

LOOK OUT

Helping to protect over 18,000 households

July 2011

From the Chairman, Keith Roberts

The development of H&D NHW continues with new schemes being formed almost every week. Sometimes there is an element of 'after the horse has bolted' – the consequence of increased criminality and it would obviously have been better to avoid the incidents in the first place. However in order to stem the flow of burglaries a series of "STOP the burglaries" initiatives have been set up. All households in the problem areas are being invited to local early evening sessions with the police, the community safety partnership and neighbourhood watch. This awareness campaign should enlighten the vulnerable and give recommended actions in order to minimise the risks of further problems. It is hoped that there will be a positive response and many in the neighbourhood will participate. There are still problems with insecure uPVC door locks and 2in1 burglaries where keys are the target of a break-in and then used to drive away the family car left on the drive.

Rural areas are not totally oblivious to house burglaries but tend to be affected more by the theft of metals and equipment. If you see flatbed vehicles with scrap metal please

immediately note the registration number and inform your local police.

Your H&D NHW Committee

We are very pleased to welcome to the committee Milena Winfield from Ripon. Milena is keen to help us develop NHW in Ripon and rural parts of the district.

Consequence of Financial Pressures

Not wishing to repeat the article from our April edition but the same points about financial pressures still apply and can be reviewed on our website. Due to the fastidious efforts of our Treasurer we have been granted Gift Aid status – please see Katy's article for details. Also the on-line purchase of many goods gives us a small contribution. The website that links purchasers, suppliers and funding is www.easyfundraising.org.uk. We have already registered our charity - find us at: <http://easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hdnw>.

This link takes you directly to our site and any individual who supports us can register. Once signed in use the links to the retailers on the 'easyfundraising' site. More information is available on our website.



HARROGATE & DISTRICT

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

EMAIL: info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk

WEB: www.nwatchharrogate.org.uk

TO PREVENT CRIME IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Communication

We have recently done a rigorous check on messages that have been returned as undeliverable and have updated the database. Please ensure that we have a telephone contact number even if your usual messages come by e-mail so that we can contact you should there be any undeliverable messages, phone calls, letters and we can amend our records.

We have had several complaints about long delays in responses from the NYP Control Centre and the cost of the 0845 6060247 number. The good news is that later this year there will be a new low cost three digit national telephone number connecting you to your local police call centre.

Members' Support Meetings

The last MSM held on 12th April at Ripon Fire Station was poorly attended but we propose another meeting in Ripon in September. We shall publicise in the press but please check Diary Dates on the website. In October there will be a further MSM in Harrogate.

A Special Request!

On 16th August there will be a mock terrorist attack in Harrogate and the authorities are seeking the help of 100 NHW volunteers to take part in the simulation. The police, fire and rescue, ambulance service and council members will all take part, but a cross-section of the public is required to participate. It is anticipated that it will nominally be a full day event commencing with a briefing and allocation of duties and completed by late afternoon. Any NHW member interested please send a message to info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk a.s.a.p. and we'll collate the information – name, address and phone number, but especially an e-mail address and we'll forward
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details when available. It should be educational as well as fun - tomato sauce provided!

News from Tina Oates

Imagine the opening scenes of a TV police drama: a family wake up one morning and go downstairs ...to an empty house!

Only this wasn't a TV drama; this actually happened at a house in Harrogate a few months ago! Everything downstairs had gone, yet the family hadn't heard a sound! In this instance a burglar alarm could have deterred the intruders. Alarms may seem expensive to install but they are well worth it if they can prevent a nightmare like this from happening.

Listening to a reformed burglar speaking in a recent broadcast I was interested to hear that the things which would most deter him from entering a property were a burglar alarm, a dog, NHW signs and SmartWater stickers. Over recent years we have all become too complacent with an attitude of "It won't happen to us." Well it could and the best policy is protection and prevention – especially with the current escalation in burglaries and thefts in Harrogate District.

Once again there have been warnings about elderly people being duped and robbed by callers posing as Water Board officials. We need to instil in everyone's minds that **there is no such thing as a 'Water Board' any more:** so the lie is immediately obvious so please remind your elderly relatives and neighbours of that fact, as well as prompting them to ring any companies to verify their operatives' authenticity. Remember too that we now have the Nominated Neighbour Scheme in place for you to help your vulnerable/frail relatives or neighbours with unexpected callers. Details of this can be obtained from your local police SNT

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or by email to us at info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk

Trading Standards are reiterating their reminder to report any seemingly scam callers and those trying to circumvent the NCCZs – including telephone calls. It doesn't matter how small the piece of information you have about a rogue/scam caller; if you send it in they can gradually build up a picture of the offenders over a period of time, eventually giving them plenty of evidence for a prosecution.

