

LOOK OUT



Helping to protect over 18,000 households

October 2013



**From the Chairman,
Keith Roberts**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It's that time of year again and your committee look forward to meeting you and our guest speakers. The AGM will be held on Wednesday 30th October, again with the kind permission of Harrogate Grammar School 6th Form College on Arthurs Avenue, Harrogate HG2 0DZ; commencing at 7 pm prompt, to be concluded by 9 pm. First on will be our guest speakers with time to answer questions, then a short refreshment break before concluding with formal AGM business.

Could co-ordinators please urgently circulate this notice to their members? Perhaps also arranging for copies to be posted in local shops, schools, libraries etc.? We usually have 60 to 80 members attend but the hall can accommodate many more. Assistant Chief Constable Paul Kennedy, a recent addition to the NYP organisation, will represent Headquarters and answer your questions on organisational changes and priorities and perhaps enlighten us on what NYP envisages for our future partnership. Sergeant John Freer and PC Amanda Hanusch-Moore will give us an introduction to the growing problem of drugs and by increasing our awareness, encourage us all to report incidents to NYP.

If you have any specific points you wish to be discussed please let me know via

info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk or briefly raise the subject at the meeting and if necessary we can respond later.

For the formal part of the meeting we seek nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and at least four additional committee members. We have tried repeatedly to encourage committee membership without success since we lost our secretary a year ago. Should we lose another key member there is a serious risk that H&D NHWA will collapse. There are so many things we would wish to do but cannot without additional committee members. Nominations for the committee should be made on the form downloaded from the website under 'Forms to Download' and sent to me. If in doubt please email info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk or phone me on 01423 562743

Ringmaster

We repeatedly discuss the problems of the outdated, cumbersome Ringmaster system and the limitation for police on the beat not having direct access to it, making it impossible to communicate urgently between the police and co-ordinators. Did you know that very few members of the police are trained to access the Ringmaster system to send messages or interrogate the Ringmaster database? After discussion with the police we wish to develop a simplified system based on the familiar email system. Do we have a com-

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puter literate co-ordinator who could join us and help develop a prototype system for part of our District? After proving it, it could then be rolled out to all parts. We also need to develop with the police a NHW training programme for PCSOs which reflects consistency and improved relationships with co-ordinators. We are fortunate that our police are still recruiting PCSOs but word of mouth training can lead to confusion especially with scheme set-ups, roles and responsibilities.

New H&D NHW Leaflet

Our current information leaflet was first published in 2008 and is way out of date, so we have just published a new one for use at set-ups and for general distribution which looks much more professional, locally produced and easy to update. It will be available at the AGM for members.

Smartwater Supplies

H&D NHWA was the first NHW organisation to promote the use of SmartWater and we were able to negotiate a good price for this effective crime deterrent. We sold approximately 2000 household kits out of the million + UK users. Unfortunately because not all NHWs have been as conscientious as we in structuring the sale, marketing and distribution, the suppliers have decided to discontinue the present arrangement of discounted sales through NHWs. With immediate effect we are no longer able to order and despatch sales of the SmartWater household kits. We have just a few units left for sale at £22 each on a first come basis. In the future the kits can be ordered at £25 each directly from SmartWater by visiting www.smartwater.tv/affinity using discount code **KDHP25H**. The still very competitive price includes delivery with no annual

fees (comparing very favourably with the RRP of £60 per annum).

H&D NHW Schemes

Although the rate of expansion of NHW schemes has recently slowed down there continues to be a gradual increase. At the last count there are 1370 NHW schemes, 650 Rural Watch schemes and a grand total of 3000 of all schemes in our District. We have more in the process of being 'refreshed' - where co-ordinators have left or messages are not being circulated.

District Crime

Year to date figures show a slight increase of 1% but the worrying trends are for domestic burglary up 23% (22 incidents more than the same period last year) and the theft of cycles up 68%. The former is invariably due to insecure doors and windows and the latter due to insecure storage in sheds or roadside parking. Expensive cycles really need improved owner protection.

AGE UK

H&D NHW has had a good working relationship with Age UK for many years, especially working with the Knaresborough police in increasing the awareness of local criminality (without increasing the fear of crime) and offering good advice. The one disappointment was that with the increase of cold callers there was a low take-up of our Nominated Neighbours Scheme. However, not to be defeated, we are working on a plan with Age UK to attend their communal meetings and recommend the fitting of a low cost intercom so that the elderly and vulnerable do not need to open the door but still communicate with uninvited visitors and can inform them that they must leave immediately or they will be reported to the police. Charity

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collectors, who attempt to get you to sign up with bank details, and double glazing salesmen are continuing problems.

