



NW NEWS

Your co-ordinator is:.....

Tel No.

Watchout

The Voice of Neighbourhood Watch

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"Security through awareness"

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Stop Using Your Mobile Phone While Driving

Half a million drivers a day are illegally using their mobile phones. The alarming figures show that the under 30s age group are the biggest culprits, with more than one in twenty breaking the law.

The majority of offenders were texting or surfing the internet rather than holding the phone to their ear.

People who insist on doing this are putting lives at risk. Hands-free and Sat Navs are also distracting if used while driving. The trouble is that people using them feel that they are not doing anything wrong.

The Department of Transport said van drivers were around twice as likely to break the law as those in cars or lorries.

Men were more likely than woman to use a handheld phone while at the wheel for texting or speaking. At traffic lights or in traffic jams the roles reversed, with women more inclined to reach for their phones. Bus, coach and minibus drivers fared best: only 0.4 percent were spotted flouting the law. Those aged sixty or over were also among the least likely to offend.

The number of accidents in which mobile phones and texting have been factors has soared by twenty-one percent in just three years.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety said the figures were very worrying, and not helped by having fewer police on the roads due to cuts being made.

It was noted that twenty-six deaths in 2013 involved a crash where the driver was using a mobile phone. It is as dangerous as being intoxicated while at the wheel.

There is a penalty of 3 points being added to your licence and a £100 fine if you are caught using a phone whilst driving.

Please STOP today using your mobile phones while driving. It can save lives. Just put them out of reach and do not be tempted to answer the phone if it rings. Drive off the road and park in a place of safety before answering that call. Please have a word with family members, especially if you have teenage children who drive. No family wants that knock at the door saying their child has been involved in a serious accident while using their phone.

It is hoped the fine will increase to £200 and six points in the future.



Rip Off Britain

I have been very impressed by the BBC TV programme Rip Off Britain in which Gloria Hunniford, Julia Somerville and Angela Rippon appear. They cover a vast amount of issues on the programme, especially scams in which the public are duped out of their money by fraudsters. They put a lot of research and hard work into the programme and it is very informative.

I have had calls while working as a Volunteer asking if Neighbourhood Watch supply the Contactless Card Protector that

has been mentioned on the programme. This is a very good item to put into your purse/wallet as it helps to stop your bank cards being 'skimmed.' Apparently the card intercepts the radio signal emitted by any payment terminal or criminal 'skimmer' and uses the power of that incoming signal to power-up a red LED warning light. Then without the need for any battery, it automatically generates a powerful electronic force-field nine cms either side of the card which blocks and scrambles any data request. That is up to nine times more protection than other devices.

It certainly does seem a good item to buy. We do not supply these cards, but do use the internet and go to Amazon, Scotts of Stow, Argos or other companies and view their items and make your own choice as to which company you wish to use.

Take care when using the 'hole in the wall' bank machines. Check to see if you are being watched by anyone. If so, do not use the machine, walk away and go somewhere where you feel safe and withdraw your money. *Ed.*

Take Care of Your Purses and Wallets

We are advising people to make sure they look after their purses and wallets when shopping in town. Also please make sure you do not leave bags unattended in or on the back of the trolleys when out shopping particularly in the run up to Christmas.

We want people to enjoy shopping, but it can be very distressing when someone discovers that their purse or wallet has been taken. Sometimes this is not discovered until they reach the tills at the check out and want to pay for their shopping.

If you see anything suspicious in the store or feel someone is following you around the store please report it to the staff or dial 101 or 999 in an emergency.

I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year. *by Linda Baker PCSO.*

Thanks Linda, I see it all the time in shops, customers go off and leave their bags wide open and their purses on show, while they just nip to another isle for an item. *Ed.*

British Transport Police

Text 61016 for problems on trains or the tube. Dial 0800 405040 to give more information. A 999 call is guaranteed a quick response. For Crimestoppers dial 0800 555 111.

Make a note

When contacting the Police in West Kent

Emergency only 999

Kent Police 101

Is for reporting non-urgent crime, suspicious incidents or to contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team. Calls cost just 16p from landlines or mobiles.

Volunteer and Watch Liaison Officer

I have now taken over from Sophie Thring as the Volunteer and Watch liaison Officer for West Division and would like to introduce myself.

