

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford

1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras¹ contribute towards deterring crime, reducing the fear of crime, increasing crime detection and protecting vulnerable people in the district.

The report is produced using information provided by the CCTV monitoring suite based in Abingdon. It is based on information drawn from the record of occurrences. A record of occurrence is completed by the operator on duty, each time a CCTV camera is used proactively to monitor a specific incident.

The report covers the four towns that have had CCTV installed; Didcot (nine cameras), Henley-on-Thames (20 cameras), Thame (15 cameras) and Wallingford (13 cameras). Reports are provided on a half yearly basis to each town council and other stakeholders in order to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses.

DATA SUMMARY

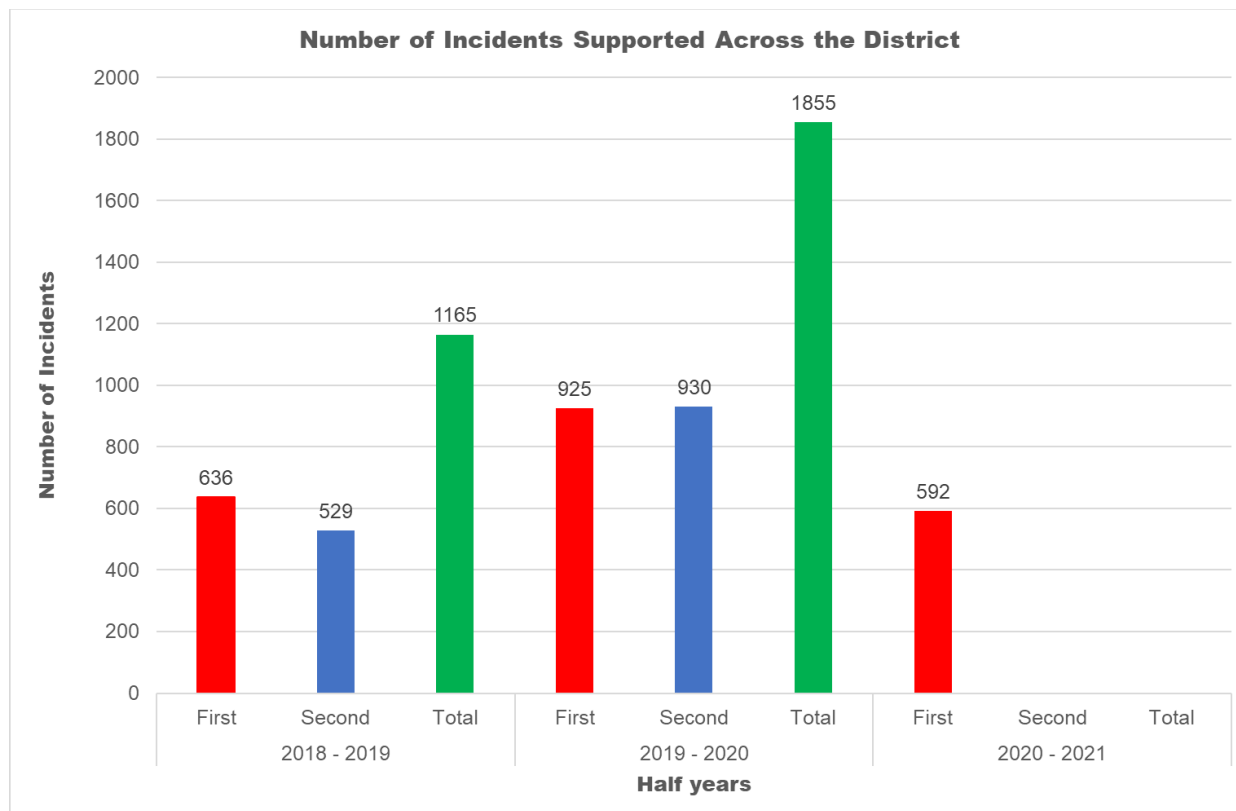
In South Oxfordshire, CCTV operators supported 592 incidents during the first half of 2020-2021. The operators also produced 51 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 28 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 43 arrests.

The following table displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the first half of 2020-2021, where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS				
	Didcot	Henley	Thame	Wallingford
1	Missing persons (42)	Fear for Welfare (22)	Missing persons (18)	Fear for Welfare (12)
2	Suspicious behaviour (22)	Drunkenness (22)	Fear for Welfare (17)	Suspicious Behaviour (9)
3	Fear for Welfare (22)	Missing Persons (14)	Disturbance (8)	Missing Persons (9)

¹ The report covers the district council cameras plus three which Henley Town Council installed in Mill Meadows as these are managed under the same scheme.

The chart below compares this half yearly total with previous half years:



For further breakdown please see table below:

	2018 - 2019			2019 - 2020			2020 - 2021		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Didcot	192	228	420	411	448	859	198		
Henley	241	132	373	213	225	438	209		
Thame	97	87	184	130	147	277	97		
Wallingford	106	82	188	171	110	281	88		
Total	636	529	1165	925	930	1855	592		

