

# CHASE POLICING DIVISION NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



**E-mail edition**

**April - May 2009**

## **OWL IS HERE**

The OWL (On-line Watch Link) message system is finally in use, replacing the old WatchOUT system in sending Neighbourhood Watch messages to you and the members of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme that chose to receive them.

During the past few weeks a number of coordinators have swapped from receiving messages by telephone, and opted to receive them by e-mail. With the OWL system, receiving messages by e-mail gives you the added benefit of access to the password protected OWL web-site.

The web site stores recently sent messages so that you can log on at any time of day or night to access them and the web-site also provides information about your local police and council. You can use the web-site to report such things as broken street lights and incidents of fly tipping and you can also keep up to date with local information such as crime figures, property prices, planning applications and even the local weather. There is even a section to help you find your nearest doctor, dentist, plumber, pharmacy and a lot more.

If you currently receive Neighbourhood Watch messages by telephone and you or any member of your scheme would like to swap to e-mail, please contact the Chase Watch Team, contact details are on page 8.

## **NO COMPUTER? DON'T WORRY!**

### **You don't need a computer to be part of Neighbourhood Watch**

The OWL message system has extra functions that the WatchOUT system didn't have and in particular, added benefits for any Watch members who use computers and the internet, but if you don't have a computer – don't worry. You will still receive messages from Neighbourhood Watch by telephone just the same as you did with the old WatchOUT system and you will benefit from having a more reliable and modern system sending those messages to your telephone.

***Did You Know?*** *The Chase Division Neighbourhood Watch newsletter has been continuously published every two months since December 2000 – which makes this the 45 edition. A copy goes to every Area Coordinator and Deputy Area Coordinator in Chase Policing Division and the e-mail version is sent to the Commander and Sergeants of each Neighbourhood Policing Unit along with all of the Neighbourhood Beat Officers and Police Community Support Officers. Copies also go to other local agencies including Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards. Any member of Neighbourhood Watch can also opt to receive the e-mail version; just contact the Chase Watch Team. Contact details are on page eight.*

## **PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH US**

The change from using the WatchOUT computer system to using the OWL system is an exciting new chapter in the evolution of Neighbourhood Watch, providing members with a more reliable message system and extra benefits for members who use the internet.

It is also an exciting time for your Chase Watch Team. We have been trained to use the new system, and as always, we shall endeavour to make any messages that we send both targeted and timely but please be patient with us as we get to grips with new ways of recording, targeting and sending messages to your schemes.

**If you have any queries or concerns about the new OWL messages, or you or any members of your scheme would like to change the time periods for receiving messages or the method by which you receive messages, please contact the Chase Watch Team.**

## **PRIZE QUIZ**

### **DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND, THIS MONTH THREE MORE WINNING ENTRIES WILL RECEIVE A PURSE SNATCH CHAIN**

The silver coloured chains are approximately 14 inches long with a spring hook on one end and a split ring on the other. One end can be attached to your purse or wallet and the other to your handbag or clothing to deter pick-pockets and thieves.

**This month's question is:**

**How often is the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter published?**  
(The answer is in the newsletter)

**Telephone 01543-464218 or 01785-234129 with your answer, or post it to:  
Neighbourhood Watch, Police Station, Wolverhampton Road, Cannock, Staffs, WS11 1AU**

*Entries must be received by Friday 22nd May 2009*

Results and correct answer will be published in the June-July newsletter

### **DECEMBER – JANUARY PRIZE WINNER**

Chase District Prevention Officer Lisa Bullock drew the three winning entries out of a hat. Mrs Homer, Cannock, Mrs Furber, Stafford and Mr Truman, Wombourne, correctly stated that OWL stands for On-line Watch Link

### **Tips From Coordinators**

#### Joy, Rugeley

Letters are still circulating, informing residents who have not entered competitions that they have won prizes. Responding to such letters can lead to disclosing personal information that could be used by criminals, or to being duped into paying money to release the non-existent prize.

