

# CHASE POLICING DIVISION NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



**E-mail edition**

**October-November 2009**

## **HAVE A SAFE AUTUMN**

**With the nights drawing in, help to reduce the opportunities for crime by taking simple precautions:**

Keep your doors locked and windows secure. Sneak-in burglaries occur in winter as well as summer!

Close curtains after dark so that passers-by can't see your valuable possessions

Don't open your door to strangers. If you're not sure about a caller, ask them to make an appointment for another time so that you can check up on them and arrange for someone to be with you. NEVER deal with doorstep or telephone cold-callers

If you have fencing panels in the garden, wire them together around the post so they can't be lifted up to give a burglar an entry or exit point

After getting the garden ready for winter, lock all your tools away and check that the fabric of your outbuildings is sturdy and windows are secure

Check that locks and bolts on outbuildings are up to scratch

Consider fitting a shed alarm

Make sure outdoor security lighting is in good working order

## **THE STAFFORDSHIRE FIREWORKS HOTLINE 2009**

**08454-02-03-34**

The Firework Hotline answers firework queries 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call the hotline if you have concerns about problems caused by the misuse of fireworks or you are confused about the laws to curb anti-social behaviour associated with fireworks. You will receive information about when and where fireworks can be sold, how they should be used and when they can be let off.

Information passed to the hotline regarding firework related problems will be taken and passed to the appropriate enforcement agency – Trading Standards, Fire & Rescue, Police or Environmental Health, who will take action as necessary

# **Hallowe'en**

Hallowe'en is associated with families and having fun, but for some people October 31<sup>st</sup> can be an intimidating evening especially if 'trick or treaters' don't behave in a responsible manner.

As householders, it is advisable to put cars away in the garage, leave security lights on, lock up valuables and put wheelie bins safely away.

It is also important that 'trick or treaters' stay safe and that youngsters are always accompanied by an adult. They should stay in well lit streets, wear something visible such as sticky-back reflective strips on their costumes and NEVER accept invitations to go into houses.

If you don't want 'trick or treaters' to call, why not put a clear sign by your door stating 'sorry, no trick or treaters'.

## **PRIZE QUIZ**

### **THIS MONTH TWO WINNING ENTRIES WILL RECEIVE A MINI CHIME AND ALARM**

The Mini chime and alarm sounds either as a chime or as an alarm. Simply use the switch to swap between the different modes to either notify of welcome guests with a chime or sound an alarm for intruders. There is also an off switch for when the unit is not required. Double sided tape (provided) mounts the alarm and magnetic sensor to the door, window or cupboard to be protected

**This month's question is:**

**On which night can fireworks legally be set off until midnight?  
(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 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009*

Results and correct answer will be published in the December-January newsletter

### **AUGUST-SEPTEMBER PRIZE WINNER**

Cannock Neighbourhood Policing Unit Commander, Inspector Pat Shannaghan, drew the two winning entries out of a hat. Mrs Haycock, Cannock, and Mr Smith, Hatherton, both correctly stated that the date of this year's County Neighbourhood Watch conference is 3<sup>rd</sup> October

### **Doorstep Clothing Collections**

Many organisations are currently operating around the country, putting flyers or bags through resident's doors, asking for unwanted clothing and other goods. A practice that at one time just helped to support well-known charities has been hijacked by numerous businesses, sometimes implying that they are doing charitable work and always aiming to make a profit from your unwanted goods. The most unscrupulous have even been known to pick up bags put out for collection by a genuine charity!

If you would prefer your unwanted goods to go to a genuine charity, please look for the charity number on the leaflet or bag. A business number or registered number is not the same as a charity number. If you don't recognise the charity asking for donations, you can check that it is genuine by calling the Charity Commission on 0845-300-0218, or checking them out on the Charity Commission web-site. Call Consumer Direct to report any suspicious collections on 08454-04-05-06

## **Don't be the victim of a Hidden Key**

However careful you are and however impenetrable your home security is, it becomes useless if you have a key concealed somewhere outside your home in case one of the family forgets their own key and wants to get into the house.

