

Neighbourhood News

The Avon & Somerset Watch Newsletter



Welcome to Avon & Somerset Watch

This week is Neighbourhood Watch week 2023, and I can think of no better time to publish the first issue of this newsletter, that marks the relaunch Avon & Somerset Neighbourhood Watch Association (that will be known as Avon & Somerset Watch).

Whether you are a coordinator or scheme member, I hope you enjoy the read.

Competition Time!

I'm the first to admit that "Neighbourhood News" is a bit of an uninspiring name for our newsletter.

So there is a coveted Avon & Somerset Watch 'No Prize' up for grabs (as well as a mention in the next issue and lifetime bragging rights) for whoever suggests the best name.

Just email your suggestion, your name, and which scheme you are with to avonandsomersetwatch@yahoo.com

Newsletter Highlights

What are Neighbourhood Watch Associations?

About Avon & Somerset Watch

Coordinator Spotlight

The Toolbox - Hollie Guard

Are you all signed up?



Avon & Somerset Watch Chair - A little bit about me...



My name is Frank Simonds and I am the interim chair for Avon and Somerset Watch. I was a Police Constable for 16 years until I retired on ill health grounds in 2017.

During my career, I was a Neighbourhood officer, Crime Prevention Officer, and Crime Prevention Design Advisor in Bristol, and concluded my career with the force Problem Solving Team at police HQ in Portishead.

Once I left the police, I wanted to continue promoting the benefits of crime reduction in my local community so I founded Whitecross Village Neighbourhood Watch that is based near the sea front in my home town of Weston super Mare.

Last year I was approached by the national Neighbourhood Watch Network who asked me to reform Avon and Somerset Watch. I accepted, and here we are!

There are two images here, one is from a few years ago when I was looking less scruffy than I usually do, the other is how you will typically find me if we meet.

I look forward to getting to know you, and if you ever need anything, please feel free to contact me by emailing me at avonandsomersetwatch@yahoo.com.



Did You Know?

People can still join even if there is not a scheme nearby!

Individual membership is available with Neighbourhood Watch.

They can visit www.ourwatch.org.uk/joinNW to find out more and join.

What are Neighbourhood Watch Associations?



A while ago, I was challenged in a meeting to justify the necessity for Neighbourhood Watch Associations. This is a good question, and worth answering here.

Regional associations form an important part of the structure of Neighbourhood Watch as an organisation.

But, what do associations do for you, to help as a scheme coordinator?

Regional associations can be thought of as the filling to the Neighbourhood Watch sandwich (yep, that's why I used that image) in the sense that we create a link between the national Neighbourhood Watch Network, and individual watch schemes.

Associations represent Neighbourhood Watch at the regional level through engagement with strategic partners (such as Avon and Somerset Constabulary); local business; regional politicians; public sector organisations; educational institutions; and the charity sector. The association highlights national projects, and promotes the amazing work you all do to those who otherwise won't hear about it.

It's important that the Network benefits from feedback so they know which campaigns are effective, and where best to direct resources. Associations conduct research with coordinators and members to determine what works, or doesn't, ensuring Network's activity is having a positive impact for our communities.

The Network provides a wealth of advice in the form of resources such as the Knowledge Hub; online toolkits; and examples of good practice from across the nation. Associations possess specialist knowledge and experience to guide you, and also provide practical assistance such as supply of window stickers, and advice on how to put up street signs in compliance with law.

Each police force area has differing needs. Neighbourhood Watch Associations can deliver a bespoke service that best meets the needs of the watch schemes and communities locally.

About Avon & Somerset Watch



To understand where we are now, there is value in a brief history lesson.

The first Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood Watch Association constituted in 2016 and everyone involved did a fantastic job of leading Neighbourhood Watch locally. The association then changed it's name to Avon and Somerset Watch.

Sadly, the organisation dissolved in 2021.

The Neighbourhood Watch Network approached me to restart the association in 2022, and I have spent nearly a year preparing for the launch of the new organisation. As the 15 syllables in "Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood Watch Association" is a bit of a mouthful, I've decided to keep the name Avon & Somerset Watch.

