



Watch Schemes Newsletter

Somerset

Summer 2018

Area Commander

If you have read this before you will know that I am a born and bred, proud citizen of Somerset. As a result of the last newsletter I received an invitation to an annual Parish Council meeting and started my talk with a quiz about the size of Somerset - was it bigger or smaller than Malta? No one realised that Somerset covers an area 10 times bigger, with a population 100,000 greater. We are really about the same size and population as Luxembourg. It's not surprising then how diverse Somerset is both in terms of its topography and also its communities. The parish I visited was idyllic and I think the audience was very concerned when I described a neighbourhood about 5 miles away and how challenging it was to live there.

Those of you who keep up with the news may have heard of "County Lines." This is a type of criminal drugs dealing network run from large metropolitan areas like London and Manchester which stretches out into any of the counties in England and Wales. The "lines" relate to the mobile telephone numbers used to deal drugs. It's a national problem and an important issue for us in Somerset. Just one of the hideous features of this type of crime is that for it to work, the out of county drugs dealers need a local base to operate from. This can often be in the form of infiltrating themselves into a vulnerable household - called "cuckooing." As members of Neighbourhood Watch we need to be alert to this, the drugs dealers generally target medium size towns of which we have many. Please report any concerns in the normal way. Sorry this is not a more upbeat message but it is important you know the challenges we face as a community.

Mike Prior

Superintendent, Neighbourhood & Partnerships - Somerset

Neighbourhood Policing Support Team

Summer is on its way, the weather is warmer, the evenings lighter and longer. It is a great time of the year, but of course it also brings some significant challenges to the Police Service.

Unfortunately, this time of year can see an increase in burglary or thefts from sheds and garages as we all enjoy the weather. Thieves are lazy though! They will take the line of least resistance, so you need to make it as hard as possible for them. Make sure you secure windows and doors when you leave the house, even for a short while. If you are enjoying the sun in the back garden, lock the front door and secure the shed or garage. Be vigilant, report suspicious activity and keep an eye on elderly and vulnerable neighbours who are often targeted by the unscrupulous.

The longer nights, the exam period and school holidays also mean children and teenagers may have more freedom. Most will behave respectfully but there may be increased incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). ASB is personal to the individual, what may seem trivial to some may have a huge impact on another's quality of life. If you believe you are a victim of ASB, or witness it, please let us know and if we cannot attend at the time, a record will be made and the Beat Teams will certainly follow up persistent and regular ASB.

Hopefully, everyone will have a great spring and summer.... please continue to be our eyes and ears and stay safe!

Inspector Lee Moore

Neighbourhood Policing Support Team

REMINDER FOR CO-ORDINATORS

The free Public Liability Insurance for Neighbourhood Watch Street Signs and associated activities has been renewed for this financial year (1 April 2018-31 March 2019). Copy of the policy document and certificate were sent on a message to co-ordinators at the end of April but if you missed it, please contact the office and we can send again for you. If you prefer a paper copy of the document, please contact the office.



SEASONAL CRIME REDUCTION ADVICE

Now that we are entering the summer/holiday season it is especially important not to become complacent about security. It is the period in which the opportunist criminals take advantage and will:

- Enter open front or rear doors or windows whilst residents are in the garden.
- Enter doors or windows that have been left open or insecure at night whilst residents are asleep.
- Reach through insecure windows to steal property.

When you go on holiday, police advice includes:

- Take steps to make your house look occupied.
- Ask a trusted neighbour to open and close your curtains for you and place your post out of sight.
- Put a timer on some of your lights – do not leave a landing light on.
- Cancel your milk and paper deliveries.
- Ask a neighbour or friend to park their vehicle on your drive.
- Move valuable items, such as pedal cycles, from the shed to the house.
- Cut your lawns and hedges and make sure the hedge to the front of your property is cut to below three feet to aid surveillance.
- Do not advertise that you are going away on social media.



ROGUE TRADERS



This time of year we often see an increase in rogue traders across the force area – advice from the police and trading standards includes the following. Do not agree to work offered by unsolicited doorstep callers, take time to get three quotes from reputable businesses you trust and make your decision on who to use in your own time. Get recommendations from friends or via www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk. If you are concerned someone is at risk, always call the police. If you are concerned rogue traders are operating in your area, always report it. Remember - **if someone knocks at the door and you are not sure, don't open the door.** <http://www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk/consumers/rogue-traders-doorstep-crime/>

OFFICE DETAILS

Watch Scheme Administrator
Bridgwater Police Centre
Sandy Padgett House
Express Park, Bristol Road
Bridgwater TA6 4RR

Telephone 101 (switchboard)

Or 01278-644799 (direct dial)

Email:

lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk

KNIFE CRIME

A police operation last year saw 679 knives surrendered across the Force area. As a result the force has now provided knife surrender bins on a permanent basis in designated stations. If there is not one near you please contact your local beat team or pop in to your nearest enquiry office where staff will be able to advise.