



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter
Summer 2015

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

Greetings and welcome to this latest edition of "Watching Brief", the content of which, as usual, I should most heartily like to commend to you – not just for your personal benefit but also to share with your scheme members.

"You said – we did" . . . whilst our article on Pedlars in this issue is very worthy of note you may also be interested to hear an update on members' concerns regarding 'doorstep chuggers' – people from third party organisations representing charities, who knock door-to-door asking occupiers to sign-up to give regular donations through direct debit authorisations, in other words by giving them your bank details! Although many chuggers will be genuine some may not, and the passing of personal details to doorstep callers always breaks with all advice given about protecting the security of your financial information /identity (see our article below: "Don't Get Scammed – Get Savvy"). The concern was raised with the Canterbury Community Safety Partnership but CCC are not prepared to ban the activity – albeit they agreed that, when granting permissions to chuggers, they will specify that no-one should be calling after dark or where a 'No Cold Caller' sticker is displayed. (Stickers are still available from our NHW Office). I've now raised the matter at County level with Kent Police, as several other NHW District Associations share our anxiety on the issue. In the meanwhile our guidance continues to be: never divulge your financial details to any 'stranger' on your doorstep – there are many other, safer, ways to support charities.

Membership – our local PCSOs, KCC Wardens and CCC staff are very good at creating new interest in NHW. However, another way in which we could hugely promote our growth is if every Coordinator was able to create one new scheme through his or her own contacts. If that also was passed down in every existing scheme to every member then the possibilities are immense. Hopefully this is a 'mission' you will feel able accept – many thanks.

C&DNHWA Growth Since Last Newsletter

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

New Schemes:

Cherry Orchard (East), Chestfield – Mrs Linda Neesham

New Coordinators

The Drive, The Drove, Meadow Drive, Chestfield – Mr David Bailey

St Swithins Road, Tankerton – Miss Michelle Anderson

Lorry Watch

Are your local streets plagued with lorries that shouldn't be using them? If so **Lorry Watch** could help. Lorry Watch is a Kent County Council backed scheme run by local residents – see www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/lorries-and-hgv/lorry-watch – in which community volunteers record details of lorries that are suspected of using unsuitable roads or not sticking to limits and restrictions imposed through Byelaws and Traffic Orders. Once the information is collected, it is passed to Kent Police who can find the vehicle's registered keeper. If the vehicle is ignoring legal limits and restrictions, the police contact the company and warn them that continuation may result in formal action. If there are no restrictions but the road is thought unsuitable, Kent County Council will contact the company and advise them to use the Kent Freight Gateway journey planner – an internet facility designed specifically to assist users of large vehicles. Setting up a Lorry Watch is a simple process, anyone can do it. You just need at least 2 volunteers, aged 18 or over, for your Lorry Watch team. Parish Councils or other community groups can be good places to find volunteers. Then contact Lorry Watch, by emailing freight@kent.gov.uk or phoning 03000 412457, to discuss the idea. KCC will arrange delivery of the necessary equipment and give you safety information and instructions on how the scheme works.

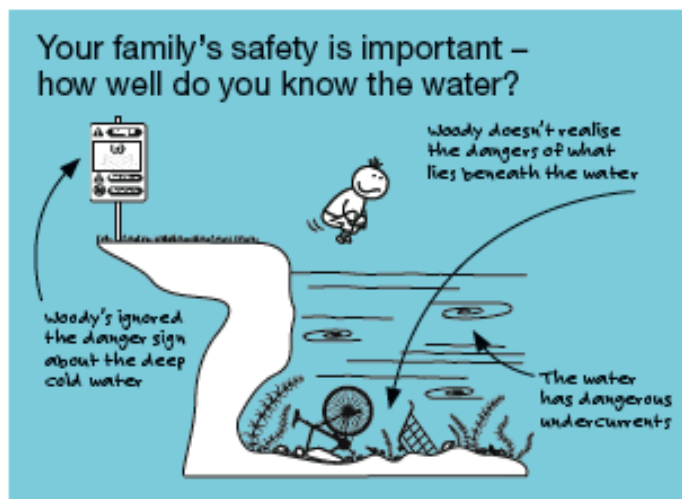
Innocent Victims Or 'Just Asking For It'?

