



Community Council Report

This report covers progress we have made in dealing with your priorities for the Kincardine and Mearns Community Council area for the period December 2023.

The report aims to highlight emerging issues in your area, provide crime prevention advice and guidance to Community Council members and the residents you represent. Our focus is to reduce crime and disorder, help create safer communities and respond effectively to local concerns.

In this report I will focus on Policing Station 'areas' as historically these stations would covers the following areas.

Portlethen Police Station – Portlethen and surrounding areas including Drumoak and Durriss. I will specify this as Portlethen.

Stonehaven Police Station – Stonehaven, Newtonhill and surrounding areas. I will specify this as Stonehaven.

Laurencekirk Police Station – Laurencekirk and surrounding areas including Fettercairn, Edzell woods, Auchenblae and Garvock. I will specify this as Laurencekirk.

The A92 towns (Catterline – St Cyrus) along the coastal Road are covered between Stonehaven and Laurencekirk but I will specify them as Coastal Road.

Community Policing Priorities

Antisocial behaviour, Violence and Disorder:

Area	Youth Disorder	Anti-Social
Portlethen	5	4
Stonehaven	2	16
Laurencekirk	1	6
Coastal Road	0	4

Acquisitive Crime: D – Detected UI-Under Investigation

Area	Thefts	Shopliftings	Theft of motorvehicle
Portlethen	0	1 UI	2 UI
Stonehaven	2 UI	1 UI, 3 D	0
Laurencekirk	2 UI	0	0
Coastal Road	2 UI, 1 D	0	0

Road Safety & road crime:

Area	Drink/Drug Driving	Dangerous	Careless Driving
Portlethen	2 D	0	1 D
Stonehaven	1 D	0	1 D
Laurencekirk	1D	0	1 UI
Coastal Road	1 D	0	1 D

Community Engagement & Reassurance:

As the weather worsens here is some strong advice from our friends at the AA. Prior to this, the most important message Police Scotland can pass across is to resist leaving your car unaccompanied with engine running. This is not only a known opportunity for thieves to take advantage of but also an offence.

How to drive safely in snow and ice

The roads can be dangerous in winter when there's snow, ice or sleet. Our top tip is to take it slow. [Stopping distances](#) can be 10 times longer when it's icy. Gentle manoeuvres and slow speeds are the key to safe [driving in ice and snow](#).

In the season of winter colds, don't [drive with a cold](#) if you're feeling unwell and are on any medicine that could make you drowsy. It could affect your reaction times.

Before you set off

- Allow extra time for winter journeys.
- Plan routes around major roads, which are more likely to be cleared and gritted.
- Try to get up at least 10 minutes early to give you time to de-ice the car.
- Wear comfortable, dry shoes for driving so your feet don't slip on the pedals.
- Check fuel levels – have at least a quarter of a tank in case of unexpected delays.
- Clear all windows using a scraper and de-icer and wait until the windscreen's fully demisted.
- If you drive an automatic, check the handbook – some have a winter mode or recommend selecting '2' in slippery conditions.

Learn what to do if your [car heater's not working](#).

Driving on winter roads

- Pull away in second gear, easing your foot off the clutch gently to avoid wheel-spin.
- If you have to use your brakes, apply them gently.
- **Driving uphill** – leave plenty of room between other cars or wait until it's clear so you don't have to stop part way up. Keep a constant speed and try to avoid having to change gear on the hill.
- **Driving downhill** – slow down before the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid braking. Leave as much room as you can after the car in front.

OFFICIAL

If you get stuck in snow or ice

- If you get stuck, straighten the steering and clear the snow from the wheels.
- Put a sack or old rug in front of the driving wheels to give the tyres some grip.

Clear your windows of snow, ice and mist

Don't drive like a tank driver with just a tiny patch of windscreen to see out of. Make sure all your windows are clear of ice, snow and condensation before you set off.

- Keep the windscreen and other windows clear of dirt and snow to avoid a fine.
- Clear snow from the roof – it can fall onto the windscreen and block your view.
- Air-con demists the screen faster and reduces condensation.
- Replace worn or damaged wiper blades.
- Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the blades freeze to the screen, you could damage the blades or wiper motor when you turn the ignition on.
- Use a suitable additive in your screenwash to reduce the chance of it freezing.

Here's some more advice on [how to defrost a windscreen](#) during the winter months.

Make your car visible in poor winter weather

With shorter days and more chance of rain, sleet and snow, there can often be poor visibility when driving in winter.

- Make sure all car lights are working and the lenses are clean.
- If the roads are really mucky, you might have to clean your lights after every trip.
- Keep number plates clean, to avoid fines.
- If you have to clear snow, don't forget the lights – front and back.
- You must use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced. If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.

Choose the right winter tyres

- We recommend at least 3mm of tread for the winter.
- Don't let air out of your tyres to get more grip – it doesn't work, and it's unsafe.
- Only use snow chains if there's enough snow to prevent damage to the road.
- Think about getting winter tyres or all-season tyres – these are made from a special rubber that gives better grip in cold, wet conditions.

[Need new tyres? Book a fitting and we'll come to you.](#)

Avoid a breakdown in winter

Look after batteries and electrics

Car batteries rarely last longer than 5 years. There are extra demands on them in the winter thanks to lights, heating and wipers. Here are some tips to prevent a [flat battery](#) in winter:

- Turn off electrical loads like lights, heated rear window and wipers before trying to start the engine.
- Use the starter in short 5-second bursts.
- If the engine doesn't start quickly, wait 30 seconds between attempts.
- If you don't use your car often, give it a regular overnight trickle charge.

Top up your antifreeze in cold weather

[Antifreeze](#) only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair. You need a 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water for the winter – this protects your engine down to -34C.

Most modern cars use long-life antifreeze but some types of antifreeze need changing after only 2 years. Make sure you use the right type and check your service schedule.

Troubleshooting car problems in winter

A continuous squealing noise when you start up probably means the water pump's frozen - it's the fan belt slipping on the pulley. Stop the engine straight away and let it thaw out. This could take days unless you can move it into a heated garage.

If your car overheats a few miles from home, it's likely that the radiator has frozen. Stop straight away so you don't cause more serious damage.

Carry the essentials in your car

What do you need in your car for winter driving?

There are a few essentials you should keep in your car when you're driving in winter. These will help you deal with ice, snow and dark winter nights. Here are things to keep in your car:

- Ice scraper
- De-icer Torch and spare batteries
- First aid kit

You should also keep a fully-charged mobile phone and power bank. That way you can let friends or relatives know if your journey's taking longer than usual or call for help in an emergency.

What should be in a winter car survival kit?

No matter how safely you drive, there's still a chance you could get stuck somewhere in poor weather. Pack a [winter emergency kit](#), just in case. That way you'll be prepared for a long wait in the cold. Here's what to include:

- Warm clothes, waterproofs and high-vis jackets
- Sturdy footwear
- Hot drinks and snacks
- Shovel
- Jump leads
- Warning triangles

Drive safe.

Inspector Rhona Di Meola
Kincardine and Mearns Community Policing Team
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