I joined Kent Police in 1979 as a police cadet where I was stationed in Sheerness. I then joined as a Police Constable and served over 30 years in The North Division, having a variety of posts from Front Line Officer to Neighbourhood Beat Officer.

At the end of my Policing career I joined as a Support Officer working in the Force control room taking calls 101, 999 and internal calls before leaving and heading back to North Kent working in the Service Delivery arm of the Business Services.

I have moved into Sophie's old office and the office telephone number and e-mail addresses are the same (01622 604395 and nhw.west.division@kent.pnn.police.uk). My own email address is dave.spitter@kent.pnn.police.uk.

Please feel free to contact me and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Dave Spitter, Volunteer and Watch Liaison Officer.

Peter Rolington the Chairman and all the members of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee wish Dave 'good luck' in his new post and look forward to working with him.

Bluewater Safety Shop becomes Safer Home

By the time you read this, the Safety Shop will have moved once again to Upper Thames Walk near Next.

With this move the name is changed to Safer Home, reflecting the change of format to a completely new look. It has rooms where you will be able to see the different home and personal security devices set up as they would be in your own home.

Come along, see the difference and chat to the usual enthusiastic advisors.

Launched on Wednesday 27th July with Lord Mayor Mr John Burrell cutting the tape, see photo on right.



Safer Home Manager, Daniel Rudden, Dartford Mayor Mr. John Burrell, Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott, Mayoress Mrs. Eija Burrell, Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, Bluewater General Manager Mr. Robert Goodman and Safer Home Manageress Joanne O'Riordan.



Above and left, two of the rooms in Safer Home

Thanks goes to Richard Myers editor of the newsletter Magalert, for this item.

Time to Clean Your Chimney

There is always a sharp increase in chimney fires in the Autumn and Winter as people forget to have their chimneys cleaned during the Summer period.

Chimneys that are used for coal fires need to be cleaned every six months and wood burners quarterly.

It is best to do this as it can result in a house fire if it gets out of control.

This is also a good time to check your smoke alarms and I do hope you are doing this once a week.

If you have children at University, please do ask them if they have smoke alarms in their flats or homes. If not please make sure they buy one and fit it securely. It will save their lives if there is a fire in the building.

Choosing your smoke alarm.

1. Smoke alarms are available from most DIY stores, electrical shops and some High Street supermarkets.
2. Your local Fire and Rescue Service will be happy to give you advice on which one is best for you.
3. Buy an alarm with the British Standard Kitemark or Loss Prevention Certificate (LPCB) logo which shows the alarm is approved and safe.
4. Consider installing a 10-year battery smoke alarm.

Please check smoke alarms for any elderly or disabled people you may know, as they can't always reach up to install a new battery.

Bedtime Check List

Before you go to bed please, turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be on, like your fridge/freezer.

1. Check your cooker and microwave are turned off.
2. Do not leave your washing machine or tumble dryer on.
3. Turn heaters off and put up fireguards near open fires.
4. Make sure candles and cigarettes have been put out properly.
5. Close inside doors at night to stop a fire spreading too quickly.
6. Take your mobile phone into the bedroom with you so that you can call 999 if you find yourself trapped.
7. Please do not leave mobile phones or e-cigarettes on charge while you are sleeping.

What to do if you have a Power Cut

A national phone number 105 has been launched if you need to report or find information about a power cut in your area.

Dialling 105 will be free and put you through to your local electricity network operator. You can also use the number if you spot damage to electricity power lines or substations that could put life in danger.

Find out more by phoning 0800 169 8870, or e-mailing psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk or at www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority.

Farewell from Sophie

The last two years as West Kent Volunteers and Watch Liaison Officer have been very enjoyable.

I have enjoyed working with you all and thank you for your support and hard work as Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators.

Sophie Thring, formally of Kent Police.

My personal thanks go to Sophie for all her support when I worked for her as a Kent Police Volunteer. She also never failed to support me as the Editor of this newsletter. Sophie you will be greatly missed.

The Chairman and all the members of the West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee wish Sophie good luck in her new career as a teacher. *Ed.*

Types of Fraud

As we all know there are several types of fraud that we need to watch out for. Here are a few examples.

By e-mail or letter . . .

A fraudster sends correspondence pretending they are from a legitimate organisation. They may use the legitimate organisation's logo and link to a website that is set to look like the real thing. They will try and get you to enter a website using your password or send your details by e-mail. If any doubt please do not reply. 'Spam' e-mail (which is contact that you have not requested) may also be sent to try and get access to your details electronically.

