



East Division Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Issue 6 - Summer Crime

Welcome to the last newsletter from me. This one focuses on summer crime types. Thank you to our volunteer, Karen, for compiling the content. I have highlighted in my handover document for my successor that they need to continue to produce these newsletters in the future.

Unfortunately no one has been appointed to replace me as yet, but candidates will be interviewed in the near future. Thank you for your continued support for NHW and your communities.

Best Regards – Alexandra Harrington VWLO East Division.

Summer Crime

During the summer months Kent Police and Neighbourhood Watch often notice a spike in certain crimes; in particular, thefts from gardens and sheds, beach huts and cars left in laybys whilst the owners go on walks. The summer months also see an increase in boot fairs, where there is ample opportunity to pass counterfeit currency, merchandise and stolen goods. The purpose of this newsletter is to offer you advice on taking precautions and still be able to enjoy the summer months. We hope you find this useful.

Garden Security

Here are some tips on how to protect items in your garden and ways you can design it to prevent an opportunist burglar targeting your home, shed and other outbuildings. Further advice can be sought at your local garden centre, hardware shop or by contacting your local PCSOs, KCC Community Warden or Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

- Maintain hedges and fences and consider increasing height of boundaries with trellis fences. This will deter unwanted visitors from entering the garden and using overgrown hedges as cover. Trellis fences can make climbing over fencing very difficult.
- Ground cover shrubs with thorns can be used to keep people away from things or make people walk along a particular route. Some shrubs or small trees can be useful as hedging barriers and some for growing over walls and fences to make climbing impossible or at least very difficult. You need to be careful with certain types of plants if you have pets or young children. Plants such as pyracantha/fire thorn bushes are fast growing and effective.
- Consider gravel pathways and/or drives. Gravel makes a noise when walked or driven on which may deter an opportunist thief.

- Fit locks to side and back gates. For further advice visit www.locksmiths.co.uk Also consider fitting locks to sheds and garages so that burglars cannot break in to these and get hold of tools which could be used for getting into your home.
- Security mark all garden tools, bikes etc. This will make it easier for the police to return any items recovered from a burglary. Stockists of security marker pens include online shops such as Amazon. For more information contact your local PCSO or KCC Community Warden. A popular and easy to use product called SelectaDNA is on the market. Each SelectaDNA property marker and spray contains a unique DNA code. These codes allow police to identify property and link criminals to the crime. Selecta DNA offer a discount to NHW schemes. Visit www.selectadna.co.uk for more advice and full range of products.
- Store wheelie bins and ladders away carefully as these can be used as climbing aids. A wheelie bin can be strong enough to support the weight of an adult male.
- Fit security alarms and security lights with sensors in the garden/driveways as a preventative measure. www.securedbydesign.com A large proportion of the crimes circulated to you are preventable by the simple installation of lighting and better security..
- CCTV is an excellent crime prevention measure and could also provide potential evidence if a burglary occurs. www.spotonsatellites.com Care needs to be taken as to where cameras are located so as not to intrude on the privacy of offers. For more information contact your local PCSO or KCC Community Warden for advice. One company is Guardcam, there are others look on – Amazon and other specialist websites.

GUARDCAM WF-M - Area Protection System with monitor for surveillance and protection of external areas around homes, offices or industrial and agricultural units. Cameras can be linked to apps on mobile phones or tablets so your premises can be monitored 24/7.

- Take photos of any valuable items in the garden, garage or shed and keep a note of any serial or model numbers. This will aid the police in recovering any stolen items and assist with insurance claims. Register valuable items with www.immobilise.com

Beach Hut Crime

Beach Huts can be a potential target both for vandalism and burglaries. Items stolen may include fishing rods and accessories or water sports equipment. These are very valuable items so beach hut owners should consider taking extra precautions.

- Beach hut users should secure their hut whenever it is not in use and to consider investing in a beach hut alarm and good quality locks. Remember: because of their design and location a beach hut is unlikely to be as secure as your own home or garage.
- Never leave any valuables in your beach hut overnight. An opportunist thief or accomplice may be watching during the day to identify which huts contain valuable items and then target those beach huts after owners have gone home. Be alert to people paying attention to your hut and property, and not just enjoying the beach.
- Remove anything that is combustible, such as gas canisters and matches that could be a fire hazard.
- Security mark any valuable items and keep a digital and written record of serial numbers and photos of all equipment.
- A beach hut that looks uncared for could more likely attract vandalism and burglaries.
- You might also consider CCTV security. As well as being a deterrent, certain types of camera can now be linked to an iPhone using an app and the user can then view images even when away from their property. For further information on apps visit your local mobile phone shop or look online at;
 - iCamViewer app from CCTV Camera Pros
 - Manything app

For more information and advice visit www.standfast-security.co.uk/beach-hut-security/ or go to Crimestoppers www.crimestoppers-uk.org or telephone 0800 555 111

Layby Crime

During the summer months a lot of people like to go for walks in the countryside, either to specific sites or simply pulling up in country lanes. If you are leaving a vehicle or bicycle unattended to go for a walk you may need to take extra precautions due to the risk of theft from or of vehicles.

