

LOOK OUT



Helping to protect over 18,000 households

January 2014



From our Chairman, Keith Roberts

Welcome to the first quarterly edition of the H&D NHW newsletter of 2014. The Committee of our Association wishes you and your members a happy, healthy life and a safe crime-free new year.

On reflection, during 2013 the level of crime and the fear of crime have continued their downwards trend overall but there have been some small increases and pockets of crime which continue to give concern. The main problems seem to be the theft of cycles from poorly secured locations (up 50% = 45 crimes year to date), shoplifting of food and other items from shops (up 20% = 110 crimes).

By area, Harrogate Town is down -1% in spite of one group of youths suspiciously engaged in burglary and other thefts; Harrogate Outer down -4%; Knaresborough down -3%, but Ripon has shown an increase of +10%. There is obviously some scope for improvement assisted by increased reporting of suspicious incidents from our members.

For more detailed information on your local situation please consult your PCSO or Safer Neighbourhood team by phoning 101 or visit the NY Police website.

Anti-Social Behaviour – See it, Report it!

ASB is the common name for issues including crime and serious nuisance but it also includes less severe but frequent annoying behaviour. It is regularly, but not exclusively, youths who are the culprits, but it is society generally that is too tolerant and reluctant to report incidents or perhaps some people do not have the confidence or knowledge of whom to report to.

Reporting anti-social behaviour in Harrogate District is explained in a leaflet which helps to recognise different types of ASB and who to contact to report them. The leaflet can be found on our website www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk From the home page click on 'Security Advice', then sub paragraph 'Neighbours' and finally Anti-Social Behaviour' and print off a copy. The leaflet gives advice on reporting of different types of incidents to Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire Police or North Yorkshire County Council. Remember the speed of response in reporting is vital so that the relevant authority can deal with the situation before it escalates and ends up more serious. To report incidents does have a material effect on reducing further criminality. As the paragraph heading says: 'ASB – See it, Report it'. I would only add – 'without hesitation!'

TO PREVENT CRIME IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



Le Grand Départ

You will be aware of the Tour de France event starting in our district on the 5th and 6th July. It is an honour for Yorkshire to host this prestigious event and we welcome it for its spectacle and for the economic benefits too. However because of the large influx of visitors from home and abroad there are underlying increased risks of burglary and personal theft. The tour organisers are working away on the detail using previous international experience and involving local personnel. The police, fire and rescue services and ambulance and medical care are formulating their plans for any eventuality.

We and the police are aware from experience that about half of burglaries occur through security negligence e.g. windows or doors left open to the opportunist thief and valuables exposed to public view. Imagine the situation with many more opportunists on the prowl while many property owners have their attention turned to the event. Also being amongst crowds of spectators is where pickpockets operate so please be on your guard! Protect your property, use handbag alarms, and keep your mobile phones safe.

Co-ordinators are advised that now is the time to start convincing your neighbours that they should improve their security – locks on windows, replacement Eurolock cylinders, alarm systems, deterrents. We'll compile a list of 'do's and don'ts' and publicise it on our website. You may think it elementary but so is the consequence of leaving your door unlocked!

SmartWater

We, at H&D NHW, have previously promoted and supplied SmartWater to our members in over 2000 households at a

preferential price of £22 per bottle for coding of 50 to 80 items. We developed a system of ordering, delivery and logistic control but many other NHWs failed to properly manage a system of supply. So consequently SmartWater have now decided that their business with NHWs could grow substantially by doing the ordering and deliveries process themselves.

The new procedure with a unique ordering code for NHW members will shortly be on our website and the same product will be on sale for a one-off £25 with no recurring costs for maintenance on the SmartWater database. It is still excellent value and we and the police would recommend it to all members. If you have immediate queries email us on info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk or phone me on 01423 562743.

Security Goods

Currently we are updating our list and prices of security goods. They have been held at the same price for over five years. Please call the above number if you wish to discuss.

We do, however, wish to promote a new product called a 'VIEW COMM'. This unit fits to the door and has speaker communication between the resident and unsolicited cold callers – you can see and speak, informing the visitor that they are not welcome and must leave immediately or you will call the police as they are committing an offence. This simple device only costs £15 and thousands are already in use. It is pre-wired and easily fitted.

Use it with a North Yorkshire Trading Standards "NO DOORSTEP CALLERS" door/window sticker to warn the cold caller that they are not welcome and are

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committing an offence if they do not leave or if they return – under no circumstances open the door. We are working with AgeUK to encourage the use of this intercom by the elderly and vulnerable.



News from Tina Oates

The Crime Prevention Design Adviser to Thames Valley Police has been promoting an intriguing piece of night-time security equipment which is easy to fit yourself. It is a timer switch for the main house lights which slips over the existing wall switches without the need for a specialist/professional fitter. There is a video on the website: <http://www.lightswitchtimer.co.uk> which demonstrates how it works. At £30.99 (with a second switch at £23.99) it is not cheap but if it helps to deter a burglar then it is money well spent. Reviews, testimonials, information and advice on ordering are all available on the company's website.

As we near the end of the first month of 2014 I wonder if like me you have already broken some of your New Year resolutions. Hopefully all of us will not break our resolve to maintain and maybe increase our security especially around our homes.

Several recent burglaries in one part of Harrogate were sadly enabled due to unsecured windows and doors. Hopefully by the end of this quarter spring will be making an appearance when we will be occupied tidying up back gardens ready for some outdoor activities in the coming months. Open windows and unlocked doors at the front are very tempting to the opportunist thief who can slip in and out unnoticed whilst we are busy with the weeding and digging at the back!

Often at set-up meetings I am asked the question “Do we ask our co-ordinator to report to the police incidents or crimes which we have witnessed?” NO!! If you witness an occurrence or have suspicions about something you must please report it yourself. You are the one who has seen something happening; only you may know the car colour, build of the criminal etc. but your co-ordinator has not seen what has happened with his/her own eyes.

Having reported the incident to the police, then tell your co-ordinator so that the rest of the scheme's members can be advised about what has been happening in your area: but initially you must tell the police yourself.

Co-ordinators are reminded that it is imperative that they pass on all the relevant information they receive, be it from North Yorkshire Police, Trading Standards, Neighbourhood Watch or local information from your scheme members. Communication and exchange of information are the best ways to assist the police in their pursuit of the criminals who blight our lives.

This newsletter is in itself a good means of communicating with members. It is not just for co-ordinators to see but for their members also. Please circulate one or more copies round your watch area.

REMEMBER: To contact the police phone 101 but if it is urgent, like an on-going incident, do not be afraid to dial 999. The police will not mind if you do this in good faith when speed is of the essence to enable them to catch, or at least eliminate, a suspect.



Rural Watch Report from PCSO Alistair Graham- Merrett

Due to the wet weather there has been a decrease in laming and poaching but it is still going on so please stay alert.

Scrap metal theft seems to have also decreased. This could perhaps be due to the recent new law that has been introduced.

Worryingly, we have seen a rise in burglaries of houses and outbuildings; mainly in rural areas and not in any one area (i.e. random properties / random villages). So please step up your security and awareness.

Some good news! An arrest in West Yorkshire was made recently and some property from North Yorkshire burglaries has been recovered and returned to its owners.

Please help us and yourselves by continuing to promptly report suspicious activity in rural areas.

Remember that I am always happy to give advice on security matters. Either stop me out on patrol or contact me by phoning 101.



From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza

I would like to say many thanks to Beckwith Road NHW for your recent donation. We also received personal donations from Mrs Lewis & Mrs Woolley during this quarter. Other income included £30.03 from HMRC for Gift Aid repayment and £5 in donations towards the cost of the AGM refreshments. Our expenses in-

cluded £75 for the AGM and £140 on a supply of VIEW-COMS.

While we really appreciate all the recent contributions, donations are down by nearly £200 over the same period last year and over £400 down on two years ago. There are many schemes, old and new, that have never donated and we need to hear from you so we can continue our work to fight crime. To put it in perspective a mere 50 pence per member's household per year would be more than sufficient to allow us to achieve all our aims. So please, organise that coffee morning or evening or ask your neighbours for a very small donation to help support our efforts.

Please send donations to Katy Piazza, 8 Woods Court, Harrogate, HG2 9QP. (Cheques made payable please to Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association) Please include your Gift Aid Declaration if you are eligible. The relevant form can be printed out from our website under Donations and Funding.

Remember, you can also support us by using the 'easyfundraising' website when you do any shopping online. For more details please visit our website nwatchharrogate.org.uk and click on Donations and Funding. Using 'easyfundraising' costs you nothing but is of great benefit to your Association. Disappointingly we have only raised £2.15 since the last £15 cheque in March last year (you have to accrue £15 before they send you any money).

Finally, for your information, RBS branches and accounts (which include our NHW account) are due to be sold to a new group of investors who are re-forming Williams & Glyn's Bank. This will occur sometime in 2015.