



CHELMSFORD CITY

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ESSEX POLICE

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

Spring Edition April 2014

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON BEFORE RECYCLING

... and the good news!

These Newsletters can be full of gloom and dire warnings ... but the good news is that actually Chelmsford is a very safe city – both in town and in the surrounding countryside. We just need to keep vigilant – look out for our neighbours and for one-another – and especially for the elderly and more vulnerable of our citizens.

Chelmsford is a great place to live in the main – let's work on the issues raised in this Newsletter to keep it that way – and to improve on the safety and security of our environment. Get in touch and keep in touch. Send us your views (see below).

Dog Watch

A scheme referred to as 'dog watch' is being launched by the Police with Neighbourhood Watch. Those of us who have dogs and take them regularly for walks in the neighbourhood – early in the mornings, in the evenings – during the day – we might spot things happening, suspicious activities – vehicles parked up. Can we encourage you to make a note and then let the police know via the 101 telephone at a suitable moment? More about the scheme will be publicised later.

Remember – in an emergency ALWAYS CALL 999

Check out more information on our website

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

This newsletter has limited space and can only raise issues in summary. We will put more detailed information on our website as soon as possible. If you have any queries or comments please contact us via:

info@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk.

If you're interested in joining a Neighbourhood Watch in the Chelmsford area, contact our Membership Secretary:-
email mikevine43@btinternet.com or phone 01245 473715

In this issue: Email Fraud & Fake 'Official' Internet Sites, Burglaries Update, Cold Calling, Beware 'Traditional' Crimes ... *and the good news!*

Email Fraud & Fake 'Official' Websites

In our Winter Newsletter we wrote about nuisance phone calling and on-line fraud, and we want to keep stating the warnings about on-line fraud in this edition. **Phishing** – where email messages are designed to steal your identity so criminals can get your money – is approaching epidemic proportions. With all the benefits of internet-buying and banking, criminals seek easy money on the back of these services through bogus emails. There is also the scam of **copycat 'official' websites** which try to dupe people into handing over huge fees for official services in addition to standard fees or which they can receive for free.

- **Phishing & Fraudulent emails:** these emails may appear to come from trusted sources – your bank, your email provider, even individuals who you may know. Many of these emails appear to be legitimate: the email address might look authentic, and the contents are becoming increasingly sophisticated making it quite difficult to distinguish between genuine emails and fakes. Typically, there will be **a link** to entice you to reveal personal information, pin numbers, or passwords, enabling them to hack into your email or your bank account; sometimes the link may automatically download malicious software onto your computer. **Always be very cautious about links in an email**, check it out by hovering (**not clicking**) the mouse pointer on the link to see if the address matches the link that was typed in the message. Likewise, check out the authenticity of an email address by *hovering* the mouse pointer over the email address in your in-box – but beware, some of the invented email addresses are very clever too – they can look very like legitimate email addresses

If you are concerned that your security has been compromised – your bank details have been accessed or your email hacked – contact your bank, email

provider, or other service provider as appropriate, immediately. Change all your passwords. Many of us don't actually do this, but it's good practice to change your passwords regularly anyway – and have different passwords for different sites and services. Don't use your on-line book-buying service password on your on-line banking account, for example.

- **Fake 'Official' Websites:** these are websites that often pop up after a search, such as when searching for 'passport renewal', 'tax returns', or 'driving licence renewals'. These may be legitimate businesses offering assistance with on-line renewals for these or other services – but at a cost. In many cases, these companies may have a similar appearance to a government website and hide in small print a statement that they are not official. Check the web address has, for example, '.gov.uk' or '.nhs.uk' as an ending.

Further sources of advice on all these matters can be found (amongst others) at:-

www.actionfraud.police.uk/node/298
www.ageuk.org.uk/money-matters/consumer-advice/scams-advice/
www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/phishing-symptoms.aspx
www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/

Check our website for regular updates:-

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

Burglaries Update

We repeat our continual message: **check that your house is not vulnerable to opportunist thieves**. Some specific advice was given in the Autumn Newsletter – you can see this again by linking to our website (see above).

Burglaries occur because premises are not properly secured. Sometimes we can be surprisingly careless: windows open or unsecured; doors not locked; premises looking unoccupied with tell-tale signs; sheds and gates not secured. Make a check on your own premises – don't make it easier for the burglar. There's further advice from Essex Police on

www.essex.police.uk/

and our website:

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

where you can also see up-dated reports on what's happening in the way of burglaries on our website.

Cold Calling Update

Beware 'cold calling' – i.e., uninvited calls – either at your front door or over the phone. We had a report on nuisance phone calls in our last Newsletter – so in this one we want to alert you to those who knock on your front door. Many cold callers are from legitimate organisations, such as charities. Others may **claim** that they are – such as 'Prisoner Release Group' or 'Ex-Services'. Remember, you should always say 'No' if you don't want to buy anything.

**WORRIED OR SUSPICIOUS? REPORT IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON 101
IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999.**

When someone calls,

- close and lock the back door and any accessible windows before you go to the front door;
- look through your spy hole or window;
- put your door chain on.

Check the caller is who they say they are. The following has further advice:-

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/home-safety-and-security/bogus-callers/>

Beware 'Traditional' Crimes

We've written a lot about on-line crime – but let's keep alert to what we might call 'traditional' crimes: in addition to burglary, there's handbag dipping (with unfastened handbags!), pick pocketing, stealing from cars, stealing of handbags and wallets (from back pockets), theft or robbery of mobile phones and laptops; theft of cars and bicycles. But remember too, most crime is opportunist.

- Look after your personal safety
- Don't leave shopping, laptops – or anything else – visible in your car
- Always lock your car – never leave your keys visible *anywhere*
- Never leave handbags visible and unattended on tables or on the backs of chairs in public places – however safe it might appear
- Be careful when using your mobile devices in a crowded public places
- Chain up your bike – even if you leave it for a few minutes
- ALWAYS secure your home when going out – even if you're out for just a few minutes

SECURE YOUR HOME AND LET THEM THINK YOU'RE IN!