

# Radios cast net to catch culprits

## System to link shops and pubs and help crack down on troublemakers

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The town is cracking down on shoplifters and anti-social behaviour by equipping businesses with radios.

A new era has been ushered in with the arrival of TenterdenWatch, which will use a "town net" radio system to link shops and pubs, alerting members to suspected shoplifters, or pub troublemakers.

Tenterden town councillor Sue Ferguson said: "TenterdenWatch is a no-brainer really as we had to do something to keep our shops and pubs secure."

Cllr Ferguson said that the days of the bobby on the beat were long gone and it was time to face reality and put systems in place to protect the town.

"It's self-help Tenterden," she said. "Ashford already has a shop and pub watch scheme, so we have to act as we don't want the criminals running elsewhere."

The scheme, in association with the Ashford and Weald Partnership Against Crime, will cost individual businesses £364 per year to include the radio.

Concessions are being offered by Tenterden Town Council and the partnership to soften the blow of the initial cost.

Cllr Ferguson conceded that the scheme had taken more than a year to get off the ground due to various issues, including the need to get planning permission for an aerial on the town hall.

She said as well as allowing



Cllr Sue Ferguson described the TenterdenWatch radio system as a "no-brainer"



business owners to alert each other to potential problems, the scheme would mean High Street cameras could be trained on suspects with the information being

fed back to police in Ashford.

TenterdenWatch has the backing of Ashford Borough Council, Kent Police and the Tenterden Chamber of Commerce.



'We will see how it goes'

Carol Webb of High Street store Webb's said: "We won't be signing up as we've tried the system in our shop in Battle and it doesn't work.

"It requires someone to be with the radio at all times and it's likely we will be too busy with customers to do that.

"We already have a very good CCTV system in place in the shop but we will see how it goes and if it's a great success we might consider it."

Alex Jones, a director of Potters Home Digital in East Cross gave a cautious welcome to TenterdenWatch, saying he thought it "pretty likely" the firm would sign up.

He added: "It's a good idea but it will mean an investment and I'm not sure just how much it would act as a deterrent.

"It's one of those things that everyone will have to embrace for it to work."

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