

WATCH OVER WOKING



The news-sheet of the Woking Association of Neighbourhood Watches (WAN)



From the isolated Woking Common Station in 1838 to this in 2014

Issue 10

Spring 2014

Chairman: Tony Kremer email:
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Website: www.wanw.org.uk

Message from your Chairman

Dear Watch Coordinator

I hope you will enjoy the Spring edition of Watch over Woking. It contains a special message from the Police about the reorganisation taking effect on 1 April, as well as the results of the survey that many of you completed at the end of 2013. Woking came out well compared to all other parts of Surrey but there are still areas for us to take action.

You will also find a summary of the PCC's Crime Summit held in Woking that was well attended.

You are all welcome to the Spring Coordinator's meeting see below for details. We normally attract 50+ to these: it would be great to emulate Surrey Heath who regularly have 100+ at their meetings!

Feedback on any matter is always welcome to me or to your Area Coordinator (see below).

Be safe!

Tony Kremer, Chair

Spring Coordinators` Meeting

You are very welcome to attend the Spring meeting of Coordinators to be held on Monday 28 April from 7:30 in the Parkview Community Centre, Sheerwater (note that an earlier email invitation said 7:15, but we would like you to get there for 7:30).

We want to cover two aspects: we will be describing the new pattern of neighbourhood policing and what lies ahead. And we will also be reviewing the results of the County-wide survey of Coordinators, with a focus on Woking respondents. This will include workshops to discuss some of the suggestions for improvement that were made, to identify good ones to take forward.

RSVP to me please at Chair@wanw.org.uk, to help get the right quantity of teas and coffees.

Woking's Crime Summit

Well over 100 people attended to hear from a distinguished panel, to engage in round-table discussions and then to ask questions of the panel. Neighbourhood Watch was brought up many times and received strong support from all corners. Here are some of the headlines:

Kevin Hurley, PCC, emphasised the difficulties Surrey has since we get the second lowest Government grant, causing him to raise the Police precept by about 2%, which raises about £2 million. More savings would have to come in the future too, as another £30 million had to be saved over the coming 3 years.

He also took the opportunity to respond to the recent HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report on domestic abuse. This found that for every 100 domestic abuse crimes recorded there were only 45 arrests in Surrey (for most forces the number is between 45 and 90.8.) Weaknesses in training and procedures were identified by the Inspectors.

Commenting on the report, Kevin Hurley said that victims should be at the heart of the criminal justice system, but very often they are not and he was determined to make things better for victims of crime in Surrey. There will be a review of the service provided to domestic abuse victims in Surrey. There is certainly room for improvement.

John Davies, Borough Commander, showed a slide with performance figures in the year to February. Though the Total Notifiable Offences had reduced by 11.8% (539 offences), detection rates decreased by 4.8% points to 29.8%. He reported that violent crime with injury had increased by 5.1% (16 offences) but detection rates decreased by 3.3% points to 34.6%. Similarly domestic burglary had increased by 6.0% (17 offences) while detection rates decreased by 6.3% points to 16.1%.

Insp. Davies also described the changes to neighbourhood policing (see separate article) though he reassured the audience that there should be no decrease in the effectiveness of that important aspect of policing. He emphasised the importance of partnership work, with the Council and volunteers like NHW.

Ray Morgan, Chief Executive, WBC mentioned a new scheme of joint enforcement teams of council officers and police which is being trialled elsewhere in Surrey and would be introduced here. He also emphasised the importance of residents working to make their community better, taking littering as a simple example.

I attended the round-table discussion on policing and here are some of the good points we raised:

- there should be better publicity given to crime statistics, particularly around burglaries
- what percentage of these are drug-related, we asked
- more emphasis should be given to forensic property marking systems like SelectaDNA (see below)

How Neighbourhood Policing Is Changing

With effect from 1 April a number of important changes will be taking place in the way neighbourhoods are policed. These will bring down costs in line with budget reductions forced by central government, but as Superintendent Goodridge has told Surrey NHW, you shouldn't notice any change.

A number of functional roles previously undertaken by staff such as Crime Reduction Advisors (CRAs) at *Borough* level will now be carried out by 3 teams, one in each of the 3 *Divisions* lead by a Community Safety Sergeant. Our Division is West Surrey and is based in Guildford, and Sgt Adam Luck is to be our Community Safety Sergeant.

Supt. Goodridge said that cost reduction was an important element in the organisational changes, which will result in a reduction of the number of CRAs, but improving neighbourhood safety by working with Neighbourhood Watch remains an important objective for Surrey Police. He also noted that the changes would enable Surrey Police to maintain overall staffing numbers in Neighbourhood Teams which would in future also have a higher proportion of PCs as compared with PCSOs and this would help the teams to focus on the key task of making neighbourhoods safer.

I am delighted that our Crime Reduction Advisor Mark Saunders remains in post, though we now have to share him with another borough.

