



Neighbourhood Watch

Ascot area newsletter November 2014



Key decisions WE face in Ascot Neighbourhood Watch Association



Important message from John Bailes, chairman Ascot NWA

"If you don't use it you might lose it." That was the warning to our NW scheme members recently on the Thames Valley Police Alert system from Jeff Pick, the NW Administrator for the Royal Borough. He was referring to the fact that of about 2,000 members only about 30 or 40 attend our quarterly meetings. These were originally intended for scheme coordinators and their deputies, but in recent years have been open to all members.

This warning may have seemed a bit alarmist, but it comes at a time when there are various problems facing Ascot Neighbourhood Watch Association which are being discussed by your executive committee and on which we urgently need your opinions and help.

I should first say that I have been chairman for 10 years and have decided, for age and other reasons, to stand down after the AGM next April. I have written to all scheme coordinators in a search for a replacement, and hope that one will come forward in good time to shadow me in the months before the AGM.

These past 10 years have thankfully seen a gradual decline in crime in the Ascot area, which can be put down to a variety of causes, such as the work of our local police and the effectiveness of the Alert system. I like to think that the efforts of our members to improve household security have also made a contribution! However, this welcome improvement also has a downside: it may be that many of our members feel that the Association is no longer as relevant or needed as it used to be. If so, now seems an appropriate time to review where we now stand.

I see four issues at least which merit debate:

- ▶ As mentioned above, attendance at our quarterly meetings is very low (with the exception of last month) when compared with the size of our membership. This despite our excellent guest speakers, and the lively and informative exchanges we have with our local police.
- ▶ Frequently we find it difficult to find a replacement when a scheme coordinator leaves – for example, there are currently two schemes at Beech Hill Road, Sunningdale, and Wentworth Avenue, Ascot, likely to be wound up for this reason. Moreover, not immediately but in due course, we shall need fresh blood on the executive committee – can we for example hope to find volunteers to come forward as newsletter editor and treasurer?
- ▶ Our newsletter is currently issued quarterly, but is this necessary? Would reducing it to two or three times a year be acceptable, given that so much crime prevention information is available from the excellent Alert system and from elsewhere on the internet? Even more radically, do these sources of information mean that we could halt the newsletter altogether, in its present form at least?
- ▶ If the newsletter is to continue in its present form, we shall continue to need funds to pay for it – and this of course is the main purpose of the modest subscription of £1

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LOCK UP AND LIGHT UP AT NIGHT

House burglaries may be down in both the Royal Borough and Bracknell Forest parts of the Ascot area, but there is no doubt that with the clocks going back in October and the darker winter evenings then opportunistic thieves are more likely to be about.

So it is particularly important to make sure all your door and windows are locked, and that your home appears occupied if you are out.

These are the five top tips from National Neighbourhood Watch to make your home more secure during winter months:

1. Burglars are less likely to target a home that looks occupied. Use a timer to switch lights on when you're away.
2. Close your curtains and blinds so burglars can't see your valuables through your windows.
3. Lock your sheds and outbuildings – and an outside light can blow the cover of darkness for a would-be thief.
4. Install a burglar alarm – the box on the front of your house will act as a visible deterrent, but you should also set the alarm for when you're away, sleeping upstairs or even out in your back garden.
5. Carry out a general security check. It takes no more than two minutes to lock your windows and doors.

Further safety advice can be found on the national website at:

http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/safety_advice/

Or you could contact your NW administrator (details on panel on back page) who will put you in touch with your local crime prevention advisor.

THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



101

IN AN
EMERGENCY
ALWAYS
CALL 999

NEWS FROM



THE BEATS

North Ascot and Winkfield

There's been another change to the North Ascot and Winkfield team. Sgt Steve McSweeney, who attended the Ascot Neighbourhood Watch meeting last month, has replaced Sgt Lorna Rivett. They have done a straight swap between Crowthorne and North Ascot.

