

LOOK OUT

Helping to protect over 18,000 households

January 2011

From the Chairman, Keith Roberts

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2011. Your H&D NHW committee wish you all a happy, healthy, safe and crime free year. Without wishing to dwell too much on the past year, which we now cannot influence, we are pleased to inform you that the crime levels in our district were maintained at a very low level. However there are still problem pockets, such as opportunist theft and burglaries, usually due to poor home security (insecure doors and windows) or irresponsible care of personal items (laptops, handbags, phones, etc). Two-in-one thefts of car keys and cars being taken from drives or the roadside have recently reduced but we should not be complacent. Leaving your car keys in view on a hall table, shelf or kitchen surface is an invitation for a thief to rapidly gain access and in no time the vehicle disappears.

Notwithstanding the low level of crime in our district, one target which NHW can have influence on is the prompt reporting of suspicious incidents to the police in order to assist them in the improvement of crime detection rates. Rural crime is a growing problem and poaching, for example, is often associated with other criminality. A parked vehicle intermittently visited by youths can often be involved in drug dealing – hence another case for reporting an unusual incident and letting the police use their discretion on prioritisation. When reporting incidents to the police please request an incident number – in that way it is drawn to the attention of senior officers and gives you a reference number to check progress – but be aware there are times when the police cannot divulge details because of the sensitive nature of the investigation.

The cold weather unfortunately seems to affect the brains of some people and it is timely

to remind drivers not to leave the keys in an unattended vehicle with the engine running. Every year some drivers lose their vehicles this way, invalidating insurance and occupying precious police time investigating and recovering the stolen vehicle. Some people never learn. **Don't let it be you!**

H&D NHW interfaces with wide ranging local and national bodies that all have similar or complimentary objectives promoting responsible neighbourhood community development. Recently we have been invited to join the Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The key role of the IAG is to help the police increase the public's trust and confidence, particularly amongst minority communities. The IAG represents people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups, people who are lesbian, gay or bi/transsexual or of different religions or cultures. The meetings are chaired by an independent member. The Committee has representatives from the police and the voluntary sector as well as persons from the minority groups. Discussion focuses on hate crimes, stop and search discrepancies, advising on major or critical incidents and generally advising on policies and procedures taking account of cultural differences. Helen Jillings is the Harrogate Minority Ethnic Development Worker for the Harrogate & Area Council for Voluntary Service and is on the IAG committee. There is a growing number of migrant workers in our locality with probably some living within NHW schemes with whom there could be communication difficulties. Helen is available for the distribution of a welcome pack and help in introducing them to essential information relating to settling into a new environment. She can be contacted by email:

Helen@harrogatecvs.org.uk or on 01423 504074. If coordinators could kindly pass on this



**HARROGATE & DISTRICT
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION**

Registered charity number 1076228

EMAIL: info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk

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information as appropriate and particularly to suggest to our Polish or Chinese guests that they would be welcome at an IAG meeting with a view to a future further involvement.

Safer Neighbourhood Groups (SNGs) were formed about two years ago and tend to be based on Council wards. Around our district there are some 40 SNGs in various stages of development with representation by councillors, police, fire & rescue, various watch schemes and local residents. Neighbourhood Watch is in most cases well represented at the two/three monthly meetings but in some cases Chairmen have contacted us to encourage better participation by NHW and their constructive criticism and contribution to the development of the neighbourhood would be very welcome. In order to help in generating more enthusiasm we plan to note meeting dates and venues on our H&D NHW website and to notify coordinators a few days in advance and will happily list links to locate minutes of SNG meetings if secretaries/chairmen forward details to info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk. It is recommended that Neighbourhood Watch be identified as a separate agenda item at the SNG meetings and a coordinator lead the discussion.

There are times, fortunately not too often, when we as current committee members are unable to fulfil our 'obligations' to NHW members or the police. This predicament usually occurs during the winter period when there are medical reasons such as sickness or accidents and because of long travelling distances in adverse weather conditions on scheduled dates for set-up meetings. It would be very much appreciated if we could attract three or four coordinators to join us on the committee to assist in sharing the load of being involved in NHW set-up meetings, training sessions (where your own experiences are invaluable) and taking part in discussions on NHW contribution to the 'Big Society'. We are already involved in new technology and processes for the development of police assistance in the future. Please give me a call on 01937 584998 or e-mail me at info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk so we can discuss and we can invite you to our next meeting without expecting further commitment.