Keys hidden under the mat, over the door, tied to a string inside the letterbox or behind a loose brick have all become clichés, but people still leave their keys in hiding places – and burglars still find them.

Don't become the victim of a hidden key! Leave the spare with a trusted neighbour, friend or relative.

## **Key Precautions**

With car security getting increasingly sophisticated, it is often easier to obtain the keys in order to steal a car.

Some criminals will attempt to break into a house to steal keys, others will fish through the letterbox with sticks or fishing rods to pick up keys left in view on a table or shelf inside the front door. Sometimes it is made very easy for the opportunist thief, who simply grabs keys left within reach inside an open window, or just inside an unlocked door.

All keys should be kept in a safe place, out of sight, but somewhere that they can be easily found in the case of an emergency.

## **Did You Know?**

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy fireworks. Shops should refuse to sell to people under the age of 18 and ask for proof of identity if in doubt

It is against the law for under 18s to carry or use adult fireworks. An adult firework is any firework except a cap, cracker snap, novelty match, party popper or sparkler

Under the explosives Act 1875, it is illegal to let off or throw a firework in a public place

Fireworks should not be let off after 11pm with the exception of November 5<sup>th</sup> when they can be let off until midnight, and New Years Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year when they can be let off until 1am

## **Follow the Firework Code**

Only buy fireworks from a reputable shop and always check that they comply with UK safety standard BS7114.

Keep fireworks in a sealed box or tin, only take one out at a time to use and never keep fireworks in your pocket

Read the instructions on fireworks carefully using a torch – never a naked flame. Light fireworks at arms length using a taper or firework lighter

Once lit, stand well back and never return to a firework after it has been lit

Ensure that children are well supervised and keep pets indoors

# **LOCAL NEWS**

## **CANNOCK & RUGELEY NPUs**

### **An Appeal for Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Volunteers**

Speed Watch has been operating in the Heath Hayes area for some time now, deterring speeding drivers by performing visible speed checks at pre-arranged times and locations on the local roads.

Speed Watch Coordinator Derek Baseley is appealing to Heath Hayes and Wimblebury residents to consider becoming a Speed Watch volunteer. Volunteers never operate alone; they are given training by Staffordshire Police and provided with high visibility jackets to wear during Speed Watch activities.

If you would like to become a Speed Watch volunteer, or if you would like to find out more, please contact Vicki at Neighbourhood Watch on 01543-464218

### **A Twist on Trick or Treat**

Street Warden Kitty Leech has turned Trick or Treat upside down in the Springfields area of Rugeley, by organising accompanied youngsters to go house to house in fancy dress on Hallowe'en giving a 'treat' to elderly householders in the form of a crime prevention pack. Residents were informed of the visits beforehand and the youngsters called during daylight hours

### **Getting the Youngsters Involved**

Student Watch is about to be launched in the Cannock area. Street Wardens and Neighbourhood Watch are working together to encourage young people to join in and be community spirited. Watch this space ....

Hayley, the newest Street Warden recruit is already making her mark and has organised a pilot Youth Club for youngsters in the Heath Hayes area. The club will initially run for four Thursday evenings starting on October 15th

### **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**

### **The Right Stuff**

PC Andy Whitehall has been presented with an award for outstanding services to boxing and the community by the British Boxing Board of Control Midlands Area Council for his work with the Right Stuff project in Stafford and Stone and the help he has given to Kinver Amateur Boxing Club. PC Andy Whitehall commented "It's a great honour to receive this award from the Boxing Board of Control - to be recognised by the sport's national governing body is fantastic not only for me, but also for all the young people I work with".

### **Trailer Checks**

Officers from Stone will now routinely stop and check people using trailers following a spate of thefts. During the past few weeks, six trailers have been stolen from the Stone policing area.

Sergeant Dave Ingham from the Stone Policing Unit said "In a bid to reduce thefts of these trailers, which can cost thousands of pounds each, officers will be stopping anyone using one. They will check the ownership and also offer crime prevention advice on securing the trailer when not in use."

