

Email to parents

4th December 2020

Dear Parents,

We have been asked to circulate this message by the Area Education Office on behalf of Surrey Police.

Kind regards,

Paul Walsh

Paul Walsh: Headteacher



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Patrols have been stepped up along the Basingstoke Canal towpath in Woking following a number of suspicious incidents and sexual exposure offences over the last few weeks. Users of the towpath and Woking residents are being urged to exercise caution after a number of offences were reported to Surrey Police.

The most recent incident took place on Tuesday evening (1 December), when a man approached an elderly woman as she was walking along the towpath around 4.40pm. This male caused the female some concern as he demonstrated for her to go off the footpath, instead but she hit him over the head with her shopping bag before managing to run away.

The man carried on walking along the canal towards St John's.

A further call reporting a sexual exposure in the same area was reported around 2.30pm. We are still trying to establish whether these offences are linked.

Officers are currently investigating to establish any links between these offences, and are urging residents to take the necessary precautions in the meantime.

Woking Borough Commander Inspector Dave Bentley said: "We have had a number of reports of suspicious incidents and sexual exposures along the Basingstoke Canal towpath over the last few weeks and officers are working tirelessly to establish any links and the pattern between these offences, which generally take place either between 7 and 8am or 4 and 6pm.

“I would also like to reassure the local community that we have stepped up our patrols, both in uniform and in plain clothes, in this area at the key times with the aim of deterring any further incidents, as well as providing a visible and reassuring presence.

“While we don’t want to alarm people unnecessarily, we would urge caution when walking along the towpath. We don’t want to stop people using it but we would advise keeping your wits about you and to report any suspicious activity immediately using 999.”

If you find yourself in a similar situation:

- trust your instincts and if you think a situation is getting worse, try not to get involved;
- look for a way to escape;
- put distance between yourself and the other person if you are able to;
- call 999 if you can;
- if you’re unable to, then call police as soon as you can.