

# Chelmsford Group of Neighbourhood Watches

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

*Safer & Stronger Communities Together*



## NEWSLETTER: Spring/Summer 2019

**Emergency? ALWAYS use 999**

### FOR US, THESE ARE BIG CRIMES: Car Thefts, Shed Attacks, Bike Thefts, Home Burglaries, Drugs in Neighbourhoods

**C**rimines in our neighbourhoods seems to be on the up—or is this because Neighbourhood Watches are more active and sharing alerts and information more than before? We must remember that Chelmsford as a whole remains one of the safer places to live and work across Essex—and nationally—but when communities are worried about incidents of car theft or break-in, garden shed attack (often linked to bicycle theft), home burglaries, or (not least) drug-related antisocial and criminal behaviour in our neighbourhoods, then people are justified in being alarmed.

**There are two related approaches** we in local communities could do well to pursue as part of an organised local Neighbourhood Watch:

- **working together** as neighbours to share information, raise alerts, and work closely with the police;
- **self-help for safety** to reduce the chances of being affected by these criminal activities.

These pages draw out a little more detail and much more can be found on our website:

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

### *We can strengthen our communities by—* **Working Together** | **Self-Help for Safety**

Many local Watches based on neighbourhoods, streets, wards, parishes, or other community groupings, are increasingly working together using social media to share information on suspicious vehicles, individuals, or other activity, spotted in localities. Shared information can be collated and then passed on to the police who will then be in a better position to respond to local concerns.

There are *apps* for the iPhone™ or Android™ that enables effective communications across closed groups of people which are proving to be very effective in sharing information. The benefits of such social media groups are that membership can be managed effectively and communications can be more immediate with alerts popping up on everyone's phones. Although this comes with a bit of a 'health warning': too much 'chat' might turn people off using this facility and innocent individuals might be inappropriately targeted—we give more advice on the following pages.

Working together like this is one aspect of helping ourselves to reduce the chances of being a victim of crime, so read on ...

In all of our previous newsletters we have written about how we can help ourselves to be less vulnerable to crime—and we pull many these ideas together on the following pages. Our website, too, gives a lot of information and advice, and has pointers to many local and national organisations and businesses that can assist us. Many local Watches are clubbing together to purchase items thereby benefiting from bulk discounts, like those shown on the following pages: this is something we hope to see more of across the area.

On the following pages there follows specific advice on:

- **car theft**
- **shed attack**
- **bicycle theft**
- **burglaries**
- **drug-related activities in neighbourhoods**
- **personal safety and security**

There is much individuals, households, and neighbourhoods can do to help themselves to reduce the risk of being a victim of crime—read more on the following pages ...

**Contact us:**  
[info@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](mailto:info@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

Working with  
local partners



**Chelmsford**  
City Council

# Working Together

Many Neighbourhood Watch groups use social media to share information about what's happening in their localities—*WhatsApp* is the usual and found to be most effective, but *Facebook* and others are used. Choose what's right for your locality. Managing a 'closed group' means that you can ensure coherence and security of membership. But rules of usage should be clear about what to use and when.

Here are some guidelines:-

- be clear about the purpose of the group, *i.e.*, for Neighbourhood Watch, and never for personal, political, or business purposes;
- never share, reveal, or disclose personal information;
- never be offensive or abusive - never use expletives;
- never accuse;
- do respect individual privacy;
- for 'social chat' use other forums.

## Collating information

Collating so that it can be more effectively shared with the police or if preferred reported *anonymously* to CrimeStoppers. Organising what you have seen will be helpful when sharing information. Consider the following:-

### What have you seen?

- Make a note of what you have seen—what was happening?
- A car with its engine running parked up; a van with people in it, engine running; and so on?
- Someone looking around as if surveilling the location, for drug dealing/drug using, car theft, burglary, *etc.*?
- If you saw an individual, a group of people, what was the age/age range; make a note of description of the people (as far as you can). What were they carrying (if anything)?

### Location, and date and time

- Be clear about the place, time and date of what you are seeing.
- If a motor vehicle—  
vehicle registration, colour, make, and model;  
you can check if a vehicle is taxed and tested by checking it out on the DVLA website:

<https://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/ViewVehicle>

### Photographs

Photographic information is always helpful if it shows facial features, body language, or clothing, **but never place yourself in any danger** when taking photos or videos. Date, time, and location, are all of course important to record and provide.

### Your details ...

The police will want your details: name, address, and phone number—but remember:

**You can report anonymously with Crime Stoppers**

**Call anonymously to report crime**



[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

# IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CRIME: **ALWAYS REPORT IT**

## SEEING SOMEONE ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY?

If you see someone acting suspiciously, or a suspicious vehicle, the police want you to report the matter. They may not be able to get back to you, but all reports do feed into their intelligence systems.

You can contact the local community policing team, too, by email on [ChelmsfordCPT@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ChelmsfordCPT@essex.pnn.police.uk)—but please don't use this for urgent matters or emergencies.

In an emergency | always dial 999

**DO IT ONLINE**

For non-emergencies, call 101, or do it on-line:

[www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online](http://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online)

In an emergency, ALWAYS call 999

## Anti-terrorist hotline

**IF YOU SUSPECT IT REPORT IT  
CALL 0800 789 321  
CONFIDENTIAL ANTI-TERRORIST  
HOTLINE**

[www.gov.uk/report-terrorism](http://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism)

# Neighbourhood Watch Code of Ethics

Neighbourhood Watch has a strict Code of Ethics which has been published by the national organisation. The Chelmsford Group has included this in its constitution. The key points include the following:

Neighbourhood Watch is

- non-party political and its members shall not express any party-political view whilst performing any Neighbourhood Watch function;
- inclusive of all religious, ethnic, social, racial, or other such groups, and is welcoming and inclusive to everyone irrespective of their race, gender, faith, age, or ability.

Full details can be seen in full on our website at:

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/aboutnhw.html](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/aboutnhw.html)

This code applies to all Neighbourhood Watches working across the Chelmsford district. If anyone has any queries please contact us by email on

[info@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](mailto:info@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

# Self-Help for Safety

Helping communities, families, and individuals to be resilient against crime and advising on sensible precautions is what Neighbourhood Watch is all about. Below are some pointers. More detailed information is available on our website:

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

and on, for example, Essex Police's website:

[www.essex.police.uk/advice](http://www.essex.police.uk/advice)

## Car theft

Car theft is a nasty intrusion into our personal security, privacy, and well-being. Modern key-less car systems don't necessarily offer complete security either.

- **'Millennium' thefts:** this term refers to the theft of motor vehicles (often high value) where a burglary is committed first in order to steal car keys and subsequently the car itself. There was quite a spate of these burglaries at the turn of the millennium hence the name!
- Keep your keys in a secure place, out of sight, and inaccessible from outside (e.g., not accessible from a device pushed through your front door letter box—such as a fishing rod, believe it or not! It's useful to have a shield of some kind behind your letter box so someone can't peek in!)
- Use a **Thatcham-approved** steering lock: these are police-approved recommendations from the *Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre* (MIRRC). Note—whilst fitting a steering lock may act as a deterrent to car thieves, it is worth noting that some makes can be removed in a matter of seconds. A good example of what to use is the Thatcham-approved **Disklock**, see illustration, from [www.disklokuk.co.uk](http://www.disklokuk.co.uk).



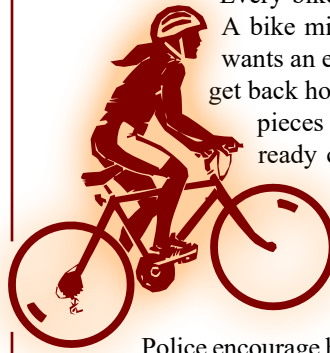
- **Keyless Car Theft**—Many modern cars equipped with 'keyless' systems may be prone to keyless car theft where thieves use electronic equipment to detect and capture the key code for a car, then in a matter of seconds activate the code and drive away a car. The use of a 'Faraday' pouch is recommended for all keyless systems. Essex police have recommended the *Defender Signal Blocker* with RPF™ and Police Preferred Specification—Vehicle Fob and Phone Protection Pouch offered by Redline Security at a very reasonable price of £6.49 + p&p. See [www.redlinesecurity.co.uk](http://www.redlinesecurity.co.uk)

## Shed attack

Garden sheds are targeted by thieves looking for bicycles (see below) and sometimes expensive tools and even alcohol!

- Secure your shed as far as you can with robust padlocks and latches—see our website under *shed security*.
- Essex Police have advice on shed security, too: [www.essex.police.uk/advice/garden-security](http://www.essex.police.uk/advice/garden-security)
- Consider high security sheds—see: [www.asgardsss.co.uk/high-security-sheds/](http://www.asgardsss.co.uk/high-security-sheds/)

## Bicycle theft



Every bike owner can have their bike stolen. A bike might be taken by someone who just wants an easy ride to somewhere—perhaps to get back home. Many bikes are very expensive pieces of equipment and can be sold on for ready cash; sometimes bikes are taken to commit crime. But in all cases, if your bike is stolen at best it's an inconvenience, at worst you stand to lose a significant investment.

- **Register your property**—Essex

Police encourage bike owners to register their property at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)—a UK national property register recognised by the police country-wide (and not just by bikes but all kinds of property). Registering improves your chances of getting any stolen property recovered.

Invest in your bike's security—don't take it for granted, here are some tips to take help make your bike more secure:-

- At home, lock up your bike securely and ideally in an inaccessible location—and **ANCHOR IT**, for example with a wall or floor anchor—see illustration (available from [www.cyclehoop.com](http://www.cyclehoop.com)).
- When out and about, secure your bike with a strong bicycle lock, and immobilise it if possible (remove a wheel or saddle, etc.)
- Buy a bike from a legitimate source—don't encourage a thief's market.
- If your bike is stolen, report it on line—**DO IT ONLINE** [www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online](http://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online) or call 101.



## Home burglary

Essex Police provide a wealth of information about helping prevent burglary—see

[www.essex.police.uk/advice/home-security](http://www.essex.police.uk/advice/home-security)

Our website ([www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)) gives many suggestions, such as use of timers for lighting and 'fake-TV' systems, intruder alarms, CCTV, etc. We have given detailed advice in previous newsletters too—all back copies of which are available on our website.

Check out our website for suggestions of self-help devices, such as window alarms, shed alarms, personal alarms, etc.

## Drug-related activity in neighbourhoods

There's no denying the link between drug use and crime. It's estimated that a third of all property crime is related to drugs and around three quarters of crack cocaine and heroin users admit committing crime to feed their habit. If you're concerned about drug use or dealing in your area, no matter how small, the police want to know. The blight of drug-related activity in our neighbourhoods is all too clear: sometimes dealing is blatant, and users might be seen haunting various residential locations, sometimes even leaving their paraphernalia visibly discarded. This is potentially very dangerous.

If you see anything like this, or are suspicious it might be happening, make a note of place, date and time, and if possible a description—and if you can, without endangering yourself, a

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take a photograph. Do not attempt to confront or intervene.

To report drug activity call 101 or contact CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Read a case study on how a local community worked with the police to tackle local drug-related activity in their neighbourhood—see our website:

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/nhdrugs2.html](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/nhdrugs2.html)

### **Personal safety and security**

A regular feature in past newsletters has also been about personal safety—for example:

- Don't be a victim to personal theft: open handbag—purse-dipped: so quick; wallet or mobile phone in the hip pocket—snatched before you know it ... so quick.
- Phone and keys on a bar or café table—you're only having a chat with someone - next time you look, hey what's happened? They've gone ...
- Handbag (manbag) hung on the back of a chair ... your back is turned ... off it goes in the hands of someone who shouldn't have it!
- In your car at big supermarket - valuables on back seat as you put shopping away. Someone comes over and asks for directions somewhere - you are being helpful, then your valuables are suddenly snatched from the back seat.

### **Knife Crime**

Knife crime in and across Chelmsford is not as prevalent as elsewhere—but there have been some serious and disturbing occurrences in recent months. These have been gang/drug-related and were not random attacks. *OurWatch* have produced advice on knife crime—you can see this via our website:

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/knifecrime.html](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/knifecrime.html)

See also [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)



**PURSE  
DIPPING**

**Don't be a victim!**

**WALLET  
SNATCHING**

**Look out for your  
personal property**

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

## **Welcome to Community Inspector Steve Scott-Haynes**

**I**n our previous newsletter *Chelmsford and Maldon District Commander Chief Inspector Gerry Parker* wrote for us, introducing himself and talking about his aims. Earlier this year, *Inspector Andy Sawyer* left the Community Policing Team for a new role and *Inspector Steve Scott-Haynes* took over the leadership of the Team. With thanks to Andy for all his support.

Here, Steve introduces himself and writes about community policing:

I am Inspector Steve Scott-Haynes, I have served with Essex Police for 15 years following 2 years' service in the Metropolitan Police. I am extremely proud to have been posted to Chelmsford as the Community Policing Team Inspector.

I have held a variety of roles in my career always in front line posts from response policing to tactical teams, community safety and intelligence. I am a public order trained officer, an intelligence manager and trained in counter terrorism.

Chelmsford is an exciting new role for me working with a new and expanding team to deliver the District Commander's priorities:

- Protecting and supporting vulnerable people and victims of crime
- Reducing harm caused by alcohol and substance misuse
- Reducing re-offending
- Tackling crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tacking violent crime
- Promoting road safety and challenging irresponsible driving

My background in intelligence gives me a unique perspective on the value that Neighbourhood Watch gives to policing. As the intelligence manager for North Essex for three years I evaluated, developed and ultimately actioned the large volume of information that Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers report to the police.

From this information I was able to direct resources and create proactive operations to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour directly affecting your communities. It is important to say that developing intelligence can take some time and your information may appear not to have been actioned, but like completing a jigsaw the information you give us fits into a larger picture.

I look forward to working with you and continuing to develop the close links between Neighbourhood Watch and Essex Police.

*We will place up-dates on our website about how the Police and Neighbourhood Watch are working together—check this out and other local neighbourhood watch information at:*

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

### **Police News**

**Y**ou can keep up to date with policing in Essex by checking out their news site at:

[www.essex.police.uk/news](http://www.essex.police.uk/news)

Essex Police also provide a wealth of advice on all aspects of crime and self-help. Check out their website on:

[www.essex.police.uk/advice](http://www.essex.police.uk/advice)

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