# **WOMBOURNE & WATLING NPUs**

## **Partnerships in Action**

It's an exciting time for young people in the Kinver area. A number of initiatives to promote good relations between young and old in the area and reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour have been created by partner agencies including police, Neighbourhood Watch, Fire & Rescue, Youth Services and Parish Councils.

Partnerships in Action initiatives include Street Dance, Boxing lessons at a club run by local PCSOs, Fire Fighter courses run by Fire & Rescue, a Youth Shelter promoted by the Parish Council, and the re-launch of a youth club supported by Youth Services and now regularly getting around 40 youngsters attending.

£24,000 has been raised by Kinver Action Group through the Playbuilder Fund (a grant from Staffordshire County Council) to provide a new BMX track, which has successfully engaged local youngsters and seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area since its launch in March this year. The BMX track is the first phase in developing an area of leisure facilities for Kinver youth. The second phase is to be the £100,000 skate park, designed in conjunction with young people from the village.

The members of the partnership are pulling together to make a brighter future for the youth of Kinver.

## **Volunteers Needed for Age Concern Befriending Service**

Can you make a difference to someone's life? A volunteer Befriender will visit an older person who may have limited mobility, be frail or isolated, to have a chat or share interests.

Would you like to give an hour a week to become a volunteer visitor? Age Concern has older clients waiting for visitors in all areas. All expenses are paid, full training and support provided.

A volunteer needs two references and a CRB check. There is training induction and follow on training as appropriate, social events and full supervision and support for volunteers.

For more information, please contact Jenny Woodman or Kristian Palmer on 01785-788492 or 01785-788489

## **Horse Watch Re-Launch**

Penkridge Community Beat Officer PC Kate Hardt is coordinating the re-launch of Horse Watch in Chase Policing Division. Horse Watch aims to prevent and tackle equine crime and members will be offered amongst other things, security advice and tack marking.

PC Hardt said "Saddles and other stolen equipment can be very expensive to replace. An initiative like Horse Watch, which has proved successful across the country, is a fantastic opportunity to work together to stop criminals in their tracks".

The first meeting was held in room AC1 at Rodbaston College, Penkridge. Further meetings at the same location will be held at 7pm on Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup> and Tuesday December 15<sup>th</sup>

For further information please contact Ray Jones, Chase Watch, telephone 01785-234427

## **Bicycles Beware!**

Bicycle thefts often increase in the run-up to Christmas. Please make sure that you keep them secure at all times, at home or away. Watch out for cycle safety campaigns in South Staffs in the coming weeks.

## **Six Percent Drop in Staffordshire Crime**

Between April – June 2009 over 1,300 fewer crimes were recorded in Staffordshire compared with the same period in 2008, dropping by 6% (1,333) to 20,451

Serious acquisitive crimes committed in April, May and June fell from 3,443 in 2008 to 3,080 in 2008.

Business crime fell by nearly 7% and offences such as shoplifting and commercial robbery and burglary fell from 2,759 to 2,575.

88% of people unfortunate enough to have been victims of crime were satisfied with the service they received from Staffordshire Police.

Figures from the British Crime Survey show that 64% of people in the force area agree that their officers understand community issues (the force target was 63%) and 53% agreed that their local officers are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crimes that matter (target 53%).

Between April and June 2008 76% of people who needed help with issues linked to anti-social behaviour were satisfied with the service. By the same period this year, the satisfaction level had jumped to 85%.

Assistant Chief Constable Douglas Paxton said "The drop in crime means that significantly fewer people were victims in Staffordshire in the first three months of 2009/10, which is encouraging. The fall in business-related crime is also pleasing, especially when so many individuals and organisations are having to cope with the recession".

## **Does Anyone Want to Contribute?**

Would you or any member of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme like to contribute to future newsletters?

Would you like to submit ideas for topics to include in future editions of the newsletter?

Would you like to write an article and send it in for inclusion?

Perhaps you would like to write a letter and future editions could include a letters page.

