

# Watch Over Woking

The newsletter of Woking Association of Neighbourhood Watches

**wanw.org.uk**

## Chair's message

Welcome to this edition of Watch Over Woking. Most of you will know that I have taken over the chair of Woking Neighbourhood Watch from Tony Kremer. I wish to thank Tony for the excellent leadership he has given Woking Neighbourhood Watch over a number of years. He continues as chairman of Surrey, while Steve Dew has taken over my administration role in Woking. Steve's name will be familiar to many of you, as his other role is to compile the weekly crime summary on behalf of Woking Police (which he does as a volunteer, note).

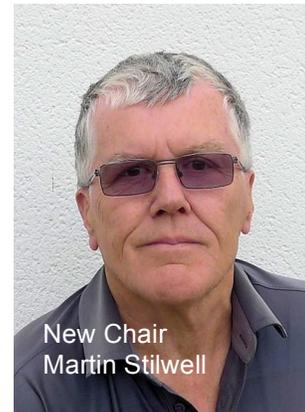
As to Woking, we find ourselves with yet another Police Inspector. Inspector Mark Offord was doing an excellent job for Woking and was a keen supporter of neighbourhood policing, but a promotion in Surrey Police has taken him away from us. We wish him well in his new role.

In his place, we welcome Andy Greaves. Although only just appointed, he has already shown he is also a keen supporter of neighbourhood policing. But you can hear for yourself – as he has agreed to speak at our next co-ordinator's meeting on 23rd October. A calling notice will have gone out to all co-ordinators for this meeting (more details of this in the following pages).

Because of Andy's attendance, we will extend the meeting to all those in Woking who are registered on the system, and not just co-ordinators. This will be your chance

to hear what Andy has to say and to fire questions at him.

On the wider Neighbourhood Watch front, there are a number of initiatives across Surrey that will improve the speed and quality of information that goes to and from the police. This does inevitably mean the involvement of social media, but used wisely this has already been shown to have made considerable improvements in the passing of key information (again, more



New Chair  
Martin Stilwell

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on this later).

There are also initiatives to move Neighbourhood Watch away from just being about police and crime and towards being about the quality of life for those of us who live in the Surrey. Woking B.C. (and Surrey C.C.) are key to this, as many of the issues that cause us problems are not in the police's remit. These include parking, fly tipping, trespassing, and the current state of Woking town centre.

A good example of the police's problems is illustrated by Surrey Chief Inspector Nick Ephram's recent open letter to the press regarding the Traveller community.

Keep up the good work and I hope to see as many of you as possible on the 23rd October.

Regards,  
*Martin Stilwell* ■

### **Tackling knife crime**

Together with other forces, Surrey Police have launching Operation Sceptre – a national knife crime campaign which aims to reduce the number of people, especially young people, carrying a weapon.

Officers are undertaking proactive activities across the three divisions and encouraging knife owners to give up their blades anonymously as part of a national initiative to tackle knife crime.

Detective Superintendent Kerry Haddleton said:

“We are pleased to give our support to this national initiative once again. The knife bins based in Woking, Staines, Reigate and Guildford will enable members of the public to hand over knives safely and anonymously and in turn remove these weapons from our streets.

“Our message to those who carry a knife or thinking of carrying a knife is that it does not protect you and in fact it makes you more vulnerable and places you in danger of serious harm.

“We want to reassure the public that we do not have an escalating knife problem here in Surrey, however it is essential we keep on top of this issue and that's what makes our participation in Operation Sceptre so important. One knife is one knife too many.”

As part of the operation, officers will be conducting weapons sweeps, attending local schools and performing proactive patrols across the county.

Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, David Munro, said:

“In the wrong hands knives can be deadly weapons as we've all too often seen with some of the sad events across the country in recent times.

“Knife crime thankfully remains low in Surrey but we're not immune to the problem and we must continue to raise awareness, particularly amongst young people, that carrying a blade can have fatal consequences.

“I hope this amnesty is an opportunity to help rid our streets of these weapons and spread the message that those carrying knives pose a serious danger to both themselves and those around them.”

Anyone with information on knife crime should call 101 or report it online at [www.surrey.police.uk](http://www.surrey.police.uk). In an emergency always dial 999.

### **Autumn meeting**

All co-ordinators are invited to attend our autumn meeting, which will take place on 23rd October at 7:15pm (for 7:30pm) at Goldwater Lodge.

The agenda includes an update from Martin Stillwell on his role as Surrey-wide champion for old people and scams, as well as a talk from Detective Inspector Andy Greaves.

Det. Insp. Andy Greaves was recently named as the new Woking Borough Inspector.

Andy says:

“As the newly appointed Woking Borough Inspector, I would like to extend my thanks to you, Woking Borough Neighbourhood Watch members, for your continued support for Surrey Police, and keeping the Borough safe.

