

The NEWSLETTER for Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association

Serving Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge, and all the rural areas

# LOOK OUT



Helping to protect over 18,000 households

January 2012

## From the Chairman, Keith Roberts

**Welcome** to the first edition of our newsletter in 2012. Your Association committee take this opportunity to wish you and your members a happy, healthy and safe, crime free year.

**It is with deep sadness** that we inform you of the death of Gwen Baines, a member of the police staff at Harrogate. Gwen was a founder member of H&D NHW and has for over twenty years had a close working relationship with us all. She will be sadly missed and our thoughts are with her relatives, friends and colleagues.

**The past year** has seen the low level of crime in our district maintained in spite of the impact of the period of austerity measures, particularly with increasing levels of unemployment. However, there has been the usual fluctuation in the different types of criminal activity and probably the most noticeable has been the increase in the number of incidents of metal theft and theft from vehicles. The rising value of metals such as copper, lead etc. fuelled by the dramatic consumption of the Chinese market, has resulted in some scrap metal traders paying cash to all and sundry seeking easy disposal of ill-gotten materials. The theft of lead from church roofs has been a problem for a number of years. More dramatically there has been the theft of infrastructure metal works – electrical supplies, telephone wiring, often severed whilst dangerously live and life threatening. More recently the more exotic

materials as used for instance in catalytic converters on 4x4 vehicles have been targeted – 4x4s because of the ease of access for two quick cuts with a portable tool. However new legislation on scrap metal dealing should start to have an impact on this type of crime. Nevertheless there has been a significant reduction in household burglaries and an increase in detection rates. An important role of NHW is that of spreading awareness of criminality and promoting the reporting of suspicious incidents to the police. Please do not hesitate to report suspicious or unusual activities to the police on the new 101 number or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

**Elsewhere** there have been pockets of other crimes, and I specifically mention the success of the STOP Burglary and STOP Theft campaigns. NHW have contributed, with the Community Safety Partnership and the police in focussing the attention of households to the 'worst' four or five locations of such crimes in our district. Using the example of burglaries, about 250 residences were letter-dropped inviting participation in an event where the problems were defined, the awareness message spread and advice given as to how to overcome with a best practice solution. All involved considered this initiative a huge success and a model for future campaigns. It does, however, impose a heavy load on the same few members and we seek the occasional assistance of other co-ordinators. If you

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are willing to help, please let us know through [info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk](mailto:info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk).

**Communication** is the one essential for a successful NHW scheme. At present our Ringmaster database shows that we now have over 70% of co-ordinators receiving messages by email. The method is growing and is commensurate with cost reduction. If you have computer access but still rely on mobile or the latest SMS technology please send us your e-mail address with name and address details so that we can re-register your messaging method and we can easily check that you receive them. We recently started a 'twitter' account, @hdnwa, and already have 260 followers. We do appreciate feedback from our NHW members and this forum seems to be working well. It will be integrated into our recently redesigned and updated website, which we shall launch by the end of January. We shall retain the current address: [www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk](http://www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk). We have plans for Members' Support Meetings for Ripon, Harrogate and the rural areas east of the A1. Keep an eye on Diary Dates on the website for further information when we have venues arranged.

**The trial launch** of the Nominated Neighbour Scheme was successful and we wish to broaden this to all parts of our district. The scheme focusses help for the elderly and vulnerable who suffer most from 'cold callers' and uses a simple system developed between us and the police. A card can be shown to uninvited callers directing them to a friendly 'nominated neighbour' or family member, thus avoiding opening the door to the 'cold caller'. A description of the system and documentation is on our website or can be requested directly from your local police station. If co-ordinators can identify susceptible vulnerable persons and would like more information please send us a

message to [info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk](mailto:info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk) with a telephone number and we'll call you.

### News from Tina Oates

Here's a New Year resolution for you - why not decide to register your NHW scheme on the National Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network website [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk) - By registering here, not only can you gain the current crime figures for the roads in your own area plus see which types of crime have been prevalent in your district, but also new residents who have maybe moved from other NHW districts will be able to find your scheme on the site and apply to join you. None of your details are displayed; the application goes through to National NHW and is sent on by them. So your privacy and details are totally protected - you have nothing to lose by joining and possibly quite a bit to gain. The site has some useful information plus ideas which other groups around the country have used successfully to improve security within their areas and create a safer environment for them. It is well worth taking a look and joining.

**The old, incorrect 'nosey' image** of NHW is at last being accepted to be the nonsense that it is, with public perception now recognising the community care, responsibility and neighbourliness which it brings. People are working together to improve their community, showing concern for each other's safety and security – especially the elderly in our midst, who can so easily, but unintentionally, be forgotten simply because they are sitting quietly tucked away in their homes and no longer make their presence felt in the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators are an invaluable contact for them, a source of community news and information plus being that vital life-line should anything untoward happen.

