



Neighbourhood Watch

Ascot area newsletter May 2014



Ascot Police Station is due to re-open in early May after extensive refurbishment.

**Opening hours for the front counter are expected to be as before:
10am-2pm Tuesday-Thursday.**



BEWARE THE 'LOOKALIKE' OFFICIAL WEBSITES

Another warning about not giving strangers your personal details, such as passwords and bank account numbers, was given to Ascot NW members in April.

This time it came from Greg Nelson, head of Trading Standards, at the Royal Borough who said that when faced with a cold caller at the door many of us tend to be suspicious, but when approached by telephone or computer many people's guards are down – particularly when the caller purports to be from their bank or the Police.

"You just have to remember that there are many people out there who are trying to rip you off – although of course it doesn't apply to everyone. So be careful. Keep all information confidential and private. Don't give your details to anyone. If in doubt simply put the phone down, or don't respond to the email, just as you'd put unwanted mail straight in the bin," he said.



Greg (pictured here) said another thing we should beware of was the proliferation of "lookalike" official websites. Most of these look very like the real websites you go to in order to renew a driving licence, car tax or passport etc, but in fact charge an unnecessary fee for "checking" your details and sending them on to the real site.

"If you are filling out any official form online you must make sure you are on the official website – remember any Government site will have gov.uk in its web address," he said.

Another piece of advice was not to respond in any way. If you engage in any sort of conversation on the phone you are bound to give some information away, and you will go on a list of people likely to respond to hoax calls. The same applies if you send back unwanted mail. And unfortunately if you do become a victim of fraud statistics show that the fraudsters will try and target you again.

For official Trading Standards Institute advice on dealing with doorstep sellers and bogus callers see back page.



Thanks to Neighbourhood Watch from Superintendent Kate Webb

Having had the pleasure of being invited to the Ascot NW meeting in January I was really impressed by the level of attendance and evident commitment to reducing crime and reporting suspicious activity that has undoubtedly contributed to reducing crime and disorder in the Ascot area.

A significant recognition for achieving that reduction must also go to the Ascot Neighbourhood Team under the leadership of Police Sergeant Martin Littlewood. They have worked tirelessly with you, partners and other community groups to make your community a safer place to be.

Please continue to work with us. You know your community. If something or someone doesn't seem right to you, trust your instincts, they are probably not. We would rather check out an incident and find an innocent explanation than not and find we have let a criminal slip through the net.

I am also grateful to all the work that Jeff Pick has done with you to keep you informed of scams, incidents and suspicious activity which you share onwards, raising awareness far and wide and increasing our armour against becoming victims of crime.

Performance figures for Thames Valley Police and for the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Police Area show that all crime is down in our area by 9%. Or over 800 fewer victims than the year before. Your engagement has directly contributed to that huge achievement and I am very grateful to you for your continued support.



**Thames Valley
CRIMESTOPPERS**
0800 555 111
Call anonymously with information about crime



**THAMES VALLEY
POLICE**
101 IN AN
EMERGENCY
ALWAYS
CALL 999

NEWS FROM



THE BEATS

North Ascot and Winkfield

Crime down, but remember to lock up

Firstly, following the good news about Thames Valley Police having record figures in their reduction in crime this year, we are very proud in Bracknell Forest, yet again, to be one of the top performing areas in the Force. We have exceeded the targets set last year and are one of only two Local Policing areas to achieve this. All crime has reduced by 5%.

Sheds and garages continue to be a popular target for our opportunist offenders, with no particular pattern as to where they attack, but they are mostly looking for insecure or those where tools are known to be kept. It is really important that outbuildings are securely locked; checked regularly; tools secured within; and any suspicious activity should be reported to the police immediately.

Vans are another inviting prospect for the opportunist, very likely to contain tools and sometimes even left insecure. We must continue to get the message out to van owners and drivers to keep their vehicles secure; consider fitting specialised alarms; and keeping those valuable tools secure, possibly in a big metal, lockable storage box.

We are enjoying our success of low crime figures and hope that members of Neighbourhood Watch and those who just receive our Alerts, will continue to work with us, reporting suspicious activity and providing us with very valuable and useful information, ensuring that the figures decrease even further during the next year.

**Margaret Weber, NW Administrator,
Bracknell Forest Police.**
margaret.weber@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Farewell Lucy

I have taken up a role as a Police officer within the Youth Offending Scheme in Bracknell. I have very much enjoyed my time as a Neighbourhood Officer working in Winkfield, Cranbourne and North Ascot, and will miss such a close and dedicated community. I have met some lovely people and hope the Neighbourhood Watch meetings continue to be a success.



WPC Lucy McDonnell

● Pending the appointment of a replacement, other officers from the district will be covering North Ascot.

Ascot Neighbourhood Watch newsletter May 2014

Ascot, Sunningdale, Sunninghill & Cheapside

Message from Sergeant Martin Littlewood:



The Ascot Neighbourhood team are still working out of Windsor Police Station whilst Ascot Police Station is being refurbished. We are now hoping to be back any time now in May.