REMEMBER you can just ignore the e-mail/letter.

If you are suspicious of any contact made by these methods:

- Don't reveal any personal details.
- Don't enter any websites using your normal password.
- Delete e-mails you are suspicious of.
- Don't click on any hyperlinks.
- Report it to Action Fraud 0300 1232040.

Advance Fee fraud . . .

This is when fraudsters ask you to make

upfront payments for goods and services or an opportunity to make money.

Some common examples:

Letter Fraud . . .

Victims are asked to allow the transfer of money from another country to your account. They say they will give you a percentage of the money in return for doing this. They may pressure you to meet up. They will ask for your account details. Never reply to letters or e-mails from these types of fraudsters.

Lottery fraud . . .

Fraudsters contact you to say you have won a large sum of money through a lottery, sweepstake or draw. If you respond you may be asked to provide personal information, which could be used to steal your identity, pay upfront fees (before you can receive the non-existent winnings) or be asked for your bank details, so they can empty your bank account.

Never respond to this type of unsolicited contact. Think about any competitions or lotteries that you have taken part in and contact the organisation directly yourself.

Dating Fraud . . .

If you use dating sites don't start giving

people money. Be careful with people who want to make contact with you outside the dating website. Do not give them personal information such as your bank details and don't send compromising pictures that they could use against you.

MOBILE PHONE FRAUD

Some examples:

Missed call/text found . . .

You get a missed call or text from someone saying "Hi it's John, when do you want to catch up?"

You text or call back only to find you have been redirected to a premium number rate service which can cost you up to £15.

Ringtone Fraud . . .

You accept an offer for 'free' or low cost ringtone. By accepting the offer you are actually subscribing to a service that keeps sending you ringtones and charging you a high rate for them.

Recorded Message Fraud . . .

You receive a message to say you have won a prize. You call back on the number provided to find it is a premium rate number or your prize will involve you spending more money before you receive the non-existent prize.

Your Personal Safety When You Are Out And About

When on foot:

Be aware of your surroundings and keep to well lit busy areas when ever possible and try to avoid routes that include underpasses, quiet alleyways, wooded or deserted areas.

Try to look and act confident.

Keep valuables out of sight. Be careful if you decide to take out your phone, mp3 player or wallet in public. If you are wearing your music player this will also make it more difficult to hear someone approaching you.

Try to avoid chatting or texting on your mobile when walking home alone, as this could distract you and prevent you from noticing potential danger approaching.

Spread your valuables around, example, keys in your jacket pocket, phone in your bag, money in trouser pocket. A purse chain can be obtained from some police station front counters.

Consider getting a personal safety alarm to carry with you when out and about.

Walk facing the traffic so a car can't pull up beside you without warning.

Try to avoid using cash machines at night. During the day you can pop into a bank or obtain 'cash back' from some local shops.

Do avoid carrying important objects or credit cards that you do not need to take with you.

Cover up expensive-looking jewellery.

Remember you are more vulnerable to attack when you have been drinking. Be careful of drink spiking and never leave drinks unattended. Ask a trusted friend to look after your drink for you if you need to go to the toilet. Keep handbags close by, never leaving them unattended under the table or hanging on the back of a chair where they can be dipped into.

If you go jogging or cycling.

Vary your route from day to day and the time if you can.

Stick to well lit areas and open spaces.

If you think someone is following you, go to the nearest place of safety where there are other people, such as shops or a police station if there is one close by. *Ed.*

I would just like to thank you for all your work and commitment to the Neighbourhood Watch cause over the past year. It is clear that an effective NhW network in West Kent has had an important role to play in helping to prevent crime and make our community a safer place to live.

Our next Annual General Meeting at St. Stephen's Church Hall in Tonbridge will take place on Thursday 20th April 2017.

In the meantime, I wish you a happy festive season with an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. P. Rolington, Chairman.

*HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a very Happy NEW YEAR to all our Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators who work so hard looking after their members. I look forward to talking to you in the New Year when I do my ring rounds.
by Julie Walker, editor and Kent Police Volunteer.*



Crimestoppers in Kent

Founded in 1988 by Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC, Crimestoppers is an independent charity helping to find criminals and plays a vital role in the fight against crime by offering a unique route for the public to pass on information about crimes with a guarantee of anonymity.

