# Feral youths spark rising fear and threats in Hoo village businesses



In the village of Hoo, Medway, Kent, a wave of anti-social behaviour involving groups of youths has been causing significant distress for local businesses and residents. The unrest, described by some locals as acts by 'feral' children, has escalated to the point where shopkeepers report daily threats of violence, including threats involving acid and plastic knives, as well as incidents of water being poured over customers.

The trouble, centred around the village’s High Street and extending to a nearby parade of shops on Knights Road, has seen youths engaging in activities such as stealing from convenience stores, riding bikes dangerously on roads, and causing late-night disturbances which have left elderly residents too fearful to leave their homes after dark.

One notable violent incident took place three months ago outside the Premier Express store on Knights Road, where a teenager was slashed in the face with scissors. The victim was hospitalised but later discharged. Police arrested a 26-year-old man on suspicion of assault following the attack, and an investigation is ongoing.

Business owners at a family-run store near the High Street, operating for nearly 20 years, recounted a sharp increase in aggressive behaviour. One owner described incidents where youths threatened to bomb or burn the shop down and have hurled racist insults towards staff. “We only let two kids in at a time, and if it’s a troublesome kid, we just let one in,” said one shopkeeper, noting the strain the situation has placed on their operation. Shop staff have also found themselves targeted with water sprays and verbal abuse, with fears raised that plastic knife threats might soon escalate to actual violence.

Local shopkeepers have expressed frustration at what they see as insufficient police action, although recent increased patrols and police presence have been noted as somewhat effective. The shopkeepers have cooperated with local schools by providing video evidence of incidents, hoping to curb the misconduct through educational channels.

Among the residents affected, 78-year-old pensioner Susan Chell said she no longer ventures outside after dark due to safety fears. Other community members have commented on the lack of visible police interventions despite requests for extra patrols.

Julie Evans, 65, who runs the Five Bells pub in the village, spoke to MailOnline recognising the youths as children but acknowledging that some have been problematic: “There are bad apples in every generation. But it doesn’t help that they don’t have anything to do.” To engage local youths in productive activities, she established a darts club that welcomes children from different age groups, providing a supervised social outlet.

Independent Councillor Ron Sands, who has lived in Hoo his entire life, acknowledged the presence of disruptive youths, noting that most children in the village are respectful, but some from either Hoo or neighbouring areas appear to be “trying to make some statement.” He has advocated for an increased police presence to prevent escalation, cautioning that a lack of enforcement may lead to residents taking matters into their own hands.

Kent Police confirmed receiving reports of anti-social behaviour at the affected stores and said investigations are ongoing. After a recent incident on 12 April, officers attended the scene, gathered witness statements, and reviewed CCTV footage capturing youths allegedly throwing liquid from a plastic bottle inside a store. The police are liaising with business owners and schools to identify those responsible and engage with their families to achieve appropriate resolutions.

A spokesperson for Spar UK, one of the impacted businesses, stated their commitment to staff and customer safety: “We take the safety of our team members and shoppers very seriously and are aware of a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour that have been reported at our store in Hoo, Kent. We have been working with the local authorities to report these issues and ensure we are able to provide a safe and welcoming environment to serve the local community.”

The situation in Hoo remains tense, with reports indicating that the problem intensifies particularly during school holidays. Local businesses continue to balance serving their community with managing the challenges presented by the ongoing anti-social behaviour.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/shop-s-alcohol-licence-suspended-after-serious-crime-and-di-319817/> - This article reports on the suspension of Kent Quick Mart's alcohol license in Knights Road, Hoo, following a serious assault involving a teenager, highlighting the escalation of anti-social behaviour in the area.
2. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/dartford/news/nuisance-drivers-told-not-to-return-in-crackdown-305714/> - This piece discusses a crackdown on anti-social behaviour involving off-road bikes in Medway, including Hoo, where police seized a bike reported to have been used antisocially.
3. <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/police-crack-down-car-meets-8058778> - This article covers police actions against car meets at Medway City Estate, addressing anti-social behaviour reports, and mentions the use of dispersal orders to manage such issues.
4. <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/assaults-threats-vandalism-tunbridge-wells-8762813> - This report details various incidents of anti-social behaviour in Tunbridge Wells, including assaults and vandalism, reflecting broader concerns about youth-related disturbances in Kent.
5. <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/assaults-threats-vandalism-tunbridge-wells-8762813> - This article highlights the impact of anti-social behaviour on local businesses and residents in Tunbridge Wells, drawing parallels to similar issues in Hoo, Kent.
6. <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/assaults-threats-vandalism-tunbridge-wells-8762813> - This piece discusses the community's response to anti-social behaviour in Tunbridge Wells, including calls for increased police presence, mirroring sentiments expressed by Hoo residents.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14664825/sleepy-Kent-village-besieged-feral-children.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data