

Police team making arrests

OFFICERS from Braintree's local policing team had a busy month, making number of significant arrests across the district.

The team is made up of emergency responders working closely with other police teams in the district.

They include Braintree's community policing team, which carries out proactive patrols, and other departments such as Braintree CID and Braintree's domestic abuse investigations team.

On May 23, the team arrested a man in a taxi following reports of a domestic related burglary involving a vulnerable victim.

Kai Bucknor, 26, of Stirrup Close, Chelmsford, will appear at Chelmsford Crown Court on June 22 charged with assault causing actual bodily harm, criminal damage and burglary.

On May 17 a 17-year-old boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was charged with assault, threats to commit criminal damage and criminal damage.

He will appear at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on June 19.

Another man, Andrew Johnson, 58, of Hay Lane, Braintree, will appear at court this month charged with using threatening behaviour to cause harassment, failing to comply with a community protection notice and obstructing a constable in the execution of their duty. Officers also responded to a concern for welfare call in Notley Country Park, helping a woman before an ambulance arrived to take her to hospital.

Girl's fitness boost for zoo

A SECONDARY school student has raised hundreds of pounds for Colchester Zoo.

Animal lover Fia Knowles, 12, has now gathered more than £300 in donations after completing the Couch to 5k fitness programme during the lockdown.

The initiative sets out a training programme for people wanting to work up to completing a 5km run.

Fia, who is a Year 7 student at Maltings Academy in Witham, chose to raise cash for the tourist attraction after it made an appeal for donations to ease the financial impact of the pandemic.

She said: "I love Colchester Zoo and have grown up visiting the animals there. The zoo is a very special and important place to me.

"I'm glad I could do something to support the animals I've come to know and love."

Safety 'paramount' as schools set to re-open

Pupils and staff praised for adapting during coronavirus lockdown

ONE-WAY systems, temperature checks and smaller class sizes will all be put in place to help get secondary students in Witham back to school.

The newly-announced plans come after a number of primary schools across the district welcomed back some of their pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on Monday.

Secondary schools are to remain closed to all students except those who parents are key workers until Monday, June 15.

Both New Rickstones and Maltings academies say they plan to follow the Government's advice and welcome back Year 10 pupils from that date.

New Rickstones is expecting up to 75 per cent of the year group to return after getting the results of a survey sent out to parents.

Every Year 10 student will be offered a one-hour, face-to-face consultation at the school from June 15 to give them an opportunity to discuss how their studies are going and how they are coping with lockdown.

New social distancing measures will be put in place, such as one-way systems and new hand-washing stations.

Every student's temperature will also be taken at the start of each day and face



SAFETY IS PRIORITY: New Rickstones Academy headteacher Damian Lee and Maltings Academy headteacher James Forbes are gearing up to welcome pupils back

masks will be available to pupils.

Headteacher Damian Lee said: "I have to consider student and staff welfare – health and safety is paramount.

"Every student in the school is receiving a weekly phone call from us, with the most vulnerable hearing from us daily. We have got an amazing virtual learning programme in place. But,

students are missing their teachers, so the need is there for us to return.

"The work the staff have done and the way the students have adapted to all of these changes has been phenomenal.

"They have really stepped up and I am so proud of them. There will be things we take forward from this as some students have learnt better with virtual lessons as

they have been able to extend themselves even more."

Similar safety measures will be in place at Maltings Academy, which also plans to host a virtual careers day for Year 10 students.

Groups of 30 students will spend three hours in school from June 15 for a reorientation day.

Each classroom will be allowed no more than ten students at a time.

Headteacher James Forbes said: "Students will have a learning review to see how they have been getting on with their home learning.

"But, as headteacher, it is a priority to also make sure students – and staff – are looking after their health and wellbeing.

"We are using a tool called AS Tracker to support students with their social and emotional needs. This is at the heart of our return to school strategy. From day one, we have said mental health is a priority.

"We have got some really exciting things happening, such as live lessons, video content being delivered and an academic support team on hand to respond to students' questions immediately. For Year 7 and 8, we have launched a Skills Beyond the Classroom curriculum to focus on the things they can achieve while at home.

"As leaders, we are having to cope with continued development in government guidance. But, in education, we are sharing information and ideas and working together to make sure we are doing what is best for children in general.

"We have been very clear to parents that we will not have more students on site unless our risk assessments suggest it is safe.

"We will continue to review that every two weeks."

Teacher's DIY renovations are a lesson for students

A TEACHER has continued to teach his students during the lockdown – while renovating his home at the same time.

Alan Burges has been streaming the work taking place at his bungalow in Braintree online to students studying construction at college.

Mr Burges has been carrying out structural, flooring, roofing and plumbing work by himself and getting pupils to interact with him online.

Students have been encouraged to answer questions and offering solutions during the live sessions.

Mr Burges, who is the senior curriculum manager for construction at Havering Colleges' Rainham

campus, said: "I was going to refurbish our home anyway, but I have brought it all forward so that I could give the students the chance to see work in progress while they can't get into college.

"It seemed too good an opportunity to miss."

Mr Burges says the renovation has seen him remove walls and ceilings, as well as carrying out electrical and plumbing work.

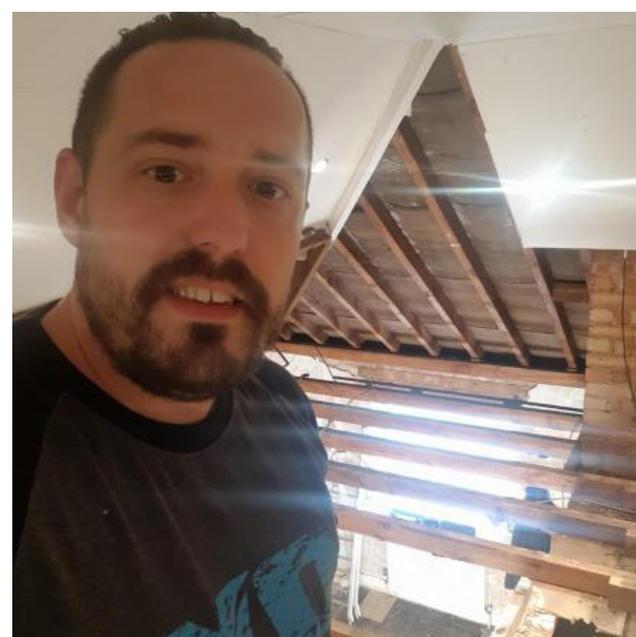
He added: "The students have been able to learn about real-life, unexpected problems and we are able to talk through as a class how these issues can be solved.

"I have had excellent attendance from the students and they are really engaging with the sessions.

"We have to think of the positives in situations like this and thankfully I have a very understanding partner who was happy for me to knock down walls in our home during the lockdown."

Mr Burges' lessons have seen him earn praise among fellow teachers, as well as the Mayor of London's Construction Academy which has praised his "innovative" approach to delivering practical lessons virtually.

WORK IN PROGRESS: Alan Burges has been using renovation work at his own home to teach construction students



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