



Beating Business Crime Together

IBAG Newsletter 01 – March 2021

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Police and Crime Commissioner's Foreword

I am delighted to send you the first edition of my **Independent Business Advisory Group's (IBAG)** newsletter.



The IBAG plays a crucial role in supporting police efforts to tackle business crime, providing independent advice on how crime is impacting on Hertfordshire's businesses, and acting as a conduit for disseminating crime prevention and safety advice to businesses across the county. I recognise that businesses are subject to a range of crimes, including cybercrime and fraud, which affects 70% of all businesses nationally. Hertfordshire is home to over 60,000 businesses with micro-businesses representing over 90% of the total.

I care passionately about putting victims at the centre of all we do, and investing in important new services to help victims of crime. Our victim-centred approach applies to businesses too, and we want to ensure that businesses are heard fully at court in regard to the effect that a crime has had on them; from financial loss to reputational damage and operational disruption. In 2015, we launched [Beacon](#) - Hertfordshire's Victim Care Centre - which offers a complete 'wrap-around' provision for all victims of crime, with vulnerable or repeat victims being identified early on for an enhanced care package.

This newsletter is an opportunity for us to update you on the breadth of activity to address business crime across the county. IBAG's future work programme includes developing a business crime strategy - and strong engagement with the business community throughout

Hertfordshire will help us deliver an effective strategy that continues to address business crime in our county.

We want Herts businesses to get involved with IBAG, and we want you to tell us your views on policing of business crime in Herts, so please get in touch.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Cyber Basics Review Scheme – get your free cyber health-check and keep your business safe

Hertfordshire's small businesses are losing thousands of pounds to cybercriminals every single day. We have created a scheme which provides a free cyber health check for your business. If you have fewer than 50 employees, you can have an hour-long, 1:1 consultation with a Government accredited IT company. They will provide you with an action plan identifying any risks to your business and how you can put it right.



Over one hundred Hertfordshire SMEs have taken part in the scheme so far and none of them have fallen victim to cybercrime in the 12 months since taking part. Many small businesses don't think they are at risk, but SMEs have to understand: **You ARE a target, you MUST take the threat seriously, you need to take ACTION.** Follow the link to the OPCC [website](#) or search for Herts OPCC and complete the contact form to request an appointment today.

This [video message](#) from the Police and Crime Commissioner explains in more detail the threat of cybercrime faced by SMEs and how SMEs can access the free Cyber Basics Review.

Policing business crime in Herts - tell us what you think

Crime data discussed at the most recent IBAG meeting highlighted the level of business crime in Hertfordshire: 20% of all crime in the county is classified as a business crime. A business crime is defined as any criminal offence where a commercial enterprise, or person in the course of their employment, and because of that employment, is the victim. Comparing the figures from November 2019 to October 2020 recorded monthly crimes of all types varied between 7,000 and 5,000 a month, with Covid-19 lockdowns having a significant effect on the figures. But each month business crime accounted for around one in five of those crimes.

Looking at business crime by offence type just over 47% was shoplifting, with other theft accounting for another 22%. Criminal damage and burglary accounted for another 9% each.

Businesses in Hertfordshire are encouraged to engage with the IBAG and get involved. The group is a fantastic forum in which to learn about crime prevention and what we are doing to tackle business crime. It is also an opportunity for businesses to suggest what they would like to see in the future in terms of how business crime is policed.

Countywide Virtual Barn Meeting – addressing rural crime together

On 3 February, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Hertfordshire Constabulary and NFU Hertfordshire partnered to host a successful **Countywide Virtual Barn Meeting** to hear the views of farmers and the wider rural community in Hertfordshire on rural crime and help shape rural policing priorities in the county. The full recording of the virtual meeting can be accessed via this [link](#).

It was attended by over 100 people, from farmers to small business owners, who were able to hear presentations from PCC David Lloyd, Chief Constable Charlie Hall and Sergeant Ryan Hemmings of the Rural Support Team.

