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Police Scotland - MAKI Area Community Planning Partnership Update for meeting on 03/11/21

Fraud Prevention:

Continuing on from our update in the last meeting, the MAKI and surrounding areas have again seen a number of people fall victim to frauds.

We are urging residents in the area to be vigilant following a number of reported incidents of unsolicited phone calls and emails received over the past few months which are scams.

A number of different types of fraud have been reported to us, which include a phone call pretending to be from your bank or a 'Scottish Fraud Team', advising that your account has been compromised and requesting either, immediate transfer of funds into an account they provide you, or withdrawal of money from your account and physical posting of this money to a detailed address.

In September, an 82-year-old woman in Oban was contacted by phone by a person claiming to be from her bank. She was asked to withdraw large sums of money and send it via 'special delivery' as part of an investigation into bank staff who may have been defrauding her account. The woman was told by the caller if questioned by bank staff to state the reason was a family purchase.

This is a scam. No bank will ever ask you to withdraw cash from your account and send it on.

Earlier this month, a resident in Campbeltown received a phone call from a person claiming to be from her bank, requesting they attend the bank to collect £17,000 in cash, before then meeting with a police officer to hand over the money.

This is a scam. No police officer or member of police staff will ever ask for money under any circumstances nor will they ask for personal financial information other than in the course of a full police investigation, where it will be absolutely clear and obvious of the identity of the officer asking and the reasons why the information is required.

In August, we received a report of a romance fraud, where a person gains the trust of a victim through social media or a dating app and slowly seeks to draw money or valuable items out of them after securing a 'romantic connection'.

A 49-year-old woman in Lochgilphead reported sending over £23,000 to an unknown person met via a dating app. The fraudster continually requested transfers of money, along with valuable items as gifts.

This is a scam. Do not send any money to people you have not met in person. Discuss any requests of this nature with friends and family, or with police, to help test check what is taking place and ensure someone is not manipulating you.

Other scams include:

- **Emails and text messages** purporting to be from a service provider such as your bank, internet, or delivery company requiring you to input personal details or click on a hyperlink. Do not respond to the message or click any links. Go through the company's own website and only phone using the numbers detailed there. Check whether they have sent the correspondence.
- **Cold calling by companies**, either at your door in person or via telephone. Responsible companies avoid doing this. The advice is clear, never buy from or pass your personal or financial details to a cold caller.

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- **Financial service providers**, advertising on social media, offering high value returns for investments in shares or Cryptocurrency. How can you check if they're reliable? Check the company with the Financial Conduct Authority. If a deal is too good to be true, it usually is. Reputable firms don't cold call, pressure sell, use 'mobile numbers' or offer heightened investment returns beyond the ability of trusted businesses.

I would ask that everyone takes every opportunity to highlight the following guidance notes to anyone within their family or community who may be vulnerable to these scam types.

In the bluntest of terms –

- Do not trust **ANY** unexpected correspondence.
- Never pass your personal or financial details to **ANYONE** unless you're clear who they are and why they require that information.
- If you feel the need to reply to correspondence to check the authenticity of a contact, please, only use the company's verified official website and the communication methods detailed upon it.
- Where money is being requested, be it physically withdrawing it from the bank or the electronic transferring of it, always, **STOP, THINK AND CHECK** with a friend, relative or neighbour before taking any action.
- Any victims of such crimes, or anyone with any concerns can contact their local police station via 101.

Vehicle Thefts

As we head move into Winter and the longer periods of darkness which come with it, I would ask that everyone takes the time to ensure the safety of their vehicles.

Within the farming community in particular, expensive Quad Bikes and the likes are extremely sought after due to their value and we have had a recent incident in Campbeltown where 2 were taken. Our officers were able to trace the vehicles and have them returned, as well as apprehend a group suspected of being responsible.

Other incidents have seen cars taken by means of true key. These can vary from 'sneak-in' thefts whereby thieves will enter insecure houses and grab car keys which have been left on a table or worktop near to the door, to vehicles being left insecure with the keys within.

Please take a moment to ensure that all vehicles are locked and secured at night and that keys are placed out of sight, whilst keeping doors locked.

Mobile Police Office

As the winter months and the associated weather come forwards, here in MAKI we will be looking to get our Mobile Office out to some of our more remote communities and given residents a chance to come and meet with officers and discuss any queries or issues they may have.

A schedule will be built over the next few weeks, however if any community councils wish to get in touch and let us know of specific days or events which would suit, please let us know and we can try and factor this in.

COP26

As everyone will be aware, COP26 is taking place in November in Glasgow and as part of the Policing operation a number of MAKI officers will be there. These officers will perform a number of conventional and specialist roles

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and will represent the area. Whilst this is ongoing, the officers remaining in MAKI will continue to provide the high levels of service expected.

Festive Period

We are only a few weeks away from the start of the festive period and we all hope that this year it can resemble the more traditional Christmases we are used to, as opposed to the one we endured last year. In the run up to Christmas it is expected to be a busy time for all licensed premises and as such we are keen to work with licence holders to ensure that they are supported and customers can feel safe when socialising.

In the coming weeks, my team will reach out to all licence holders and offer them the chance to come together and restart the PubWatch scheme, which was so successful in the past.

Using this scheme, all licensees will be able to meet either in person or virtually and discuss concerns, issues and upcoming events with members of the local Policing team. This will ensure that Police can provide a suitable response to keep community and pub goers safe, give staff the comfort of knowing we are on hand, whilst also allowing officers to give out any important advice or messages which may be of interest.

I would urge all licenced premises, including hotels, to engage with this scheme, as like many, it's success will come from the participation. The ultimate aim is that the business can continue to be an important part of the community and everyone can enjoy themselves in a safe way.

As part of the festive campaign, my officers will be highlighting the Police Scotland message on Drink Driving. The consequences of drink or drug driving can be devastating and it is important that we are all aware of the impacts it can have on our communities. I would ask that everyone takes the time to look out for those who may be considering getting behind the wheel whilst under the influence, including the morning after, and dissuade them from doing so.

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