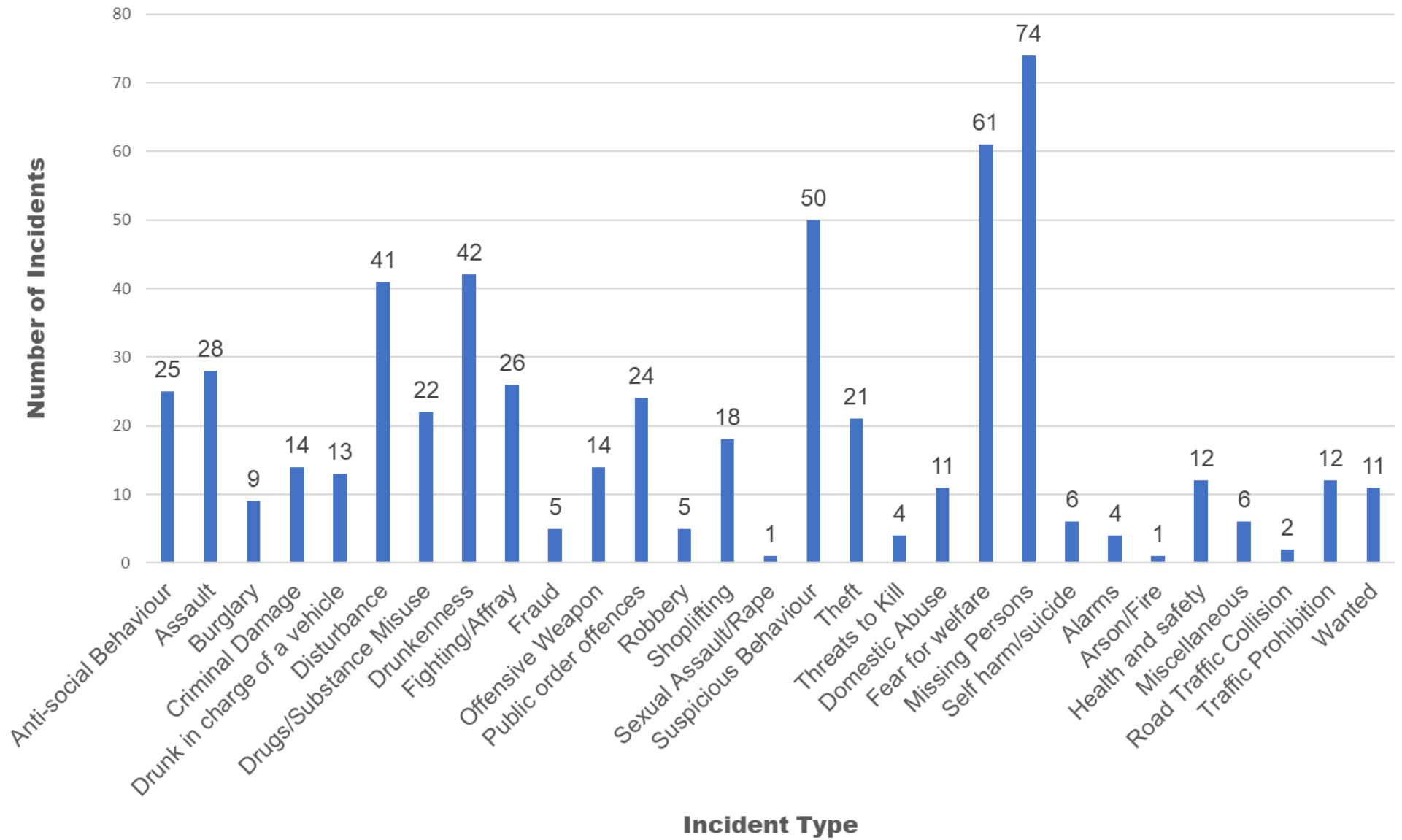
Demands on the CCTV service changed during the first half of 2020-21 as a result of the government restrictions introduced to help tackle Covid-19. The chart below compares the number of incidents monitored between April and June with the same period in 2019-2020. The figures in brackets compare the same totals for the month of April alone. During lock-down there was some variety in the type of incident monitored by our operators; the need to monitor incidents relating to shoplifting and the night-time economy reduced as many shops and bars were closed but 'Missing Persons' and 'Fear for Welfare' were prevalent.

	April to June 2020-21 (April)	April to June 2019-20 (April)
Didcot	113 (26)	178 (49)
Henley	99 (20)	85 (31)
Thame	38 (14)	81 (18)
Wallingford	35 (2)	83 (16)

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on the next page shows the amount and type of incidents the CCTV operators have monitored and supported across all four towns, between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2020.

