

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Wantage and Abingdon

1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras in Wantage and Abingdon contribute towards deterring crime, reducing the fear of crime, increasing crime detection, and protecting vulnerable people in the district.

The report is produced using information provided by the CCTV monitoring suite based in Abingdon. It is based on information drawn from the record of occurrences. A record of occurrence is reported each time a CCTV camera is used to proactively to monitor a specific incident.

Reports are provided on a half yearly basis to each town council and other stakeholders to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses. We have 23 cameras operational in Abingdon and six in Wantage.

DATA SUMMARY

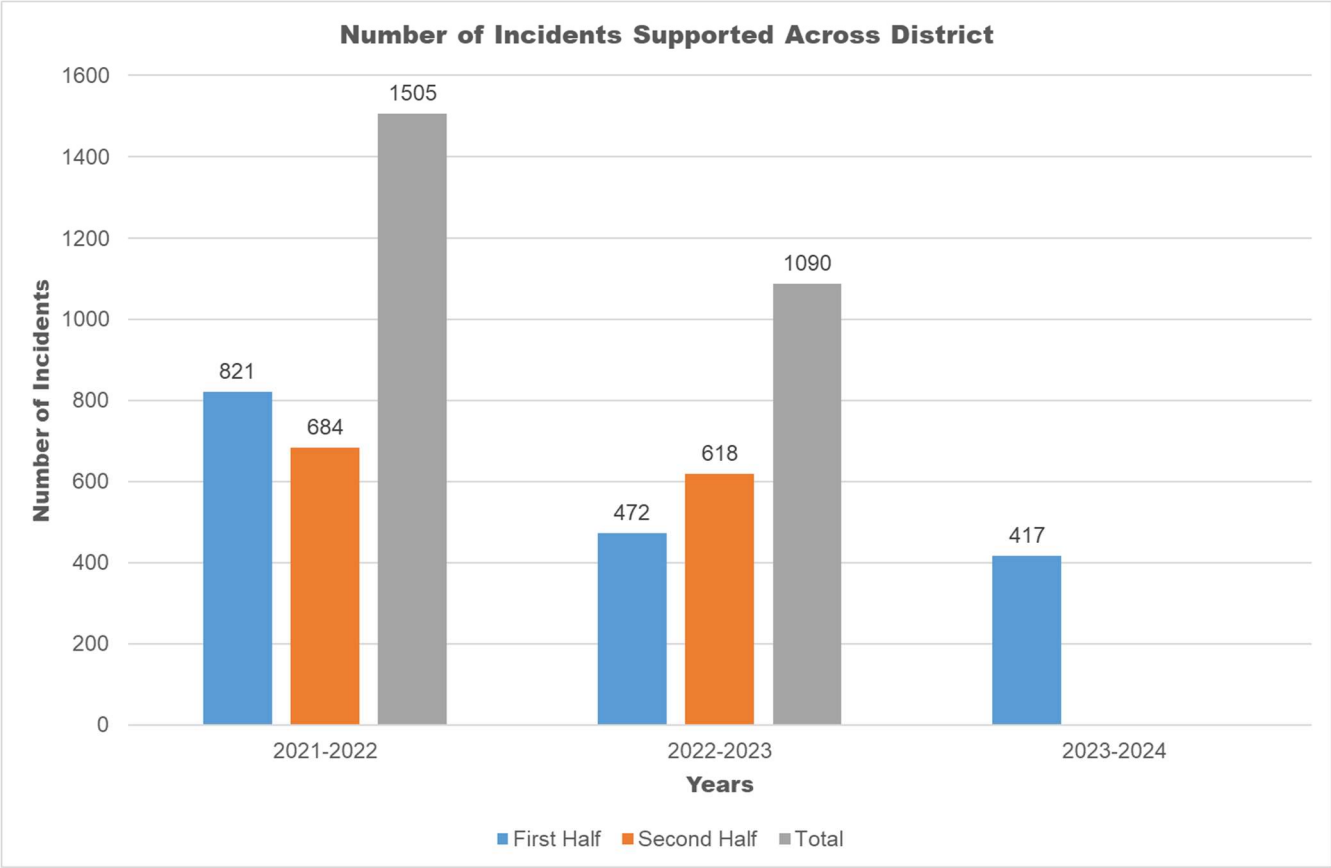
Across the Vale, CCTV operators **supported 417 incidents** during the first half of 2023-24.

