

WATCH OVER WOKING

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



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New Woking Borough Inspector Mark Offord writes:

I am very pleased to be taking up the role of Borough Inspector for Woking, a borough that presents a broad and diverse range of challenges to any police officer. A little about me:

I joined Surrey Police in 2005, initially posted to East Surrey Division where I worked as a response officer primarily in the district of Mole Valley. In 2007 I moved to North Surrey as part of the Elmbridge Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) where I undertook roles as Constable within the proactive arm of the SNT before a short stint as the Neighbourhood Specialist Sergeant for North Walton. Following this I took up a post as a response team Sergeant for North Surrey, covering the boroughs of Elmbridge, Spelthorne and Runnymede. During my tenure working in some of the busiest areas of Surrey with a significant border with London, I managed the initial police response to broad range of incidents and investigations. In 2015 I was promoted to the rank of Inspector initially taking up a role as one of the Duty Inspectors for the North Surrey Division. In October 2015 I was posted to work as the Staff Officer to firstly Chief Constable Lynne Owens, and following her move to the National Crime Agency, Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave.



Throughout my service I have also undertaken the secondary role as a Public Order Officer which has taken me to various parts of the country to police significant public events, protests and disorder.

As someone who subscribes to the 'Peelian' principle that "The police are the public, and the public are the police", I am unwavering in my belief that only by working together with the community of Woking can we make this borough as safe as it can be. The work that you all undertake as part of your Neighbourhood Watches is invaluable to us as the eyes and ears of the community and I look forward to working with you all in the coming months.

WAN Chairman's speech from AGM

In my Annual Report this year, I concentrated on what I see as a meaningful change in approach from Surrey Police. First I paid tribute to June Weaver, a WAN Committee member for several years who tragically died suddenly in April. June had just volunteered for a new role as Scam Champion (in partnership with Trading Standards), and was booked on a training course so that she could help everyone resist the dangers of online fraud. This is an important role and we now need someone to come forward as her replacement as Scam Champion.

Additionally, I thanked our volunteer committee members for the hard work they continue to do for the Neighbourhood Watch movement here in Woking

As I reported in the previous Watch over Woking, I am confident that we have the backing of the Surrey Police top brass in pushing for a complete overhaul of the way the Police engage with residents and in particular with Watch Coordinators.

I recently met the new Officer who has now taken over responsibility at Surrey Police for Neighbourhood Watch across Surrey, Chief Inspector Terri Adderley. I took the opportunity to express the frustration

felt by Coordinators that has grown over the past 18 months. Terri was very responsive to our concerns and will follow up on them.

One particular issue is "InTheKnow". We were invited by Terri to join a 3 hour meeting on 13th June at which Police representatives from all 11 Surrey Boroughs met to discuss the system and its effectiveness, following its few months of implementation. Among the proposals for real change that are now being looked at by Surrey Police is a standard timetable defining how frequently messages should be sent. I will be able to report back on this at our autumn meeting.

Here in Woking, a big step forward is that we are now getting information flowing again in the form of regular crime reports. This is due to Woking having a Police volunteer for 4 hours a week, in the form of WAN Committee member Stephen Dew. You will recognise his name on the weekly crime reports.

An example of what we are trying to develop is to access more information on cybercrime, to be shared with approved NhW persons so that we can protect vulnerable people from this type of crime.

I want to pilot new ways for NhW to make up for the absence of Police Panel Meetings, both to ensure local communities are kept informed about policing in their area, and to feed back concerns to help set local police priorities. I want to initiate one pilot based on a meeting (Horsell perhaps) and one via email/Facebook (West Byfleet/Pyrford perhaps) and evaluate the effectiveness and attendances. Do you have any views on this?

Of course, the fundamental things that are traditional within the Force will not be forgotten in the process of developing a modern relationship with the Police. Let's take Burglary as an example:

NhW will always assist the Police in crime prevention, in spreading good advice on how to avoid being burgled.

I was told that to obtain a conviction the Courts look for at least one of three things: – best of all is a witness – and I quoted recent stories to illustrate how neighbours had helped apprehend criminals. Second best is video or CCTV of the crime in progress; through our friends in Surrey Heath we have the opportunity to purchase CCTV at discount. Again, a recent crime story illustrated the power of CCTV. Thirdly is DNA evidence on stolen goods. We are able to offer SelectaDNA kits at a good price if there is enough demand.