“My borough priority remains to keep Woking as safe as it can be, and to do this I need to tackle drug-related violence. This is a broad ask, as to tackle this effectively will positively impact on other criminality directly involving your communities such as burglary, anti-social behaviour and exploitation of the vulnerable.

“We are a busy borough, and have been struck recently with burglaries and ATM thefts, to mention a few higher profile incidents. Our response to these will be balanced against many other competing demands, but your continued support with crime prevention remains as invaluable as ever.

“I also remain committed to supporting the local authority with local issues affecting the community such as parking, anti-social driving and alcohol-induced crime. However, resourcing being a topical issue, a large part of my role is to achieve more with less, which highlights the importance of

your valuable role in the community to support law enforcement.

“I look forward to meeting you at the forthcoming WAN event on 23 October, where I can brief you more comprehensively and field any questions you may have.”

The address for the 23rd October meeting is:

Community Hall,  
Goldwater Lodge,  
Wishbone Way,  
Woking,  
GU21 3RT



**“My borough priority remains to keep Woking as safe as it can be, and to do this I need to tackle drug-related violence”**

We look forward to seeing you there! ■

### **Woking’s serious about social media**

Horsell residents won’t be surprised to learn that they have more Neighbourhood Watches per head than any other part of Woking, writes *Tony Kremer*.

Currently around 750 residents receive regular emails from us about crimes in the locality and how to guard against them.

But emails are a slow way to get important news out, especially if you can help hunt for a missing person - be it a suspect or a vulnerable wanderer. For those who use social media and can

get alerts on our mobile phones, a faster tool is at hand: a Facebook Group.

Since we launched Horsell Neighbourhood Watch Facebook Group early in June, we have grown rapidly to around 375 members, and I confidently expect that by the end of 2018 we will match the email network’s 750 members. Similarly, the newly launched Goldsworth Park Neighbourhood Watch Group has just welcomed its 100th member. We can see how Byfleet’s Group continues

to grow well into its second year. The group has reached 2,000 now and they firmly believe they have made their village safer.

Members get Surrey Police's important messages such as: "Off on holiday? Who's watching your home?", "Have you seen this missing teenager?"

And it's not just faster alerts: Facebook Groups allow anyone to post a warning alert about something suspicious and to comment on the posts of others, such as: "Boys up to no good on Littlewick Road just now, trying to take a bike".

What is interesting is that the average age of the Facebook Group member is much lower than our existing email members: typically around 30, I would guess from their Facebook photos. Recruiting younger members is even more important to me than the simple growth in numbers, because we surely want the younger generation to become involved in keeping this community safe. They need crime prevention information too, but perhaps it wasn't getting through by traditional email.

Whatever your age, you are welcome to join Neighbourhood Watch – any Horsell resident can join by going to [www.facebook.com/groups/HorsellNHW/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/HorsellNHW/) and clicking Join. Similarly, on the Park you can go to [www.facebook.com/groups/GoldsworthParkNeighbourhoodWatch/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/GoldsworthParkNeighbourhoodWatch/)

Or perhaps you want to start a Facebook Group in your community?

Go on, become part of the conversation ■

### Scams and old people

There are a number of country-wide Neighbourhood Watch initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the residents. One of them is "Scams and Old People", writes *Martin Stilwell*.

### A wheelie good idea

Now you can not only deter criminals, but also liven up your tired-looking wheelie bin at the same time.

Smartwheelie is a Cambridgeshire-based company whose activities recently caught the eye of WAN.



The firm prints and supplies a range of speed and community awareness signs that are designed for sticking to wheelie bins. These include stickers designed to remind motorists of local speed limits – and more recently, approved Neighbourhood Watch stickers too.

The stickers are designed for exactly the kind of plastic wheelie bins that Woking households have in abundance. They are screen-printed on high-grade self-adhesive vinyl using UV-stable inks.

Standard packs are available from Smartwheelie's website at [Smartwheelie.co.uk](http://Smartwheelie.co.uk), and non-standard quantities can also be ordered on request ■

At first, the title seems a little misleading, as not all old people are worried about scams and not all scams are aimed at old people. But I think we all agree that old people are the most vulnerable to scams.

These scams can be via the telephone, on the doorstep, through the post and, of course, via the computer. The latter is generally termed "cybercrime", and is a whole subject

in its own right. The UK Neighbourhood Watch organisation has lots of very useful advice and collateral available via its website at [www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes/](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes/). The third icon along the bottom of the page (in yellow and a bit hard to read) is for “Scams and Old People”.

For Surrey, I am the champion for this initiative and I have taken the “Scams Campaign Toolkit” presentation and deliberately split it into computer and non-computer related scams. This is because many old people turn off immediately you mention the words “cybercrime”, “virus”, “hacking”, etc. – it’s all too hard for them and many do not use IT much anyway. I will trial these presentations over the next few months and make them available via the Surrey Neighbourhood Watch website.