The operators also **produced 53 evidence packs** for court proceedings and **supported 57 arrests**.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the first half of 2023-24, where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Anti-Social Behaviour (40)	Missing Persons (21)
Fear for welfare (30)	Fear for Welfare (8)
Drunkenness (28)	Wanted Persons (7)

The chart below compares this half yearly total with previous half years:



As you can see from the graph, the number of monitored incidents is similar to the same period in the previous year. However, it is important to note that during the first half of 2023-24, the CCTV service was carrying a full time CCTV operator vacancy which will have had some impact on the team’s availability to monitor the cameras. We have now appointed somebody to this vacancy and expect them to start shortly, once they have passed the police vetting process.

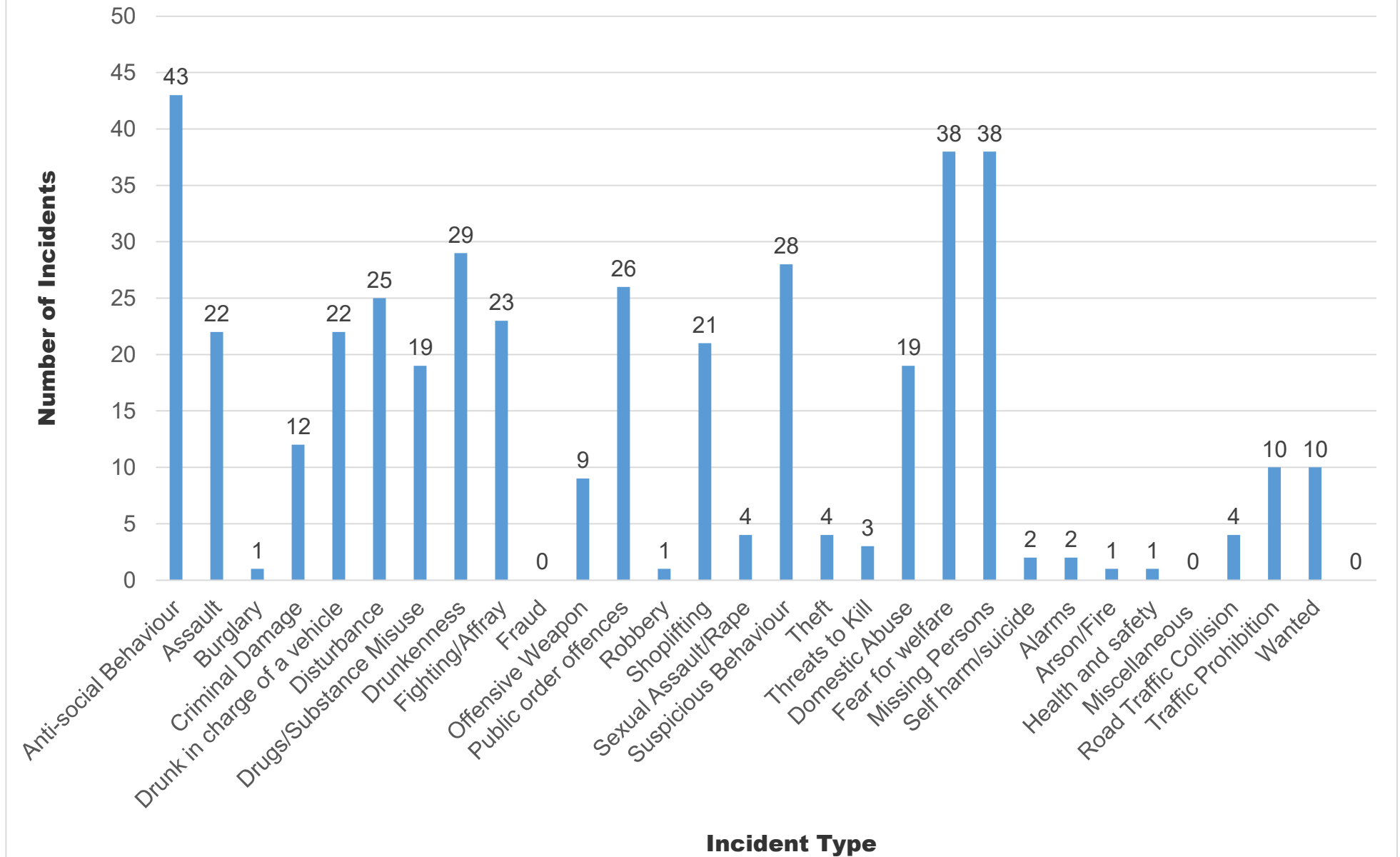
For a further breakdown of monitored incidents by town please see the table below:

	2021-2022			2022-2023			2023-2024		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	672	614	1286	374	521	895	340		340
Wantage	149	70	219	98	97	195	77		77
Total	821	684	1505	472	618	1090	417		417

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incidents the CCTV operators monitored and supported across both towns from 1 April to 30 September 2023.

Incidents by Type - 1 April 2023 - 30 September 2023

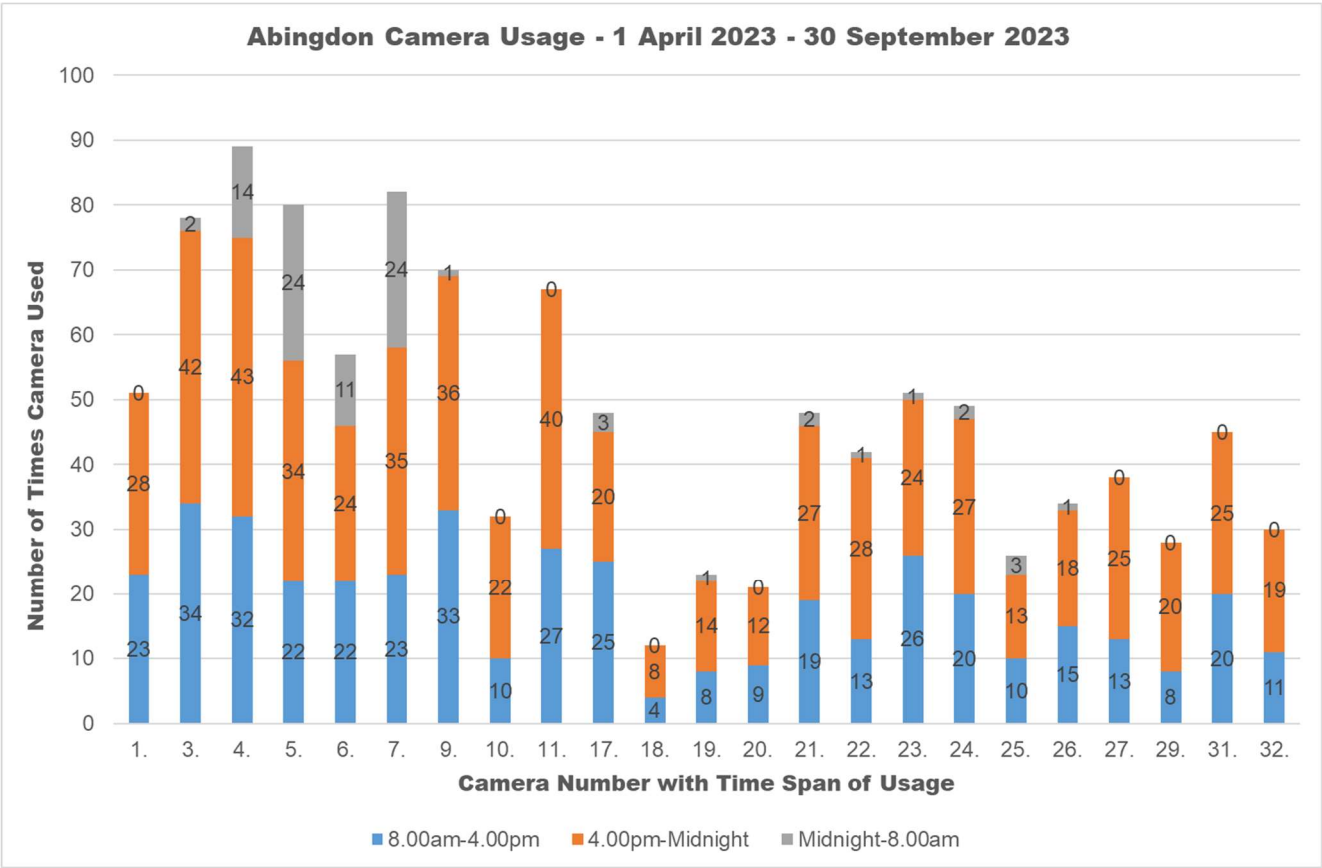


CAMERA USAGE

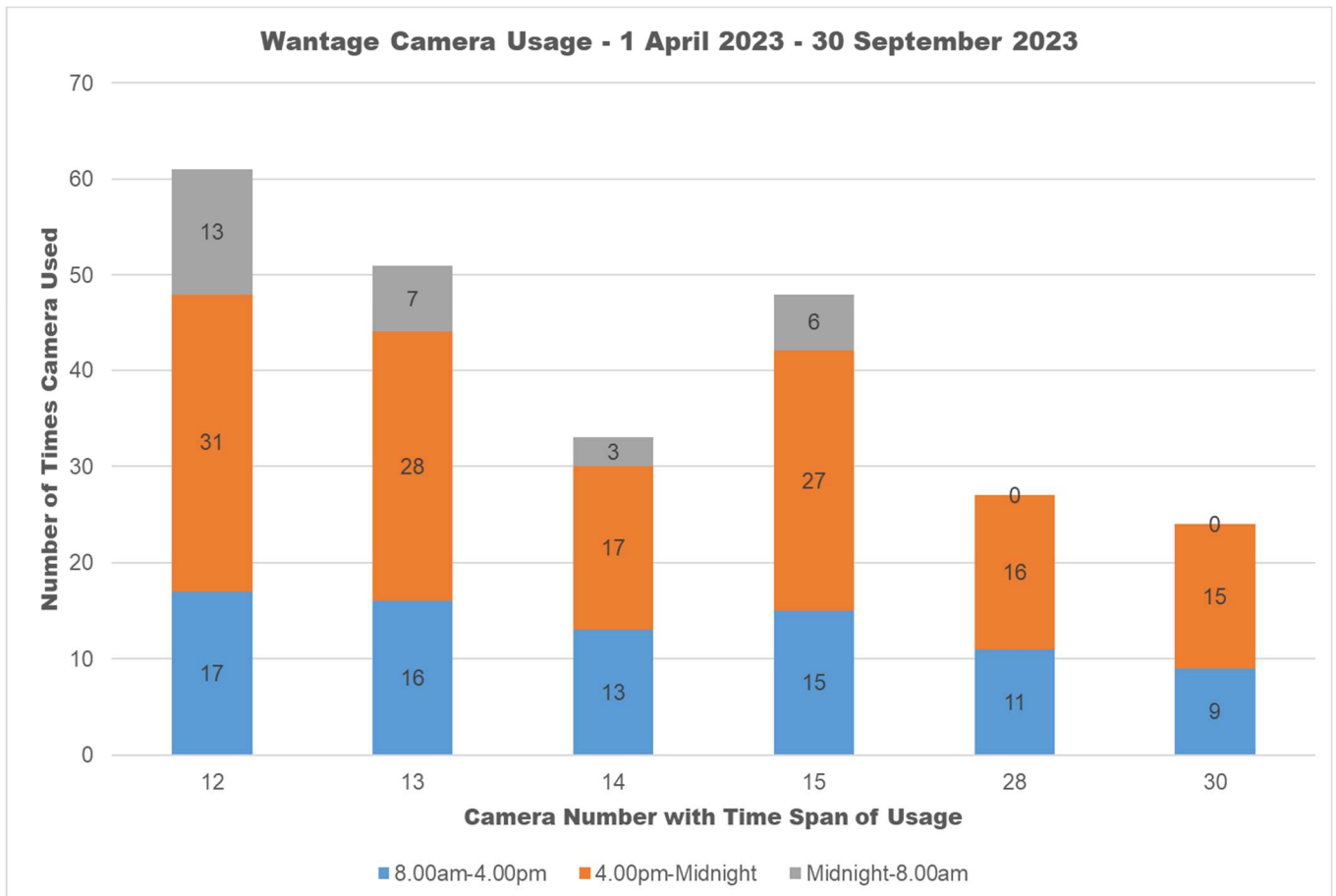
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras were deployed in recorded, monitored events.