Incidents by Type - April 1 - September 30 2020

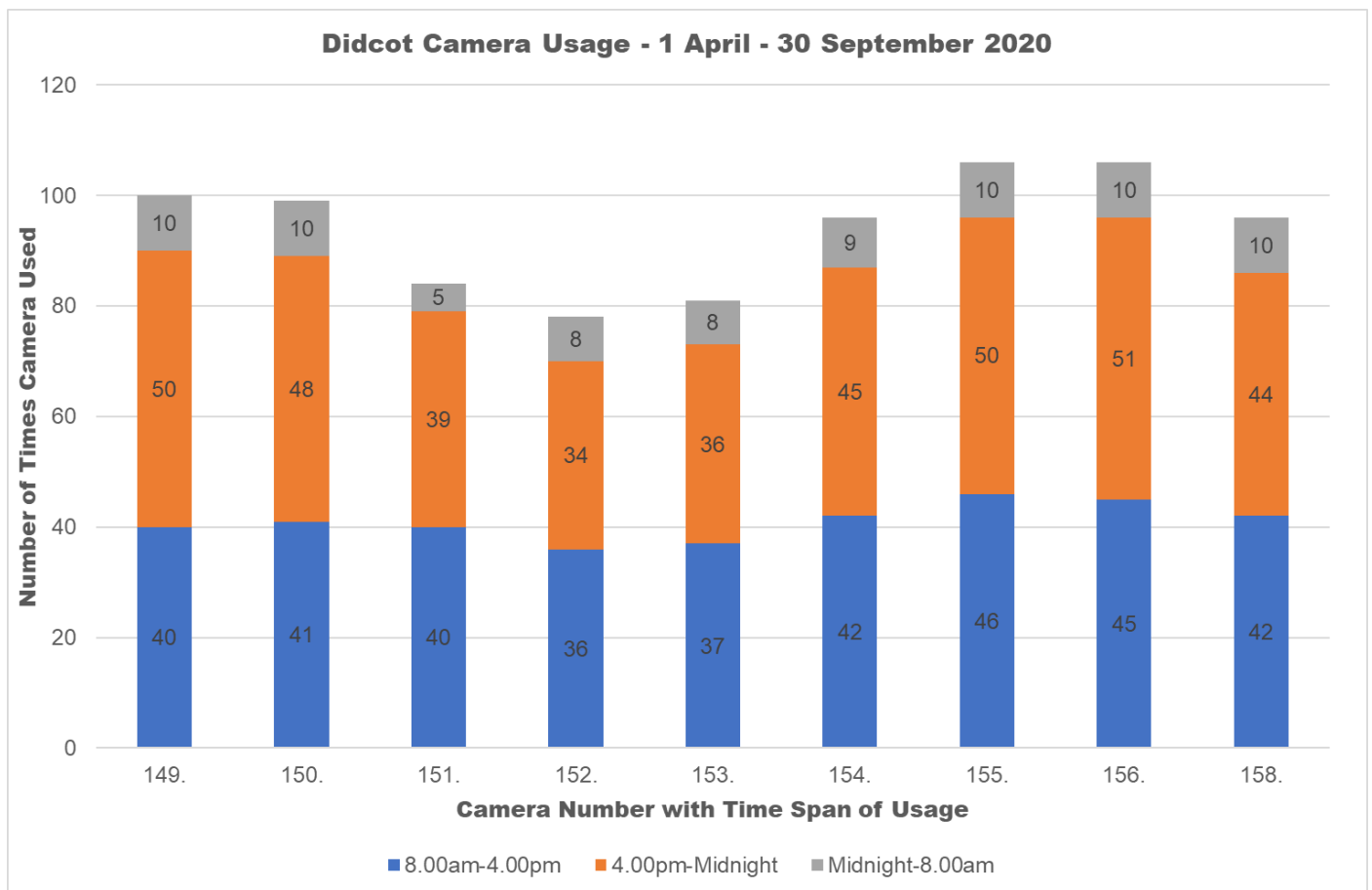


CAMERA USAGE

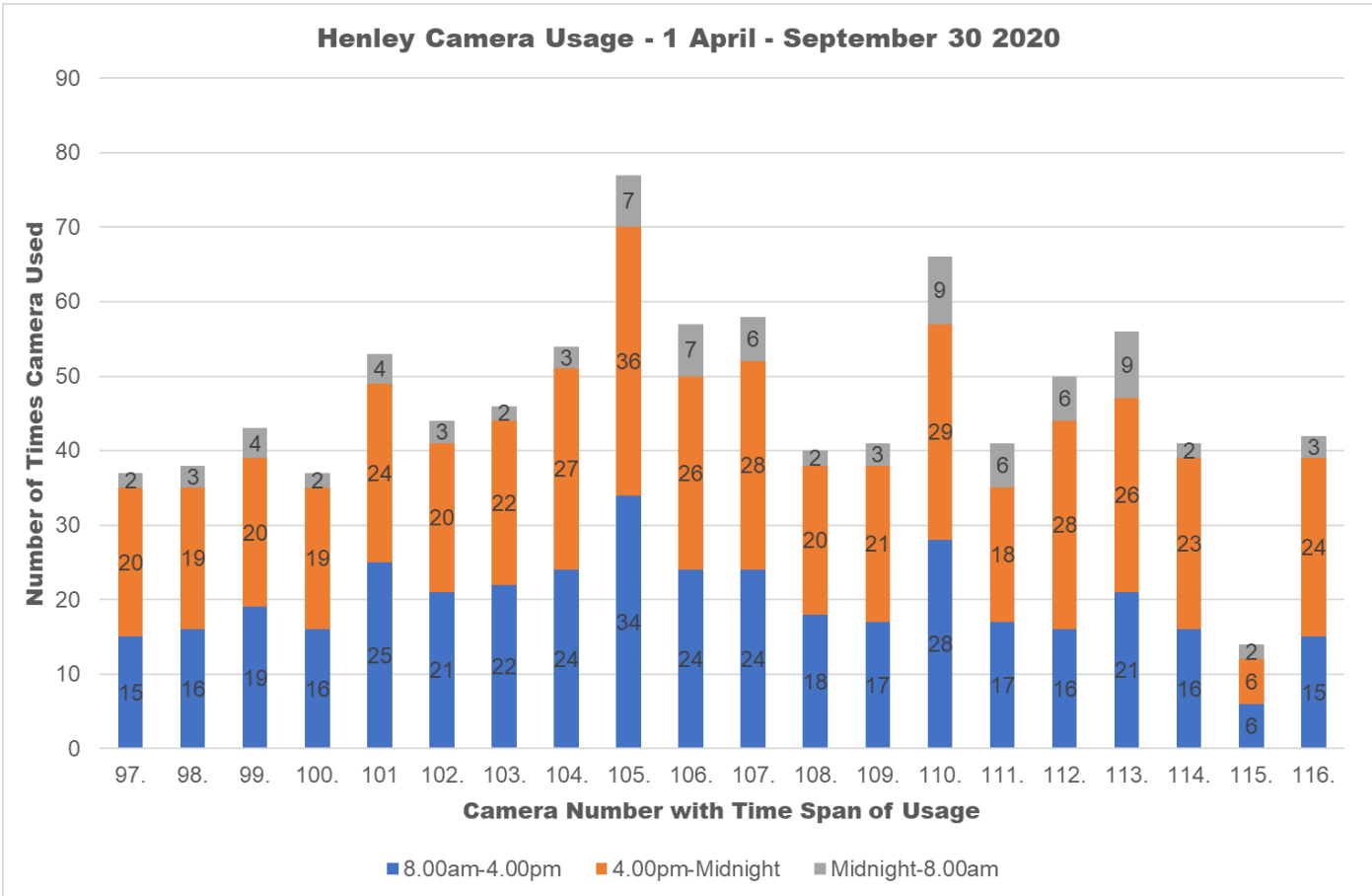
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras were deployed in recorded, monitored events.