Tony Kremer, chair

Feedback or more information from Tony Kremer [email him](#)

The future direction of Neighbourhood Watch

The role of NhW in the community is fast changing direction. Make no mistake, the fundamentals of "watching out for your neighbourhood" remain, but WHAT we watch out for; how we COMMUNICATE the information; and the RESPONSE to it is changing, and quite rapidly. This has come about through a combination of modern communications, particularly social media, a change in policing methods, and a recognition by other organisations such as Social Services and the Fire & Rescue Service that having a community keeping watch is invaluable to them.

Keeping up with these changes is not going to be easy as not every organisation moves forward at the same speed. In Surrey, we are endeavouring to create a county-wide set of guidelines and policies. The county-led model has been implemented in Lancashire and other counties' support groups are watching and learning.

In the meantime, everyone in NhW needs to be aware of the changes that will inevitably take place. These are broadly as follows:

- "Neighbourhood" will not just be a street Watch but also a Community that may not have physical boundaries
- Crime is changing and the public needs to be protected from more than a break-in. Identity theft is a crime; domestic violence is a crime; taking money from your bank account without your approval is a crime. Cyber crime is a huge drain on the country's coffers. We need to update our perspectives of crime
- The days of the Bobby walking round on the beat are long gone. We need to come to terms with that and accept it and change our behaviour accordingly. When we contact the Police we need to give them good quality information that enables them to deal with the problem effectively. Police need to be fed intelligence that helps them prevent crime
- The Police have to be more receptive to the intelligence and facts passed to them. They also need to understand that they must acknowledge receipt of the information

- Social media is here to stay, whether some of us like it or not. It is very powerful in communicating information to everyone, and sometimes very quickly. Using email is a very good way of passing historical information but is not so good for catching the moment
- NhW needs to attract a younger membership.

None of the above changes are going to happen quickly so please bear with us all. We are currently laying the foundations to enable the changes to be effective once in place – a rushed and uncoordinated approach will never work. But please keep “Watching” for your “Neighbourhood”.

Feedback or more information from Martin Stilwell [email him](#)

The power of Facebook

Byfleet residents are demonstrating to the rest of Woking how social media can raise awareness of risks. The new Facebook page has over 1,400 members who exchange information about crimes and suspicious behaviour.

The plan is to expand this to all parts of the Borough that want to join in and who can provide a couple of supervisors to make sure the pages are kept clear of anything unwelcome. Our next target is Pyrford/West Byfleet, so please get in touch with us if you are interested in joining this new group.

Feedback or more information from Martin Stilwell [email him](#)

News from beyond Woking

- A new Chair has been appointed to head up the national NhW organisation. His name is David Huse and with him comes a fresh look at the role of the movement in the future. The thrust is clear – NhW needs to change and fit into the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy, such as helping to identify and help people who are vulnerable or at risk
- We have made proposals for a Surrey NhW website
- We now have a procedure for the vetting of new watches (remember, the Police no longer do this themselves). To be clear, we won't have to vet coordinators known to us through the now-defunct Police ACS system
- A marketing leaflet has been devised and circulated across Surrey Boroughs.

Some of us also attended an anti-terrorism session put on by the Home Office, part of PROJECT GRIFFIN. Perhaps the most useful elements of this were as follows:

- Take personal responsibility for preventing crime as information from the public assisted in a third of all terrorist investigations underway
- Remember the acronym HOT: is an object like a bag Hidden? Obviously suspicious? or not Typical for the environment?
- If there is an alarm, evacuate 100m from bags, 200m from a car or 400m from a lorry
- Don't use a mobile phone nearer than 15m to object
- Watch out for suspicious behaviour inappropriate for the location.
- There is a direct Police anti-terrorism phone line: 0800 789 321.

Feedback or more information from Tony Kremer [email him](#)

Weekly Crime Reports

As a Community Engagement Volunteer for Surrey Police I attend the Safer Neighbourhood Team police office at the Woking Borough Council offices once a week, for a 4 hours shift. There my responsibility is to produce the weekly Crime Reports that I email to all Woking NhW Co-ordinators. My procedure is extract from the police crime database an online report of all incidents over the previous 7 days.

