

Spotlight on: Neighbourhood Watch of Avon and Somerset



How much do you know about Avon and Somerset Police's dedicated Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) team? Find out how they can support you and help deter crime in your local area.

Neighbourhood Watch of Avon and Somerset is a thriving network of schemes across the force area, with approximately 4330 volunteer coordinators. These schemes are overseen by three dedicated police staff members.

- Paul Johnson, covering Somerset (2307 coordinators)
- Kym Booker, covering Bristol (1129 coordinators)
- Trevor Wilmot, covering BANES and South Gloucestershire (894 coordinators)

Paul, Kym and Trevor spend most of their time scanning internal databases to find out about the crimes taking place in their areas. The team read through relevant reports, 'sanitise' information by removing identifying details, then share their findings with the NHW coordinators in (or near to) the affected communities. Coordinators can then cascade the news, along with any crime prevention guidance, to residents.

For the visually impaired and rural locations without internet access, our NHW administrators can also send out voice alerts to mobile phones and landlines.

Sending one message to a volunteer coordinator can reach over 400 households, and a forcewide alert can be heard by over 120,000 people!

Why should you join your local Neighbourhood Watch?

Joining Neighbourhood Watch of Avon and Somerset will give you the reassurance you need at home.

Our team will regularly provide information about crime in your local area, so you will always be up to date on recent activity and know when to be extra vigilant. As well as reporting burglaries, anti-social behaviour, fraud and rogue traders, and vehicle-related crime – such as catalytic converter theft, bicycle theft and keyless car theft – the team will also share advice on how to stay safe and keep your property secure.

What's more, whether your local scheme covers an entire village or just one or two streets, NHW communities rally around each other to provide support when needed.

"We want to reinforce that Neighbourhood Watch is more about crime prevention and deterrence than surveillance and spying on people! The biggest misconception is that we expect residents to spend all their time looking out of the window or doing patrols," says Trevor.

And that's a fact – areas with NHW schemes, bolstered by physical deterrents like signs and window stickers, frequently see a reduction in crime on their streets.



Volunteering for Neighbourhood Watch

The continued success of Neighbourhood Watch schemes across Avon and Somerset is thanks to our dedicated volunteer coordinators who support our internal team by sharing news and crime prevention advice to their neighbours.

In critical situations like the Covid-19 pandemic, having a reliable communication network was an invaluable tool as community members needed support with transport services and grocery deliveries during scary and uncertain times.

Volunteer coordinator Dean Jefferies began volunteering with us at the beginning of the year. Based in Southville in Yeovil, his family were struggling with persistent anti-social behaviour happening in an alleyway next to their house, which became a hide-away for drug dealers and anti-social drinkers. One day, he was able to speak to a police community support officer (PCSO) patrolling their neighbourhood, who proceeded to take photos of the alleyway and alert the relevant authorities: the wider neighbourhood policing team, the local council and housing association. The PCSO also encouraged Dean to join NHW. Spurred on, Dean went out canvassing in his community to build up interest in a new scheme and recruited 10–15 members in the first month alone.

“It feels really good to be part of a scheme that offers direct access to community information.

“Paul, the Neighbourhood Watch administrator for Somerset, is great if you need any help. He sends me daily alerts about crime in the area, community events and crime prevention guidance.

“I wish I’d joined earlier!”

And this wasn’t the only success – the alleyway impacting Dean’s feeling of safety at home was gated off late last year.

Sign up today!



Do you like what you hear and want to find out more about joining a supportive Neighbourhood Watch community? You can learn more about joining or setting up a scheme locally [here](#).

As Kym sums up, “Neighbourhood Watch volunteers are good, hardworking people who want to help others. More than 20 years have passed, but I’m still passionate about the work I do for communities in Bristol.”