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YOUR CO-ORDINATOR



Somerset West Police District INFORMATION BULLETIN

February - May 2010

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COMMAND TEAM

This Newsletter is the first for 2010. May I take the opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe New Year and thank you all for your continuing support.

The last quarter of the year saw the production of the first corporately styled Newsletter that gave an insight into the work of your local Police team. I know many of you were involved with ensuring it was distributed across NHW schemes and I hope you all found it interesting. It is the intention of the Constabulary to continue with these on a quarterly basis. As 'critical and valued friend' we would welcome your feedback on the document so that we might improve with future editions – please pass your comments through Lindsey Stone in the NHW office.

I know last year was a frustrating year as far as the messaging system is concerned. There were technical problems preventing easy circulation of messages particularly telephone voice messages although we are fortunate on this District to have just over 60% of schemes contactable by e-mail. I am confident this is being resolved and once again thank you for your patience.

As a District our performance remains fairly stable, currently with a 6.1% reduction in total crime this year, that equates to nearly 800 less victims, and a current detection rate of 31%. We cannot be complacent. I continue to encourage you to support your communities and feed back any concerns to me directly, Lindsey Stone, or through the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) Process.

Superintendent Trevor Margenout
District Command Team

This bulletin is designed for circulation to various public groups. The information contained within has to be relevant to all areas across the Police District. If specific information is required then contact should be made with your local Beat Officer or Community Support Officer (PCSO). If you wish to contribute to the next Bulletin, items should be forwarded to the Watch Schemes Office, Bridgwater Police Station, Northgate, Bridgwater, TA6 3EU. (Telephone 01823-363348 or Email lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk) **Bulletins are issued to NHW Co-ordinators on the basis of one per every five households registered within their Scheme – they contain information that may be of interest so please ensure they are circulated.**

Prepared by the Watch Schemes Office

A REMINDER - the non-emergency Police number is **0845-456-7000** – please also remember tag your call **Neighbourhood Watch** when you call the Police.

Crime Statistics are available on our website, together with other local news and information at:
www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

IMPORTANT REMINDER FROM THE OFFICE

- A note for all co-ordinators, deputies and contact points registered on the Ringmaster computer at the Neighbourhood Watch Office – this is the time of year when the annual audit needs to be done to update records. The audit form is enclosed with this publication for those who need to complete them and we would appreciate them being returned to this office by 31 March 2010. Failure to return the form may result in your scheme being made dormant.

PROPERTY MARKING

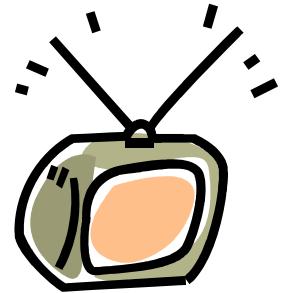
Why we should mark our property?

If the police find someone in possession of your stolen property, do you want them convicted? The answer is probably – yes.

How can the police prove it's stolen if it's **not** marked or recorded anywhere?

What property should I mark?

- All valuable electrical items – e.g. flat screen TV's, laptops/computers, satellite navigation systems, game consoles, MP3 Players, mobile phones, digital cameras, video cameras, audio systems.
- Other valuable items – e.g. jewellery, bikes, power tools, lawnmowers, sporting equipment



How do I mark my property?

It's simple – mark it with a clear identification mark which cannot be erased easily e.g. your house name or number followed by the postcode. Mark it somewhere out of sight but where the police can easily find it – near to a serial number is often a good idea.

Types of Property Marking Available

- **UV pen** – inexpensive and popular method but can fade over a period, so should be regularly reapplied (dual UV/permanent marker pens available from the NHW office at £1 each)
- **Invisible & Permanent Solutions** – these contain unique elements of DNA or Micro Dots in a clear solution which can only be seen under UV light
- **Engraving /Etching** – by using scribing pens, ceramic markers, electric hand engravers. Etching is normally by means of chemical stencil
- **Labels** – tamper resistant or affixed with special adhesive. Good visual deterrent.
- **Electronic Register** – we recommend you register valuable property free on the immobilise website -www.immobilise.com – which the police check to help identify the owner of lost and stolen goods. The Secured by Design website – www.securedbydesign.com – also gives details of police recommended licensed companies under the heading '**Asset Marking & Recovery**'.

It is also worthwhile photographing and keeping a record of antiques, paintings and similar items of high or sentimental value.

GRASSROOT GRANTS

Your scheme may be entitled to a 'Grassroot Grant' through the Community Development Foundation, an opportunity available until March 2011. Grants could range from £250 to as much as £5,000. Initial criteria state that the organisation must be non-profit making, led by volunteers, active for at least 12 months and works for the benefit of the community.

More information and advice is available through the website www.cdf.org.uk or alternatively telephone 01223-400331.

THEFT/LOSS OF MOBILE PHONES

As you are aware the police encourage property marking of mobile phones and registering the IMEI (or serial) number with organisations such as Immobilise. If your phone is stolen then report the loss both to the police and network supplier (even for prepay phones) – by giving them the IMEI number at this stage they can disable your phone so that unauthorised persons cannot use it.

The Force then gets a list of incidents where attempts have been made to unblock the phone. There are usually two main reasons this could happen, firstly that the loser has found the phone quite legitimately and forgotten to notify the police, or secondly that someone is trying to use the phone unlawfully. In the latter instance, this then enables police staff to investigate further and does lead to culprits being identified, arrested and charged.

CAROL SERVICE – WELLS CATHEDRAL

December saw the annual Age Concern Carol Service in Wells Cathedral, an event attended by some 650 people from across Somerset. This was a lovely, traditional service together with performances by two schools from the Taunton area.

There was also a multi-agency initiative to provide 'goody bags' of seasonal information, safe cans for everyone attending.

Thanks go to the organisers of the event – we hope to circulate details of this year's in due course.

CRIMESTOPPERS 0800-555111

Did you know during December 2009 information reported by members of the public across the Force to the Crimestoppers number resulted in 6 people being arrested and charged. The information also helped police recover drugs, stolen property and one firearm.

From this district there were 15 reports made to Crimestoppers during the month, of those calls 2 people were arrested leading to 2 crimes being detected.

Remember Crimestoppers is anonymous and the information forwarded really does help reduce and detect crime.

GOOD WORK REPORT

The following are some examples of the continuing good work being performed by Watch Schemes across the district in their efforts to assist the Police and their community.

Over a period of time in 2009 a co-ordinator from the **Wellington** area helped gather evidence of youths causing damage to property. Local police staff were informed of the information gleaned and this helped identify one of the youths who was subsequently called to the police station and given stern advice. An example of how Watch Schemes and the police working together can help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

During a weekend in November a former co-ordinator from **North Petherton** reported a matter to police regarding rogue traders in the area and their attempts to get money from an elderly resident. When the culprits returned officers were called and the response was such that all three were arrested and charged with offences. The Deputy Chief Constable at Police Headquarters became aware of this matter and was amongst Police Officers wishing to thank this member of the public for their quick thinking and action taken. There is no doubt that the help of this member of Neighbourhood Watch enabled officers to arrest the offenders and prevented further crime occurring.

One afternoon in November a resident in the village of **Mark near Highbridge** received a caller at the door presenting a card which described him as being deaf and selling pictures to raise money. The resident sent the caller away from the house but immediately called the police informing them of the incident. Police officers attended the village and NHW co-ordinators contacted to assist in locating the caller. Within a very short period of time two males were located and subsequently arrested. One male was not deaf as he had purported and was charged with a fraud offence, the other cautioned for not using a relevant permit. This incident highlights the good work of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the area and how effective they can be in supporting the police.

LEAFLETS – contact Lindsey at the office to obtain copies of crime reduction advisory leaflets on general matters of home, personal and garden security, vehicle crime, holidays, bogus callers and scams to name but a few. Contact the office (details at the base of page 4) to order.

West TV region gets switched on to Switchover Help Scheme

TV is changing from analogue to digital in the West region soon. For many people, television is an important way of receiving information from the outside world, however, some are going to find it difficult at switchover time. This is why the BBC has set up the Switchover Help Scheme, through an agreement with the Government, to help older and disabled people make the change to digital.

More than 300,000 older and disabled people living across the West TV region can get help from the Switchover Help Scheme to convert one of their TV sets to digital.

People are eligible if they are aged 75 years or over, they have lived in a care home for six months or more, or if they are registered blind or partially sighted. Also eligible are people who get (or could get) attendance or constant attendance allowance, mobility supplement, or disability living allowance.

For a one-off payment of £40, eligible people will be offered easy-to-use digital equipment to convert one television set in their home; home delivery and installation if they wish; an aerial check and replacement if needed; a helpline and retuning advice; and a 12 month digital TV aftercare service.

Most eligible people will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help. The service is free for people who are eligible and also get pension credit, income support, income-based jobseekers allowance, or employment and support allowance.

Eligible people living in the West TV region served by the Mendip transmitter (Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucester and parts of Dorset) are due to switch over on 24 March 2010.

Eligible people living in these areas are being asked to watch out for information packs that explain how they can get extra help to convert one TV in their home to digital in time for switchover.

Most people should receive their pack by the end of the year. Details about how to apply, an explanation of all the available options and prices are clearly set out in the pack. Completed information pack forms need to be returned to the Help Scheme to get the help. To make it even easier to apply, eligible people can also choose to nominate someone else to fill in their form for them.

Ed Jezard, Regional Networking Manager in the West region, said:, "Although we write individually to all eligible people, we also know people often need to hear about things from more than one place before they take action. We want to ensure those who need it, have the relevant information about the Help Scheme and you can help by simply spreading the word that there is help and support available from the Switchover Help Scheme."

The Switchover Help Scheme has been designed around the needs of older and disabled people. Equipment has been specially chosen for ease of use, and contact centre, delivery staff and installers have all been trained to understand and respect older and disabled people. Installers are vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau, carry identification and will never call without having made an appointment.

More information is available by visiting the website www.helpscheme.co.uk

OFFICE DETAILS: Lindsey Stone, Watch Scheme Office, Bridgwater Police Station, Northgate, Bridgwater, TA6 3EU.
Tel 01823-363348, Fax 01823-363389, or Email lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk

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