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Email us at info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk or phone 0845 60 60 247 and ask to speak to a police officer from your local Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Safer Neighbourhoods Policing by Supt. Ken McIntosh

Having completed my first year as the Safer Neighbourhoods Commander of NYP Harrogate & District, it is a pleasure and opportune to share some thoughts with Neighbourhood Watch on the recent past and the future of policing in our district. Our relationship and the results of its effectiveness concur very much with the external assessments conducted nationally, answering the fundamental question "Does NHW impact positively on crime reduction?" We are of the same opinion that NHW schemes impact positively on crime reduction in four out of five cases when compared with similar areas without schemes. Furthermore, NHW schemes are generally highly valued by the public, who appreciate them not just for their impact on crime but also for the re-assurance they provide and for the ways in which they encourage greater community spirit and cohesion. The growth in the number of NHW schemes in recent years, the concept of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the introduction of PCSOs have all contributed to the reduction in crime and the fear of crime. We have a history of a significant decrease in crime and the downwards trend continues. However, there are always new challenges and the impact of new types of crime which necessitate a responsive police service and the contribution of NHW, by reporting suspicious incidents promptly, is paramount. There will always inevitably be some crime and the formation of a NHW scheme is an effective deterrent but an increasing level of detection rates also contributes. We have recently had a huge success in that since 20th October 2010 there have been no two-in-one burglaries. We are sure that the opportunist burglars have still been around but the repeated reminders to keep doors and windows secure really does help – remember to secure your possessions! Word soon circulates amongst the criminal fraternity if their chance of successful crime is reduced. The impact of the projected spending cuts has yet to be appreciated but we might expect to see an increase in crime or at best a

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levelling off. Together we can minimise the effect.

An improved partnership and a constructive working relationship between H&D police and NHW, auger well for the future. A true partnership is built on effective communication, the establishment of priorities, and agreed monitored action plans.

You may have heard that the previously well publicised Policing Pledge has officially been withdrawn by the Home Office but the principles have been retained by NYP. The current policing strategy has five key areas:

Tasking: bringing partnership and police data together, prioritising and monitoring progress.

Community Engagement: developing the Safer Neighbourhood Group (SNG) concept.

My Neighbourhood: focussing on localised areas with specific problems.

Repeat victims/locations: focussing resources on hot spots and prolific criminals.

Volunteers: recognising the value of NHW volunteers and encouraging their involvement.

The contribution of H&D NHW is very much appreciated and we respect any points that you may wish to raise with Safer Neighbourhood Teams, which you consider could improve our service to your neighbourhood.

From the Harrogate District Community Safety Partnership by Andrea Atkinson

Why not add one more resolution to this year's list? How about carrying out a security review of your property? A new year brings opportunities for reflection. Something we tend to overlook is home security, which is why it's a good idea to do a security review of your home, vehicle, shed, garage and outbuildings now.

Harrogate District is a safe place to live and We are asking you to help keep it that way. You are probably thinking "where do I start? "

Put yourself in the place of a criminal. View your property, through the eyes of a criminal and where you see an opportunity; think about what you can change to reduce the risk.

Next look at your house, imagine it has many layers. Start outside and work inwards: Look at

the perimeter of your property – can the gate be shut or locked?

Is the fence doing its job – will it keep people out? Can you reduce the number of hiding places by cutting back hedges and shrubs?

Do you have a sensor light - does it work?

Are there any items around the exterior of the property, which could assist a burglar?

Now let's look at the property: Are your window and door locks adequate? Remember to lock your doors even if you are in the property. Have you got a spy hole and door chain to protect against unwelcome callers?

Inside the house - are you keeping your keys safe? Don't leave them on display. Are your valuables in a safe place and out of sight? Are items of property security marked and/or photographed? Do you use a light timer when you are away from the house?

Do you need a security alarm? Remember houses with alarms are less likely to be burgled.

Let's move on to your car: Have you left valuables on display? Are the keys in a safe place and out of sight? Remember your car keys are worth the value of your car. Is your car parked in the safest place it could be - garage, driveway, or road outside?

