

Community Safety

The newsletter from
Hart District Council



Issue 33 January 2024

This Newsletter aims to provide information around safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), raise awareness of current issues across the district and promote the good work of our partner agencies and celebrate the successes we have had.

We can be contacted online: [Report antisocial behaviour | Hart District Council](#)

by phone: **01252 774476** or by e-mail: communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

New Year, New Legislation

Following a concerning rise in attacks and fatalities caused by XL Bully dogs, the government have added this breed to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. To help current owners adapt to the new laws, the changes in legislation will come into force in 2 stages.

On **31 December 2023** it became an offence to:

- sell an XL Bully dog
- abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray
- give away an XL Bully dog
- breed from an XL Bully dog
- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle

From **1 February 2024** it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog in England and Wales unless your dog has a Certificate of Exemption.

For more information and guidance see the dedicated [Government page on XL Bully dogs](#).

Off-Road Bike Nuisance and Danger

Off-road bikes include a range of vehicles such as quad bikes and motorbikes, including scramblers and mini-motos. For many years, areas across Hart have had a problem whereby off-road bikes have been driven in a dangerous and anti-social manner and causing a nuisance, which mirrors the trend seen across areas throughout the county and nationally.

There have been incidents of off-road bikes being driven in parks, on pavements, on public highways and in other public spaces, on occasion resulting in injuries to riders and the public, but more commonly resulting in damage to parks, fields, green spaces and private property. Where driven in residential areas, they can also cause significant noise nuisance, often at very antisocial times of the day and/or night.

So where does the law stand on their use? Off-road bikes can be used on private land, with the landowner's permission but the Road Traffic Act 1988 includes provisions that make it illegal to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle on land where permission has not been given. It further states that it is illegal to drive or ride a mechanically propelled vehicle without lawful authority on common land, moorland or land not forming part of a road, or on any road which is a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

Even if someone has permission to ride a quad bike on land, if they are found to be riding “dangerously” or “carelessly”, they would be guilty of an offence even when they are driving off-road.

Legislation also covers the use of such vehicles on the road. Both quad bikes and motorbikes must be approved, registered, taxed and have an MOT (if needed) to be used on the road and there are a number of other laws which protect against this activity. Under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, officers can seize vehicles which are being used illegally, including prohibited off-road use. There have been occasions where the police have used these powers to seize off-road bikes. Noise issues can be dealt with under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and can result in the serving of a noise abatement notice against people who cause a “statutory nuisance” where an issue is severe and clearly evidenced.

If you are experiencing issues as a result of off-road bikes, please [report to police](#) to record the incident and to the Hart Community Safety team who can provide you with advice and support to tackle the issue.

Have Your Say

In November 2023 Hampshire County Council agreed a new financial strategy and budget measures, following public consultation on a range of options. These required savings of at least £132 million by April 2025 to help meet the expected budget shortfall.

It now has a further public consultation open to ask for people’s views on the future of some local services to help the Authority meet the £132 million budget shortfall by April 2025. The service change proposals outlined within the consultation would contribute around £17.5 million in total towards the needed savings, while ensuring that they continue to meet the statutory duties which they are required by law to carry out.

Please [submit your response here](#) – the consultation closed 31 March, 2024.

Cannabis Myth Busting

Hart Community Safety Team consistently receive reports regarding neighbours smoking cannabis, which understandably can have a serious impact to the quality of lives to those nearby, through the strong odour of skunk cannabis, a potent type of this substance. Whilst we work in partnership with the police and housing providers, it can be a hard problem to resolve due a lack of evidence, since a smell is not evidence. In addition, investigations into suspected criminal offences are hampered by a lack of police powers to enter a property for cannabis use only.

Picture building is key: whilst Hart and the police will not ask for people to proactively keep records of any activities, jointly, we do ask that reports are made when incidents are known, where diary sheets can assist to save time reporting each incident. Quite often the reports relate to someone smoking, however, in some cases there may be other concerns, such as drug dealing, therefore clear reports with dates/times, any vehicles seen and CCTV/doorbell footage, can help expose more serious criminal behaviours, where vulnerable people are often involved, and communities placed at risk.

Some confusion around cannabis still exists. Some people will say “I thought it was legal to smoke in my own home” or “I use it to help me sleep” – **neither are true; it remains an illegal substance in the UK.**

You should report through the [police](#) and you can also contact [Hart Community Safety](#). Whilst reports will be confidential, we acknowledge that some residents prefer to remain anonymous, in which case you can contact the charity [Crimestoppers](#), who will not ask you for your name, but they will pass on your information to the police.

You may know and be concerned about a family member or friend with an addiction. If so, there is discrete help available in your area and these services will work with adults and children to support them, whilst allowing them to continue in work and education:

Social Services support for [adults](#) and [children and young people](#)

[Inclusion Hampshire can assist with addiction to drugs and/or alcohol](#)

[Catch22](#) can help with a range of issues including substance misuse, criminality and exploitation



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communitysafety@hart.gov.uk