Trading Standards have been informed of one such letter received in the Rugeley area, with a Ross on Wye post mark and they commented that they have been informed of a number of such letters with Ross on Wye post marks.

As always, be on your guard and if something looks too good to be true, it probably is!

#### Cyril, Stone

Did you know that although old-style paper driving licenses are valid until the age of 70 photocard Driving Licenses expire after 10 years even though drivers are registered to hold a license until the age of 70? The first batch of photo licenses were issued in 1998 and if they are not renewed the driver is in breach of the law and at risk of a fine

# **TEN TOP TIPS FOR HOME SECURITY**

Most burglaries are opportunist and a few simple steps can help to make your home less attractive to the prospective burglar.

1. Encourage neighbours to be vigilant and look out for each other – research indicates that many criminals would think twice before committing a crime in a Neighbourhood Watch area so display your Neighbourhood Watch stickers and 'we don't buy or sell at the door' cards, and encourage your neighbours to do the same. If you need replacements, the cards and stickers are FREE from the Chase Watch Team
2. Over a quarter of all burglars get in through an unlocked door or open window. Make sure your home is secure whether you're out for the day or just working in the garden.
3. Do the 'burglary test'. Look at your home through a burglar's eyes. Would it be easy to break into your home? If so, take action to make your home more secure.
4. Make it harder for someone to break in unseen – use outside lights at night and don't hide your home behind fences or shrubs.
5. Keep garden tools and ladders locked away – a burglar could use them to break into your home.
6. If you are out at night, draw curtains and leave several lights on up and downstairs – burglars prefer unoccupied homes
7. Don't advertise the goods you own – whenever possible keep expensive items out of the view of passers-by who may look in through your windows.
8. Never leave a spare key in a convenient place. A thief will know where to look.
9. Consider fitting a burglar alarm. Less than 4% of homes with an alarm ever get burgled.
10. Never let a stranger into your home unless they have a pre-arranged appointment and you have carefully checked their identification. Don't let anyone in if you have any doubts.

## **DON'T FORGET THE SHED, CAR AND BICYCLE**

Criminals often see a garden shed as an easy target. If you keep valuables in your shed, think about the security advice given in last month's Neighbourhood Watch newsletter. Padlocks should be the closed shackle type and the hasp and staple should be fitted to the door with coach bolts and secured inside with a large washer and lock nut. Expensive items can be secured by chaining to a ground anchor set into a small area of concrete inside the shed. A cheap shed alarm, without any wiring to install, will warn of any attempt to break into a shed.

Car doors, windows and sun-roofs should be kept locked and secure at all times, even if you are only going to be away for a few minutes for example, paying for petrol at the garage. Don't leave any property unattended in your car – it's an invitation to any opportunist thief, and where possible, garage vehicles when not in use.

Bicycles should be kept secure at all times. When you're locking up your bike, make sure that it is attached to an immovable object and that any removable parts of your bike, such as wheels, are within the lock. If necessary, invest in a lock extender so you can secure both front and back wheels. Make use of special bicycle parking racks where ever possible and look for a rack that is in a well-lit or well-travelled area. Property mark your bicycle with your house number and post code and Keep a note of the make, model and frame number along with details of any extras you may have added over time. This might include a wide range of equipment - mudguards, high-performance tyres and even water bottles.

# LOCAL NEWS

## CANNOCK & RUGELEY NPUs

### Operation Matrix

A safety campaign led by Sergeant Jason Dorrington aims to make Cannock and Rugeley even safer places to enjoy a night out. Police are working with other local agencies to support the night-time economy and tackle alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour.

Highly visible patrols are covering both Cannock and Rugeley during the twilight hours, targeting locations that have been identified by the public as areas of concern for anti social behaviour. Underage drinking is one of the issues being focussed on and under a partnership scheme Deputy Head Teachers and Heads of Year at local schools are accompanying officers on their night time patrols. Youngsters found to be involved in underage drinking are either being taken home or to the police station by officers. A document is completed for each individual which includes details of their behaviour and the response to this given by parents.