The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24-hour period.

It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am, most of the camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



Camera 4 (which covers the High Street), camera 7 (covering late night venues) and camera 5 (covering the taxi rank and Square) saw the highest use; these were actively used 89, 82 and 80 times, respectively.



Cameras 12, 13 and 15 were the most used cameras in Wantage in the first half of the year – these cover the Market Place as well as several late-night venues.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S, AND OTHER OUTCOMES

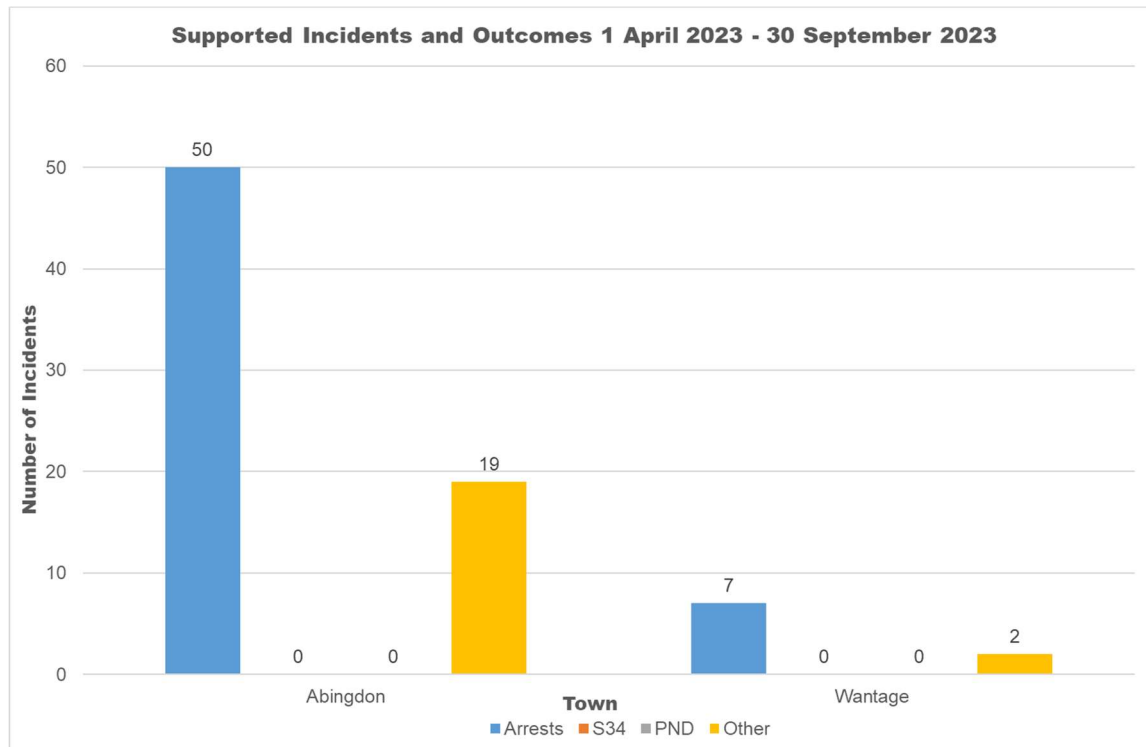
The chart at the top of page six shows the outcomes the CCTV operators supported while involved in monitoring an incident. The police use their discretion on how an incident is resolved based on experience, the gravity of the offence, the resources that are available to them at that time and so on. Whilst we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34¹ or a Penalty Notice for Disorder² (PND), we do know the cameras alert police to incidents they may not have known about. CCTV also gives the police the ability to assess and allocate resources and prioritise in real time e.g. should the situation allow, leaving CCTV to monitor incidents or offenders while officers attend other incidents.

A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social behaviour disorder. A PND is an ‘on the spot fine.’

Actions on the chart designated ‘other’ usually mean that the police either gave verbal advice or a warning or a non-recordable sanction (e.g. returning and paying for low value items that had been stolen from a store).