The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24 hour period.

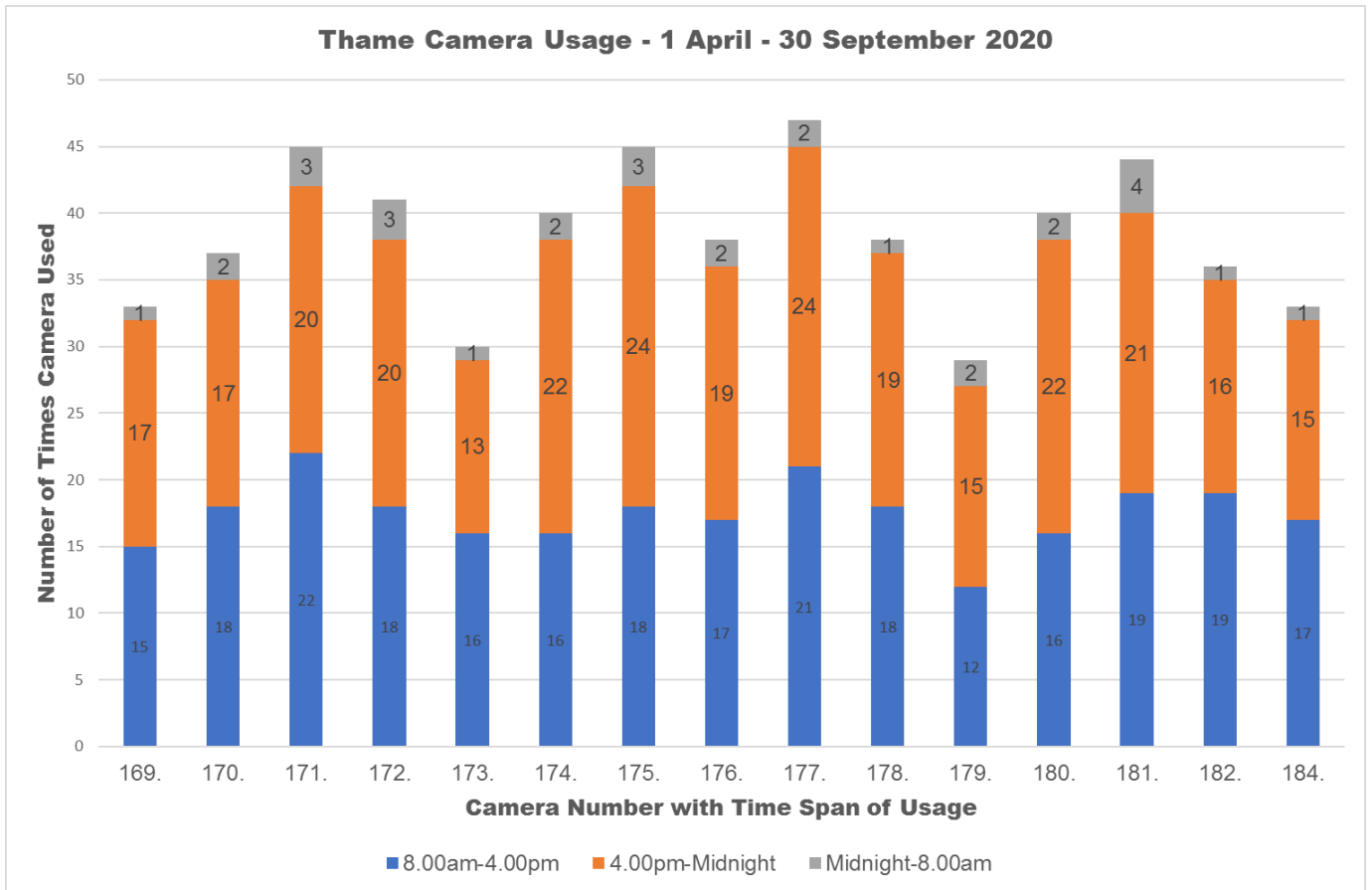
It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am, the vast majority of camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



