# Recent thefts expose retail crime challenges in Midlands and Surrey



A series of recent thefts across the Midlands and Surrey have highlighted ongoing issues with retail crime in the region.

In Leicestershire, Thomas Harte, a 30-year-old resident of Mere Lane in Oadby, was arrested following a significant shoplifting incident at a Sainsbury's supermarket in Mansfield on Monday, March 24. Leicestershire Police reported that nearly £3,000 worth of smoking cessation goods were stolen during this spree. Harte, who pleaded guilty to two counts of shop theft, appeared at Nottingham Magistrates’ Court on Wednesday, March 26. He received a nine-week prison sentence, which has been suspended for 12 months, and was ordered to pay compensation. In addition to this incident, Harte also admitted to two unrelated thefts at other supermarkets in Nottinghamshire. Following the theft, two teenage boys, aged 15 and 14, were apprehended nearby. They remain on police bail while investigations continue. Sergeant Cat Darby from the town centre policing team praised the officers' swift actions, stating, “The officers involved with these incidents did a great job to detain these suspects so quickly and process the available evidence in a timely manner.”

Meanwhile, in Surrey, police are appealing for witnesses after three masked men forcibly entered a Morrisons store located on Westfield Road in Woking on Sunday, March 30 around 11pm. The suspects used a crowbar to gain entry, causing damage within the shop; however, they were unable to access the safe and ultimately left without taking any significant items, save for a Creme Egg. Investigating officers are looking for any information that can assist with their enquiries, including CCTV or video doorbell footage from the area.

In a separate incident occurring earlier in February, Surrey Police have released CCTV images of two men suspected of stealing high-value items from a Waitrose store in Cobham. Over the course of multiple days, specifically on February 10, 11, and 21, hundreds of pounds' worth of meat and champagne were taken from the supermarket. The police are urging anyone who might recognise the individuals captured in the CCTV to come forward with information. They can do so directly or anonymously through the independent charity Crimestoppers.

These incidents reflect ongoing challenges within retail environments and the actions being taken by law enforcement to address crime in the area.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://westbridgfordwire.com/stores-radio-network-leads-to-shoplifting-arrests/> - This article corroborates the arrest of Thomas Harte in Leicestershire following a shoplifting incident at a Sainsbury's supermarket in Mansfield, highlighting the use of an intra-store radio network to assist in apprehending shoplifting suspects.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - While not directly related to specific incidents, this article discusses how digital evidence plays a critical role in criminal investigations, which can be relevant to understanding how police gather and use evidence in retail crimes.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk> - Although the specific link is not provided here, The Guardian often covers retail crime and police efforts across the UK, including the Midlands and Surrey. This could serve as a general source for understanding ongoing retail crime issues.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - Similarly, BBC News often reports on local crimes and police actions in various regions, which can include incidents like those described in Surrey and the Midlands.
* <https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/> - Crimestoppers is mentioned in the context of Surrey police appealing for information regarding the Waitrose theft. This link highlights how anonymous tips can assist investigations.
* <https://www.police.uk/> - This official police website provides information on reported crimes and how to report them, which can be relevant for understanding the broader context of retail crime and policing efforts.
* <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/leicestershire-man-goes-shoplifting-spree-10081477> - Please view link - unable to able to access data