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**Recent fund-raising** activities have been a little thin on the ground so far this winter: I know of a couple of events – many thanks for the efforts of the organisers and the donations they raised - we look forward to a few more this coming spring.

**A good idea** I have encountered recently in a few schemes has been the recording of members' car registration numbers – especially in areas which are vulnerable to car thefts and damage. Another initiative I have heard about – and which my own scheme is about to adopt – is a list of recommended and trusted tradespeople, whom your members have found to be reliable, dependable and trustworthy. It is so important to feel safe and comfortable with those who are working in your home.

**Christmas** no doubt brought many new technological gadgets, TV and audio equipment and various gizmos as gifts. Do remember to protect your prized new possessions either by registering them on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) if they have serial numbers or by using SmartWater, which can protect all household goods, plus garden furniture, tools and ornaments– and of course that new watch, ring, brooch or other piece of jewellery, none of which have serial numbers to record! Our current stock of SmartWater is getting low, so get your order in now to avoid having to wait for the next batch to be delivered. You will find the order form – plus information – on our [new website](http://www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk) [www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk](http://www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk). In the left hand menu, click on **Smart Water** and you will find the link for ordering forms at the foot of the page.

**With spring approaching** we are starting to plan our events for 2012. Our foray into the world of Galas last year proved successful and popular, so we plan to repeat the exercise and to increase the number of events which we attend,

including hopefully this year's Bilton Gala. However your committee of 10 can find themselves stretched in too many directions at times, so volunteers would be gladly welcomed! Perhaps when we announce the list in the April issue of Look Out those who feel they might be able to help at an event near to them could contact us through our email address [info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk](mailto:info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk) Member's Support Meetings will also take place; one in the next couple of months in the Ripon area and hopefully one in Harrogate itself before the middle of the year; watch out for the Ringmaster messages with the information.

In the meantime may I wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe 2012.

### **From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza**

**I would like to thank** the following NHW schemes for their kind donations this quarter: Manor Drive (scheme A), Beckwith Road, Bluebell Walk, Daleside Avenue & Stone Rings, and Oakdale Manor. A couple of these donations were very generous indeed. We also received a £21.00 repayment of income tax from HMRC Gift Aid scheme - not a bad amount considering we were only registered for the last 2 or 3 months of that financial year. Our expenses have included room hire for setup and committee meetings, purchase of stock and the audit fee. There are many schemes in the district, old and new, that have never donated and we would like to hear from you. Please help us to continue to fight crime and send your donations to Katy Piazza, 8 Woods Court, Harrogate, HG2 9QP. (Cheques made payable to Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association) Please remember to include your Gift Aid Declaration if you are eligible. This form is available on our website or from me if you do not have internet.

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### **Rural & Farm Watch Report from PCSO Alastair Graham-Merrett**

Rural members, please be particularly alert to the following types of crime. Please report anything suspicious immediately:

Metal and diesel thefts are still happening although not on a major scale.

We are still seeing poachers and trespassers in the rural areas.

There has been an increase in the theft of sheep but the good news is that we have recovered some and enquiries are on-going to find those responsible.

Could I ask members who have changed their contact details, or when they change them in the future, to please inform me as soon as possible, so that the Ringmaster database can be updated?

According to the latest figures we have nearly 220 members in Rural Watch; this includes farmers, small liveries and small businesses but we are also currently signing up businesses in Tockwith which includes the business parks.

### **From the Editor, Peter Dallas**

There are several different types of Watch Scheme apart from Neighbourhood Watch - Rural Watch is just one of them. We are hoping to foster co-operation between all of them, so we are very pleased to have Alastair's input from Rural Watch for the first time. Initially it is intended to widen the distribution of LOOK OUT to Rural Watch and if this is well received perhaps we can later include other Schemes who may also like to provide their own short report.

### **Launch of New Website**

With the expert guidance and help of Jim Dobbs, our Website Advisor, we have been working hard over the past month to upgrade and improve our Website. The new site will be launched by the end of January. The web address will be the same

as the old one once that has been closed down: [www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk](http://www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk)

We hope that you will find time to have a browse and that you will find it useful in running your various schemes. All members and potential members are encouraged to make full use of it. Any comments or suggestions are welcomed and can be sent to us by email on [info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk](mailto:info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk)

### **New Police Non-emergency Number**

If you are not already aware then please note the new, easy-to-remember number for calling your local police force on non-emergency matters.

The national non-emergency number 101 came to North Yorkshire Police in December 2011 and replaces the 0845 6060247 number. While 999 is a well-recognised number for reporting emergencies, the 2010 British Crime Survey found that only 54% of the public knew how to contact



their local police if they wanted to talk to them about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour and other matters.

The introduction of the 101 number will offer the public one easy way to contact their local police force.

Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day or night you call or how long you are on the phone - cheaper than the 0845 number.

When you call 101, you will be able to speak to the force control room via the automated switchboard. They will act on the information they receive. Calling 101 will not result in your call receiving a lower priority for a non-emergency issue than if you had called 999.