Sergeant Dorrington said: "Anti-social behaviour affects every part of our community and we are committed to listening to the needs of residents and addressing this very important issue. Already we have seized alcohol from young people and I would like to stress that their parents have been very enthusiastic when approached by the police to help change the behaviour of their children."

### Rugeley Garages Demolished

Following concerns raised by local residents in the Peartree Estate area of Rugeley, officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Unit have been working with partners including Street Wardens and Cannock Chase Council to reduce anti-social behaviour. As part of the effort, a set of garages that attracted nuisance behaviour are being demolished.

PCSO Sean Nicholls said "Although we have worked closely with residents to listen to their concerns and try to resolve their issues, removing the garages will make a big difference to the quality of life. However, removing the buildings would not have been possible without a number of partnership agencies pulling together."

### STREET WARDENS

Cannock & Rugeley Street Wardens offer support to residents, they work with young people in and outside school and work with other agencies to help resolve local problems such as nuisance and anti-social behaviour. **Contact them on 01543-437430**

## STAFFORD & STONE NPUs

### Stafford Night time Economy Scheme

Officers from Stafford Neighbourhood Policing Team are continuing to provide high visibility patrols in Stafford town centre as part of the ongoing Operation Cascade night-time economy project. The team are working with door supervisors and looking at ways to cut down on people who cause problems in bars and clubs, including under-age drinkers and those who secrete alcohol and drugs in their clothing. Positive action will be taken against anyone found in possession of counterfeit identification such as under eighteens using an older siblings driving license or passport. The ID will be confiscated and passed on to the police who will return it to the issuing authority.

## WOMBOURNE & WATLING NPUs

### The Red Bus Visits South Staffs

A London double Decker bus visited Perton, Codsall and Penkridge during March. Working with the South Staffs Crime Reduction Partnership, PCSOs, Trading Standards Officers, Fire & Rescue and members of South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust were on board to give advice to residents on a range of issues including home fire risk checks, bogus callers and rogue traders and improving lifestyles to be healthier.

## Road Safety Events: Stafford and Rugeley

Two events held in Stafford and Rugeley during March highlighted the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. At the centre of the event was a staged crashed car. Police, Fire & Rescue, the County Council and Borough Council all supported the event aimed to ensure that drivers consider the effects of illegally using their hand-held mobile phone. Assistant Area commander for Stafford said "As a fire and rescue service we attend some horrific crashes, some of which are caused by drivers being distracted by their mobile phones."

## **SPECIAL OFFER**



Chase Division Strategic Crime Reduction Officer PC Gordon Scott has some Autolock 2000 Steering Locks for sale at the bargain price of £25

If you would like to buy one of the steering locks or would like further information, please contact PC Scott on 01543-464312

## **KEEP YOUR CARDS SAFE**

**Simple precautions can make life more difficult for fraudsters:**

### **Treat your debit and credit cards like cash**

Don't let them out of your sight when completing transactions particularly in bars and restaurants and especially abroad

Make sure you know who you are dealing with before disclosing any card details

Never give your card details to anyone who contacts you by telephone or e-mail

Dispose of receipts carefully

Always check your bank and credit statements carefully

### **Keep your PIN safe**

Never tell anyone else your PIN, never write it down and then keep it with your card

If you think that someone else has discovered your PIN, change it immediately and notify your card issuer

### **Using Cash Machines**

Don't use a cash machine if you notice anyone behaving suspiciously around it or if you spot anything suspicious about the cash machine itself. Report your suspicions to the bank concerned or the Police. If your card is retained by a cash machine contact your card issuer immediately

### **If you are a victim of card fraud**

Report lost or stolen cards or suspected fraud to your card issuer immediately. The 24 hour emergency number will be on your statement, or call directory enquiries.

If you are the victim of card fraud, the most you will ever have to pay is £50. However, if you have acted without reasonable care, for example by keeping your PIN written down with your card, you will be liable for all the losses.

A Home Office leaflet on keeping your cards safe is available free from the Chase Watch Team, or visit [www.cardwatch.org.uk](http://www.cardwatch.org.uk) for more information.

