



Trouble linked to kebab shop

POLICE have been called to reports of anti-social behaviour at a kebab shop nine times in just six months.

The calls have been made since January following problems at KFS takeaway, in Pinfold Avenue, in Norton, above.

Five of the reports related to rowdy behaviour, three alleged racial abuse and one was a public order complaint.

Staffordshire Police have released the data after 23-year-old Anthony Shenton admitted racially abusing KFS owner Abdul Ghafoor.

Shenton, of Edge Street, Burslem, was jailed for 18 weeks and banned from going within 100 metres of the kebab shop for five years by magistrates last week.

A Staffordshire Police spokesman said: "We are committed to tackling all forms of anti-social behaviour and hate crime and to bringing offenders to justice.

"Hate crimes will be investigated and treated with the utmost seriousness.

"We would encourage anyone with concerns about anti-social behaviour or hate crime in their community to contact us on 101, or speak to their local neighbourhood officers out on patrol."

Decision is due on homes plan

PLANS to build more than 160 houses in the countryside are set to be approved later today.

Bloor Homes North West wants to build the houses at Gresty Green Road and Crewe Road, in Crewe.

The scheme includes three, two-bedroom bungalows, 24 two-bedroom semi-detached properties, 33 three-bedroom semi-detached properties, 55 three-bedroom detached homes and 50 four-bedroom detached properties.

Fifty-seven of the homes will be classed as 'affordable'.

Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council has objected to the development because of the impact it will have on the character of the area.

As part of the scheme, the developer will be asked to pay almost £1 million in contributions to education and road improvements.

It will be asked for £495,000 towards the construction of the latest stage of the Crewe Green Link Road, an education contribution of £292,850 and £2,000 towards barn owl conservation work.

Members of Cheshire East Council's strategic planning board were ruling on the application this afternoon.



HISTORY LESSON: A Holocaust survivor met Year 9 students at Sir Thomas Boughey High School to help them understand more about the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis. After hearing a talk by survivor

Zigi Shipper, whose visit to the Halmerend school was organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET), pupils were able to take part in a question and answer session with him. Karen Pollock, chief executive of

the Holocaust Educational Trust added: "We impart the history of the Holocaust to ensure that we honour the memory of those whose lives were lost and take forward the lessons taught by those who survived."

Listening to Zigi Shipper are, from left, Jess Poole, 14; Melanie Chung, 14; Saul Forster, 13; and Kate Thomasson, 14.

Picture: Malcolm Hart

Gang admitted trying to steal £176 million in scam Pair jailed for part in phone VAT fraud

BY TOM MULLEN

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TWO businessmen have been jailed for their part in one of the largest and most complex mobile phone tax frauds uncovered to date.

Marshall Boston and Lee Sellers are among 15 people convicted of trying to steal £176 million from the public purse in the international VAT swindle.

The plot saw the crooks make vast sums of cash from the Government by devising a con involving the VAT-free import and export of phones from EU countries.

They claimed to have sold four million handsets worth £1.7 billion, including 250,000 phones which had not even been launched in the UK.

The gang used a string of false documents and made up companies to trick the taxman into believing the phones were being legitimately sold in the UK with VAT added on.

The men then claimed the tax back from the Government – when in actual fact no VAT had been paid in the first place.

Boston, of Hugo Way, Loggerheads, was jailed for two years and banned from being a company director for five years.

The 46-year-old, who owned Belgium-based freight company Boston Freight, admitted fraudulently dodging VAT.

Sellers, aged 42, of Whitehurst Lane, Dilhorne, was locked up for two-and-a-half years, and also banned from being a company director for five years.

Sellers, the owner of freight company A1 Logistics and Freight Ltd, admitted fraud-

ulent trading. Another gang member, Paul Smith, aged 43, of Hawthorne Avenue, Trent Vale, was given a 12-month suspended jail sentence on January 27 and ordered to carry out 240 hours of unpaid work.

Smith became embroiled in the scam as one of Boston's managers.

The men were sentenced at Kingston Crown Court in Surrey after a series of trials, which can now be reported.

The 15 gang members from the across the UK were jailed for a total of more than 64 years.

The ringleader, Dilawar Ravjani, will serve 17 years – the longest penalty imposed for so-called 'carousel' fraud.

Investigators were alerted after they discovered the gang had been claiming to trade phones made by Sony Ericsson and Samsung which, although they had been unveiled in promotional campaigns, were not yet on sale.

Some £170,000 in cash was found during the investigation, including £80,000 stuffed into drawers at one of Ravjani's companies, Future Communications, which investigators believe was to be used to pay off accomplices at other businesses.

Donald Toon, criminal investigations director at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, said: "The people who run these scams aren't isolated individuals.

"Some of them are professional major fraudsters and it's a massively international game."

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Girl freed after toe becomes trapped in bike

FIREFIGHTERS were called to help free a little girl who had trapped her toe in the chain of her bicycle.

The nine-year-old had been cycling near her home in Wilkes Street, Tunstall, when the accident happened at around 6.15pm yesterday.

Three firefighters attended and helped free the girl, who was left

shaken but uninjured. However, watch manager Des Keeling said the youngster could have lost her toe if they hadn't arrived in time.

He said: "Her toe was trapped between the bike's chain and the cog.

"Just one more turn of the cog and she could have lost her toe, so in that sense she was very lucky.

"We don't know how it happened. We got there and there was a man and a woman there helping her.

"She was uninjured but she was just a fraction from losing her toe."

One engine attended the accident, and the victim, who did not require medical attention, was freed within minutes.

In brief

BROWN LEES: Defendant Craig Wykes, of Tower Hill Road, Brown Lees, pleaded guilty to doing an act intending to pervert the course of public justice. The 26-year-old reported that his Mitsubishi had been stolen on July 17 last year; Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court heard. Wykes will learn his fate after a pre-sentence report is prepared. His bail was allowed to continue.

FEGG HAYES: Nathan Crutchley, aged 24, of Rivington Crescent, Fegg Hayes, has pleaded guilty to causing criminal damage to a car at Sandford Hill on April 22 belonging to Kathleen Horton. He was fined £110 by North Staffordshire Magistrates and ordered to pay £85 costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

COBRIDGE: A further adjournment was granted at North Staffordshire Magistrates' Court in the case of a 36-year-old woman accused of assaulting three members of staff at Harplands Hospital in October last year. Reports have been requested concerning the psychiatric condition of Gloria Oladimeji of Leek New Road, Cobridge, and there will be another hearing on August 7.

BURSLEM: The cases of Krzysztof Peczak, aged 31, of Campbell Road, Stoke and Michael Rogalski, aged 31, of Waterloo Road, Cobridge, both accused of vehicle interference at Burslem on June 24, were discontinued by the Crown Prosecution Service at the magistrates' court in Fenton after a hearing yesterday.

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