

Advice on setting up a new Watch in Woking

Initially, you need to speak with your neighbours to get their support for the Watch, and then to arrange, with them, to hold an inaugural meeting for the Watch (or Scheme, as the registrations system calls a Watch). This could be held over Zoom, in a local Hall or perhaps in someone's home if they have a suitable room.

You then need to decide if the Watch is going to have “hard” boundaries such as street(s), estate, block of flats, etc, or is going to have a “virtual” boundary and be social media based.

Setting up a Street-based Watch:

You will need to agree with your neighbours as to whom will be the Coordinator of the Watch (probably yourself) and who would be your Deputy (to take over in your absence). At the Watch Inauguration meeting these two people would then be voted into office. You will also need to agree with your residents on a suitable name for your Watch (e.g. Quality Street Neighbourhood Watch).

Following the successful outcome of the meeting (at which a member of the Woking Assoc. of Neighbourhood Watches may be invited to give some guidance), the Coordinator will be able to register with the WAN. For formal recognition of the Watch, the coordinators (and deputies) must register on the UK NhW registration system. www.ourwatch.org.uk >> “join us” >> scroll down to “Surrey”. Click on the link and fill in the details. This system is also used by the Police to disseminate information down to coordinators and residents. The coordinators will then start receiving Police and Watch emails. That information can then be disseminated down to residents in the Watch via email or social media. The WAN chair will also receive notification of the new Watch and will contact the co-ord to approve the Watch.

Setting up a social-media-based Watch

This is usually Facebook-based, but other social media tools can be used. Contact the chair at chair@wanw.org.uk for further advice.

From experience, social media Watches soon get the membership going once word gets around. If using Facebook the Watch needs to be set up as a Group where members ask to join as this generates control over the membership. The Administrator and deputy create the Group. WAN will help publicise the new Group. Facebook Pages are not allowed for NhW Watches. As with coordinators for a street-based Watch, the Admin and Deputy need to register on the ‘ourwatch’ system. Once registered, the WAN will provide all the support and publicity to get the Group going.

For all advice or any enquiries, please contact WAN chairman on Chair@WANW.org.uk