New research says that two million of us openly leave details of our debit and credit card PINs (personal Identification Numbers) lying around our homes. So it should come as no surprise that convicted burglars, interviewed by the well-known insurer Churchill, said that they actively look out for PINs when they break into a property. Around 13% of us who create a copy of our PIN will leave it, 'unsecured', somewhere in the house, the survey revealed. A staggering 10% will keep it in their wallet or purse, an awful move that risks an empty bank account should it be stolen. Almost a quarter (23%) put it in a secure location, such as a safe. **Other favourite hiding places** – many of us do attempt to hide valuable documents such as mortgage papers, bank details and passports. Favourite hiding places are in: underwear or sock drawers; food containers (often in a fridge or freezer); books; the loft or taped to the bottom of drawers. However, burglars are getting smart to these. One burglar interviewed by Churchill said he always checks the fridge and freezer, "old fish finger boxes in the fridge... that is the first place you look for something they don't want you to find". Burglars no longer seek only to steal jewellery or electronic goods. Nowadays they are on the hunt for PINs, passports and documents that they can sell on to identity fraudsters. **Passwords** – if you have gone to the trouble of password protecting your laptop, mobile phone or tablet, it may not offer the total protection that you think it should. According to Churchill, many burglars say they can get laptops unlocked for as little as £10, or they simply wipe or replace the hard drive before selling the machine on. A far better way to deter thieves is to register Apple devices with the 'Find My Device' service so that they can be traced. Alternatively, investing in forensic property marking will act as a deterrent.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service Have New Allies

Meet the Byrnes family

Meet Kent Fire and Rescue Service's 'Byrnes' family and learn more about keeping you and your loved ones safe this summer



Let the Byrnes family make the mistakes, so you don't!
www.kent.fire-uk.org/meetthebyrnes

The Byrnes are an average family who live in the county. The family, like so many others across Kent and Medway is made up of individuals who go about their daily lives be it school, work or at home. The Byrnes family will be helping Kent Fire and Rescue Service explain some of the pitfalls of modern living. Sometimes they will get themselves into situations that could be very dangerous. They will be trying to help us all avoid making similar mistakes. Every member of the Byrnes family – including the pets, are much loved. The safety messages that they will be helping us deliver all aim to do one thing – to keep the family safe, protecting those we love the most. You can meet the Byrnes at www.kent.fire-uk.org/meetthebyrnes

Don't Get Scammed – Get Savvy

Individuals are at as much risk now of being targeted by scammers, intent on committing financial fraud, as they are of being robbed by conventional thieves. During the year to March 2015 more than 32,000 UK citizens fell victim to theft of their identity and/or savings as a result of scams – a figure which was worryingly 31% higher than that of the previous year! It goes to show that scams are BIG business for organised criminal syndicates, generating enormous sums of ill-gotten gain which are then used to fund other serious criminal activity in countries across the world. Scammers use every available form of communication network to ply their evil trade – the internet, telephone and conventional mail systems. The scammer might reside in any land on the planet but his (or her) reach is world-wide. Some scams seem innocuous at first glance, with no obvious means of extracting benefit from their target, but rest assured they don't do it for fun – it always ends up with someone paying the price. And once caught for the first time a victim's details are flashed around the globe to others in the scamming game – added to a sinister list of those 'who are worth pursuing again, and again, and again'. Simple precautions, such as maintaining up-to-date anti-virus and firewall programs, can help to keep you safe, **but they can't protect you from your own actions, so the best way of avoiding the scammers is to know their game and remain vigilant at all times.** To assist you in this we have compiled a fact sheet which explains how the 10 most common types of scam operate, see www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/minutes/ScamAdvice.pdf It's also useful to keep abreast of the latest developments and warnings via two web pages that we have mentioned before, 'Hoax Slayer' – see www.hoax-slayer.com and 'ActionFraud' the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre at www.actionfraud.police.uk/. There are also ways in which you can check to see if you are at risk of attack as a result of detail about you being circulated on the 'dark web' (an 'underworld' area of the internet used by criminals to ply illicit trade in stolen identities, paedophilia etc). A company called 'C6 Intelligence' operates a webpage which offers facilities to see if your personal identity details are for sale on the dark web. Since criminals often start by gathering information from email accounts, the company offers a free service to check the security of your email address, see www.hasmyidentitybeenstolen.com/ Regularly checking your credit rating with one of the recognised credit report agencies can also alert you use of fraudulent activity in your name.

Pavement Parking – Legal Or Loutish?



With more vehicles than ever before using our roads it's small wonder that parking problems are endemic at certain points of the day, especially in residential areas that have little or no off-street parking provision. Where there are no restrictions drivers often feel the need to leave vehicles on both sides of the carriageway, sometimes leaving precious little room for the passage of traffic between them, which causes huge problems for commercial vehicles, and of course ambulance and fire crews.

