

Napton on the Hill :: Neighbourhood Watch

Newsletter - Christmas 2011

Welcome to the Christmas Newsletter from Napton on the Hill Neighbourhood Watch. In our village we are lucky and grateful to have virtually 100% coverage, and very close liaison with Southam Police and Warwickshire Trading Standards. All of this means that your neighbours are looking out for any unusual or suspicious activities in your street, and willing to alert the authorities. If you are newly arrived in the village, please contact your local street co-ordinator who will supply you with door stickers and useful crime prevention material. If you are elderly there's a special package just for you.

Sheds and Outbuildings - Police advise you to check your outbuilding security after several recent thefts in the Southam area.

- Most sheds are inherently weak, so do not store valuable items in them.
- Ideally, sheds and garages should be connected to the house alarm, but if this is not possible, fit a suitable battery operated alarm.
- Always lock your shed with a good quality padlock, ensuring that the hasp is bolted through the shed and into a steel plate.
- Secure up-and-over garage doors with padlocks through the inside runners, or fit a padlock (with hasp and staple) to either side of the door.
- Items which are easily carried away are the most popular with thieves who get into your shed. These need to be locked away in a secure cabinet and marked with a house no. and postcode.
- Consider having lockable steel boxes fitted to the floor to store your valuable tools.
- Larger items such as bicycles and lawn mowers can be shackled together with a bike chain or similar, ideally to the fabric of the building or to a metal post cemented into the ground.

Research shows that thieves often take tools such as ladders and spades, from a garage or shed, to help them break into a house. Ladders need to be fastened to a secure fixture. A spade can be shackled to another larger item through its handle.

Dial "101" - the new national non-emergency phone number providing one simple way for the public to contact the police service has now been rolled out across England & Wales. It will become an easy to remember number when anyone wishes to talk to their police force about policing, crime or anti-social behaviour. Calls to this new number will cost 15p per call, however long the call. This charge applies to both landlines and mobiles.

In an emergency, please continue to call 999, such as when a crime is being committed, when there is danger to life, or when violence is being used or threatened.

Worried about rogue traders and want peace of mind - if repairs are needed around your home, then call Tradeline, a unique service aimed at anyone aged over 50 and living in Warwickshire. Just phone - 08456 123 258 - and a trained adviser will put you in touch with a selection of local traders who have been vetted to ensure you receive quality and value for money.

Tweeters be aware - criminals can locate unattended homes within seconds of people posting comments about being on holiday on social networking sites such as Twitter, according to a recent study. Messages such as "packing my cases" and

"just landed" are big clues for thieves surfing the internet; a quick check on the family name, or the name of their child's school, and cross referenced with online address databases, will show the location of the unattended home. This study, conducted by Co-operative Travel, showed that children are often the worst offenders, with 51% of youngsters updating their status when they are about to go on holiday. When going away, please make sure that your travel plans are not disclosed on social media sites.



"School run" crime is up in rural areas" - a report from the National Farmers Union has revealed that opportunist thieves are taking advantage of unlocked cars and house doors in rural areas. Research shows that unforced burglaries have doubled in the past year, as thieves target trusting homeowners who do not lock their doors. Nearly a third of rural dwellers have left their homes unlocked and empty during the day; and more than a quarter of parents are failing to lock up when taking their children to school. Figures show that each theft provides the burglar with around £920 of goods, with some thefts costing the homeowner more than £3,000.

Copper and robbers - in the past few months all of us have suffered from the theft of phone cables along the Southam Road, which resulted in Napton being without both phone and internet connections. This year the number of crimes aimed at stealing metal has never been higher - in some parts of the country they're up by 75%. Car parts, children's slides, drains, sculptures, war memorials, power lines, church roofs, shopping trolleys, bus shelters, manhole covers, and phone cables have all disappeared. Thefts on the railways, which inconvenience many thousands of passengers, totalled 3,000 in 2010 - four years earlier reported crimes were just 600. According to the British Transport Police there's a direct correlation between metal prices going up and the fact that we are seeing more metal thefts. Copper prices are up 40% in the past two years, hitting £6,432 a ton in February. Lead trades at £1,500 per ton, compared to £650 in 2009. Aluminium and iron ore have doubled in price as well. There is no sign that the strong demand for metals from India, China and Brazil will decline any time soon; China's imports of scrap copper rose 9.1% in the first seven months of this year. In the summer a supermarket in Essex had 800 shopping trolleys stolen over 12 days, and the thieves paid £1 to release each trolley! It is likely that these trolleys were shipped abroad. White van man with a full load of copper cables can walk away with around six, seven or eight thousand pounds with almost no questions asked. Ecclesiastical, the main insurer of Anglican churches, paid out on 1,763 claims last year, costing a total of £3.3m - up from 10 cases in 2003 costing £18,111.

It's not a happy picture, but if you see anyone acting suspiciously, particularly late at night along the Southam Road, please call the Police at once - it might prevent another phone cable theft.

Wishing all parishioners a safe crime-free Christmas and Happy New Year
Compiled, produced and published by Napton Neighbourhood Watch