

A Christmas message...

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for this festive season and most importantly to thank you for all the dedication, commitment and hard work you put into neighbourhood watch. I do not underestimate how vital your role is and quite simply, without you neighbourhood watch would not be the success that it is. Prevention is at the heart of the new Police Crime Plan, and we know that effective neighbourhood watch prevents crime! My plan is that we build upon this by ensuring that Avon & Somerset has the best supported neighbourhood watch. I hope there are exciting times ahead, and that you will continue to be a part of this most valuable resource.

Nigel Colston, Chief Inspector Neighbourhood & Early Intervention

As another challenging year rapidly comes to a close, we are pleased to say that interest in Neighbourhood Watch continues and we are adding new schemes on a regular basis. There have been a couple of changes and some others will soon become apparent. The key points to note are:

- We now have a permanent, full-time Administrator for each of the three policing sectors. These are B&NES and South Gloucestershire, Bristol & Somerset
- Community Alerts is being updated and the Alerts messages will look slightly different. Those of you who receive voice messages will soon be receiving them from a realistic computer-generated voice. These are still our own tailored messages and you will know it is from us as each message starts with a prerecording stating it's from Avon and Somerset Constabulary.
- We continue to build relationships with outside agencies such as Trading Standards, Crimestoppers, Action Fraud and others to bring you information on current crime trends and prevention advice
- Administrators work closely with other force areas to bring valuable information from our colleagues across several different counties.
- As of today, December 14 2021, NHW Coordinators have shared a staggering 427,493 Community Alerts this year. Voice messages adds another 14,353 to this total.
- The feedback we receive from you is fantastic. Passing scam and fraud activity with us to share with the wider community will have prevented other residents falling foul of these crimes.

REMEMBER!

Traditionally, Christmas is a time for giving – but not everyone deserves a present!

Leaving your vehicle unlocked may prevent damage caused by someone breaking in, but this only works if drivers remove ALL their property. Alarmingly, people still leave wallets, purses and cash in their cars. This provides easy pickings for thieves and encourages them to try other vehicles or return at a later date.

CHRISTMAS OPENING

The Neighbourhood Watch Office will close at 4pm on Friday 18 December and reopen on Monday 3 January 2022.

We send our best wishes to all our Members and Residents for a joyful and crime-free Christmas



CHRISTMAS SECURITY

AT HOME

Keep all unattended doors and windows locked at all times – you'd be surprised at how many "walk in" burglaries happen. Remove any keys and keep them out of sight, but ensure all residents know where they are in case of emergency. Close internal doors at night to help prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

Put lights on timer switches whenever you go out, and tune a radio into a talk station to give the impression that someone is at home. You can now get a light that imitates the flicker of a TV, giving the impression that someone is watching television upstairs. As your neighbours will probably have their Christmas lights on, a dark house will stand out as being unoccupied.

Close the curtains or blinds at dusk to make sure thieves can't see through your windows and see what you've got to steal or that you're on your own.

Avoid advertising that you're going to be away on Facebook or other social media – people other than your friends could be seeing your posts.

After Christmas, don't leave the boxes from your presents where people can see them - you'll be advertising what's in the house!

VEHICLES

Keep your vehicles locked and alarmed (if you have one) at all times. Ensure you leave nothing on show, tempting thieves to break in and see what else is in there! Keep any shopping in the boot so it's out of sight, and remove the items as soon as you can.

If you return to your car with a lot of gifts and plan on continuing shopping, drive away and park in another spot. This makes anyone watching the car park think you have gone home or you've just arrived and don't have a boot full of gifts – many of which may have a receipt in the bag!

GOING OUT / SHOPPING

It's always busy when you're shopping or going out at Christmas, so watch out for pickpockets. Keep any wallets and purses in a zipped up pocket if possible.

Get cash before you go out, so you don't need to use a cash machine. If you have to get more money, never keep your PIN number in your purse or wallet, and always make sure no-one can see your number.

If you think you'll drink – get a taxi! Police stops and breath tests will be increased at this time of year.

Guard your drink – don't leave any drinks unattended to prevent the risk of drink spiking.

Look out for each other! Stay with your friends and don't let anyone go off alone, especially if they have overindulged!

TAXIS

Try to book a taxi before you go out and agree a price for the journey. Use a recognised taxi rank if you haven't planned your journey, and look out for a taxi badge and a meter. Taxis that don't have a For Hire light are not allowed to pick up passengers that haven't booked but hail them from the street. Any passenger that does travel with them after hailing them will be uninsured. Don't let a drunk friend take a taxi on their own - having a sober friend with them protects both the passenger and the driver.

Remember, DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!

HAVE A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS