

LOOK OUT



Helping to protect over 18,000 households

July 2013

From the Chairman, Keith Roberts



Neighbourhood Watch activities continue with enthusiasm and requests for new schemes feature prominently. However we have reached a stage in our development where this expansion and other tasks, such as the integration of rural watch and NHW, are slowly grinding to a halt because of the utter dependence on the few fit and available committee members. We now have 1400 NHW schemes covering 20,000 households. In simple terms we have around 2000 co-ordinators and deputies with just a small committee of 10 persons integrating activities over 500 square miles. The ten committee members all have family commitments, the younger elements have work commitments and the elderly seem to get older and invariably have season tickets to the local hospitals! We have pleaded for assistance from co-ordinators to join our committee without any success. We still do not have a minute's secretary and help at galas has not materialised – for instance at the recent event only two persons could assist in the set up and two saw the afternoon through and dismantled the gazebo and equipment. For three persons it meant a 7.30 breakfast and return to base after 5pm whereas if only three more people could have helped share the load it would have been more tolerable.

The police appreciate our involvement in communicating with the public and giving advice on security matters – prevention rather than cure after suffering some criminal activity. PLEASE GIVE SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT TO HOW YOU COULD HELP US.

It would be very easy to abandon all of our involvement in NHW and there are many other voluntary activities where those of us committed to community service would continue to have satisfaction. We have stretched ourselves beyond a normal limit, so now is the time to get involved in order to ensure the continuity of H&D NHW.

Diary Dates

A list of diary dates is kept up to date on our www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk website: www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk. Members are welcome to join us at our committee meetings on the first Tuesday of alternate months, at 7.15 pm at Harrogate Fire Station. Minutes and typical agenda items are on the web also. The next meeting is on 3rd September 2013.

An early reminder is for our next Annual General Meeting which will be held in the magnificent sixth form college lecture theatre of Harrogate Grammar School, Arthurs Avenue, HG2 0DZ commencing at 7pm on Wednesday, 30th October.

TO PREVENT CRIME IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Crime Statistics

Overall the performance reports in most crime categories continue to be encouraging indeed. Domestic burglaries, which have the greatest impact on the public, remain low helped by local police prevention work. There are no specific 'hot spots'. The majority are 'sneak-in' burglaries to insecure premises.

Non domestic burglary does show an increasing trend. This is primarily due to the theft of cycles, which are stored insecurely overnight or are 'abandoned' outside shops or other premises – again sadly insecurely. As the Tour de France comes closer, perhaps inevitably there will be more opportunity for such theft unless serious precautions are taken to prevent it.

Shoplifting is an area of concern with growth in both Harrogate and Ripon.

Rogue Traders and Cold Callers

Our district still suffers from household visits from unsolicited and unwanted cold callers, even to established Cold Calling Zones. Regrettably these 'professionals' target the elderly and vulnerable and many are being 'ripped off' for significant sums for menial and often un-necessary work.

In the past we have formatted a 'Nominated Neighbour Scheme' to help protect the vulnerable but there was a resistance to taking it up.

Trading Standards issue a window sticker which clearly states that uninvited visitors are not welcome and if visitors do not leave or return they are committing a criminal offence. We have a stock of

these stickers which can be requested through:

info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk. It is preferable to mount the signs on a gate or fence away from the front door in order to avoid unknown persons calling to explore an opportunity to assess the benefit of criminal activity later.

It is probably natural to open the door to visitors but please do not ever open the door unless the visitor is known to you. We have a low cost, easily installed, door intercom system so that you can inform a visitor that they are not welcome and you will not open the door. Secondly, spell out that you will inform the police immediately should they not leave.

Recently NYP and Trading Standards (TS) with our help had a one week special project trying to combat Rogue Traders and it is very encouraging to report that many leads were followed up but exceptionally three arrests were made of individuals who were on the 'wanted list' of 20 of the 41 countrywide police forces. In another case TS were following leads for a particular trader's vehicle but lost track. TS saw the NHW sign in the area and contacted me and in turn I was able to locate the co-ordinator who immediately sent a message to his members, two of whom recognised the vehicle registration and we were able to impart the information to NYP and TS.