The lively Q&A session raised a wide number of topics from fly tipping to hare coursing as well as questions on collaborative work with neighbouring forces across rural areas. The meeting highlighted opportunities that local policing teams will look to take forward in partnership with their communities. If you would like to learn more about the Priority Setting Forums in your local area and the contact details for local officers follow this [link](#). More information about the Rural Operational Support Team (ROST) can be accessed [here](#).



The OPCC will look to return to in-person barn meetings - with bacon sandwiches! - as soon as it is safe to do so. We are also adopting positive technological improvements as a result of the pandemic and will continue to offer more online events to bring the wider rural community together and reduce travel for everyone.

Helping SMEs to identify and prevent Modern Slavery

The SHIVA Foundation, who work with the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership, held a [webinar](#) for SMEs and representatives from business networks and forums to learn about a brand new toolkit to help SMEs spot the signs of Modern Slavery and prevent it. The webinar took place on 17 February.



The toolkit is free and includes key features such as a simple risk self-assessment, practical steps to protect employees, and clear guidance on how to report modern slavery concerns. All SMEs are encouraged to sign up to learn more about Modern Slavery. The webinar focussed on: the business case for modern slavery prevention, key steps SMEs can take with tools to support, and a Q&A session with participants.

To find out more about the toolkit and the work of the Shiva Foundation visit their [website](#). The full toolkit is available [here](#) and a summary [here](#). More detail on Hertfordshire's Modern Slavery Strategy can be found on the PCC's website here information can be found on the PCC website [here](#).

Business Watch in Hertfordshire – join now and get the latest crime advice and alerts

Join Hertfordshire's **Business Watch** for free to get the latest alerts and crime prevention advice from your local policing team. Through Hertfordshire's Business Watch, local businesses work together with police and other partner agencies to reduce crime and help to keep them safe and secure.

Several thousand businesses and tradespeople have already joined Business Watch in Hertfordshire. Members receive messages, alerts, appeals and crime prevention advice from local policing teams and police business crime specialists by email or text via the secure, award winning OWL Online Watch Link system.

Messages include information about crimes currently impacting local businesses, such as thefts, frauds, scams

and cyber-crimes, together with the latest advice about how to avoid your business being targeted by criminals.

Members are encouraged to share information and watch out for each other to help to keep their business, premises, property and neighbouring businesses safe and secure.

Membership of Business Watch in Hertfordshire is free of charge. To join simply visit: www.owl.co.uk/herts and

under "Finding Your Nearest Watch in Hertfordshire", select "Business Watch" to register your details.

Alternatively, email police@owl.uk or call the police non-emergency number 101 and ask for the Watch Liaison Team.

IBAG Webinar Programme – look out for more details soon

The IBAG hosts an annual seminar for the business community on topics related to business crime. The most recent IBAG seminar focused on the pressing issue of Business Fraud & Cybercrime and the recording can be viewed [here](#).

There are plans to supplement the annual seminar with a series of shorter webinars in 2021. These will be shorter sessions of no longer than one hour which will allow business owners and employees in Hertfordshire to drop in to the session and hear from an expert on a range of topics, from modern slavery to violence in the workplace.

Please keep a close eye on the OPCC website and our social media channels for details of future webinars.

About the IBAG - and how to get involved

PCC David Lloyd established the county-wide IBAG in order to put in place a strategic forum that brings together the Constabulary, the OPCC and the business community in Hertfordshire and is dedicated to "tackling business crime together".



As the [PCC's Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan](#) (CSCJ) states, the IBAG plays a key role in: supporting police efforts to tackle business crime; providing independent advice on how crime is affecting Hertfordshire's businesses; and acting as a conduit for disseminating crime prevention and safety advice to businesses across the county.

Anybody from the business community in Hertfordshire is able to apply to be a member of the IBAG. Current members of the IBAG include representatives from the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Herts Growth Hubs well as a range of large businesses and SMEs based in Hertfordshire.

If you would like to get involved, please register your interest with the OPCC:

Charles.Bohan-Hurst@herts.pnn.police.uk,
or alternatively visit the PCC's [website](#).