Garages, sheds and outbuildings are often used to store valuable property. Is the quality of your security equal to the value of the goods stored? Do you need a shed alarm? Does that padlock need upgrading?

Remember if you see any unusual or suspicious activity call North Yorkshire Police: on 0845 60 60 24 7 or 999 in an emergency.

To help you even further we have produced a Home Security Checklist on our website: www.saferharrogate.org.uk along with more information about crime prevention. Also, visit the site to obtain your **free UV marker pen!**

News from Tina Oates

A Happy New Year to all! Well, the big freeze returned with a vengeance but did not dampen your enthusiasm, with set-up meetings going ahead and several PCSOs reporting good turnouts. Thank you! Committee members have travelled throughout the district, criss-crossed

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Harrogate and traversed Knaresborough in furtherance of Neighbourhood Watch!

I know of a few fund-raising events over the last quarter but obviously several more have been held since the Treasurer recently reported more welcome donations.

One group in the Rossett area held a Christmas dinner at Hotel Du Vin where over half the membership enjoyed the festive spirit. Their enjoyment was such that they have decided to hold an April barbecue for the royal wedding.

Some groups have even started 'Tweeting', having opened a feed for their neighbourhood, to include important localised messages/news and relevant Ringmasters - plus a further link to the local SNT. This seems an excellent idea, embracing modern technology for NHW and other neighbourhood purposes.

However you decide to get together, do let me know what you are doing by using the H&DNWA email info@nwatchharrogate.org.uk Your ideas might inspire others!

A point of interest from a pre-Christmas NHW coffee evening attended by a Trading Standards officer is that with new legislation coming very soon, those nuisance callers who try to ignore your No Cold Calling Zone (NCCZ) signs will be committing an offence simply by knocking on your door and will be prosecuted. So hopefully that should finally put a stop to them.

For those areas without an NCCZ – but where there are elderly or vulnerable residents - we have been looking recently into 'Nominated Neighbour schemes'. Basically these are where an elderly or frail resident is not confident or feels threatened by doorstep callers, they ask a trusted neighbour to act on their behalf. They have a card to show callers via the letterbox or safety-chained door giving the address or telephone number of the appointed neighbour who will speak for them. This person can either verify the caller is genuine and assist the elderly householder with any further business or ask the caller to move on. If any co-ordinator has elderly or frail members who would fit this category and thinks the scheme might be of interest please contact us for more details using the email address above – or contact NYP. We hope to have more info about this and other items soon on our website.

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In the weeks leading up to Christmas we were inundated with enquiries on how to order SmartWater through our website. It is very simple. Scroll down the site till you find the SmartWater link and click on it. There you will find 3 pages: 1. Information about SmartWater: 2. FAQs about SmartWater: 3. Order Form for SmartWater. Print off this form, fill in your details and post it - with a cheque for £22, payable to H&DNWA - to the administrator, Chris Oates. Your SmartWater will be delivered or posted to you by return if possible (availability of stock permitting).

Finally - at last we have been able to re-book the **Members' Support Meeting (MSM)** for schemes/villages east of the A1, which had to be postponed last year due to heavy snow. The re-scheduled meeting will take place on **Wednesday 16th February at Green Hammerton Village Hall from 7pm until 9pm.** Whilst this meeting is for the convenience of members from outlying villages, any H&DNWA members are welcome to attend. Coffee/tea and biscuits will be available at a small charge, prior to the meeting, from approx. 6:30 pm until the meeting commences.

From the Treasurer, Katy Piazza

We are always really pleased to receive contributions which help to pay for running costs, starting new schemes and development training. Since the last Look Out we have received donations from the following watches: Farnham, Hall Ln, Rossett Ave, Garth & Gdns, Manor Dr. Scheme A, Oakdale Manor, Rossett Beck, Daleside Ave and Beckwith Rd, and personal donations from Mrs Kennedy, Mr & Mrs Brown, Mrs Eyre, Mrs Hillsdon and Mr Preston. Thankfully we have many schemes that make regular annual donations but we have many more schemes that have sadly never donated. Perhaps some of the newly set-up schemes can also make a donation – any amount is welcomed. Please send to Katy Piazza, 8 Woods Court, Harrogate, HG2 9QP. (Cheques made payable please to - Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association)