

31<sup>st</sup> March 2020



## Covid-19 Update from Assistant Chief Constable Simon Blatchly

“Police forces in the UK have a relationship with the public that is the envy of the world and we would always rather work with the public than against them.”

These are the words of a senior police officer at Northamptonshire Police as no COVID-19-related fines were issued by police officers across the county over the weekend period.

Assistant Chief Constable Simon Blatchly, said: “Firstly, I would like to thank the public in Northamptonshire who have sent a clear message over the weekend that they want to save lives and work with us and the government by staying at home.

“We police by consent in this country and we have a relationship with the public in the UK that truly is the envy of the world. We engage, we listen, and we educate, and we would always rather work with the public than against them.

“We have been given powers that in all honesty, we would not normally wish to have. However, extraordinary times often call for extraordinary measures.

“That being said, we want to ensure that we continue to hold respect at the heart of everything we do and that a dialogue between the police and our communities continues to exist.



“Where our police officers and PCSOs have come across people outside over the weekend period, they’ve been able to educate them on why it’s so important to follow the government’s guidance to stay home, save lives and protect our NHS.

“Make no mistake, we will use enforcement and issue fines if we have to, but at the moment, our communities in Northamptonshire have been fantastic in their resilience to respond to such an unprecedented situation. Though there will always be people who will break the rules, and we will deal with them, it’s heart-warming to know that the majority support us.”

To enforce social distancing, people in Northamptonshire are being asked to stay at home and only go outside if they have a ‘reasonable excuse’. These include shopping for necessary food, household and medical supplies, travelling to and from work where working from home is not an option, and daily exercise that adheres to social distancing guidance. Full details of the measures are available: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Northamptonshire Police can issue penalty notices of £30, rising to £60 if not paid within 28 days, where they have reason to believe there has been an offence under the regulations. These penalties are doubled for each repeat offence up to a £960 cap, with no reduction for early payment. Due to the exceptional nature of these powers, the regulations will be reviewed at least every 21 days to ensure they are still necessary.