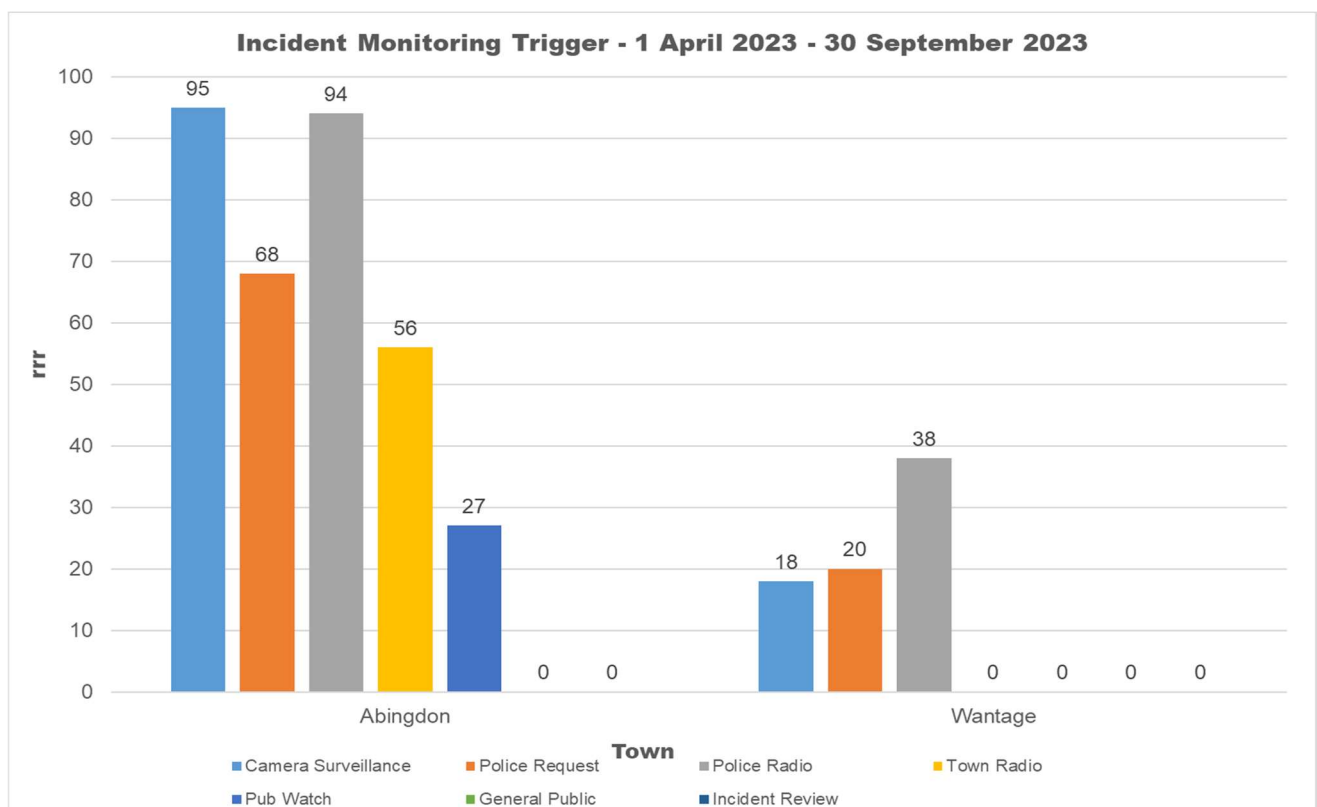
¹ A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social related disorder.

² A PND is an ‘on the spot’ fine.



HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart below shows how many of the incidents monitored by CCTV were as a result of the following: a direct request from the police (police requests); the CCTV operator hearing about an incident on a police radio (police radio); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance); request from officers to review footage at the time of an incident e.g. to clarify details of a reported incident while they are on scene (incident review). Only Abingdon has a town radio scheme.



REVIEWS AND EVIDENCE PACKS

When not tasked by police, the operators patrol all the cameras and focus on ‘hotspot’ areas. All cameras are recording 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are set in ‘default’ positions where they remain whilst not being actively moved by an operator. These positions are agreed with the police as covering those areas that are most likely to experience community safety issues.

