

## A MESSAGE FROM BCU COMMANDER, CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT HELEN HARPER



Dear all,

I hope you are well.

### **Covid restrictions**

As you know further changes to the Covid restrictions came into operation yesterday. This includes allowing up to six people to meet outside - provided those from different households continue to strictly observe social distancing. Also, a number of schools in our local areas are now welcoming some pupils back to school.

### **National Volunteers Week**

As you may be aware, the Met, along with others, is celebrating National Volunteers Week. The Met has around 20,000 volunteers including special constables, cadets, staff and many others who work alongside us in communities. Each plays a vital role in helping to fight crime to support officers throughout the pandemic period to keep Londoners safe.

The volunteers work across the Met including delivering crime prevention leaflets, working alongside neighbourhood or specialist crime teams or assisting police at events across the capital.

Volunteer Lucian Fernando, said: "I joined the Met to help out during the coronavirus pandemic, especially as there has been an increase in scams. I help with leaflet drops and weapons sweeps in parks and public places. I enjoy being part of the Met family to protect the community and cut crime."

Commander Catherine Roper, said: "The 20,000 strong Met volunteering family are out in their communities across London every day helping to prevent crime and keep Londoners safe. Many people who have been furloughed from their day jobs have joined as volunteers since the outbreak of the pandemic to do their bit during these challenging times. It's an honour to work with them and I'm extremely grateful to the time they give.

"Volunteers have delivered thousands of crime prevention booklets and are checking in with the most vulnerable to tackle online fraud and scams. I would like to reassure that they will never ask you for any personal details, like your bank account information. If this happens, stop the conversation and report it immediately.

"We have special constables who give their spare time and have done so for many years to help police London. I'd also like to highlight the incredible work of our cadets who help the most vulnerable in their communities."

The Met has seen an increase in the interest in volunteering as people see the vital role of the police during this crisis. In the last three months, more than 1,100 people have signed up as Met volunteers, and special constables have contributed over 135,000 policing hours. We have also seen a number of former officers returning as volunteers or specials.

On Saturday, 16 May the Metropolitan Special Constabulary, with the volunteers, were out in force across London to provide reassurance and tackle criminality. On that day they made 12 arrests, carried out 61 weapons sweeps and dispersed 341 groups as lockdown rules were explained and people encouraged to return home. They also removed knives, a firearm and drugs from the streets of London.

Retired Inspector Philip Spaul has returned to the Met as a special constable. He said: "I worked for the Met for 30 years and retired a year ago. I'm now volunteering as a special constable and my first shift back was in Woolwich town centre where I first started my Met career. I'm proud to be a special and to help out during the coronavirus pandemic. If every one of us does a bit to help, I know that it will make a huge difference."

If you would like to play a part in making London a safer place and volunteer with the Met please visit our website.

### **Protest activity**

You are likely to have seen or read about a number of protests that have taken place across London this weekend. A number of these are in response to the tragic death of George Floyd in the US. We are aware of the views of many members of our community and the tension and upset this incident has caused.

Our wish remains to keep London safe and you will have seen a police presence at the protests in order to achieve this. We understand that the intention of protest organisers is that the protests are peaceful and it is our hope that this continues. We police London by consent and our good relationship with our communities is very important to us.

I would like to thank you for your continued support.

Kindest regards



Helen

BCU Commander Central West BCU and Royal Parks