It has been a very positive start to the year, with very few offences being committed. Please continue to help us by making it harder for criminals by taking simple crime prevention measures and call us with anything that is suspicious. Now that you have dusted off the lawn mower, why not overtly mark it with your house number and postcode; chain it to something solid in the shed; fit a shed alarm and lock the side gate.

BEWARE OF SCAMS AND DON'T GIVE OUT YOUR DETAILS

I hope that you are all now aware of the various scams that have been hitting the area. The good news is that 'courier fraud' has dropped dramatically in Windsor and Maidenhead since the introduction of the local Police's action plan, drawn up to target and reduce it. There were only six recorded cases in March, a reduction of 45% from the previous month. It appears that good communication with the public and taxi companies, to raise awareness of this fraud, has been successful in deterring offenders from targeting our area.

A male linked with 18 courier fraud offences across Thames Valley was arrested following a warrant at his London address in February. He has been bailed and Thames Valley are working with Surrey Police to bring him, and others arrested in connection with him, to justice for around 80 courier fraud offences in the South East region, spanning multiple police forces. In addition a male and female have also been arrested in the last couple of weeks after being found in possession of a bank card obtained by courier fraud. They have been bailed for further investigation into the offence.

Remember: your bank will never send a courier to your home; your bank and the police will never ask you for your PIN number; your bank and the police will never ask you to key your PIN into your phone; your bank will never tell you that they have set up an alternative account for you to transfer all your money into.

JAIL FOR THEFTS FROM SUNNINGDALE SUPERMARKET

John Gwillim-Jones, aged 60, of no fixed abode, has been sentenced to four years in prison, after pleading guilty to six offences of theft. The offences took place in Waitrose stores in Sunningdale, Windsor, Marlow, Chesham and Henley, between May 2012 and October 2013. Gwillim-Jones entered stores on the pretence of being a shopper and stalked female shoppers until he had a chance to reach into their shopping bags or handbags and remove their purses.

This is an excellent result after some hard work by PCs Pete Bullett and Martyn Withers. Thanks to them, and a reminder to everyone please – Mr Jones did not use any force, he bided his time and stole purses from open handbags that were put in shopping trolleys. In a similar vain, we have recently been investigating a man who stood behind people in a local supermarket so that he could see them inputting their PIN numbers.

Please don't hesitate to call us if something is not quite right. Together we can continue to reduce crime.

Is your car really locked?

Recently four cars were broken into in the same street in Sunninghill one evening—and all were insecure. However, the owners of some of them think that they may have locked them.

The Police suspect that thieves may again be operating electronic jammers so that when an owner locks a car with a fob the lights may flash, but a jammer has been used to stop the doors actually locking.

So please check that your doors have actually locked when leaving your car parked anywhere.

Another local problem has arisen with rear house doors being left unlocked at night. Any property or vehicle left insecure acts as a 'Crime Attractor'. The message will quickly spread amongst opportunist thieves that there are easy pickings in a certain area.

Don't encourage crime. Everyone must do their bit to make sure they do not become a victim of crime, and just as importantly that they do not attract crime to their neighbours' houses or property.

Keep your garden safe and secure



With summer just around the corner the national Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network have issued this advice:

- Secure your garden with lockable gates and walls or substantial fencing. Thorny plants around the perimeter and trellis on top of fences make it harder for an intruder to access your garden.
- Keep your ladder and garden tools locked away, as they can be used by burglars to access your home. Keep tools inside if you do not have a garden shed.
- Remember to lock garage and shed windows and doors. Use electronic shed alarms or padlock alarms to deter thieves.
- Make sure any valuable items stored in sheds are well-secured, to a ground/wall anchor where possible.
- Store bins securely to prevent them from being used to access high windows or flat roofs.
- Outside security lighting can act as a deterrent for burglars.
- Walking on gravel is noisy and this can help to deter intruders.

Ascot NW Association posts

Alison Moody has stepped down as NW coordinator for Cheapside, and has been replaced by Wendy Pentelow who can be reached on 01344 291058.

We are still looking for someone to take on the role of selling at-cost security devices to members. If you might be able to help please call Ascot NWA chairman John Bailes on 01344 286023.

The work of the community wardens

Ben Page, the Community Warden for Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale, is back in the area after spending the earlier part of the year helping people elsewhere in the Royal Borough who were affected by floods.

After a call from Sunninghill and Ascot Parish Council he has been dealing with graffiti in South Ascot Park, but is appealing for any information about the culprits either via the Police non-emergency number of 101 or directly on 07917 211 598. He has also been involved in a Speed Watch operation in April.

Ben is concerned that at this time of year we tend to get a rise in shed break-ins, so make sure you know what is in your shed. If you have high value items you take pictures and get serial numbers. Alarms for sheds are relatively cheap so consider installing one and board up windows so they are not an easy point of access.