During the past three months there have been seven burglary dwellings, four burglary non-dwellings, 10 thefts from motor vehicles and four thefts of vehicles. Investigations are ongoing in four of the burglary dwellings, with two arrests having been made in two others.

All four burglary non-dwellings occurred in the Chavey Down area, and a suspect is currently being dealt with. The same suspect is also thought to be responsible for a number of the thefts from vehicles. Two arrests were also made behind the garages off Fernbank Road for possession of a controlled substance and a further arrest on Mill Ride for the same offence. Please, if you see any suspicious activity, call us immediately.

I am also currently investigating two criminal damage cases on Fernbank Road, firstly the damage to the shop window of the funeral directors and secondly to the flower beds along the road near the Parish office. If you have information regarding these, please contact your Neighbourhood Team on 101 or by the email address below.

The latest speed enforcement operation was carried out on Locks Ride and the Forest Road junction with Cricketers Lane. At Locks Ride some 20 drivers were cautioned for speeding in excess of 36mph in a 30mph area, and on Forest Road a further four were cautioned for the same offence. I have had two members of the public offer their services, and as result the Speed Indicator Device (SID) will be deployed on a regular basis to monitor speeding in the area. If anyone else would like to volunteer please contact me via the email address below.

The next 'Have Your Say' meeting will be held at the Winkfield Parish Office on Wednesday 19 November from 9.30am to 10.30am and also on Thursday 18 December at the same time and venue. Should you have an issue to raise and are unable to attend please call me on 0781 5178420 or send an email to bracknellnorthernparishesNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk

PCSO Gary Clarke (tel 07815178420)

Ascot Neighbourhood Watch newsletter Nov 2014

Ascot, Sunningdale, Sunninghill & Cheapside

Message from Sergeant Martin Littlewood:



A big thank you to everyone who took time and effort to respond to the Ascot Neighbourhood Action Group questionnaire earlier in the year. Hopefully you are aware of the NAG, but if not it is a group who meet regularly in an attempt to address local problems. The Crime and Disorder Act required the establishment of Neighbourhood Action Groups. The group was initially led by the police, but has now grown into a community group comprising local residents, members of Neighbourhood Watch, borough and parish councillors, community wardens, and the police. The principle was to give local residents a voice in what the local priorities should be for the police, as opposed to the priorities and targets that came down from the top - initially the Home Office and now the Police and Crime Commissioner.

LOOKING AT RESIDENTS' CONCERNS

The results of the questionnaire have now been reviewed, and the general themes remain the same. Residents are concerned about burglary, anti-social behaviour and speeding or parking issues. Where residents have identified specific problems, we will be reviewing the issues, speaking to the residents, and trying to resolve them. The workings of the NAG can be seen on their website www.ascotnag.com. The reply date for the questionnaire has now passed, but the NAG and the local Neighbourhood Police are always keen to hear your views, or issues. The best form of contact is via email - there are links on the NAG and Thames Valley Police websites (or you can just phone us on 101).

Talking about targets, Thames Valley Police currently has a target to reduce domestic burglary compared to last year's figures. The good news is that the reduction over the past 12 months is 24% across our Local Police Area of Windsor and Maidenhead (and Ascot). My request to you is to continue to be vigilant, and take all reasonable precautions. We have unfortunately had a number of reports of someone just walking in through an unlocked door and taking a purse. It might seem unnecessary if you are just out in the back garden...but the reports tell a different story.

SEEKING SUNNINGHILL BURGLARS

We are approaching the time of year when we traditionally see a rise a crime - coinciding with the dark nights (see also front page). Please use a timer to set lights to come on if there is no-one at home in the early evening. As always, please call us if you see something suspicious. We are currently looking for two men who were seen looking into houses in Sunninghill around the time of a burglary in the area. Both white males, one aged 30 to 40 years, 5'8" tall, large build, short brown hair, stubble, wearing dark clothing, and the second male, 30 years old, 5'10" tall, light coloured hair, smartly dressed in a black quilted jacket. Please try to call us at the time if you see anything odd so that we can attend and check it out - there may well be an innocent explanation.