Neighbourhood Watch members are valuable sources of information of what goes on in their local community and as we have said previously they do act as the 'eyes and ears of the police'. We are, however, requested by our Safer Neighbourhood Teams to inform them of vulnerable persons so that the police can use PCSOs to attend to potential unsavoury situations ASAP. Co-ordinators are

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familiar with the possible limitations of their neighbours and are in a good position to discreetly enquire of any suspicious works being done.

Road Safety Issues

The NYP summer drink driving campaign in Harrogate District was successful in that 87 arrests were made of intoxicated persons exceeding the limit. The campaign will recommence early December.

For those who are not aware new legislation came into effect in January 2013 for vehicle drivers who tow caravans or trailers. Parking obstructions are becoming more than a nuisance and in many cases could inhibit access of ambulances and fire engines to premises. If you see an obstruction please report it.

Operation Hawk

North Yorkshire Police has launched a major operation to combat rural and cross-border crime.

Operation Hawk will relentlessly pursue and disrupt travelling criminals who intend to prey on our rural communities.

Maximising the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology and sharing information with colleagues from neighbouring policing areas, teams of officers will be ready and waiting to pounce on those suspected of targeting farms, rural businesses, outbuildings and vehicles.

Action will also be co-ordinated alongside volunteers from the various Rural Watch schemes, as well as support from key countryside partners such as the National Parks and the National Farmers Union to help spread crime prevention advice.

Residents can also play their part by reporting any suspicious activity to North

Yorkshire Police on 101, select option 1, and speak to the Force Control Room.

If you would prefer to remain anonymous, details can be passed to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

If an emergency response is required, always dial 999.

For the latest information about Operation Hawk, please go to the North Yorkshire Police website: <http://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/>

Conmen Targeting the Elderly

Many members may not be aware of recent media publicity regarding conmen operating in Harrogate and York, who prey on the elderly by persuading them to hand over their bank cards and account information.

The technique used is one of a criminal calling the victims on the telephone pretending to be from their bank. They claim that there has been a fraud committed against the victim's bank account. They sound quite plausible and offer to send someone to help sort out the problem and in the process take the bank card and obtain the PIN number.

Thousands of pounds have been stolen already using the stolen cards. Some conmen are dressed in drag as women and probably find that they have more persuasive powers to obtain the cards.

Please be aware of these tricks and ensure that you and your neighbours behave sensibly and NEVER part with your bank cards.

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Anyone who is aware of such incidents should report them immediately to North Yorkshire Police by telephoning 101.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

We have previously highlighted the STOP ASB campaign and the SEE IT – REPORT IT leaflet produced by the Community Safety Partnership. Copies are available on our website and are useful to have to hand for the reporting of different aspects of ASB. Reporting to NY police, NYCC and HBC for different offences are itemised. There are many instances where witnesses do nothing because they do not know who to report to.

For those who do not have computer access facilities and would like a copy please ask a friend to either print you a copy off our website or send us a message to: info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk and we'll post you a hard copy.

News from Tina Oates

In this edition there is a yawning gap in that Tina Oates' article is missing. We are very sorry to have to report that Tina's husband was hospitalised in July and although he is now at home he relies upon Nurse Tina to look after him and it is obvious where her priority must lie. Thankfully Chris is slowly recovering. We send our very best wishes to Chris and Tina and look forward to the time when they both can contribute to NHW again.

Rural Watch Report from PCSO Alastair Graham- Merrett



Diesel and scrap thefts are still occurring regularly. Please tighten up your security, particularly with Diesel. I will be happy to give security advice if requested.

There has been a rise in the theft of Quad Bikes which seems to be happening in daylight hours.

A group of three males using a transit van is approaching farms and other premises and blatantly attempting to take the quads.

There have been three reports so far - Riffa on the A568, Ouseburn and Dunkeswick. All have been unsuccessful apart from Ouseburn where the quad was taken but recovered about 10 minutes later.

From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza



I would like to say a big thank you to Moor Monkton NHW scheme and Nesfield Village Fund for their recent donations.

Over this quarter our income has been £261, made up of donations, sales of SmartWater and signs that are advertised on our website under Crime Prevention Goods. Our expenses totalled £472 which included the purchase of SmartWater units.

We receive no other funding and rely solely on your donations to help our fight against crime. If your scheme has not donated recently please make a contribution now, however small. Please send 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 an income tax payer (a form is available to print off on our website or request one from me when sending your donation.