not normally do. They may also promise that things will be better soon and that there will be no more money trouble. The fraudster may send you expensive items, or ask to send money to your bank account. The circumstances may seem genuine, but you could unwittingly be laundering money, which is a criminal offence.

Keeping secrets - They may ask you to keep the relationship a secret. This is a tactic to isolate you from your family and friends, who may be able to identify the fraud. The fraudster may act upset or insecure when you talk about them to others. They may make you feel sorry for them or distract you with promises of a future together. They may act hurt if you doubt them, even though your doubts are reasonable. They may introduce other people to help the fraud seem more real. This could be family, solicitors or medical professionals, but this is also part of the fraud.

Victim stories - The Met, in collaboration with West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit and the City of London Police, has created a series of videos showing victim accounts and crime prevention advice on identifying the signs of romance fraud.

They highlight both the financial and emotional consequences. These can be viewed

at <https://www.kent.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/romance-fraud/>

Community Engagements:

- 10/02/2026 1000-1100 - Mersham Stores, The Street, Mersham TN25 6NA
- 18/02/2026 1400-1500 - Kingsnorth Parish Cafe, Ashford TN23 3EF
- 05/03/2026 1000-1100 – The Woodchurch Hub, Woodchurch, Ashford TN26 3PA

Your local officer:

PC 13322 Picton

Have your say on local issues:

Kent Police are currently running a new priority survey through MCV to understand the three biggest priorities affecting our community. Your feedback plays a vital role in helping us focus on the issues that matter most to you. Please take a moment to complete the short survey so we can better support you and work together to address the local priorities over the next three months.



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