



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter
Registered Charity No 1078269
Autumn 2015

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

Welcome to the latest edition of District Association newsletter, the content of which as always I thoroughly commend to you and also your members. Particular thanks for the ongoing high quality of these newsletters are due to the extremely hard work of our Editor, Neal Fowler, who is also the Association Vice Chairman.

“Doorstep chuggers”: update – after sharing our concerns with you in the last newsletter I can report that, in a reply to a letter to our local MP Julian Brazier, who is also one of our NHW members, I was told that there is a Charities Bill currently before Parliament, which hopefully will address the issues we raised. The County NHW Forum (Kent Neighbourhood Watch) is still awaiting a response from Kent Police to its same concerns.

Membership update – the ‘challenge’ of finding new interest in NHW in my last message does not yet seem to have borne great fruit but there are always gaps between sowing seeds and harvesting. Hopefully, if you believe in the purposes and benefits of NHW, then you will indeed be spreading this around amongst friends and relatives – and not just those living in other parts of the Canterbury District, as NHW is very much a national movement.

OurWatch scheme registrations – it’s still sadly the case that only about one third of our total number of schemes is actually registered on the national website. We want to give the clearest possible picture of the strength of NHW in our District– so please do aim to register your scheme as soon as possible at: www.ourwatch.co.uk If you should find any problems doing this then please do contact us at: committee-cdnhwa@fsmail.net

And finally – it’s good to reassure people that we are lucky enough to live in what is generally a very low crime area. However, if any NHW members do need to report concerns or actual crimes to Kent Police, please stress that it is vital that they identify themselves as such, so that our NHW presence and contribution will duly be noted.

C&DNHWA Growth Since Last Newsletter

The Committee offers thanks to the following for support of NHW in their communities:

New Scheme:

Dove Close, Whitstable - Michele Coppard

New Coordinator

Beltinge Rd, Dence Pk, Lavender Ct, Beacon Ave, Alma Rd, Hilborough Rd – John Charlesworth

The Eyes Have It



Country Eye Ltd has launched a free iPhone ‘app’ for people living and working in the rural community. The app allows users to record and share information on crime, suspicious behaviour and damage in their home community or whilst out and about. The Crime Rural Advisory Group (CRAG) has commissioned the design and build of the Country Eye app to help combat rural crime, the cost of which in Kent stands at £1.8 million. The app has been built to help residents and farmers in Kent report information quickly and efficiently. This information is securely stored in a central database and accessed by the voluntary Country Eye team who are fully trained by Kent Police. The team analyse and disseminate the information and then broadcast it out to other local app users. The app has been supported by Kent Police, The Police & Crime Commissioner, Safer Kent, National Farmers Union and BTF Partnership. Signing up for the app is simple – the system requires a contact number, email address and postcode. It records and disseminates information using the phone’s camera and GPS location settings. The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play by searching Country Eye.

No Hiding in Patent Place

Householders have been urged to hide their valuables in unusual places after a scientific study revealed how experienced burglars choose predictable routes when raiding homes. Recent research found that career crooks targeted high-value areas, such as bedrooms, studies and living rooms, but were suspicious of unusual rooms and rarely entered bathrooms. The University of Portsmouth ran the study on the methods used by burglars and non-burglars after seeing their actions first-hand during mock burglaries. In the tests, all the experienced burglars entered houses by the back door, while the novices went through the front door. All the burglars navigated the house in a systematic way, with half heading straight for bedrooms and avoiding bathrooms. Serial burglars and novices took a similar number of goods, but the burglars' hauls were worth about £1,000 more and included designer handbags, wallets, cash, phones and leather jackets, most of which had been ignored by novices. The burglars were much more efficient, systematic and persistent than the novices. Through deliberate practice and repeated exposure to the layout of houses, burglars automatically recognise the high-value areas. The study has provided important information to aid crime prevention and will assist development of simulations to safely observe offending behaviour, which can be used with large populations of convicted offenders to try out various crime prevention techniques that might be capable of stop them in their tracks and shocking them out of tried and tested habits. This, it is hoped, will increase their anxiety and the likelihood of the crime being abandoned.