Further changes are expected in June as the support staff in Woking reduce from 4 to 2. Volunteers from WAN will have to do more if we are to continue some of the information sharing tasks, but the details remain to be seen.

2013 Survey of Coordinators` Views

To me it always makes sense to ask you whether you are happy with the service you get from the Police and from the volunteers at WAN. We also can take the opportunity to learn more about you and your watches. I am glad to report that 6 out of 10 Woking Coordinators took part, more than any other part of Surrey and double the average response rate. So thank you.

At the Coordinators` meeting Alan Taylor will go into some more detail, but here are the headlines:

Police

One issue particularly concerns me: only 57% of you were fairly or very satisfied with your working relationship with the local police teams and indeed only 40% were contacted by Police in past 12 months. I am shortly meeting Insp. Davies to propose that every Coordinator should be contacted by his/her local team a minimum of once a year.

WAN

It seems that over 70% of you are satisfied with the support you receive in your NHW activities, but 4 Coordinators said that they were dissatisfied. We have suggestions to work on to improve this score in future.

Weekly Alerts

The survey responses are crystal clear that Coordinators value the weekly email contact from the Police on burglaries in their area. As mentioned above, cuts in backroom staff in June are putting this service at grave risk, and I have made it clear to Insp. Davies that the loss of this service would seriously undermine the Watch movement.

Have emails

We have always encouraged Coordinators to gather the email addresses of those in your watch so that you can forward the emails from the Police and WAN to them quickly and easily. Where this doesn't happen, the important information they need is not provided to them. It seems that only 3 out of 10 Woking residents get any notification by email at all. We will continue to urge coordinators to collect these email addresses and we hope to see a big improvement next time we survey.

Have deputy/successor in mind

Just over 1 in 5 of you have a successor in mind. We think it's a good idea to have a deputy who can fill in while you are away and potentially inherit the task from you in due course. WAN needs to know who that deputy is.

RA/NHW links

Not surprisingly many Coordinators are members of their local Residents' Association (57%) and this encourages me in the attempt we are making in Horsell to bring the RA and NHW closer together. We are encouraging any RA Road Steward to become a Watch Coordinator (and vice versa), and we are asking all RA members NOT in a watch to give us their email addresses so that we and the Police can contact them with advice as if they were in a Watch (we call this a Virtual Watch). If it is successful, I plan to encourage other parts of Woking to do the same as Horsell.

Good Ideas

We asked you for ideas that will improve the way in which NHW operates, and thank you for them. We have picked four groups of suggestions and we hope you will come to the Coordinators` meeting on 28 April so that you can look at them in more detail with us and choose the ones we should take forward.

The four subjects suggested are:

- sharing information with other local watches
- how we can raise the profile of NHW
- planning a social event to meet the neighbourhood police in a relaxed atmosphere
- how can NHW help reduce domestic abuse

Property safety advice

You have probably heard about the unique marking system called SelectDNA? This invisible trace on your high-value items can be registered on a database and so if stolen and recovered later it can be traced to you and returned!

We are offering these now at bulk buy prices... more details to follow.

And if you, or someone you know, feel reluctant to use the system or don't have access to the internet, WAN can find a volunteer to help.

Burglary Alert System

Every day WAN receives an email from the Police reporting any burglary that has happened in the past 24 hours. WAN volunteers then telephone the Coordinator immediately just in case there is a witness to what has happened, but also as a matter of courtesy.

Clearly not every Coordinator is aware of this as several responses to the survey asked for such a service to be put in hand. It has been running since July 2013.

Area Coordinator contact details

We hope to recruit an experienced coordinator in all 9 areas in Woking, but as you can see we still have a few vacancies:

Byfleet, West Byfleet, Pyrford	Fui Ling Bolton	ByfleetAC@wanw.org.uk
Goldsworth Park	Vacancy	
Horsell	Alan Taylor	horsell_area_coordinator@wanw.org.uk
Town Centre	Martin Stilwell	Centre_Area_Coordinator@wanw.org.uk
Old Woking, Barnsbury, Kingfield & Westfield	Derek Bartholomew	old_woking_area_coordinator@wanw.org.uk
Mount Hermon, St Johns, Hook Heath, Mayford & Sutton Green	Vacancy	
Sheerwater	Paul Salt	Saltbox46@msn.com
Maybury	Vacancy	
St Johns, Knaphill, Brookwood	Vacancy	

News from the neighbourhood Police teams

Please go to the Woking Police web page for news regarding your local area.

Byfleet, West Byfleet, Pyrford:	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKBP
Goldsworth Park	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKGP
Horsell	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKHO
Town Centre	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKWT
Old Woking, Barnsbury, Kingfield, Westfield, Mayford, & Sutton Green	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKOW
Sheerwater	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKSH
Maybury	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKMA
Mount Hermon, St Johns, Hook Heath, Mayford & Sutton Green	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKMH
Knaphill, Brookwood	http://www.surrey.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/woking/WKNB