## **PLEASE THINK ABOUT HOW YOU PARK:** **A MESSAGE FROM STAFFORDSHIRE** **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Please think about how you park your car: Thoughtless parking can cause the emergency services extra time to reach an incident

Make sure that when you park, you leave enough room for a large emergency vehicle, such as a fire engine to get down the road

Avoid parking on a hydrant – look for the yellow 'H' plates. They are the main source of water when attending incidents

### **Think:**

**It could be your property or your neighbours that the emergency services are trying to reach**

# Doorstep Crime Warnings

As the weather improves, there is often an increase in the reported incidents of doorstep crime as rogue traders cash in on residents who need work and repairs doing around the house and garden. Simple steps can ensure that you don't fall victim to this type of crime:

Don't deal with anyone at the door unless you are expecting them and they have an appointment - Regardless of whether they say they're from the Water Board or any other utility or agency and remember: the Water Board no longer exists!

**Never** let a stranger into your home. Send them away and ask them to ring or write to make an appointment.

Don't accept offers of work from any doorstep cold-callers. They may be offering to do work such as gardening, clearing gutters, fixing roof tiles, repair jobs.

Work may be of very poor quality.

You might be overcharged.

If you pay cash for work, it indicates that you keep money in the house.

**If you need any work doing, get friends or relatives to recommend someone, or consider calling the Trading Standards/Age Concern Traders Register on: 01785-788499**

Some of the doorstep callers are criminals and they swap information with other criminals. Beware even the doorstep caller with cleaning goods or paintings for sale.

There are a few whole families who travel from area to area to commit crimes. If someone accepts work at the door, word gets round and others might call in the next few months, because they know that the resident might agree to more work. Criminals called Bogus Callers might try to trick their way in to the resident's house knowing that they keep money at home.

**Beware of anyone on the doorstep who says:**

- They need urgent help
- Asks you to step outside
- Wants to come into the house
- Asks to make a phone call
- Wants to use the toilet
- Asks for a glass of water ... **JUST SAY NO!**

**IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE HAD SOMEONE SUSPICIOUS AT THE DOOR, TELL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.**

**IF THEY DON'T GET INTO YOUR HOME THEY MAY TRY AGAIN SOMEWHERE ELSE.**

# **IN BRIEF**

## **Stuck in the Mud**

A local resident telephoned the police when they spotted a vehicle fly tipping in a Featherstone lane. On arrival, the officers found the vehicle stuck in mud, surrounded by numerous bags of rubbish. A second vehicle was also present, attempting to tow the offending vehicle. Both parties were arrested.

## **The Brightest Criminal?**

A resident in Watling Street Policing area was rightly suspicious of a caller who offered to buy her car. The resident refused the offer but watched the caller and two other males as they made off into a nearby field. The resident then witnessed the three men steal a section of copper cable from the field. A quick call to the police resulted in an area search where the resident's good description of the three offenders and their vehicle helped the police to locate them. All three were arrested.

## **Youths Arrested**

Following a spate of incidents in the Great Wyrley area, including the theft of a bicycle and burglary and damage at local schools, two sixteen year old youths have been arrested by local officers.

## **Sunglasses Recovered**

Following a burglary at industrial premises in the Stone area, where a quantity of designer sun glasses were amongst the property stolen, police officers got a good lead when they saw similar goods for sale on an internet auction site. Following investigations, one man was arrested on suspicion of burglary and further investigations led to the officers executing a search warrant at premises where further sun glasses were recovered and a second man was arrested. The sun glasses have been returned to the business they were stolen from.

## **Tarmacers Warned**

Rogue tarmacers in the Rugeley area who attempted to charge exorbitant prices for their work were advised and sent on their way by police and Trading Standards Officers following a complaint from a resident.