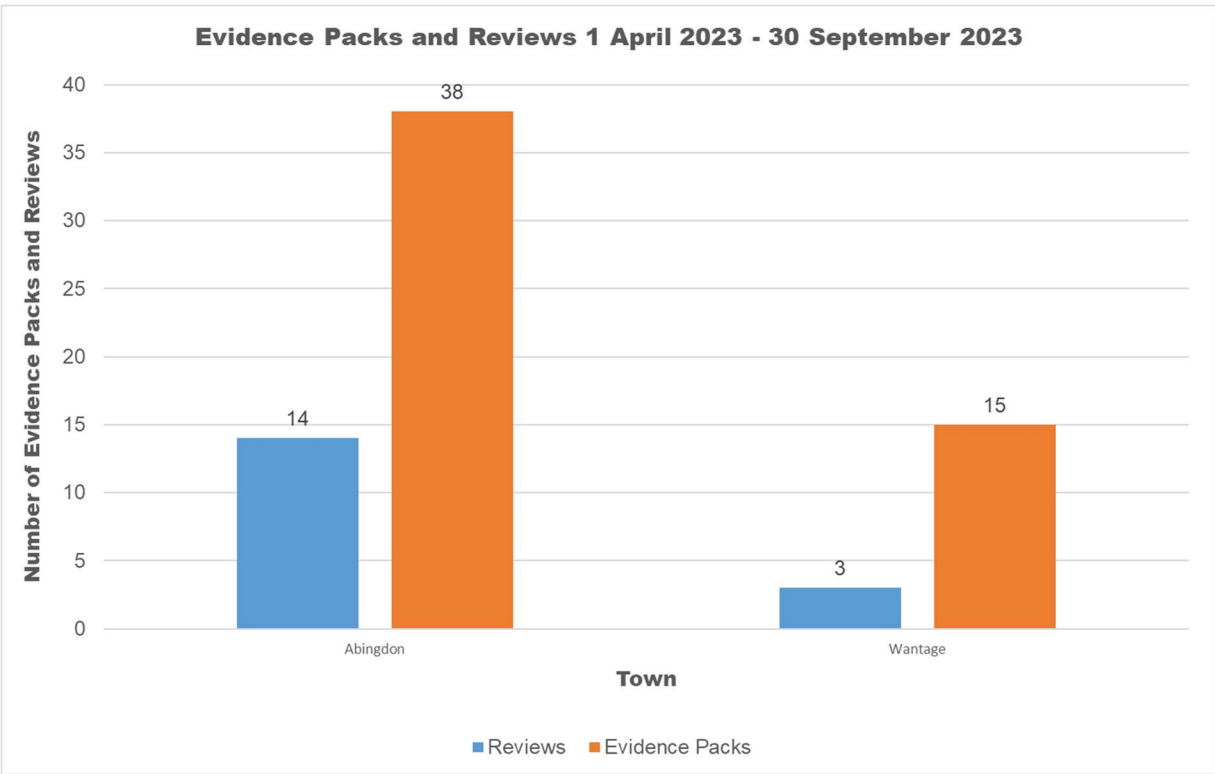
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of ‘non-stop road traffic collisions’ in which the complainant’s car has been damaged. All such requests are actioned, and replies given. Altogether we received 12 such requests during this half of the year.

The chart below shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews they undertook following receipt of a formal written request.

Evidence reviews are checks through recorded material. The evidence packs are the recordings and statements which the CCTV operators produce for police, solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced is termed a ‘review.’ This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent DVD copy for evidential use.