In the meantime, please use the collateral available on the website under the “Scams and Old People” link.

We have probably all been a victim of a scam or two (or definitely an attempted scam) but the elderly amongst us are more vulnerable than most. There are some very simple things we can all do to reduce the risk and these include:

- Registering with the Mailing and Telephone Preference Services
- Putting a chain on the front door
- Setting up a password with utility companies
- Putting a “no callers” sticker on front door

Measures like these cost little or no money and reduce the risk.

Persuade an elderly neighbour to have a key box outside to enable trusted people to be able to get access in an emergency. These are just the start; there are many other things you can do. Keep an eye out for future communications about this initiative, including a focussed “cybercrime” pack ■

## Expect the unexpected

Being involved in Neighbourhood Watch, we become more knowledgeable about crime and the places and situations in which criminals can strike. But criminal and anti-social behaviour still has the ability to surprise, writes *Mark Pengelly*.

If we asked you, “Where in Woking would you expect to see the most burglaries in August?” Then my guess is that your answers would probably not be Knaphill and Brookwood. Nor Mount Hermon, St. John’s, Hook Heath, Worplesdon, Mayford, or Sutton Green.

According to Surrey Police figures, those two combined patches saw the most incidents during a three-week period in August.

Knaphill and Brookwood suffered seven burglaries in that period, while Mount Hermon, St. John’s, Hook Heath, Worplesdon, Mayford and Sutton Green together saw three burglaries of houses and two shed break-ins.

Pyrford and the Byfleets saw two dwelling burglaries during the same period, while Old Woking, Kingfield, Westfield and Barnsbury saw two shed and house burglaries. Woking Town was hit by two shed break-ins, while Horsell and Maybury saw one house burglary apiece.

Meanwhile, Goldsworth Park and Sheerwater residents were in the happiest position – with those areas seeing no burglaries during the three-week period.

It just goes to show those of us who thought we knew it all how much we have to learn. And it underlines the importance of vigilance throughout all of our neighbourhoods in Woking – however idyllic and peaceful they may seem.

Wherever you live, NhW continues to be just as relevant as ever to keeping our communities safe and deterring crime ■

### **Cash machine thefts**

West Surrey and neighbouring counties have been struck with a series of violent ATM smash and grab style offences, warn Surrey Police.

Typically offenders are using diggers, excavators or other heavy plant to forcibly remove the ATM from the wall or building. This leaves a significant amount of damage, endangers any persons nearby or in the buildings, and incurs significant financial loss to local business. Most offences take place in darkness in the early hours.

Thefts of ATMs are a growing trend nationally and there are national working groups trying to address the trend and ensure that information is shared correctly and no opportunities are missed from an evidential point of view.

These thefts will often take place in more isolated locations and some of our areas in Surrey are more vulnerable as they offer easy access to at least two other counties. We are also aware that historically offenders have travelled across the country to carry out such attacks and therefore have a wide choice of target locations.

As a force, we are taking these seriously and carrying out enquiries where we can, utilising CCTV, forensics and witness evidence as best as possible. We are also liaising with other forces to identify organised crime groups which may be responsible for carrying out these offences. We will also take robust action to tackle these offenders whenever possible.

Our crime prevention officers continue to work with local companies and businesses to “design out” crime and this would include ensuring that these machines are secured with the maximum level of protection to prevent them from being targeted. We do appreciate, however, that this takes time to

arrange and implement and is an element of the situation which is beyond our control.

In the meantime, we would continue to encourage the public to report to us straightaway any suspicious vehicles or anyone seen acting suspiciously, as well as anyone with any information relating to any of the specific incidents that have taken place recently.

If you have any information which could assist, please call us on 101 or call the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 ■



## **Useful information**

Byfleet, W. Byfleet, Pyrford

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/byfleet-west-byfleet-pyrford/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/byfleet-west-byfleet-pyrford/)

Horsell & Goldsworth Park

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/goldsworth-park-horsell/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/goldsworth-park-horsell/)

Town Centre

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/woking-town/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/woking-town/)

Old Woking, Barnsbury, Kingfield & Westfield

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/old-woking/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/old-woking/)

Sheerwater

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/sheerwater/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/sheerwater/)

Maybury

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/maybury/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/maybury/)

Mount Hermon, St. John's, Hook Heath, Mayford & Sutton Green

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/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

[www.surrey.police.uk/woking/knaphill-brookwood/](http://www.surrey.police.uk/woking/knaphill-brookwood/)

## **How to report a crime**

Call 101 for all non-emergency policing matters or report online at [www.surrey.police.uk](http://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). Or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 if you have information about a crime and don't want to leave your name.