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Dear Sir / Madam

Our local community has been shocked by the recent violent robberies in Londis, Chesham Bois and at Ivy Stores, Plantation Road, Amersham. While these violent incidents are thankfully rare, shoplifting is not.

We understand that Buckinghamshire has seen a large increase in shoplifting over the past year. In Amersham, staff in some local stores report that shoplifting happens "on a daily basis" and that the situation has been getting worse in recent months. Staff say that the police are "just not interested" or that this problem "is not being taken seriously".

We appreciate that there are different motivations and underlying reasons for shoplifting. We understand that there are competing priorities for police resources. However, shoplifting is a problem that affects everyone as when shop owners lose money, residents as consumers see higher prices. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable in that they do not have the resources to pay for increased security and surveillance or to absorb these costs in the same way as larger retailers.

Equally, local shop staff should not have to work in fear of being threatened or attacked. In addition shoppers should have confidence that they can visit local shops without feeling ill at ease or worried over their safety.

We should be grateful to learn what actions are being taken to help local businesses tackle shoplifting in Amersham and the surrounding villages? Can you also reassure shoppers that local policing is in place to deter shoplifting and violent robbery?

Yours faithfully

Peter Matza  
Chairman – Amersham & District Residents Association (ADRA)