Clean Sweep Alert

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is launching a new free, email alert system to help keep you, your home and business safe from chimney fires. Between 2010 and 2014, KFRS tackled almost 1,350 chimney fires around the county – including 123 in the Canterbury district. From KFRS research carried out earlier this summer, one in three people who responded to a KFRS online survey said that they hadn't had their chimney swept in over a year, if at all. Head of Community Safety, Lee Rose, said: "Chimneys can turn into blazing furnaces when they catch fire, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage and putting your home, family and business at risk. "We're launching the clean sweep alert – it's safe and easy-to-use and you can sign up in seconds. It will send you a message to remind you to get your chimney cleaned and inspected if you haven't already had it done. That way you can make sure it's free from debris and in good working order before you light a fire when the weather cools down. This will help to prevent fires and structural damage to your property." If you have a chimney, open fire, wood burner, Aga or other 'real flame' appliance, it's vital that you ensure it is properly installed and serviced by competent engineers, so you can safely curl up next to a warm, cosy fire throughout the colder winter months. Lee added: "The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning can occur at any time, in any home or enclosed space. Blocked flues and chimneys can prevent carbon monoxide escaping, allowing it to reach dangerous levels. Make sure you don't get caught out by this silent killer. Proper care and maintenance will allow you to enjoy the benefits of using your fireplace safely and, as it will run more efficiently, it could save you money too! Don't take chances with safety, sign up for the free clean sweep alert and get your chimney and flues inspected and swept annually. Follow our common sense chimney fire safety advice and keep your home and business fires burning safely this winter." To sign up for the clean sweep alert visit www.kent.fire-uk.org/cleansweepalert



Call a chimney sweep **NOT** a firefighter



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad

On 3 July the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) announced changes to depositor and policyholder protection provided by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) – which safeguards savers' money in the event that a bank or insurer goes bust. The PRA is required by the European Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive to recalculate the FSCS deposit protection limit every five years and set it at a sterling amount equivalent to 100,000 Euros. Recent changes to the exchange rate, caused by the weakening Euro, now mean that the compensation limit will drop to £75,000 per person – albeit the existing level of deposit protection (£85,000) will be maintained for six months to ensure that depositors have suitable time to move savings before the change takes effect at midnight on 31 December 2015. The PRA is consulting on rules to assist savers who are contractually tied into savings products for a period which extends beyond the cut-off date. The intention is to allow depositors to withdraw funds between the old and new limits without penalty from 1 August 2015 until 31 December 2015 if they experience a decrease in deposit protection as a result of the limit change. On a more positive note though, from the same date (3 July 2015), depositors with temporary high balances of up to £1 million will be covered under the FSCS for six months, either from the date on which the money is transferred into their account or the date on which the depositor becomes entitled to the amount, whichever is later. This is to ensure that depositors are covered for specified events i.e. a house sale or funds received from a 'life event' such as a divorce settlement or inheritance. And for insurance policyholders, the PRA has changed the insurance limits for FSCS compensation to increase protection for policyholders in the event of an insurer failing. This increases the limit to 100% of cover for all long term policies, for professional indemnity insurance and claims arising from death or incapacity. So overall a bit of a mixed bag for investors - but hey, two out of three ain't bad! More information on these changes and attached conditions are available at <http://www.fscs.org.uk/>

No Tricks - Just A Treat

With October fast approaching some parents will probably already have started preparing the face paint and costumes for this year's **Trick Or Treat** season. No doubt their children will enjoy the prospect of dressing up, not to mention the anticipated rewards that might await them on some doorsteps, but there are many elderly and vulnerable residents who don't share their enthusiasm for that particular aspect of Halloween. In fact they dread it and would rather not have the attention thrust upon them, or their door bells! For them we have a treat – our own NHW window poster that can be downloaded, printed off and used politely to advise would-be revellers that they are welcome to have their fun – but somewhere else. To get your copy of the poster please visit the NHW website at www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/index.html and click on the Halloween poster link in the 'Useful Links' section. Please share this with, or print the poster for, any elderly, nervous or vulnerable neighbours in your scheme.