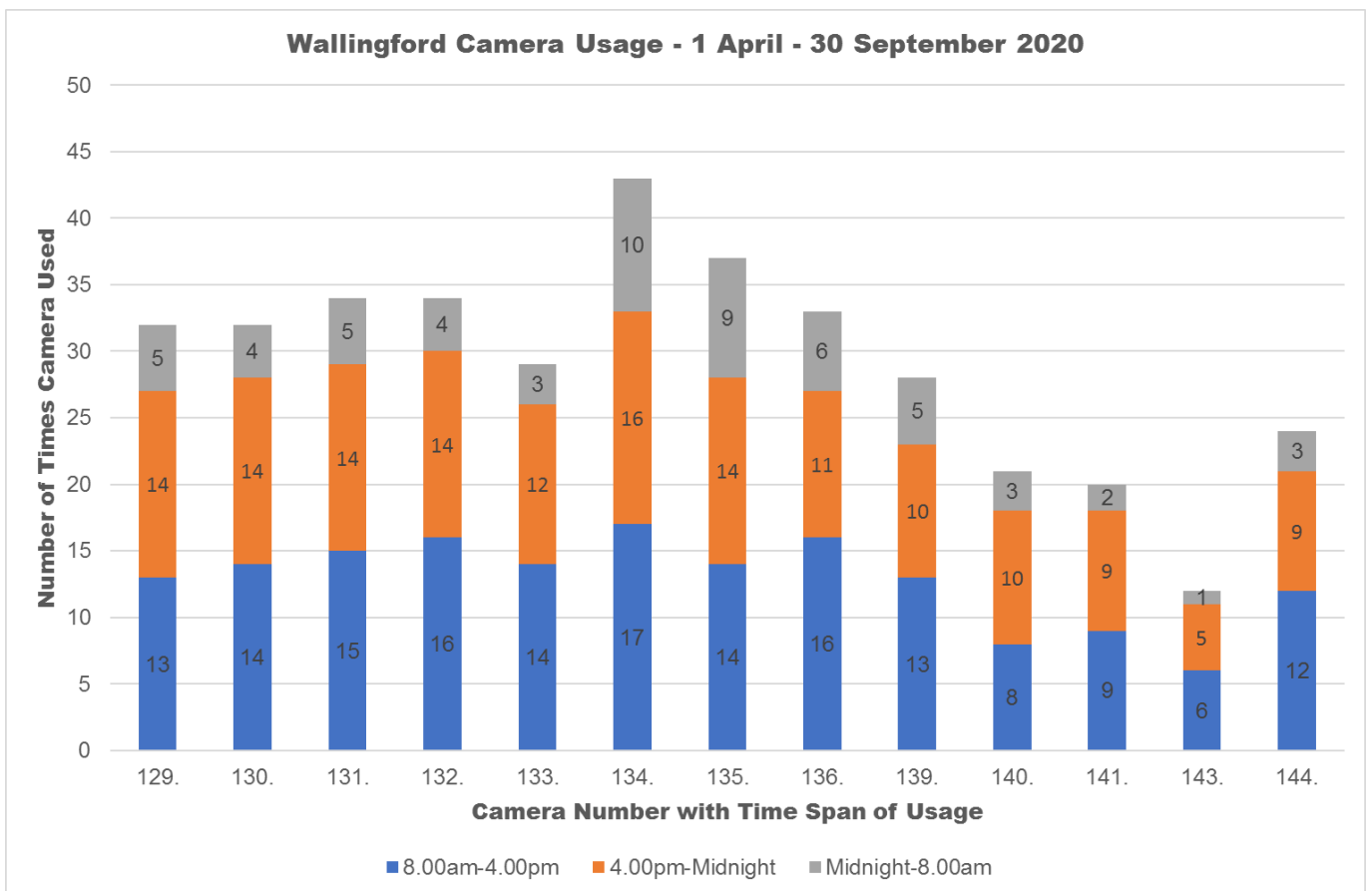
Cameras 155 and 156, which are instrumental in monitoring night time economy, were the most frequently used cameras for this half year.



Camera 105 is situated in the town centre at the traffic lights serving the Duke St. - Hart St. – Bell St. junction and clearly has the greatest number of occurrences attached to it; along with cameras 106 (Hart St.), 107 (The Bridge) and 110 (bottom of Grey’s Road). Camera 113 (Hobbs Boat Yard) had higher usage for this period as it was used more often in monitoring for missing persons and other incidents towards Mill Meadows. Camera 115 in Mill Meadows had lower usage due to it needing to be replaced.



Cameras 171 and 175 are fairly central within the town, reflected in the highest usage.

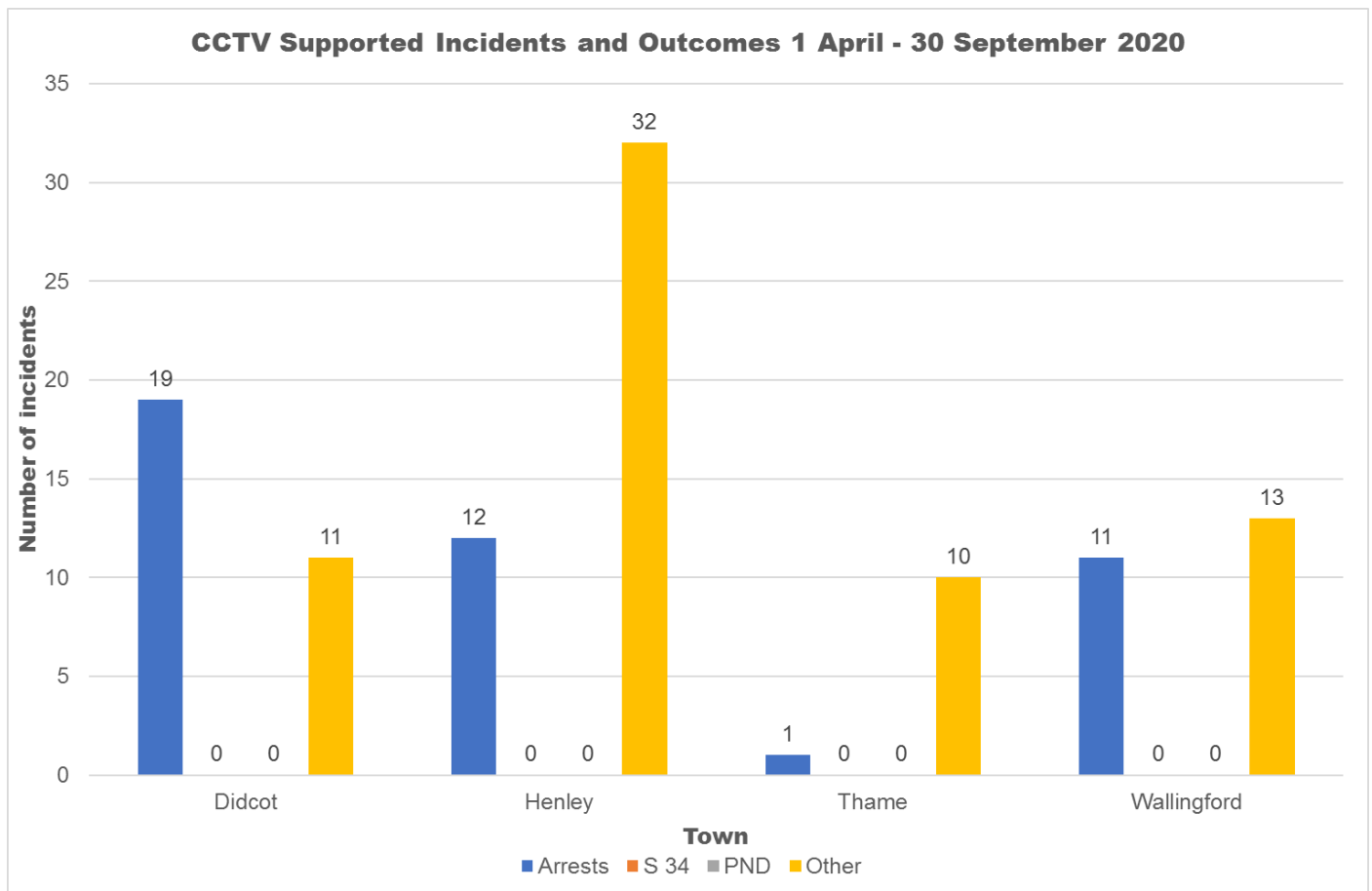


Cameras 134, 135 and 136 are fairly central to the town, which is reflected in the highest number of recorded uses.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart below shows the outcomes the CCTV operators supported while involved in monitoring an incident. The police use their discretion on how an incident is resolved based on experience, the gravity of the offence, the resources that are available to them at that time and so on. While we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34² or a Penalty Notice for Disorder³ (PND), we do know the cameras alert police to incidents they may not have known about. CCTV also gives the police the ability to assess and allocate resources and prioritise in real time e.g. should the situation allow, leaving CCTV to monitor incidents or offenders while officers attend other incidents.

In the chart below, actions designated 'other' usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or a non-recordable sanction. For this period, it includes advice relating to Covid restrictions.

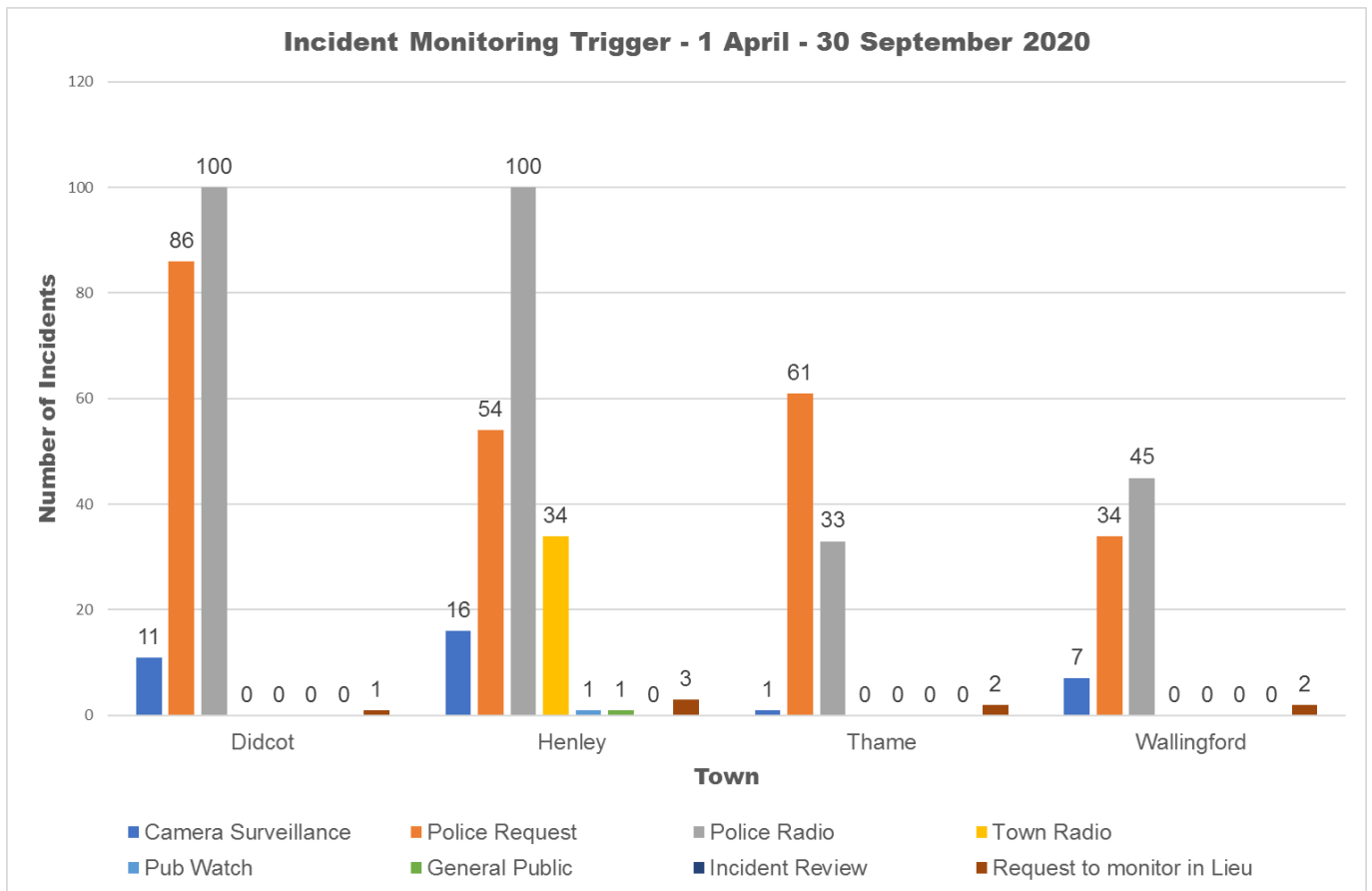


HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart on page nine shows how many of the incidents monitored were as a result of the following: a direct request from the police (police requests); the CCTV operator hearing about an incident on a police radio (police radio); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance); request from officers to review footage at the time of an incident e.g. to clarify details of a reported incident while they are on scene (incident review). Only Henley-on-Thames has a shop radio scheme.

² A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social related disorder.

³ A PND is the 'on the spot fine'



‘Request to monitor in Lieu’ refers to occasions where an operator has been specifically asked to monitor a situation by the police control centre where the nearest officers are engaged in a higher risk situation. In this role, our involvement could be before, during or after an event.

REVIEWS AND EVIDENCE PACKS

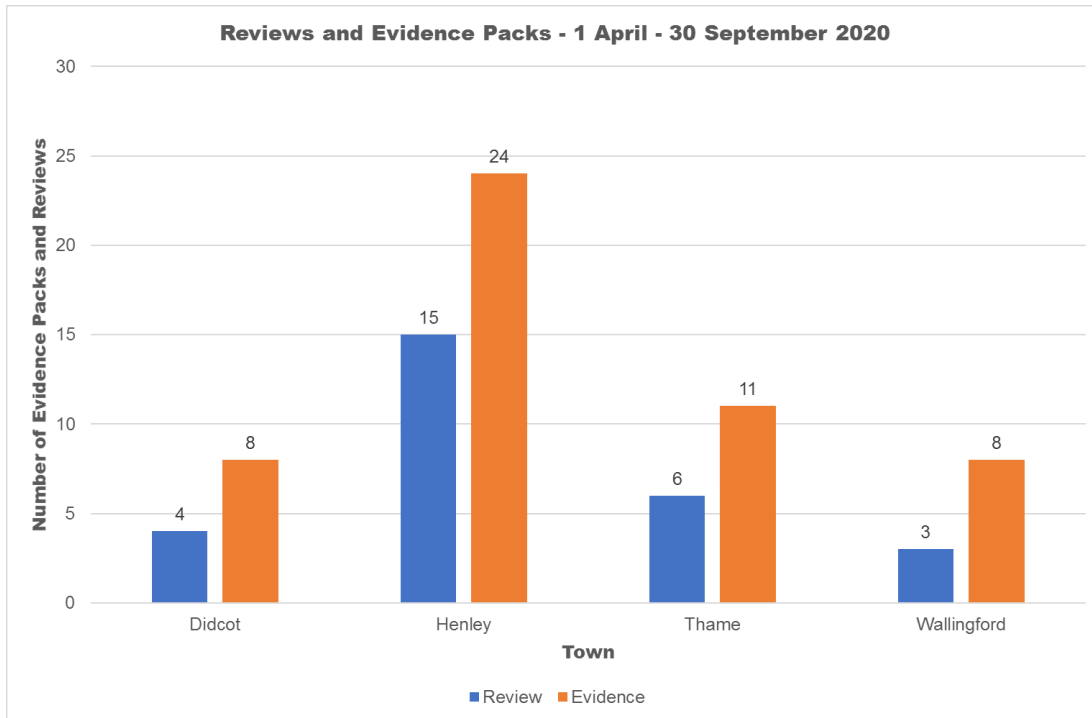
When not tasked by police, the operators patrol all the cameras and focus on ‘hotspot’ areas. All cameras are recording 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are set in ‘default’ positions which are agreed with the police as the area most likely to experience problems.

CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of ‘non-stop road traffic collisions’ in which the complainant’s car has been damaged. Altogether we received 13 such requests during this half of the year. We also received six requests from town and district council departments regarding incidents. In two of these cases, we were able to supply footage of specific incidents, caught on camera.

The chart on page 10 shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews they undertook, as a result of formal written requests. The evidence packs are the recordings and statements which the CCTV operators produce for police, solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced, is termed ‘a review’. This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent DVD copy for evidential use.

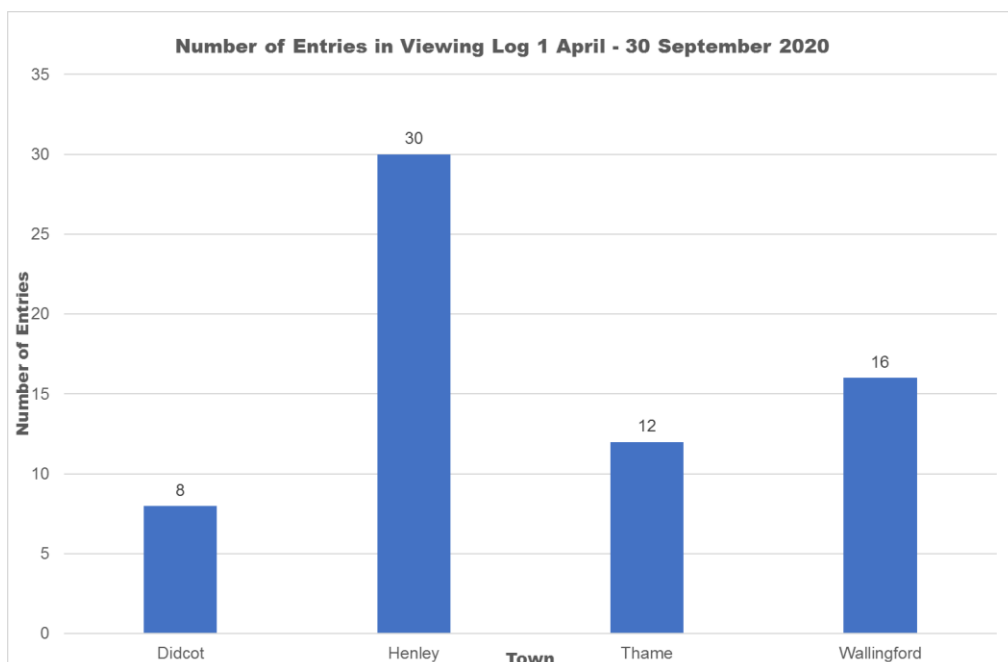
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of a full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

At present, we are unable to accommodate visitors in the control room due in the Covid-19 situation (with the exception of CCTV maintenance staff). Therefore, when police officers ask to view footage, these requests are carried out by our operators on their behalf. The following chart reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2020 across the two towns.

Please note that the viewing of footage may or may not be followed by a formal written request for footage.



CASE STUDIES

The following are examples of incidents dealt with by CCTV operators during the first half of 2020–21. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Didcot

A young girl had been reported as missing and there were increasing concerns for her welfare. Our operator noted a small child walking along the Broadway who very closely matched the description given across the police air waves. The police control centre was alerted and officers were dispatched. The operator maintained a running commentary on the girl's movements as officers were on route. The girl was intercepted and her identity confirmed. Officers returned her to her home address.

A call came into the police control centre. A local supermarket was reporting that a man who had come into the store was intoxicated; he was being verbally abusive and had caused criminal damage. From the description given, our operator monitored the man as he stood outside the store and was able to confirm his identity with the police control centre. When officers arrived, our operator was able to give an update and the man was subsequently arrested.

During the course of routine monitoring, our operator witnessed a man being assaulted. His assailant then got into a car which was driven off. Our operator alerted the police control centre, who dispatched officers to check on the man's welfare. Officers ascertained that the man didn't need further medical attention and details were taken, including the footage that was captured by our operator.

Henley-on-Thames

One of the local stores used the store-net radio to alert our operator to three women who were behaving suspiciously. They were just outside the store, collecting money from members of the public. When challenged by the staff, they gave no response, offered no credentials and left in a hurry. Our operator monitored the women and alerted the police control centre. Officers in the area were able to detain one of them and she was arrested on suspicion of numerous offences.

The police control centre contacted our operator as the police were looking for a man who was believed to be at considerable risk to himself, due to mental health issues. Using the town centre cameras and the description given, our operator was able to locate the individual. Using the police radio, the operator guided nearby officers to his location and he was taken to a place of safety.

The police control centre asked our operator to review footage regarding a collision between a car and a bus near the town centre. Our operator was able to give officers at the scene an update via the police radio and confirmed that the car had already hit three other vehicles before colliding with the bus. Footage was subsequently produced to assist the police with their inquiries.

Thame

The police control centre alerted our operator to a woman who was considered to be vulnerable and whose welfare was causing concern. From the description given, our operator was able to locate the woman using the town centre cameras and guide officers as they approached. The woman was taken to a place of safety.

The police control centre requested that we monitor a vehicle as the driver was about to return to it and was allegedly above the legal 'drink-drive' limit. Our operator monitored a man get into the car and drive off. The police were alerted and our operator gave running commentary on the vehicle's movements. The man was stopped and subsequently arrested.

Via the police radio, our operator heard of two young teenage girls who were allegedly intoxicated. A member of the public had seen them attempting to damage some plants and said that they had been verbally abusive. From the descriptions given, our operator was able to locate the two girls and alerted the police control centre. The girls were intercepted by officers nearby, their details taken and strong words of advice were given. Our operator then ensured that they left the town centre as instructed.

Wallingford

Our operator noted a call to the police control centre over the air waves. A member of staff had expressed concerns over a lady in store who seemed very distressed and agitated. From the description given, our operator was able to locate the lady and monitored her movements while officers were on route. Guided by the operator the officers were able to make contact with the lady and take her to a place of safety.

The police control centre requested that our operator monitor for a man who was intoxicated and stopping traffic, causing a danger to himself and road users. Although not in camera view, our operator was able to track the man's movements from the description given. Officers arriving were advised of the man's last known location and armed with this information, they were able to detain and arrest the man.

A member of the public had contacted the police control centre; they had concerns over the behaviour of a group of teenagers who were igniting fireworks in a dangerous way. From the descriptions of people involved and the location, our operator was able to locate a likely group and guided officers once they arrived on scene. The group were given strong words of advice regarding their future conduct.

Date of report: October 2020

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