The incidents on which I report are defined by the police directives and are mainly acquisitive crimes; these include dwelling and non-dwelling burglary and other incidents of theft. I also report on incidents of criminal damage, anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime. I report on a small number but representative sample of the total number of recorded incidents each week. I am prohibited from including shop lifting incidents nor cases of theft from petrol stations where people drive off without paying. Each crime is reported with an individual crime number which members of Neighbourhood watches are asked to use should they be able to provide the police with any relevant information about that incident. I also include in this report, crime prevention information that the Police have provided which I trust is valuable to residents.

Those registered on the Neighbourhood alert system will also receive occasional messages directly from Surrey Police officers themselves. I am also a NhW Coordinator in Horsell and a WAN committee

member so I know the value of these crime reports to the residents of Woking. Each coordinator can then forward the report onto the members of their watch.

Steve Dew, Woking Police volunteer **Feedback or more information from Martin Stilwell** [email him](#)

Horsell Prepared

Horsell Prepared is a new voluntary group creating a co-ordinated volunteer capability to help Horsell deal with any future emergency, incident or crisis affecting multiple households in Horsell.

We have all seen in the press recently how communities can become displaced as a result of a major incident. Whilst the same thing will not happen here, there are other situations we can prepare for, e.g. loss of essential services, problems due to adverse weather and transport incidents, fires and localised flooding, or the knock-on effects of incidents elsewhere, and major public health incidents such as pandemic flu. In these circumstances Horsell Prepared aims to help the emergency services, utilities and local authorities to get Horsell back on its feet and support residents.

How will it work?

Horsell Prepared is part of Horsell Residents' Association and aims to work hand-in-hand with existing groups – e.g. Snow Angels, Horsell Care, Neighbourhood Watch – to create a co-ordinated effort across Horsell.

Before an incident

- We will identify resources in Horsell available to use during an emergency, and the skills of people and organisations willing to assist
- We will develop arrangements to assist the most vulnerable in our village, and to help them join the utilities' Priority Services Register
- We will agree the way in which we will liaise with the emergency services, utility companies and local authorities in the event of an emergency or incident
- We will offer volunteers training opportunities to build capability.

During an incident

- We will deal with the initial impact, if safe to do so, while awaiting support from emergency services, utility companies or local authority
- We will contact volunteers by text message to ask if they are available to help and direct their assistance
- We will assist the emergency services, local authorities or utility companies in dealing with an emergency as appropriately directed by these organisations. This might include organising shelter, or providing information, communication, alerts and updates for residents
- We will provide relevant and timely information to the community and agencies throughout any emergency.

After an incident

- We will assist the village and its residents in restoration activities after withdrawal of the emergency services, local authorities or utility companies
- We will learn lessons and lead activity to prevent further incidents.

For more detailed information, including details on how to sign up as a volunteer, see:

<https://horsellprepared.interests.me/>

Feedback or more information from Alan Taylor [email him](#)

PostScript – over to you ...

As you will be aware NhW main activities are police liaison, local crime incident distribution and the formation of and support to Watches. This has been traditionally carried out by cascades of emails – Police to Co-ordinator to Watch members. But could we do more? Could we do it differently? Could technology help?

We would be very interested to hear your views on how we could improve our service. What else we could provide? Should we organise differently. If so, how? Could information be disseminated more speedily if we used a social media app? In Martin's article above entitled "The future direction of Neighbourhood Watch", he outlines what the future could be for NhW by exploiting technology. But perhaps you are resistant to this? Or have had good experiences that we could harness? We welcome all comments and feedback if you have ideas on how we could provide a better NhW in Woking – or even if you don't want change as it's OK as it is.

Feedback or more information from Alan Taylor [email him](#)

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/woking/byfleet-west-byfleet-pyrford/
Horsell & Goldsworth Park	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/goldsworth-park-horsell/
Town Centre	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/woking-town/
Old Woking, Barnsbury, Kingfield, Westfield, Mayford, & Sutton Green	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/old-woking/
Sheerwater	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/sheerwater/
Maybury	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/maybury/
Mount Hermon, St Johns, Hook Heath, Mayford & Sutton Green	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/mount-hermon-st-johns-hook-heath-mayford-sutton-green/
Knaphill, Brookwood	http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/knaphill-brookwood/

Call 101 for all non-emergency policing matters or **report online** at www.surrey.police.uk.

Call 999 if you have a genuine emergency requiring the attendance of the police (e.g. a crime is in progress or someone is in immediate danger)

Call the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 if you have information about a crime and don't want to leave your name.