Road Safety

The one subject that features regularly at Safer Neighbourhood Meetings is that of vehicles speeding in both urban and rural areas. The Community Safety Partnership has been leading a project to reduce speeding and make our roads safer. Eight local roads have been identified as necessitating special attention and this month refuse bins will be fitted with SLOW DOWN stickers. Drivers will no longer have the excuse that they were not aware of exceeding the speed limits. NHW co-ordinators are requested to co-operate with the fitting of the stickers.



Rural Watch from PCSO Alastair Graham-Merrett

The main issue at the moment is poachers. This is due to harvesting being completed and many field gates are open due to the increase of agricultural vehicles needing access.

We ask members to report via 101 any suspect vehicles and persons on land - in particular when lights are seen at night.

Burglaries will be on the rise due to the longer hours of darkness so please step up your security and awareness.

May I remind everyone that crime prevention surveys and advice are always available from their local PCSO's? Please feel free to contact us to make arrangements.



From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza

Many thanks to Woodpark Drive and Avenue NHW, Scotch George Lane NHW, Fulwith Avenue and Gate NHW, and Nor-

folk Road NHW for their recent kind donations. These donations along with sales of signs and 9 units of SmartWater have made up our income for this quarter. Our expenses have included the purchase of signs, along with printing, postage and stationery costs. Our financial year ended on 31 August 2013 and our accounts are currently being audited ready for presentation at the AGM on 30th October.

Please send donations to Katy Piazza, 8 Woods Court, Harrogate, HG2 9QP. (Cheques payable to Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association and remember to include your Gift Aid Declaration if you are eligible)

Will you be doing any online shopping for Christmas this year?

Please remember that with 'a few clicks' you can help raise funds for us at no cost to yourself. Hundreds of popular online retailers will donate up to 5% of your spend to us if you first register on the 'easyfundraising' website. For more details please visit our website nwatchharrogate.org.uk and click on Donations and Funding or visit this website: easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hdnw.



News from Tina Oates

As October inevitably marches on towards winter we are only a few weeks away from the year's most hectic, frenzied shopping season – Christmas! As harassed shoppers bustle about in the increasingly darkening late-afternoons, those with nefarious intent lurk in the shadows; a glint in their eye, waiting for the unwary!Perhaps a little melodramatic, but these people really are out there and unfortunately it's often not until something happens to us personally that the fact hits home! I too am often guilty of forgetting to zip up a handbag or

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maybe put it into a trolley; leaving the car boot open on the drive whilst unloading numerous bags of shopping etc. Also I am often amazed at the number of men wandering about town with a wallet clearly visible in the back pocket of their jeans! All these are gifted moments to the opportunist who can strike at the speed of lightning without us realising that anything has happened. Christmas is a happy time of year for religious and secular reasons, but in order for it to remain so we need to increase our vigilance, at all times.

No Cold Calling Zones (NCCZs)

One problem common to many NY Districts is the breaching of NCCZs by Everest Double Glazing reps. Several disturbing cases have involved elderly dementia sufferers: in one Whitby case a person unwittingly signed up for work costing thousands of pounds; fortunately her family and Trading Standards managed to resolve the situation. We have also experienced problems with others including Macmillan Cancer Charity knocking at doors in the dark. At a recent meeting National NHW said that this was becoming a problem nationally so please be aware for yourselves and for your vulnerable neighbours and relatives.

This brings to mind our Nominated Neighbour Scheme set up jointly by H&D NHWA with Trading Standards and NYP especially to help protect the elderly and vulnerable from rogue traders and cold callers. Details of it can be found on our website Please also see the Chairman's comments about supplying intercoms to fit to your doors which now have improved sound quality, a view finder and an alarm and can be purchased from us at around £15. These dispense with anyone needing to open their door to cold callers; they can simply tell the caller,

from behind the safety of a locked door, to go away and then telephone the police. For details and supply contact us on info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk or ask your local PCSO to help you get in touch with us if you do not have a computer.

Junior Neighbourhood Watch

A few years ago we had a thriving Youth NHW scheme with website organised by Charlotte, a grand-daughter of a committee member. This was the first in the country. Parents may be interested to know that in several counties across England there are now Junior Neighbourhood Watch groups run by the local police. They encourage youngsters to be more aware of people, especially strangers, around them, plus to develop an interest in their community and its residents. We too would wish to resurrect our scheme and to develop it on the basis of previous success. NYP is now keen to consider creating Junior Watches. When I was asked recently to speak to a Brownies pack about NHW to assist with their community safety badges preparation, the questions they raised demonstrated great enthusiasm.

Fraud, Pay-day Loans & Loan Sharks

There are too many cases of fraud and cyber-crime with the elderly and vulnerable being 'ripped off' - 20% increase in the last year. Criminals are turning to cyber offences and countrywide fraud. Please report any incidents to www.actionfraud.co.uk

Loan sharks are despicable and their lending is a criminal offence. We hear of interest rates of 1300% and 235 prosecutions. To report incidents go to reportaloanshark@stopaloanshark.gov.uk or contact us and we can give you a personal contact name.