Anti-social behaviour is down by 25% across the Royal Borough, and in Ascot, Sunningdale and Sunninghill the number of incidents remains low with eight reports in November, 14 in December and four in January.

The community wardens patrol our neighbourhoods regularly to identify and disrupt any troublemakers, but are always looking for more information from our residents about how the wardens can help. If you have any ASB concerns you would like to discuss with Ben, please get in touch on his office telephone 01628 685636 or by email: ben.page@rbwm.gov.uk.



Retirement fair at Ascot

This year's Retirement Fair will be held on August 20 at Ascot Racecourse. There will be over 150 exhibitors providing information for the retired or those about to retire.

John Bailes, Chairman of Ascot Neighbourhood Watch, said: "I am pleased to learn that, once again, the Retirement Fair has many



exhibitors such as the Police, the Council's Community Safety Team and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service that are related to security and offer advice of practical relevance to all of us in Neighbourhood Watch."

The day is designed to be both informative and enjoyable. As well as advice on security, health, pensions and many other issues of interest, the event, which runs between 10am and 4pm, is well attended by many clubs and local voluntary organisations. Throughout the day there will be cookery demonstrations, a fashion show and a trad jazz band and a steel band will play live music.

Entrance is FREE. Further information can be found at www.ascotretirementfair.com or phone David Hilton at 01344 626784.

Setting the police priorities for Ascot

Neighbourhood Watch members in the Royal Borough should find enclosed with this newsletter a questionnaire from the Ascot Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) inviting views on local crime and antisocial behaviour.

The NAG needs to know which issues are of most concern to all of us so that they can ensure that those problem areas get priority attention from the police and any regulatory organisations concerned. The larger the response, the more confident the police can feel that they are tackling the right issues. So please find time to respond, by one of the methods offered.

The NAG's members are drawn from a range of local organisations including the police, borough and parish councils, NW and local businesses. Any local resident with an urgent and particular issue to raise is welcome to contact the Group's chairman, David Hilton, and then attend one of the NAG's monthly meetings. You can learn more about the Group on www.ascotnag.com

NW members in the Bracknell Forest Council part of North Ascot no longer have their own NAG covering Winkfield Parish, but come under the larger Police neighbourhood of the Bracknell Northern Parishes. Their next Police 'Have Your Say' meetings are on Thursday May 8 and Wednesday June 4 both 10-11am at Winkfield Parish Office with PCSO Gary Clarke.

TALKS ON PREVENTING CRIME

Attendance at the Ascot NW quarterly meetings has grown in the past year, but more members are still welcome to attend, said the chairman John Bailes at the annual meeting in April.

"We have had most useful talks on economic crime, internet security, and crime prevention in the home. And a valuable feature of the meetings has been the opportunity to discuss current events and crime trends with our local Police," he said.

"There are usually a few empty chairs, so any scheme coordinator wishing to bring one or two of his members is very welcome to do so."

The next meeting is on Wednesday July 16 at the King Edward Hall, North Ascot, at 7.45pm (tea & coffee available) for 8pm.

Any NW member with online facilities who is not registered to receive the Police Alert messages is strongly recommended to join the system by registering at www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

Ascot Neighbourhood Watch contacts

Beat coordinators:

North Ascot : Jefferson Wood 01344 883325
Mike Dunlop 01344 883640

South Ascot : Clare Purdy 01344 876280

Sunningdale : Peter O'Kill 01344 627694
(also newsletter editor)
email pokill@btinternet.com

Nigel Potter 01344 620920

Sunninghill : George Williams 01344 621836

Cheapside : Wendy Pentelow 01344 291058

Officers:

Chairman: John Bailes 01344 286023

Secretary : Sarah Streeter 01344 624317

Treasurer : George Coates 01344 621859

Membership : John Williams 01344 876313

How to deal with unwanted callers

A lot of scams nowadays involve unwanted telephone calls or bogus emails, but many people are still pestered by cold callers or cowboy tradesmen at the door. This is some of the advice on how to deal with them from the Trading Standards Institute.

- *Fit and use a door security chain every time you open the front door.*
- *Always ask for identification that you can verify. Do not let the caller into your house until you have verified his/her identification.*
- *Check the ID of the caller by ringing his/her employer. Use the number from your telephone book, not the number they give you as this may not be genuine.*
- *Do not agree for anyone to carry out work in your house until you get a second opinion on whether the work needs doing, and the cost.*
- *Do not agree to any work when the caller says: "We are only in the area today."*
- *If you agree to buy any services or goods you have a seven day (about to be extended to 14 days) cooling-off period to change your mind.*
- *Never keep large sums of money in the house and keep purses out of sight, not near the door.*

More details can be found at website www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

The Neighbourhood Watch administrators for Thames Valley Police are:

Margaret Weber (Bracknell Forest) 01344 823488, email Margaret.weber@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Jeffrey Pick (RBWM) 01753 835504, email Jeffrey.pick@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk