

WATCH OVER WOKING

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



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A message from your chairman

Dear Woking resident.

For a number of years the WAN has been generating a newsletter 3 or 4 times a year that contains information that we hope has been useful to you. With the advent of social media and modern communications we recognise that it is important to provide this useful information more often and to tie in with local problems in the borough. As a result, we will be issuing these Watch over Woking newsletters more frequently, with each one concentrating on a specific issue or recognised problem in the borough.

This first issue covers fly tipping, abandoned cars and neighbours running a business from the road.

Regards

Tony Kremer, WAN chairman

Fly tipping, abandoned cars and annoying neighbours – what you can do

Has someone dumped some building rubble on some land near you? Does a car parked up the road look abandoned? Got a neighbour who is selling cars from his home and they are parked on the road and taking valuable parking space? These are all activities that can make your life unpleasant and annoy you. But what is the law? What can you do? Who can help resolve the problem?

Fly tipping

This is becoming a serious problem in some areas and is probably down to just a few rogue builders. The person responsible for clearing the rubbish is the owner of the land. It is for them to try and prevent their land being used to fly tip in the first place and for them to try and collect sufficient evidence to make a prosecution. Woking BC are only involved if the tipping has been done in a public space for which they are responsible (a recreation ground, say). If the rubbish is tipped onto common land managed by an organisation (Horsell Common Preservation Society, for example) then that organisation is, unfortunately, responsible for removing the rubbish. It can be very annoying when an empty site such as a closed factory or commercial building is not secured well enough by the land owners and it gets used for the tipping, but pressure needs to be put on the land owners by the surrounding residents. Woking BC can support in trying to bring a prosecution when evidence is found. So evidence such as registration number and description can be of help, particularly if photographed.

There are some things you can do to help the situation

- 1) All responsible builders or traders involved in removing waste should be able to produce a waste carrier's licence.
- 2) You should ask to see this if you are having building or clearance work done. If the workmen cannot produce one, then be aware that you may be encouraging fly tipping. If the workmen have quoted a very low price to take something away, then they are possibly fly-tippers.

If the waste you have given them is fly tipped, you are also responsible for that waste and could be prosecuted if you did not ask for a copy of the waste carrier's licence.

- 3) If somewhere is particularly prone to fly-tipping, the owners can fit hidden cameras. Woking BC has cameras covering some recycling banks, and does prosecute those who dump items the bank does not take (and is clearly stated on notice boards).

Abandoned cars

If you think a car has been abandoned, the first thing to do is to make sure it is abandoned, this means it is not taxed and it does not have an owner, and not simply left in the road whilst the owner is abroad, say, for many months. Before reporting a vehicle as abandoned the DVLA will not allow Woking Borough Council to investigate a vehicle until the Tax has expired by 2 months and 1 day. You can check the status of a vehicle by simply using the DVLA website which will tell you if a vehicle is taxed. The link is: <https://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/>

If the vehicle is parked on a public highway it must be taxed, MOT'd and insured. If a vehicle is not MOT'd or Insured on the public highway then this is a Police matter, however they will need to witness the vehicle being driven before they can take action.

Woking BC has excellent information on what you should do at:

https://www.woking.gov.uk/environment/envcrime/abandonedvehicles#q1_how_do_i_know_if_a_vehicle_is_abandoned

When checking the DVLA site, note the registered vehicle details and see that they match the vehicle in the road – including colour. Some owners swap number plates to try and make out a vehicle in the road is legitimate. There was a recent case of this in Runnymede and the Police had the owners remove the car immediately.

Neighbour running a business from their house?

This is something that is, in principle, completely legitimate. However, when that business is, say, selling cars and those cars are parked in the road then the person may be stretching the law a bit too far. The cars left in the road must be taxed, insured and have a current MOT certificate

Woking Borough Council do have powers to deal with cars being sold from the street, but there has to be proof that the person selling the vehicles is a Motor Trader and their only trade is running a business from a street, and not a resident simply selling his own vehicles. The offence is parking *two or more motor vehicles* on a road where they are parked merely for the purposes of sale. There must be two or more vehicles within 500m of each other if the offence is to be committed. There has to be clear evidence that the vehicles are for sale and are linked to a motor trade business.

Nowadays, if someone sells a car the remaining road fund licence cannot be transferred to the buyer, so a car that is for sale by someone selling cars from home is likely to be untaxed. The car should not cause an obstruction either. If vehicles are causing an obstruction this is a Police matter and should be reported to 101. If the business is being run from council-owned property then Woking BC may be very interested in the seller.

Reporting it

Note that Woking BC and Surrey CC both have excellent websites where you can report things. So, rather than moaning about a streetlight that "has been flashing for ages" why not tell the authority and so give them a chance to repair it.

Woking BC: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/report>

Surrey CC: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it-online>

To summarise

Note that none of the above involves the Police (with the exception of obstruction and of a supposed abandoned car that looks as if it had been stolen). In most cases, the Police will get involved on request from Woking BC. But first spend a bit of time establishing who is responsible for fixing something (Woking BC, Surrey CC, land/building owner) and then inform them with a factual request.

On the subject of things that annoy you – street lighting!

Many residents in Surrey have noticed that street lights are being turned off in residential roads overnight (or turned down on main roads) and are worried about this being beneficial to burglars. To their credit, Surrey Police carried out analysis of burglaries in areas where the reduced street lighting has been in operation for a while. The statistics across Surrey show no perceived increase in burglaries in those areas when the street lighting is off. The period most at risk for burglaries remains late afternoon. Our Inspector, Mark Offord, has produced the statistics for Woking and you can download the page <[here](#)>

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.