

CCTV anger

**What's the point
of having these...**

**when they
don't stop
this?**



As vandals go on rampage, the town's security cameras are condemned as "useless".

Brief history of surveillance

Closed Circuit Television - aka CCTV - dates back to the Second World War when it was first used by the German military.

The first system was installed by Siemens in Nazi Germany in 1942 to observe the launch of V2 rockets.

German engineers Walter Bruch, Wayne Cox and Tashara Arnold were responsible for the technological design of the remote cameras with black and white monitors.

The US military also used CCTV during the 1940s while developing atomic weapons, in order to watch the tests from a safe distance.

It became commercially available in 1949 under the name Vericon and didn't require a government permit.

The home security system was invented by Marie Van Brittan Brown in 1969, which had a set of four peep-holes and a camera that could slide up and down to look through each one.

The UK embraced CCTV in 1953 and it was used by the Metropolitan Police for the first time in the 1960s to monitor events or rallies attended by the Royal Family or Crime Minister.

In the 1970s it was introduced in banks and other shops as they began using it in store to prevent and record possible crime.

Over the next 20 years, CCTV cameras were installed on the streets, with increasing use all around the country until they were widespread by the 1980s

'Plagued by petty crime while



It seems that Big Brother isn't watching you - Tenterden's CCTV is under fire after a spate of vandalism

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Residents of Tenterden are being plagued by incidents of petty vandalism and the culprits are getting away with it because the CCTV in the town is "useless".

The claim was made by Tenterden town councillor Sue Ferguson after a spate of vandalism at the weekend.

She branded the CCTV "useless" because it "gives blurred images at night and always seems to be pointing the wrong way."

The councillor's comment on the Jewel in the Weald Facebook, came after a weekend in which the window of an empty shop was shattered and a life-saving defibrillator was ripped from a wall in Station Road.

Fed-up residents have also given vent to their feelings on social media. They say the High Street is a magnet for anti-social behaviour, particularly on a Friday and Saturday night when drunks tumble out of pubs at closing time, some hell bent on causing trouble.

High Street resident Samantha Ryvers wrote on Facebook that "drunken muggers on their way home" were to blame for the weekend's vandalism and added: "We live on the High Street...we hear fights on a regular basis on a Friday and Saturday evening, usually stumbling, sometimes laying down on the pavement, so drunk they can't move."

Fellow Tenterden resident Mark Stuchbury, who lives in Rolventon Road, echoed Cllr Ferguson's concerns over the CCTV, and also commented: "We supposedly have town CCTV that would have picked this up. I suspect that it no longer works or the kit is so out of date that it does not have evidential quality pictures."

In the summer Mr Stuchbury contacted the Kentish Express about the High Street being littered with shards of glass from discarded bottles and glasses left by drinkers, which meant walking his dogs was a pain. The window broken in the High Street was at the premises



Above, a grainy CCTV image released by police after a break-in at Number 75 dining room and wine bar

Right, the smashed window in the former Kensal and Gretel shop in Tenterden



Cllr Sue Ferguson is fed up that vandals are not being caught on camera



Mark Stuchbury suspects the CCTV is incapable of high quality images

of gift shop Kensal and Gretel, which closed in July. In May last year Webb's shop window was also smashed by yobs who were thought to have driven past and lobbed a missile from a car window.

In November a trail of graffiti was left all over town with walls, telephone boxes, the Welcome to Tenterden map and Waitrose signs all defaced with tags. The window broken in the High Street was at the premises

despite Tenterden PCSO Ollie Welch trawling through CCTV images.

This was followed by windows being smashed at Rising Star and Crew Clothing in the High Street before Christmas.

Tara McCarragher of Rising Star, who had to foot the £350 bill, said: "A young lad fell off his bike into the window but the CCTV was rubbish. It was dark and police couldn't even identify

CCTV FACTFILE

It is almost impossible to find the exact number of CCTV cameras in the UK due to the lack of regulation. Estimates vary hugely, depending on which organisation has conducted the survey. But here are a few facts and figures.

■ The Association of Chief Police Officers said there are around 1.85 million CCTV

cameras in the UK, although estimates by the Online Spy Shop put this figure at a staggering 5.9 million.

■ At a last count in 2016, there were around 350 million surveillance cameras worldwide.

■ In the UK you are likely to be captured on camera around 70 times a day.

■ It is estimated that Home Office-funded CCTV has cost the taxpayer £200 million in the last 10 years.

■ There are around 65 cameras on the road in an average town but 2.9 million car dash-cams were logged in the last year, which suggests that not all surveillance is through traditional CCTV cameras.

useless cameras look the wrong way'



Graffiti tags were sprayed all over Tenterden in November - the perpetrator was never caught



Town Clerk Phil Burgess

System is to be updated

Tenterden town clerk Phil Burgess said that CCTV improvements were planned. He said the town council had a visit from an ABC officer to discuss the situation just before Christmas, adding: "There are certainly plans to upgrade it as the images are poor."

In March last year ABC agreed an investment of £250,000 to replace public space CCTV cameras and "update back office systems" in Tenterden and Ashford.

But an ABC spokesman defended the current equipment and said: "We regularly monitor and maintain the CCTV around the borough. All of our CCTV cameras are clearly visible and in working order."

The installation of new CCTV is part of a rolling two-year project and ABC anticipates the first phase (which involves installing the new CCTV software) will be completed by March 2017. The second phase will see the installation of the new CCTV cameras in Ashford and Tenterden but ABC says it is unable to specify an exact date as the equipment still needs to be purchased.

the colour of the bike or any passers-by."

The Crew Clothing window was smashed in another incident at the end of November, but senior assistant Natalie Norman said staff were told that police could not identify the culprit because the CCTV was "pointing the wrong way".

Clr Ferguson said that ABC planned to improve the camera system in Tenterden but said "they need to get on with it now", adding: "There is too much theft and vandalism in Tenterden and a lot of it goes unreported as people don't believe anyone will be caught."

"Police Community Support Officer Welch does a great job but he can't be here all the time. If we are going to be police-less in Tenterden we at least need good CCTV."

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH



Liz Thorne of Tenterden Day Centre

Liz Thorne, chief executive of Tenterden Day Centre, condemned the damage to the defibrillator which was ripped from a wall.

She said: "We were very distressed to hear that the AED (defibrillator) in Station Road had been the subject of mindless vandalism.

"These devices can mean the difference between living and dying for someone who has suffered a cardiac arrest.

"This is especially important in an area like Tenterden which is some distance from the nearest ambulance station, as the emergency services cannot reach patients as quickly as they may need to.

"The Town Council has worked alongside other organisations to ensure that Tenterden has a spread of these devices across the town, and it is a real shock to see this work disrespected in such a fashion."



Tenterden's cameras aren't catching the culprits, say critics