

# News Shopper

# POWER TO MR PEAPLE

## Shop worker warns drivers about CCTV car

by LINDA PIPER

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Martin Peaple was visited at home by police after warning motorists about the council's CCTV camera car which was parked near shops in Hollytree Parade

A MAN claims he has been visited at his home by police and has been warned off any attempts to alert motorists to the presence of council CCTV camera cars in the area.

The officer, from the local safer neighbourhood policing team, handed Martin Peaple, 22, copies of photographs taken of him by a CCTV camera car 20 days earlier.

Mr Peaple had stood outside the shops in Hollytree Parade in Sidcup Hill, Foots Cray, where he works part-time, on April 7 holding a notice to warn potential customers a camera car was in the area.

The shopkeepers claim their small parade has been targeted by the council's CCTV camera cars and say the fear of getting a parking ticket is driving away customers.

Mr Peaple had grabbed the notice when the camera car showed up.

He said: "At first I stood behind the car, but the driver asked me to move, so I stood on the pavement."

Last week Mr Peaple says there was a knock on the door of his home in nearby Mallard Walk.

He opened it to find a police officer on the doorstep.

Mr Peaple said: "He said to me 'You know why I am here. You have been interfering with a camera car.'

"I told him I had only been standing on the pavement."

Mr Peaple claims the officer told him some people wanted his 'head on a plate' and said his activities were costing revenue.

He said: "The officer told me it wasn't a police matter, but the council could prosecute me.

"He told me if I said I was sorry and promised I would not do it again, he would email the council and ask it not to take it any further."

Bexley Council was unable to say how the officer had obtained the photographs of Mr Peaple taken by the CCTV car.

A council spokesman said: "The council is unable to comment on matters dealt with by the police.

"The safer neighbourhood teams have been made aware of recent incidents affecting the council's mobile CCTV civil parking enforcement operations, which have raised safety issues and in some cases resulted in civil enforcement officers being prevented from carrying out their statutory duties by non-authorized third parties."

Bexley police said: "There are various obstruction offences which may have been

committed as well as a potential for a breach of the peace. Any police response would be confined to these issues."

A spokeswoman added: "The fact an officer visited the person in question to point this out, without resorting to any formal action is a good example of safer neighbourhood teams working within communities to sort out issues as quickly and as effectively as possible.

"Officers do have a role working to assist in the identification of persons who may have committed offences against bylaws but of course only if this is proportional."

The move follows the issuing of Warning of Harassment letters by Bexley police, at the council's request, to people posting anti-Bexley Council blogs on websites.

The council has also proposed banning people who have had a "warning" from asking questions at council meetings.

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