## **Metal Theft Arrests**

Police have made two arrests following the theft of metals from a factory in the Wombourne area

## **Van Seized**

Police disturbed two thieves in action at a South Staffs Industrial Estate, resulting in their vehicle being seized

## **ANPR Success**

A South Staffs operation using ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Reading) equipment resulted in identifying a stolen vehicle. When the police stopped the vehicle one of the four occupants was found to have been recently released from prison. All four men were arrested

## **Burglar Charged**

Following three arrests on another force area, one of the males has also been charged with burglaries in the Lower Penn area

## **More Successes**

Other recent South Staffs successes include the arrest of several shoplifters who had stolen goods from shops in the Codsall and Wombourne area, and the seizure of goods following raids at South Staffs car boot sales. The raids were executed with partner agencies Trading Standards and Custom and Excise and included more than 20,000 counterfeit DVDs and blue ray discs with a high street value of £500,000

### **Rugeley Road Operation**

A recent Rugeley road operation focused specifically on excessive speed in Bower Lane, Armitage Road, Sandy Lane and Prospect Village, on ensuring that vehicles were road worthy and insured and on identifying any vehicles involved in criminal activity. As a result officers issued the following fixed penalty notices:

Three for speeding

Nine for drivers using a mobile phone

One for dangerous parts

Eleven for failure to wear a seatbelt

Three for no MOT

Four for number plate offences

One for contravening weight restrictions

Two for no road fund licence

In addition

Four vehicles were seized for no insurance

Two drivers reported for driving license offences

Three drivers issued with vehicle defect rectification notices

25 drivers were advised for minor offences

## **USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

### **URGENT/EMERGENCY**

When a crime is occurring or about to occur, and for all highly suspicious incidents e.g. youths checking car doors.

**RING '999'**

### **NON-URGENT**

**Ring 0300-123-44-55**

For **all** non-emergency calls. The call handler will transfer you to the person best able to help you.

### **STAFFORDSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS**

**Ring: 01785-277888**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

We provide members with support, guidance and advice.

**All information received is treated with complete confidentiality.**

**Vicki Singleton:** Ring: 01543-464218 e-mail: [victoria.singleton@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:victoria.singleton@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

**Ash Connor:** Ring: 01785-23412 e-mail [patrick.connor@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:patrick.connor@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

**Ray Jones** Ring 01785-23442 e-mail [raymond.jones@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:raymond.jones@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

### **STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

For information and advice

Cannock & Rugeley 01785-898065

Stafford & Stone 01785-898105

South Staffs 01785-898517

## **LOCAL COUNCILS**

**Cannock Chase District Council** Ring 01543-462621 Web address: [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

**Stafford Borough Council** Ring 01785-619000 Web address: [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)

**South Staffordshire District Council** Ring 01902-696000 Web address: [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)

## **THE TRADER REGISTER**

The register has been produced by Trading Standards and partners for anyone who wants to find a trader in their area to do work on their home or garden. Traders are not approved by Trading Standards, but if there is a problem, members have pledged to work with Trading Standards to find a solution.

Telephone **01785-788499** Web address: [www.traderregister.org.uk](http://www.traderregister.org.uk)

## **GOT A PROBLEM? CALL BOING**

Boing UK Ltd works in partnership with Staffordshire Police in providing a free telephone service to the public, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. If you have a personal emergency, and need non-police help, Boing have a data base of local traders and services such as plumbers, glaziers and tree surgeons, and they can provide information about local services such as late night chemists and 24 hour petrol stations.

Telephone free on **0800-587-0548** Web address: [www.boinguk.com](http://www.boinguk.com)

## **STAFFORDSHIRE CRIMESTOPPERS TELEPHONE 0800-555-111**

The CRIMESTOPPERS telephone number can be used to pass specific information about crime or criminals without fear of reprisals or direct contact with the police. The service is anonymous and rewards of up to £1,000 are available for information which leads to an arrest and charge.

## **PREFERENCING SERVICES**

To cut down on telephone cold calling ring **0845-070-0707** the call must be made from the telephone number receiving the unwanted calls. Use the same number to cut down on unwanted text messages to your mobile phone

To reduce cold-calling FAX messages ring **0845-070-0702**

To cut down on personally addressed junk mail telephone **0207-291-3310**