PC Pete Bullett has run a number of operations over the summer looking at speeding and mobile phone use. Whilst speeding is often not as bad as some people perceive, the use of mobile phones by drivers is very worrying. In one operation we gave out 14 tickets in Ascot High Street in under an hour to drivers using phones. If we had had more time and greater manpower it could have been many more. We will continue to target both issues.

If you have got any thoughts or observations you know where we are or you can call me on **0781 7817624**.

Packed meeting for talks on traffic problems and “legal” drugs

Report from Jeff Pick:

What a brilliant Open Meeting at Sunningdale in October – it was standing room only, on a really wet, miserable autumn evening! My thanks, to those that braved the weather to attend.

It was a really interesting evening too. Tony Carr from RBWM Highways, is so knowledgeable about everything to do with speeding/road calming and parking – even though that is not his department and he is a really good and clear speaker making all the technicalities/delays/processes, so easy to understand. I did say at the meeting that if anyone has any questions they wanted to ask him, if you forward them to me at my police email (in the panel on the back page) I will forward them to him.



After that, we had an old favourite – the new Neighbourhood Sergeant for the Bracknell Northern Parishes, Sgt Steve McSweeney (pictured here). Steve is one of those speakers, that has funny anecdote after anecdote, all delivered like a stand up comedian, tickling his audience. He again, is hugely knowledgeable and the people of North Ascot are very lucky to have him.

The ‘new’ Sgt from Ascot – Martin Littlewood had his turn and reminded us that he has now been in post for over a year! Time flies. He confirmed the messages I keep putting out – virtually no crime in Ascot.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

After that there was more - everyone should come to these meetings, they are absolutely full of vital information - we had a presentation from the DAAT, the Royal Borough Drug and Alcohol Action Team. Catherine Williams and Theresa Allen talked about all the current drugs on offer and the fact that alcohol issues, had shifted up their referrals and it was now 50/50. Theresa brought along a lot of real drugs and equipment, for us to look at, examine and sniff!!! The smell of cannabis, once smelt, is never forgotten!

There was a lot of discussion about the new phenomenon of ‘Legal Highs’ and exactly what these were, their effects, strengths – and, of course, what they look like in their packaging. She also re-enforced that kids will often speak about issues of concern to them to a grandparent, rather than a parent, who might be more judgemental, so channels of communication must be kept open. It may be, those kids realize we are from the 1960s!!!

The next Open Meeting is on Wednesday January 21 2015 at the WI Hut in Broomfield Recreation Ground, Sunningdale. If you haven’t been to one of these meetings, please think about coming, it is far more educational – and amusing – than anything on the TV and you will mix with people with similar concerns to yourself! It opens at 7.45pm for tea and coffee and informal chats with the police and Neighbourhood Watch officers, and the main meeting begins at 8pm with a speaker on crime prevention issues and reports from the local neighbourhood police. See you there!



What are “Legal Highs” ?

There are basically two kinds: gas canisters containing nitrous oxide, and packets containing pills or powder that mimic the effects of illegal drugs such as cocaine or ecstasy.

Nitrous Oxide is better known as laughing gas, and the small canisters (pictured here) are used to make soda-type drinks in home appliances, which is why young people are able to buy boxes of them. In larger canisters it is used by dentists as part of an anaesthetic, and by the catering industry to make whipped cream.



Youngsters inhale it from a balloon after using a dispenser to inflate the balloon with the gas. It gives them a “high” for a couple of minutes, after which they can be light-headed, dizzy and confused. It is dangerous because it affects coordination and balance, so there is a risk of falling over. If users don’t take in enough air they can become unconscious. Heavy and regular use can cause nerve damage.

“Legal Highs” also covers a range of substances under various exotic names that aim to closely resemble banned substances, but with chemical modifications. They are widely available through the internet and some shops – at the moment quite legally.