- Where possible park in a designated parking area rather than laybys or quiet country lanes. Be aware of anything suspicious, such as somebody hanging around parked cars, looking in windows, trying doors etc.
- Try to find shady spots if possible rather than leaving windows open. Even a small gap can be enough for a thief to gain entry. Keeps all valuables with you, and do not cover items such as rucksacks or handbags with coats/jumpers thinking this makes them invisible; it makes them more attractive to investigate! Consider additional security such as an immobiliser or steering lock.

- Don't be tempted to leave your dog in the car for security or convenience. Pets quickly overheat even with the windows left open or if parked in the shade and can become distressed and potentially very ill. If you see a pet left in a car which is showing clear signs of distress dial 999. Take images/footage of the dog and the vehicle and the names and numbers of witnesses to the incident. For further advice contact the RSPCA http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/health/dogsinhotcars/-/articleName/CAD_DogsDieInHotCars

Motorbike/Quad bike security:

Most motorbikes are stolen by being picked up and taken away in another vehicle, with chains still intact. To help prevent this, try to use a designated motorbike parking space, with stand and security loop, or secure your bike to something that cannot be moved.

Check to see that there is sufficient CCTV and lighting available in car parks.

Off-road motorbikes are more difficult to trace when stolen, so can attract more interest from thieves. Register off-road bikes with the DVLA. It's free and means that engine and frame numbers will show up on police and DVLA systems. The motorbike will be issued with a 'Q' plate, but you do not have to fit it as long as the bike remains off-road as intended.

Quad Bikes - Quad bikes must be approved, registered, taxed and have an MOT to be used on the road. You should check with the manufacturer to ensure your quad bike is approved for road use. You must register your quad bike with the DVLA and the bike must have front and rear number plates. Quad bikes used on the road need a valid MOT certificate if they are more than 3 years old. You will also need appropriate and adequate insurance.

Bicycle security:

Register your bike with schemes such as Immobilise or Bike Register and consider etching your postcode onto your bike frame.

Lock your bike to an immovable object. Where possible use a proper bike rack or ground anchor that offers multiple locking points and will stop your bike falling and causing an obstruction.

Secure removable parts. Lock both wheels and the frame together. Take with you smaller components and accessories that can be removed without tools (for example, lights, pumps, computers, panniers and quick-release saddles). Fit secure skewers to wheels, headsets and seat posts. Ask a bike shop for specialist advice.

Locks can also be picked, so face the lock to the ground (but not resting on it) so it can't easily be turned upwards for picking. Invest in good quality locks. Hardened steel D-shaped locks and sturdy chain locks are recommended. Be prepared to spend ten per cent of the value of your bike on locks.

It is always best to use two locks. Go for two different types of lock, for example a strong D lock and a sturdy chain lock. This means that a thief will need different tools to break each lock, making theft less likely. There are many different products on the market and price is not necessarily a reliable indicator of quality and resistance to attack by thieves.

Boot Fairs

This time of year we see a lot of boots fairs advertised. They are popular with buyers trying to find good bargains and people wanting to sell unwanted items. Both buyers and sellers need to be aware of the potential risks involved and the laws covering what can be sold and your rights as a consumer. More information can be found from your local council, trading standards office or Citizens Advice Bureau. Details of local offices can be found on www.gov.uk

General Rules

- Avoid buying electrical items, especially electric blankets, heaters and irons. If you do wish to buy something then ensure the item comes in the original packaging and has the operating manual. Also be very wary of phone chargers as these can be a potential fire and electrocution risk.
- Some types of clothing, especially nightwear may not meet flammability requirements. Check that cords on children's dressing gowns and coats are not loose or too long.
- Check that toys are in reasonable condition and have no sharp points or tears leading to stuffing coming out. If possible only buy items in original packaging and check for UK/EU safety symbols on labels.
- Never be tempted to buy baby or child car seats second-hand as these may have unseen damage points, making them unsafe in the event of an accident. You should also avoid buying used cot mattresses and be very cautious with second-hand prams and cots.
- Cosmetic products should be avoided because they may contain unregulated ingredients and if seals are not intact, the items could be contaminated.
- Counterfeit items – the most common items are DVDs, CDs, computer games and t-shirts.

We hope that you have found this useful. Following this simple advice could avoid you becoming a victim of crime and ensure you have a lovely safe summer.

Alexandra Harrington and Karen Uzzell- Childs