Any ideas for changes or improvements, and any articles or letters will be very welcome. Post them to Vicki Singleton, Neighbourhood Watch, Cannock Police Station, Wolverhampton Road, Cannock, Staffs, WS1 1AH or e-mail them to: victoria.singleton@staffordshire.pnn.police .uk

## **Seasonal Advice**

With the darker evenings, please think about your visibility when you go out after dark. Wear something light coloured or reflective, and where possible, stick to well lit areas

As the winter approaches, check the weather before you set out in the car and make sure that you have checked your oil, water and tyre pressure

As we get closer to Christmas, busy public areas and shops are a haven for pick-pockets and thieves. Make it more difficult for them by keeping purses and other valuables out of sight and spread them around your person, for example keys in a secure pocket, money in a different secure pocket, mobile phone in your bag. If you carry a bag, keep it close to you, NEVER leave it vulnerable, for example putting it on a shopping trolley while you shop, or close, but out of sight, in a pub or restaurant.

## **Tips from Coordinators**

### **Jenny, Woodseaves**

A resident in Woodseaves has received a telephone call purporting to be from a credit card company and offering an interest rate of 5%. The automated call did not reveal the name of the credit card company, but ended with an urgent repeated appeal to 'press six'. Similar scams where the resident is asked to press a number on the phone have resulted in being transferred to a premium phone line with a call charge of £1.50 per minute. Fortunately, in this case, the resident hung up.

### **Lynn, Blackfords**

An old story is circulating again, saying that if you put your PIN in backwards at an ATM machine, it will alert the police. For example if a criminal is attempting to force you to withdraw money. It's not true.

### **Dusty, Shropshire border**

Another old one making the rounds again: If you receive a phone call on your mobile from any person saying that they are a company engineer, or telling you that they are checking your mobile line, and you have to press #90 or #09, do not press any numbers and hang up immediately.

This is a fraud and once you press those digits, they can access your SIM card and make calls at your expense.

### **Cyril, Stone**

There is a phone scam circulating where a phone call is received from someone purporting to be a BT representative, who says that your phone will be cut off because of an unpaid bill. The person says that if you put your phone down and try to dial a number you won't be able to because the phone is being cut off.

When you put your phone down to try to dial another number, the caller remains quiet or presses the mute button, but does not terminate the call from their end, and so they remain connected to your phone. When you try to dial a number you can't get a dialling tone so you think that you have been disconnected.

When you stop trying to make calls, the scam caller phones back, demanding payment by asking for your debit/credit card details and this will allow the criminal to take money from your account.

### **Cyril, Stone**

E-mails are circulating stating that dialling 112 on a mobile phone will divert to a satellite signal and reach the emergency services even where there is no signal. Not true, it's an urban myth.

### **Geoff, Hednesford**

Free raffle tickets for a new car are being given away on the doorstep. In the small print, there is one big draw for the car, but tickets are also entered into a weekly or monthly draw to 'win' home cleaning.

A lot of people win the weekly/monthly draw and are notified to arrange the cleaning visit. When your lucky prize arrives, it comes in the form of a hard sell salesperson who demonstrates cleaning products (and admittedly does some cleaning) but is determined to persuade you to buy the products!

**Further advice on scams and other consumer information can be obtained from Consumer Direct by telephoning 08454-040506 or visit their web site at: [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)**

## **I Never Thought of That!**

If your Satellite Navigation System is stolen from your car while you're away from home, it could be used to guide a criminal back to your home address – and they know that you're probably out of the house, somewhere near to your car.

One more reason never to leave a Satellite Navigation System unattended in your vehicle, even for a few moments

Beware text messages to mobile phones that ask for any kind of sensitive information. If a phone has been stolen, there are probably phone numbers stored in it and an unscrupulous criminal could use text to make contact without the risk of being identified.

If you are asked for any sensitive information by text, no matter whose name and number it is, make a phone call to that person to verify that the text message is genuine.

## **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.

### **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

For FREE Home fire Risk checks telephone 0800-0241-999

## **STAFFORDSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS**

**Ring: 01785-277888**

## **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 **01785-330888** 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)

## **CLARENCE**

Staffordshire County Council have a Customer Lighting and Roads Enquiry Centre (CLARENCE) for residents to report problems with roads, pavements, street lighting and blocked road drains.

Call CLARENCE free of charge between 8am and 6pm on **0800-23-23-23**

## **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**