

Surrey road safety played out on the pitch

8 November 2022



On Friday 4 November **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service**'s football team played host to **Surrey Police**, with the shared goal of improving road safety during the winter period.

The fixture was planned to highlight the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and general road safety during the winter period. Those in attendance heard a speech from Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Simpson, who took the opportunity to underscore the importance of safety on Surrey's roads, and the need to improve behaviours. He was joined at the event by Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey **Ellie Vesey-Thompson**, Chair of Surrey County Council Councillor **Helyn Clack**, Councillor **Denise Turner Stewart**, Mole Valley MP **Sir Paul Beresford**, and Surrey FA's CEO, **Sally Lockyer**.

There were 330 road traffic collision incidents with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service involvement between November 2021 and February 2022 and in 2021 there were 24 Fatalities, 647 Serious casualties and 2490 slight casualties on the county's roads, 15% of which involved young drivers. The services are encouraging drivers not to drive under the influence, as well as warning against the dangers of distractions while behind the wheel. They are also calling on motorists not to speed and to take caution with risks such as adverse weather conditions and country roads.

Filming was carried out during the match, with players from both sides interviewed about their experiences in responding to road traffic collisions and the impact they had on the lives of those involved in these incidents, as well as on themselves.

Surrey Police took the bragging rights at full-time, emerging with a 1-0 victory from a competitive game. However, it is hoped that the main result from the fixture will be the powerful, football-based road safety campaign which will run throughout the World Cup and across the winter. 115 drink or drug impaired drivers were apprehended during the previous three international tournaments in which England's Senior Men's Team have featured (Euro 2016, 2018 World Cup, Euro 2020), and 78% of these were male.

Commenting on the event, **Jon Simpson**, Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service stated: *"Whilst we are all here to enjoy a game of football between the services, it also gives us a great opportunity to highlight a really important safety message to a key target audience, as we raise awareness of safe driving among young people - predominantly young males."*

"We all have a responsibility here to improve our own behaviours on the road and encourage them in others to ensure we all come home safe this winter. During the World Cup, plan your journey home on public transport, do not mix drinking with driving. If you are driving home for the games, then allow extra time for your journey. Speeding could result in three points you really do not need, or the consequences could be even worse - the loss of a life. Adapt your speed appropriately for the road and weather conditions and make sure you always wear a seatbelt."

Chief Inspector for Roads Policing at Surrey and Sussex Police, **Michael Hodder**, added: *"Road safety is a huge priority for us at Surrey Police and sadly we often work closely with our blue light colleagues at Surrey Fire and Rescue when dealing with collisions on the county's roads. Although we know the vast majority of road users are conscientious and law-abiding citizens, there is a minority of people who just disregard the law and put not only their lives, but other people's lives at risk. It really is quite simple - always drive with due care and attention, stick to speed limits and follow the laws to keep all those using the roads in Surrey as safe as possible."*

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey commented: *"It was great to support the police and fire service working together to share the importance of road safety. The win for Surrey Police was an added bonus of the day!"*

"It concerns and saddens me that our young people aged 17-24 disproportionately die in road traffic collisions. With cold and wet weather as well as social events like the World Cup and Christmas parties, it's a really key time to be sharing the message around driving safely. I urge anyone heading out with friends this winter to ensure you have a safe way of getting home - be that public transport, a taxi or a designated driver. It is also important to always pay attention and to drive to the conditions of the road, particularly when wet or icy."

"Ensuring safer Surrey roads is a key priority in Commissioner Lisa Townsend's Police and Crime Plan, which is why we are pleased to support initiatives such as Safe Drive Stay Alive which helps educate young people on the dangers of the 'fatal five'; drink or drug driving, speeding, using a phone whilst driving, not wearing a seatbelt and driving whilst distracted."

“By working together to spread this message we can reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.”

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have shared their top tips for road safety, for drivers both young and old, here.

Surrey County Council News