It's Not Only Your Driving Habits That Can Affect Your Car Insurance

There are many factors that affect the cost of your car insurance – some you can't control, others you might be able to. According to a survey conducted by uSwitch, your choice of an overnight parking spot may be worth a thought. You may assume that parking your car in a garage would give you the lowest premiums – after all, isn't your car safest in a locked garage? You might then also assume that your car is safer on your driveway than it would be parked on a public road, where it could be hit by a careless driver. Unsurprisingly the survey revealed that the cost of insuring a car parked on a driveway was in fact lower than that of a car parked on the road. However, the cost for cars parked in a garage was actually slightly higher. The logic is based on claims data and the number of accidents that occur while parking in garages, probably because many garages in older houses were designed for the smaller cars that were the norm years ago. Insurers may also take into account the fact that burglars have instant access to garaged cars once they've broken into a house, which might be a particular risk factor in areas with high numbers of burglaries. Insurers' rating factors vary wildly, so while one insurer may prefer to insure garaged cars, another may decide that a car on the road is safer based on their existing and previous customers' claims histories. So, if you have the option of parking your car in a garage, on a driveway or on the road, it might pay to compare quotes from different companies. Although you may be able to save money on your car insurance by changing where you park, you must always be honest with your insurer – don't be tempted to say you park your car on a driveway when it's actually kept on the road. If you're caught being dishonest, your insurer could invalidate your insurance and refuse to pay out on any claims. And don't forget that insurers can check on Google Street View to see if your home actually has a driveway or garage!

Knock Knock.....

The internet is a wonderful tool but it can be difficult to be sure with whom you are communicating. This gives fraudsters a distinct advantage, especially when advertising services or goods for sale – which they often do on newly formed domains (websites). Checking the authenticity of these before making a purchase can help to avoid costly mistakes. Action Fraud, the national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre, recommend a search using "whois" <https://who.is/> to provide information, which includes the date that the website was created, to give some idea of a its probable authenticity. And remember – Online auction sites are regularly targeted by fraudsters advertising desirable items which are below market value, but do not exist! Fraudsters use a variety of techniques to persuade potential buyers that the item is genuine and that any advanced payment will be protected or reimbursed should the product be faulty or not received – which of course it never is! Protect yourself by following these simple rules:

- Stay within the auction guidelines stipulated on the website;
- Remember – Payments made via bank transfer, money transfer or e-money are not protected should you not receive the item;
- View the item in person if possible before buying;
- If the item advertised seems too good to be true, **it probably is!**

Readers' Questions Answered

How can I send an email message to all of my NHW members?

Most email programs allow you to create and name a distribution list (sometimes termed a 'Group' or 'Category') from entries in your contacts directory. The name that you assign to the group will appear on your contacts list. If you enter this name into the 'Bcc' (blind carbonless copy) box of your email program you can send a message to everyone on that list without any of them being able to see any of the other recipients' email addresses.

Can I attach the Watching Brief Newsletter to my Facebook page?

We circulate the newsletter in PDF so that a) it can be read by all computer formats and b) so that we can better ensure that the content reaches the reader in the form intended. Facebook account holders are not able to attach PDF files to their pages directly but you can get still circulate the Newsletter to your Facebook chums by putting a message on your Facebook page that directs your readers to www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/ - the Canterbury & District NHW Association website, which includes the current PDF publication of the Watching Brief Newsletter - and also the past editions too.

Car Tax Changes Cost Some Drivers Dearly

Since Last October motorists have not been required to display a road fund licence tax disc in their windscreen but under the new regime car tax is **automatically cancelled** when a vehicle changes hands, albeit the previous owner can claim back 'unused' tax for any full months remaining. The new owner is required to tax the car **immediately**. Failure to do so is an offence which could lead to the vehicle being immobilised (clamped), impounded and a fine imposed. More than 25,000 vehicles were clamped, or towed away, in the first three months of this year alone because motorists have not been familiar with the new arrangements!! Citizens Advice warn that 'clamping with lawful authority' can be undertaken by councils, the police, bailiffs and Government agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) so drivers should be aware of the revised law regarding car tax.



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Useful Contacts:

www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW - C&DNHWA
www.canterburycsp.org.uk - Community Safety Partnership
www.hoax-slayer.com - Online Protection Advice.
www.scambusters.org - Online Protection Advice
environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com - Fly-Tipping

www.ourwatch.org.uk - National NHW
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www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Child Internet Safety.
www.ageuk.org.uk - Age
www.actionfraud.police.uk - Report Fraud