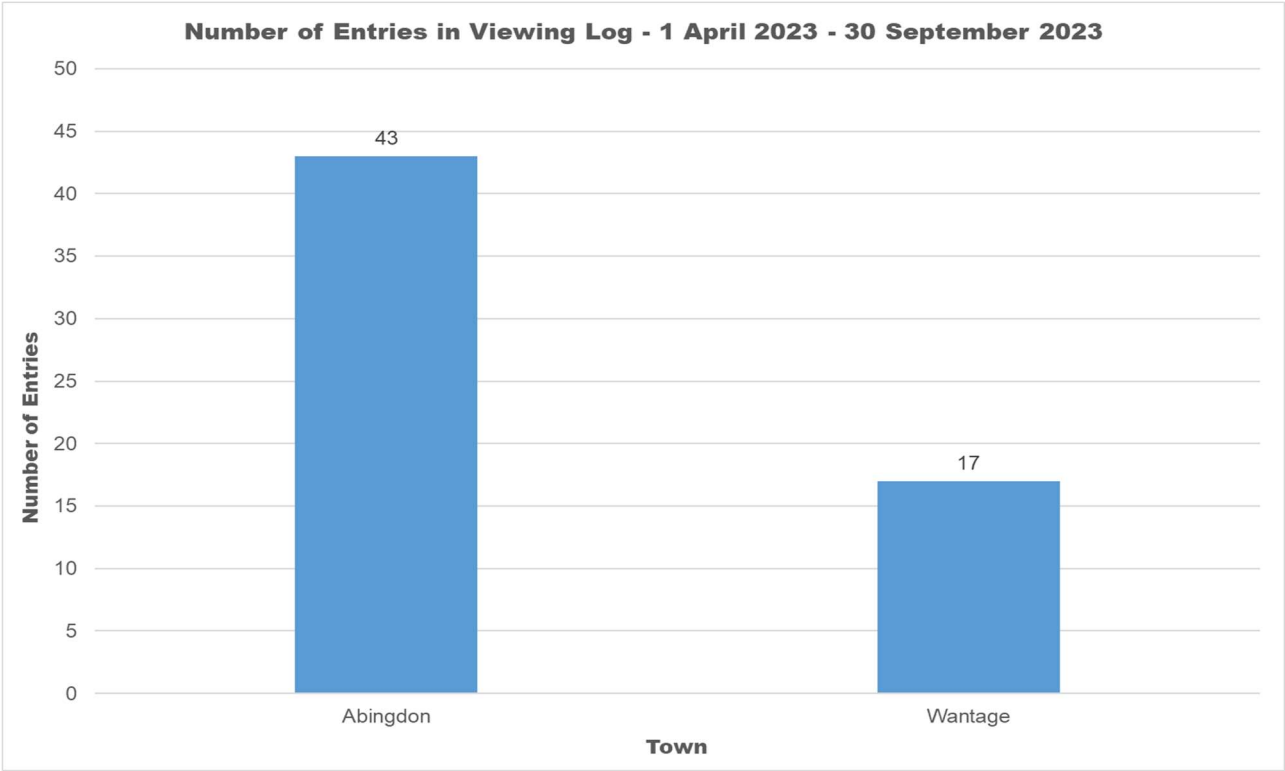
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences, this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

We also allow police to attend the control room to review footage with an operator. The following chart reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023 across the two towns.

Please note that the viewing of footage may or may not be followed by a formal written request for footage.



CASE STUDIES

The following are examples of incidents dealt with by CCTV operators during the first half of 2023–24. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Abingdon

Whilst on duty, our operator heard a report of a burglary and an assault in the town. Using details of the offender provided by the police (including a clothing description) and their own local knowledge, they conducted a search of nearby cameras and were able to locate the man in question. The operator informed the police of his whereabouts and officers then arrived on the scene and made an arrest.

At around 3:30am one morning, our operator saw a group of children in the vicinity of the Abbey Meadows play park. Due to the time, their age, and because of recent issues of vandalism in the area, the operator informed the police and officers attended to deal with the issue.

Having received a report over the town radio from a local store about an incident of shoplifting, our operator spotted the offenders and continued to monitor them back to a vehicle parked in a nearby road. They passed this information to the police who were able to stop the vehicle. Thousands of pounds worth of stock from various businesses was recovered and two people were arrested.

Wantage

The police asked our CCTV control room to look out for a motor vehicle that had been stolen. Whilst proactively monitoring the town centre and the surrounding area, an operator spotted the vehicle in question, informed the police, and directed them to the location. One arrest was made.

Whilst conducting routine patrols of the cameras, our operator on duty observed an individual who appeared to be intoxicated getting into a vehicle and driving off. This information was quickly relayed to police who stopped the vehicle and arrested the driver.

The CCTV team proactively monitored both the Wantage carnival in June and the street fair in September, liaising with police and ensuring the safety of those who were there. Both events saw lots of people attend and no major incidents were reported.

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