The motto of Avon & Somerset Watch is: **Empowering Coordinators; Supporting Police; Helping Community.**

Everything we do as Avon & Somerset Watch will be to support these aims.

Coordinator Spotlight



Every issue we will highlight the work of a coordinator in the Avon and Somerset.

If you would like to be featured in Coordinator Spotlight, just send me a photo (this is not required if you are not comfortable); and up to 200 words that answer the following questions:

What is your name?

What is the name of your scheme, and where is it?

Tell us a little something about yourself? Current or former work; Hobbies; Pets etc.

Your scheme? - When did it form?
Does it cover a street or an area?
How many members are there?

Have you undertaken any activities as a scheme? Do you have any good news stories?

Once you have written something, then email it to:
avonandsomersetwatch@yahoo.com

Help Wanted

Since last year, I have been creating Avon & Somerset Watch largely on my own, but for such an organisation to function we require a team to help deliver Neighbourhood Watch across the five counties of the Avon & Somerset region.

We require the following roles to be filled:

Deputy Chair - To assist the chair with decision making at strategic and tactical level, and to act on the chair's behalf when he is unavailable.

Treasurer - To administer the financial operations of Avon & Somerset Watch, including administration of financial accounts in compliance with legislation; reporting of the

organisation's financial status to relevant meetings; and seeking funding for the organisation.

Secretary - To organise and deliver Avon & Somerset Watch meetings including setting meeting dates and notifying attendees; securing meeting location (or arranging online meeting facilities); preparing and distributing agendas; recording meeting minutes; and distributing minutes within an agreed time scale.

The Secretary will also be expected to have a working familiarity with the organisation's constitution.



County Rep - Each county (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, New Somerset, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire) requires a County Rep who will be responsible for helping to deliver the strategic aims of both Avon & Somerset Watch, and the national Neighbourhood Watch Network, and report progress back to meetings.

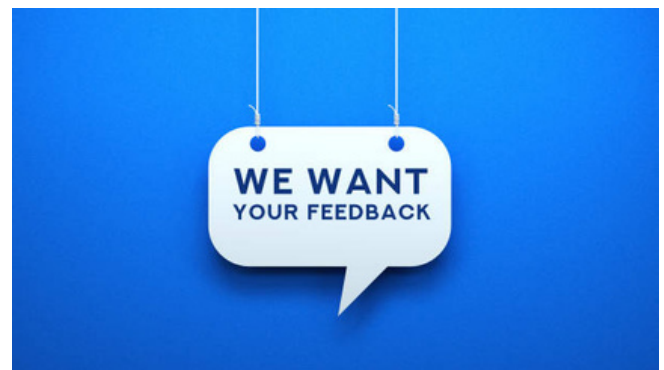
Other roles - Whilst the priority is to fill the key roles listed above, if there is something related to Neighbourhood Watch that you are particularly excited about, please contact me. As a new organisation, there is some freedom to create roles around people's skill sets and passions, and if it is possible to do so, I will.

At the beginning of the organisation's journey, you will be expected to assist with framing the constitution and on a continuing basis, any additional policy documents.

If you are interested in any of the roles listed above, please reply to this message, or email me at avonandsomersetwatch@yahoo.com detailing the role you are interested in, and any relevant experience you have.

All successful applicants will be required to agree to a DBS check for the purposes of safeguarding, and for the role of Treasurer to ensure no previous law enforcement contact in relation to theft or dishonesty offences.

Scheme Coordinators - We want to hear from you!



It is important to me that Avon and Somerset Watch tries to meet the needs of co-ordinators (and by extension scheme members) as best as possible.

To that end I would be grateful if co-ordinators would take the time to complete a brief survey (it will take about five minutes).

The survey can be completed here:

<https://www.surveylegend.com/s/4dce>

The Toolbox - Hollie Guard



In this series, I will help you build a collection of useful tools that will help keep you, your scheme members and your loved ones safe and protected.

