



# THE DIGITAL BEAT

## The Canterbury Beat – Edition #22: Safety is Our Priority

Public safety—particularly the safety of women and girls in our shared spaces—is the absolute foundation of what we do. This week, I want to address a specific incident that many of you may have seen discussed on local community social media pages, and provide some important reassurance about how we respond to your concerns.

Following reports regarding the behaviour of a man in the city centre, we took decisive action this week to ensure our parks remain safe for everyone.

### Prompt Reporting Leads to a Swift Arrest

Over the last few days, concern began to grow online and within the community regarding a male acting suspiciously and inappropriately approaching females in the Dane John Gardens area.

**The Power of Reporting:** Thanks to individuals quickly coming forward to report this behaviour directly to us, our team was able to build an immediate, accurate picture of what was happening.

**Identified and Located:** Being present in the right place at the right time allowed us to swiftly locate the male in the Dane John, and he was promptly arrested. Enquiries are continuing at the time of writing.

### Social Media vs. Direct Reporting

We know that information spreads incredibly fast on local community groups, and seeing posts of this nature can understandably cause anxiety for residents, students, and families using our parks.

**We Are Listening:** I want to reassure you that we monitor local concerns closely, but the fastest way to get us to an incident is always direct contact. The detailed descriptions and quick timelines provided by those who called us were what allowed us to bring this matter to a rapid conclusion.

**A Safe Environment:** The Dane John is the jewel of our city centre, and we will not tolerate behaviour that makes anyone feel intimidated or unsafe while enjoying it.

### The "Ask for Angela" Scheme in Open Spaces

**Question:** I know "Ask for Angela" works inside bars and pubs, but what should I do if I feel uncomfortable or followed while walking through a park like the Dane John or down the High Street?

**The Answer:** While the physical scheme is designed for venues, the same principle applies on the street. If you ever feel unsafe, approach any of our officers on foot patrol, a Canterbury BID Street Team, Whitefriars Security or step into the nearest business displaying a "Safe Space" sticker. You can also call 101 (or 999 in an emergency). Our team is specifically trained to intervene discreetly, separate you from the source of discomfort, and ensure you get home safely—no questions asked.

### **Project Vigilant**

In Canterbury City Centre, we regularly utilise Project Vigilant.

Project Vigilant is a national policing initiative aimed at keeping women and girls safe in public spaces, particularly in the night-time economy. It involves plain-clothed and uniformed officers proactively patrolling areas such as town centres, transport hubs, and licensed venues to identify and disrupt predatory behaviour before offences occur.

Officers are trained to recognise signs of harassment, stalking, or unwanted attention, intervening early to safeguard potential victims and challenge inappropriate behaviour. The focus is not on restricting social activity, but on ensuring people can enjoy their time safely and confidently. By working closely with venues, security staff, and local partners, Project Vigilant helps create a visible, supportive presence that deters offenders, reassures the public, and reinforces the message that violence and harassment against women and girls will not be tolerated.

### **Over to You**

Remember, if you ever see behaviour that doesn't feel right, don't just post about it online—report it to us so we can act.