Crimestoppers' independence from the government and law enforcement agencies and its position of not being subject to the Freedom of Information Act enables anonymity to be guaranteed. It also allows activity and campaigns that public bodies would be unable to make. If the identity of one of our callers was made known it would destroy trust in our service and no one would contact us. This is why it is so important to us that we can guarantee your anonymity.

Crimestoppers' unique Guarantee:

- Callers will not be asked to reveal their names or any personal details.
- The call will not be recorded or traced.

- Crimestoppers do not have caller line display or 1471 facility.
- Online reports have the same level of anonymity as phone calls.
- Our specially trained call agents make sure reports contain no information that could identify the caller.
- We do not make a note of gender, accents, age or ethnicity of any caller.
- Even if personal details are given, they are not recorded or passed on.

There are over a 1000 contacts with Crimestoppers everyday and this information has helped in assisting with, on average, 11 arrests daily (over 138,000 arrests since 1988) along with hundreds of millions of pounds of drugs and other goods seized.

Crimestoppers is one of the UK's best known brands, but details of what we do, how we operate and the benefits we provide are somewhat less known among some sections of the population.

Unfortunately these can be the very people who are in possession of information on criminal activity and can benefit personally from using Crimestoppers.

In an ideal world, when crime does take place, we believe that anybody who knows those responsible should go to the police. However the reality is that many people who want to take action are close to the criminal and fear retribution if they pass on information. This is where Crimestoppers can help by giving the public access to a secure means to get information to the police or other authorities anonymously. They will not have to go to court or give a statement to the police and their calls are not traced or recorded.

We are seeking assistance in helping us to raise the awareness of Crimestoppers by asking people to become an Ambassador for Crimestoppers.

Simply put, we need your help by spreading awareness of what Crimestoppers offers.

If you work or are part of an organisation that you think could assist please contact us at kent@crimestoppers-uk.org

Cold Calling Control Zones

We are pleased to announce that West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Executive Committee has now launched more Cold Calling Zones with the help from our local Borough Councils.

Zones were first set up in the area of West Kent in 2008. They were launched to protect vulnerable members of the community who are often targeted by face to face bogus callers or rogue traders.

Sue Mason, Neighbourhood Watch representative for Tonbridge and John Watson, Neighbourhood Watch representative for The Mallings have helped set up a Cold Calling Zone in The Drive, Tonbridge. Nigel Bird who is the local Neighbourhood Watch Representative reported that residents were persistently being troubled by Cold Callers. It was felt that the residents would benefit from this launch.



Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have supported this scheme.

Signs were put up in the road and window stickers given to residents to put in their windows to discourage cold calling taking place.

It is important to remember that Cold Calling is not illegal so long as the Cold Callers abide by the laws and regulations.

Criteria for CCCZs are rigorous, and include the requirements that residents must be classified as vulnerable, and the area must have a history of distraction burglaries.

Who's Who On The Executive Committee?

Peter Rolington, Chairman

Simon Wilshaw, Vice Chairman
e-mail: simon.wilshaw2@kent.pnn.police.uk

Peter Brown, Secretary

John Watson, The Mallings

Sue Mason, Tonbridge

Marguerite Ibbotson, Treasurer

Julie Walker, Editor – Tel: 01732 771075

e-mail: julie.walker@kent.pnn.police.uk

Richard Myers, Sevenoaks

Janet Ditchett, Tunbridge Wells

Committee members

Dave Spitter, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer,

for Kent Police – Tel: 01622 604395

e-mail: dave.spitter@kent.pnn.police.uk

Other Useful Numbers

Tonbridge & Malling Crime Reduction Unit

– Tel: 01732 876132

Crime Reduction Unit – Tel: 01892 502104

West Kent Special Branch – Tel: 07528 989208

UK Border Agency – Tel: 01634 895038

Kent Trading Standards – Tel: 08457 585497

Sevenoaks Community Safety Partnership –

Tel: 01732 227000

community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership –

Tel: 01732 844522 csp@tmbc.gov.uk

Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership –

Tel: 01892 526121

communitysafety@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

If you wish to contact a member of the West Kent N/hood Watch Executive Committee, please write to them at:
c/o: **Tonbridge Police Station,**
1 Pembury Road, Tonbridge,
Kent TN9 2HS.

*WKWWA Executive
Committee expresses its thanks
to the Borough Council for
their assistance with production
of this Newsletter*