This issue highlights a mobile phone app that I have been promoting ever since I was a Crime Reduction Officer in the police.

Hollie Guard is FREE (although there are payment plans you can upgrade to) and essentially converts your phone into a personal safety device.

If you ever find yourself feeling unsafe, you can shake or tap your smart phone, and the app will secretly activate the camera and microphone and start recording.

In addition, users can take advantage of other features such as:

- Assigning emergency contacts who will receive alerts when you activate the app.
- Map areas can be assigned and emergency contacts will be alerted if you don't leave that area after a set amount of time.
- Setting the start and end point of a journey, allowing your contacts to be alerted if you deviate from the route.
- A number of other features are also offered by the Hollie Guard app..

Hollie Guard was born out of tragic circumstances when Hollie Gazzard was murdered by her boyfriend, at her place of work in Gloucester in 2014.

Following this terrible event, Hollie's father Nick, formed the Hollie Gazzard Trust and soon after developed Hollie Guard. The app is ideal for anyone including independent children; those who are vulnerable; and lone workers.

I don't fall into any of the above categories, but I use Hollie Guard.

If you want to find out more, have a look at the following:

The [Hollie Guard website](#).

The [Hollie Gazzard Trust](#).

Hollie's story on the Netflix documentary series '[My Lover, My Killer](#).'

A review of the app by [Edinburgh Live](#).

The Hollie Guard app is available on Android and iOS.

Are you all signed up?

Coordinators in Avon & Somerset enjoy the benefit of two systems of information.

Avon & Somerset Constabulary employ three members of staff who, as administrators, dedicate their time to running the Community Alerts messaging service. They send you bespoke information related to crime and police related matters in your area.

The national Neighbourhood Watch Network provide the Neighbourhood Alerts system that sends you newsletters and messages from Avon and Somerset Watch, and notifications from agencies including Action Fraud,

the Fire Service, the Neighbourhood Watch Network itself, and other agencies.

Both systems are completely FREE to join.

Many scheme co-ordinators in Avon & Somerset are registered with both systems, but there are an estimated 1600 who are only registered on either one or the other, they and their scheme members are missing out on the full benefits of both systems.



Community Alerts (The police system)

If you receive emails from Avon and Somerset Constabulary with notifications from either Kym Booker; Trevor Wilmot; or Paul Johnson then you are already registered with this system.

If you're not receiving Community Alerts, then you can sign up by emailing the police Neighbourhood Watch administrator relevant to your area:

Trevor Wilmot (Bath & North East Somerset / South Gloucestershire) -
trevor.wilmot@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Kym Booker (Bristol) -
kym.booker@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Paul Johnson (New Somerset / North Somerset) -
paulk.johnson@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Neighbourhood Alerts (The national system) -
www.ourwatch.org.uk

If you receive emails from 'Neighbourhood Alert' then you are signed up to this system.

For those who don't, then registering is straightforward:

1) Visit <https://members.ourwatchmember.org.uk/join> and complete the short form.

2) You will be sent a six number code on your mobile.

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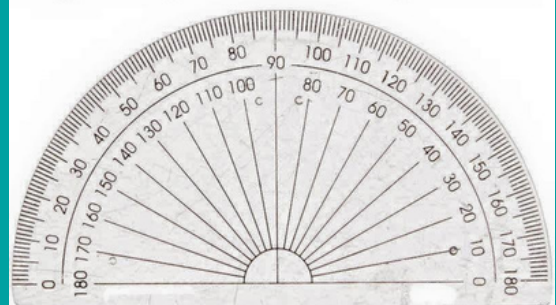
3) Enter the code, and you will receive a confirmation email.

Both Avon & Somerset Watch and Avon & Somerset Constabulary want you to benefit from both alert systems available to coordinators in our region. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact: avonandsomersetwatch@yahoo.com or the Neighbourhood Watch Administrators.

In the newsletter I send to my scheme members, I always finish with a couple of funnies.

I intend to continue this tradition in this newsletter. Please accept my apologies...

**I support farming,
I guess you could say I'm...**



Until next issue,

Frank Givard