They come in powder or pill form (some are shown here), but no safety tests have been performed on them to show they are safe. Risks can include inhibitions, drowsiness, excited or paranoid states, coma seizures and even death.

This information is taken from a booklet “Drugs & Alcohol, a guide for families” which is published by the Royal Borough’s Drug & Alcohol Action Team. Copies can be obtained from them by ringing 01628 796732.

The booklet advises: “You can’t prevent your child from coming into contact with drugs and alcohol, but by talking openly with them about the issues, you can help them to stay safe and make positive choices. It’s never too early to raise the subject, and it’s far better that you provide them with straightforward factual information than for them to be misinformed by their friends. This booklet will help you to be better informed.”

MAKE SURE YOUR CAR IS LOCKED

Eight cars were entered and searched in two days in the Ascot area recently, with satnavs, mobile phones and a handbag stolen. Police warn that someone is out and about with a jammer, or some other gadget to unlock cars.

So PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING OF VALUE IN YOUR CAR. Report anything suspicious on the 101 number.

Opportunist thieves sometimes have signal jammers which can prevent you locking your car – even though you think you have locked it. In fact, most car fobs will act as jammers confusing the signal received by your car if used at the same time as yours. Thieves often have much more powerful signal jammers, used to prevent 'Tracker' signals on more expensive cars. Whenever you leave your car, you must always try a car door handle to make sure it is locked!

DON'T FALL FOR CYBER SCAMS

Cyber crimes have almost replaced burglaries as the criminals' favourite method of getting their hands on our goods and money. Online scams (emails, Facebook, Twitter etc) can seem genuine; don't get caught out, follow this advice:

- Do not** open or forward emails which you suspect as being spam.
- Do not** open attachments or click on links from unknown sources, or from known sources if it looks unusual.
- Do not** respond to communications from unknown sources.
- Do not** make purchases or charity donations in response to spam email or unusual looking social media requests.
- Set up** spam filters on your email account.

Check here for more information:
<http://content.met.police.uk/Site/fraudalert>

HELP NEEDED FOR SILVER LINE

Silver Line, a national free and confidential advice and chat service for older people any time of the day or night, is looking for volunteers to man the phones – to be there, and be a warm, friendly, supportive voice, if someone called. The commitment, is as little as half an hour a week and full training is given - just to speak to someone who is lonely, or a carer feeling isolated and alone in the early hours, on the phone.

They are also trying to get an initiative off the ground in Berkshire concerning elderly residents who are living alone and lonely, in large empty houses, where their family may have passed on, or moved away. They may not want to burden their family, with their loneliness. The project connects potential matched tenants, to those people. The owner receives some cash and most importantly company. The tenant agrees to help look after the owner and provide that company – a sort of companion lodger. They are carefully matched and both understand, how the scheme works.

For more information go to their website: www.thesilverline.org.uk or call free on **0800 4 70 80 90**.

DISABILITY HATE CRIME

Thames Valley Police have been raising awareness about disability hate crime and encouraging victims, friends, family and support workers to report any incident where they believe they, or another person, is being targeted because of their disability. More information about disability hate crime, how to spot the signs when someone may be a victim, how to report it and how to obtain support for victims and witnesses, is on the website <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/aboutus/aboutus-ead/aboutus-ead-hate-crime/aboutus-ead-disability-hate-crime.htm>

Future of Ascot NWA

(continued from front page)

per household which we ask for annually. Regrettably, a large number of schemes have failed to send in their subs this year, despite a reminder. It would be helpful if the coordinators concerned could say what the problems facing them are.

Beyond these lie the big questions:

- *Are you prepared to help run Ascot NW Association?*
- *Have you any ideas for the future?*
- *Do you really want Ascot NWA to continue or should we let it fade away and leave individuals to get their crime prevention information direct from the Alert system or National NW via the internet?*

Do please email or phone me, or any of the officers named below, to let me know what you think. It is important. It is your Neighbourhood Watch.

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 07980 627181

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

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