



# COLIN's BLOG

26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Where does one begin to understand, or to try to make sense of the appalling event in Manchester last Monday. what drives anyone to carry out such cowardly callous acts against fellow human beings?

There have of course, always been extremists and fanatics, who use religion, greed, politics, or misguided ideology to attempt to justify their callous acts. From an early age, I have never really understood, the actions of such people, who put so little value on life.

Life is, after all, the most precious gift that anyone can have, giving us the opportunity to use the gift of life, to make good use of what chances and opportunities that we are given, an opportunity to make something of ourselves, and *to make a difference to others!*

I was brought up to believe in some basic, but important principles, especially: 'To love is to care - To care is to love.' I translate this to mean that one should, treat everyone with respect, understanding and consideration, regardless of their creed, race or gender.

In the past, my principles have on the odd occasion, been questioned, by others, who do not share or understand such principles, and do not share the same embracing principles or tolerance as I.

That said, I cannot believe, that with all the conflicts throughout history and across the world, lessons rarely seem to be learned, and, hate, murder, injury and destruction, continues through the radicalising or indoctrination, of weak or gullible individuals into organisations, that wrongfully use religion to justify their cause.

My heart goes out to the victims, their families and friends, who have been affected by the tragic events in Manchester, for which, in my mind, there is no acceptable justification for the atrocities that took place.

That said, faced with such a horrendous event, the community wasted no time in coming to the aid of those affected, offering help at the scene, and taking stranded people home.

**Hotels and other venues and the people of Manchester opened their doors, in a true spirit of friendship, which many have probably not witnessed since the second world war.**

The emergency services were quickly on the scene, showing a great level of professionalism, dedication and support, highlighting the wonderful work that they do on a daily basis 24/7.

**Colin's Footnote:** Despite, the knocks and cutbacks that our Emergency Services have endured, through inadequate funding, blighted by even more cutbacks. Politicians from all parties take note, and treat the recent events and the increased threat of terrorism, as a *wakeup call*, to make good their or others, past mistakes, and, start treating the emergency services with the respect that they deserve, and put money where their mouths are, rather than pointless political reterick, and, ensure that proper levels of funding are restored, and that our security services and the military are no longer expected to operate with such crippling financial constraints.

**Sense and Sensibility:** Now, rather than later, is the time for whoever ends up in government, to take a '*Reality check!*'



### **THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

Whilst sparing a moment to reflect upon the carnage in Manchester, why not bring these words to mind, or share them with your friends, family or colleagues: -

Let there be Peace on Earth  
And let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth  
The peace that was meant to be.

### **TERRORISM MUST NEVER WIN**

**IF YOU SUSPECT IT REPORT IT**

**CALL 0800 789 321**

**CONFIDENTIAL ANTI-TERRORIST HOTLINE**



Now turning to happier thoughts, my wife and I were overwhelmed with the wonderful leaving celebration, which we enjoyed with members of the Essex Watch team, together with their wives, in Clacton last weekend. They gave me a great send off, and I will always have fond memories of the time that I spent as part of the best team of friends and colleagues that I have ever had the privilege to work with. I have also been overwhelmed by the many good wishes and thank you messages, that I have received, from so many people around the County!

Well, as you know, I am still continuing my blog, and sending out the 'Burglary Hotspots,' whilst we wait for my replacement to come onboard, and aim to carry on through my role as a Trustee of Essex County Neighbourhood Watch Association, and my active involvement as the database controller and a member of the Epping Forest, Brentwood and Harlow NhW committees. I will also continue to support and work alongside the Community Safety Partnerships.

So, you will have gathered, that I don't intend to put my feet up, or indeed to get bored, but, I will be in a position to make my own decisions as to my involvement, which will give me the opportunity to ensure a good work / life balance. Just in case, I get carried away, keep reminding me that I am now retired!

## **Alert: Microsoft Tech-Support Scammers using WannaCry attack to lure victims**

**Action Fraud has received the first reports of Tech-Support scammers claiming to be from Microsoft who are taking advantage of the global WannaCry ransomware attack.**

**One victim fell for the scam after calling a 'help' number advertised on a pop up window. The window which wouldn't close said the victim had been affected by WannaCry Ransomware.**

The victim granted the fraudsters remote access to their PC after being convinced there wasn't sufficient anti-virus protection. The fraudsters then installed Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, which is actually free and took £320 as payment.

It is important to remember that Microsoft's error and warning messages on your PC will never include a phone number.

Additionally Microsoft will never proactively reach out to you to provide unsolicited PC or technical support. Any communication they have with you must be initiated by you.

### How to protect yourself

- Don't call numbers from pop-up messages.
- Never allow remote access to your computer.
- Always be wary of unsolicited calls. If you're unsure of a caller's identity, hang up.
- Never divulge passwords or pin numbers.
- Microsoft or someone on their behalf will never call you.

### If you believe you have already been a victim

- Get your computer checked for any additional programmes or software that may have been installed.
- Contact your bank to stop any further payments being taken.

Report fraud and cyber crime to Action Fraud and receive a police crime reference number.

[http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud)

**Action Fraud**  
Report Fraud & Internet Crime  
**0300 123 2040**



If, like me, you are 'BITTER ABOUT LITTER' and want to do something about it, check out this website: <http://www.litteraction.org.uk>



# DON'T RUBBISH ESSEX - 2017

I can hear you all saying: Now what!

Well, I feel that once again, it is time that those of us who passionately care about the County in which we live and or work, to make a difference and stand up against the litter louts that try to blight our County and spoil the environment, through their thoughtless and irresponsible discarding of litter and the ever-increasing problem of fly tipping!

There are some members of our community, of all ages, who seem to think that it's alright to drop litter, because **'someone else will pick it up!'**

Others, who 'just don't give a damn,' as long as they can dispose of it, and many, who don't appreciate what harm that they are actually doing.

**Our District and Borough Councils have environmental teams who carry out excellent work in helping to protect our local area. They are part of enforcing the laws by taking action in respect of anti-social behaviour, but perhaps it's time that those of us who belong to Neighbourhood Watch groups, Resident's Associations and other community groups get involved to help stop litter louts by educating and or reporting those responsible.**

Anyone who 'deliberately' drops litter, from the smallest sweet wrapper, chewing gum, cigarette end, food wrapper, can, bottle, paper or other packaging, commits an offence. This often occurs within a short distance from a litter bin. Many discarded items could also be put into recycling bins or taken home to be recycled. There really is no excuse.



There are now greater penalties in respect of litter and indeed, fly tipping, but we need to catch the culprits, and, where appropriate, for the courts to impose sensible penalties that actually fit the crime!



**Dog Watch:** Now it's time for me to hound all dog owners and dog walkers to join 'Dog Watch,' if you haven't already done so.  
More Details from Essex Watch: [kevin.blake@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:kevin.blake@essex.pnn.police.uk)



**Heritage Watch:** Protecting our Heritage.  
More details from Essex Watch: [terry.fowles@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:terry.fowles@essex.pnn.police.uk)



ESSEX FARM WATCH

Contact Essex Watch: [terry.fowles@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:terry.fowles@essex.pnn.police.uk)

**With the promise of good weather ahead, many of us will be thinking about going out into the sunshine and making the most of this bank holiday weekend, and looking forward to other opportunities this Summer....**



## **SENSE & SENSIBILITY 1**

### **KEEP SAFE THIS SUMMER**

**Many of us will be out and about with our family and friends and, enjoying outdoor activities over the next few months.**

**Here are a few thoughts and facts to consider:-**

- A Fire can destroy a tent in less than 60 seconds.
- In the UK, around 79,000 fires are started on grass and heath land every year (This is an average of 216 every day!)
- On average, 1,400 fires per year occur in caravans.
- Avoid: open fires in the countryside. Always have them in safe, designated areas.
- Never, throw cigarette ends or matches out of car windows. (Such thoughtless actions, are the cause of thousands of fires every year).
- Don't leave bottles or glass in woodlands, or anywhere that sunlight shining through glass, can start a fire.
- Remember, Barbecues and excess alcohol do not mix. Always ensure that safety guidelines are followed, and that the Barbecue is under the control of a responsible, sober adult.

Children are naturally curious about barbecues! They want to see what's going on, how well lit it is, what's cooking and are always keen to know when it's going to be ready to eat. They're drawn to where the cooking is going on, yet that's the most dangerous place to be. In fact, each year about 1,000 people suffer injuries, such as burns, caused by barbecues.

Ensure children are supervised well at any barbecue. Tell them of the dangers of going close to the barbecue and that the person doing the cooking needs to have plenty of space to cook safely. Running about and playing in the garden may not be practical if the garden is small, and you don't want to run the risk of a child colliding with the barbecue.

Instead, organising for an adult to play games with children away from the cooking area is beneficial, such as inside the house or in a front garden. Or, if you haven't got much space, perhaps they can take them out to a park whilst the cooking is in action. This way, they could certainly use up some energy and work up an appetite before they come back and eat!

## Setting the Barbecue Up Safely

**Firstly, ensure that it is alright to light a barbecue or Fire at your chosen location. (Many open spaces such as Epping Forest are protected by Bylaws which make it illegal to do so).**

To ensure everyone stays safe when you're barbecuing, the person in charge needs to set up the cooking device correctly, on a clear flat surface, light it properly and take care as they start to cook.

- Before you start, ensure the barbecue is in good working order.
- Find a place to set it up where the ground is flat and way from any sheds, fences, trees or overhanging shrubs.
- Never light a barbecue indoors or in a garage.
- Use charcoal and cover the base of the barbecue - about two inches deep.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for lighting your barbecue, as models differ.
- If it's windy, ensure the wind is blowing away from you when you light the barbecue.
- Keep children away from the barbecue as you light it.
- Don't wear loose clothing, or anything could dangle onto the flames.
- Don't use any flammable accelerants, such as paraffin or petrol.
- Light the barbecue at arms length.
- Once the barbecue is lit, keep children away from it.
- Keep a bucket of water close at hand, in case of emergencies.
- Never leave the barbecue unattended and don't try to move it whilst it's lit.
- When you've finished cooking, don't try to move the barbecue until it has cooled down completely. Then empty the ashes onto garden soil.
- Don't put ashes straight into a dustbin or wheelie bin - if they are still even slightly hot, they'll melt the plastic and cause a fire.



**REMEMBER THIS SOBERING THOUGHT:-**

**ONE TREE CAN MAKE A MILLION MATCHES  
ONE MATCH CAN DESTROY A MILLION TREES!**

**ONE CIGARETTE BUTT CAN DO JUST AS MUCH  
DAMAGE!**

## **SENSE & SENSIBILITY 2**



### **THE ORIGINAL COUNTRY CODE INTERPRETED**

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work (Don't destroy our heritage)
- Guard against all risk of fire (Don't light fires or barbecues, drop or discard cigarettes or matches where they can ignite the surrounding areas).
- Fasten all gates, especially where there are livestock etc., (Means what it says).
- Keep your pets under close control (dogs on leads unless under strict proper control).
- Keep to public paths across farmland (Avoid damage to crops or upsetting livestock).
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls. (They are there for good reason).
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone (Better safe, than sorry).

- Take your litter home (discarded litter can endanger livestock, wild animals and birds. It encourages vermin, and can sometimes ignite causing widespread destruction).
- Help to keep all water clean (Do not use it as a toilet or waste facility).
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees (There are laws in place to prohibit their picking, removal and damage, as well as the damage of the Eco structure).
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise. (Respect the peace and tranquility of your surroundings). (Cyclists and Horse riders must respect other users, by riding single file on busy or narrow roads, and allow others to pass without hindrance).

*And a very important appendix to the code:-*

**When in the countryside with children, young people and other adults:  
Always 'Lead by example!'**



### **SENSE & SENSIBILITY 3**

### **POTS AND PLANTS WARNING!!**

I have updated this message, which I have sent out in the past:-

Summer is approaching along with the usual crime trends that accompany it. In past years, we have noticed a sizeable increase in the theft of large pot plants and hanging baskets from private houses throughout Essex.

Where the thieves have been seen, it is reported that they simply pull up outside the house, usually in a van, two men walk into the garden then lift the pot into the vehicle and drive off. It's all over in a few seconds. The thieves seem to be targeting large pot plants (some of the ones stolen are valued at over £200 each), as well as garden ornaments and mature hanging baskets. Almost without exception the thefts have occurred from FRONT gardens.

There are very few ways by which you can secure a large terracotta pot to the floor and if you chain hanging baskets to their brackets, past offences have shown that the thieves may simply pull the brackets from the wall causing more damage.

The best advice we can give is not to display such items where passing thieves will be able to see them from the highway. If you have valuable pots and hanging baskets display them in the BACK garden; at least over the summer period.

The thieves know that there is big money to be made in stolen pot plants, hanging baskets, garden furniture, lawnmowers and other gardening equipment at this time of the year. We appreciate these items are difficult to secure but at the very least, don't make it easy for them.

**And, whilst talking about the vulnerability of our front gardens, here are some more thoughts from me:-**

“Personally speaking, as I travel around the district, I often notice **bicycles, children’s scooters and ride-on toys** left insecure and strewn around front gardens or lying against fences, walls and hedges, often on the public side of garden boundaries (footpaths etc).,

As both a parent and grandparent, I know how expensive some of these items are to buy, which is why I recommend that we all remember to take appropriate steps to ensure that these items don't become easy pickings for thieves!”

My final thought is that it is far easier to take precautions against theft than to comfort and pacify a distraught child who has lost his or her favourite possession!

And, before I sign off, something for dog owners to consider, is that 49% of dogs that are taken, (that's stolen), from their owners, are taken from their front gardens!

Let's hope that we are going to enjoy a sunny stress free summer this year!

Website: [www.essex.police.uk/my\\_neighbourhood.aspx](http://www.essex.police.uk/my_neighbourhood.aspx)

POLICE NON-EMERGENCY NO: 101 IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999

**ESSEX WATCH – HELPING COMMUNITIES TO HELP THEMSELVES**



***WATCH OUT – THERE'S A THIEF ABOUT***

**Finally - The bottom line**

**Life is precious – Together we must beat Terrorism**