Many drivers consider that parking on the pavement is the only alternative but that inflicts danger and inconvenience upon the partially sighted, children, the elderly and parents with pushchairs and prams. The charity Guide Dogs UK have, for several years, been lobbying for a change in the law to introduce a UK-wide pavement-parking ban. In 2014 they, together with Living Streets and 18 other interested groups, won support for a Private Member's Bill on the issue. It was scheduled for its second reading in the House, but that didn't happen before Parliament was suspended for the general election. It is certain that other attempts will follow but in the interim, what is the legal position about pavement parking? The bottom line is that there is no 'blanket' law preventing cars or motor bikes from being parked on the pavement, although bizarrely the Highways Act 1835 (enacted before the invention of the motor car - and still in force) makes it illegal to *'tether any horse, ass, mule, swine, or cattle, on any highway'* – which includes that part used by pedestrians. The best that we currently have is the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which provides Kent County Council, in our case, with the power to make Orders which, among other things, can restrict or ban the parking of vehicles on the footway or verge. The duty of enforcement lies with the Canterbury City Council (CCC) in our area following changes which saw de-criminalisation of most parking offences some years ago. CCC confirms that action can only be taken by their wardens where Orders are in place, or where double-yellow-line restrictions are in force. If, however, a vehicle is deemed to be causing an 'actual' obstruction, it is an offence with which the police can deal – but the obstruction has to be preventing the actual legitimate movement of a third party to be relevant. For goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes it is more straightforward. It is an offence for them to be parked on the verge of a road, a central reservation or footway, unless instructed to do so by a Police Officer as a result of an emergency, or for unloading where there is no other place to unload – provided the vehicle is not left unattended at any time.

Gear Change For Drivers

Photocard driving licences have been issued in the UK since 1998. Until recently the DVLA also included a paper 'counterpart' – which detailed the classes of vehicle that the holder could legally drive and also showed any endorsements (points) issued for driving offences. However, since **8 June 2015** the DVLA no longer issue these and from that date existing paper counterparts will no longer be valid either, leaving the photocard as the sole licence documentation. The move is part of the Government's 'Red Tape Challenge' initiative to remove unnecessary burden. The DVLA advise drivers to destroy their counterpart after this date – but some lobby groups don't agree, citing that use of the document could still be useful when hiring a vehicle abroad for example. **Paper only driving licences (issued before the photocard was introduced) remain valid and should not be destroyed.** The only free way for drivers to now check the type of vehicles that they can legally drive, and any endorsements (penalty points) that they have on their licence, is by viewing their driving document record online at www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence. Enquiries can also be made by phone or post but both will incur a charge of about £5. Similar facilities have also been made available for employers and car-hire companies to check the details of an individual as and when required. Further information on the new system is available at www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-licence-changes



Illegal Pedlars Should Get On Their Bikes



With the warmer months and lighter evenings upon us at long last we can expect to see an increase in the number of door-to-door sellers around our streets. Some may well be genuine pedlars, trying to make an honest living. Others, however, might not. Especially, maybe, those that spin a yarn to entice you to take pity on their predicament and/or are a little too persistent in their sales pitch. Worse still is the possibility that a few might be intent on taking advantage of vulnerable residents and even committing distraction theft from their homes.

But how can one tell the good from the bad? Well it may be hard, but a good place to start is

by asking to see their Pedlar's Certificate (which is clearly titled as such – not 'Hawker's Identification' or anything similar). This, according to the Pedlars Act 1871, they require to lawfully carry out their trade of selling door to door.

It is issued annually, by the police, in the home district of the pedlar, and must be shown to anyone asking to see it. Any pedlar not being able or willing to do so could be up to no good – and should certainly be reported to the police on the non-emergency 101 number. Similarly the police should be alerted if sellers are operating after dark, ignoring 'No Cold Caller' stickers or seem suspicious in any other way. And don't forget to say that you are a NHW member when calling the police.



Time To 'Legalise' NHW Signs

KCC Highways kindly give blanket approval for the installation of NHW signs on lamp posts in streets covered by legitimate registered schemes. However, they do require to be notified of the lamp post numbers on which signs are attached, something which in the past may not always



have happened. **C&DNHWA has now pledged to endeavour to promote compliance.** Schemes already in existence can 'legalise' their signs by contacting Sharon Thomas, Highways Technical Support Officer on 03000 413836 or at Sharon.Thomas@kent.gov.uk giving the road name, location and reference number of the street lamp (if visible), together with the coordinator's details.

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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
www.firekills.gov.uk - Fire Safety
www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Child Internet Safety.
www.ageuk.org.uk - Age
www.actionfraud.police.uk - Report Fraud