Recently there has been a spate of silent phone calls – I have received several in the last few weeks. I am told these come from companies abroad which can circumvent our Telephone Preference Service. We now know of a service which can help to stop these - Silent Call Guard. You can register on line at www.ukdatait.co.uk or you can telephone 0844 372 2325. Since we registered the calls to us have stopped. Registration is free, but only for 12 months, at which point you are able to renew.

So far we have had a busy summer with several new schemes being established across the district and our latest venture of setting up and manning NHW stalls at local galas and shows. To date we have attended 2 events: Oatlands Gala and Aldborough & Boroughbridge Show. The interest people have shown has been very encouraging and we hope next year to increase the number of galas and shows we attend – provided we get sufficient volunteers – as always it seems to be the same few doing the groundwork so if you are enthusiastic and keen to help please do get in touch at the usual email address. We have also been invited to take a stall at the Tockwith Show on 6th August.

Those of you who knew of the proposed threat to discontinue our NHW roundel window stickers will be pleased to hear that National

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NHW has been able to secure funding for them from Towergate Insurance, which is a great relief since they are a proven deterrent, along with the street signs, to would-be intruders.

Finally, in my role as secretary of the North Yorkshire Neighbourhood Watch Association it was pleasing to see how much interest there was from the Harrogate District in our recent AGM at police HQ. I had several enquiries but places at the meeting had to be limited to two per district of the county due to the size of The Boardroom! I was delighted to welcome our two H&DNWA members who were able to attend.

From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza

Gift Aid It!

The big news is that our application for Gift Aid has recently been approved by HMRC. This means we can make your donations go even further as we can reclaim the income tax you paid on your donation. For us to reclaim the tax you must be a UK tax-payer and have signed the Gift Aid Declaration (copy attached). If you are not working but pay tax on your savings, pensions, investments or rental income you can still sign the declaration. We reclaim tax at the 20% rate. For example if you donate £20 we can reclaim an additional £5 from HMRC. You must pay enough income tax to cover the amount of tax we can reclaim.

Finances

This quarter I was very pleased to receive donations from Daleside Close, Timble Suburbs, Nesfield Village Fund and an anonymous donation from Manor Drive. Unfortunately over this period our costs have exceeded our donations by £176. These costs have included envelopes and labels for Look Out. If your scheme has not donated recently,

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please do so now and send 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.

Safer Neighbourhood Policing by Superintendent Ken McIntosh

Following the H&D NHW AGM and subsequent editions of your newsletter LOOK OUT, I have stressed the important contribution of NHW to our Safer Neighbourhood Policing and the development of the partnership. In light of the recent restructuring of NYP and the commitments to cost savings one platform of our cooperation will be that of volunteering.

All members of NHW – individual members of schemes, co-ordinators and district committees are volunteers and make a significant contribution to policing and that contribution is valued by your NYP teams. Particularly important is the input from those who do not hesitate in contacting their local police reporting suspicious or other criminal activities. However, there are other ways in which NHW members can help and further integrate with their police colleagues. The savings plan is formulated as minimising the effect on front line services but there is an impact on back-room services. NHW has a membership with a vast experience and skill base and many of them are prepared to devote a small amount of time to improve the service to neighbourhoods.

Police front line volunteer services are those fulfilled by uniformed NYP Specials. The Special Constabulary are a very flexible resource prepared to devote a minimum of two hours per week with the full authority of that of a Police Constable. The NYP website gives much information including the roles and

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responsibilities of Specials. Further details can be obtained from your local police station. Arrangements can be made to meet with an experienced Special Constable, who will convey to you the personal satisfaction he/she experiences from the role.

NHW co-ordinators are good communicators and those skills can be utilised as a Community Volunteer – such as a Front Counter Support Volunteer, where help can be given to visitors. The police and the safety partnership, trading standards and fire and rescue service are involved in many community projects and secretarial services are badly required for note taking, sometimes during the day and other times on an evening. Such meetings can cover many subjects but usually last no longer than two hours and the contents of the notes are important to convey awareness messages to the community and operational members of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

The role of volunteering in NYP is well described on the NYP website: www.northyorkshire.police.uk. The volunteer policy, the selection process, the terms and conditions including the process of vetting where required are explained. The role of the Police Community Volunteers is to provide support to police officers and police staff to enhance service provision, providing an integral part of fighting crime and tackling issues in the local community.

NHW coordinators are considered as 'Affiliated Volunteers' and have a simplified registration and vetting procedure.

Why not consider using your skills and experience to put something back into the community and assist a slimmed-down proactive police service?