



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Registered Charity No 1078269

2017 - Issue 4 (Oct – Dec)

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

Welcome to the latest edition of our District Association newsletter. As always, I commend the contents to you and trust that you will value the range of contents not just for yourself but also to share with your scheme members. Of course, my particular thanks go to Neal Fowler, "WB" Editor and our Association Vice Chairman. Neal will always be pleased to hear from you about future content for this newsletter – so please do contact him with your ideas via our **new email address:** canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com

In this issue you will find an article about Alex Bull who, I am very pleased to say, has agreed to join our Association Committee as a co-opted member. You will see that Alex is already much involved with community work in general and NHW in particular in the Hales Place area of Canterbury in which she lives, and I am convinced that she will make a very positive contribution to our work. Indeed, she has already attended a recent committee meeting and evidenced that belief.

We have previously undertaken telephone surveys of all our coordinators – usually on an alternate years basis over quite a short period in the autumn. We have wanted to do this for several reasons – including just wanting to try to make a spoken contact with you rather than just sending emails. We have also checked on your contact details, details of your scheme, that you are receiving Watching Brief and invitations to our Annual Conference / AGM, and also to see if we can offer any advice. Our new survey will encompass all of these purposes but will be organised slightly differently, in that the contacts will be made on a rolling basis – a few at a time across the whole year. This task has very kindly been agreed to be undertaken by one of our Police Volunteers, Brenda Hunter. Brenda will make every effort to speak with you in person but, should it prove difficult to do that, then we may have to resort to the more impersonal email. Either way we look forward to staying in touch with you and working with and for you in the future. Brenda will hopefully be making her first calls in October.

STOP PRESS 1 – a new version of the Kent Community Messaging System (KCMS) should be in operation 'soon' . . .
STOP PRESS 2 – Conference / AGM 2018 will be on the morning of SATURDAY 10th MAR . . . so please put a note in your diary or on the calendar ASAP, which for some I guess will be at Christmas when the presents are opened!

C&DNHWA Growth Since Last Newsletter

The Committee offers thanks to the following for support of NHW in their communities:

New Schemes:

Barham Village – Jane Graham
Underwood & Elham Closes, C/bury – Claire Littlefield
Old Farm Close, Whitstable – Gerry Skinner

New Coordinators:

Richmond Road, Whitstable – Cathy Anscombe
Windmill & Bayview Roads, W/stable – Carolyn Chester
Ellis Road, Tankerton – Jean Waldock

No Way Is This A Toy!

Miniature crossbows, which are now being imported into the UK and sold as toys by online retailers, are the latest product to raise serious safety concerns say Trading Standards. Small enough to fit in the hand of a child this crossbow can fire a sharp missile, such as a cocktail stick, with force sufficient to pierce an apple or a drinks can. Reports from China suggest that injuries have occurred as a result of these weapons, and now there is considerable concern here too that they pose an extreme risk to children. If you see any of these items for sale in Kent you are asked to report it to Trading Standards online at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/



Introducing Our New Committee Member - Mrs Alex Bull

As our Chairman mentioned in his opening address, the Association is delighted to welcome Mrs Alexandra Bull as a new, co-opted, member of the Committee. Here, by way of introduction, Alex explains her involvement with NHW and how that benefits the community in her particular area.

Firstly, I would like to say how pleased I am to be joining the Canterbury and District Neighbourhood Watch Committee. I first became aware of NHW in 2001 when I moved to Canterbury with my husband, a university academic. The upper Headcorn Drive area we moved into had a well-established NHW scheme and we were happy to join. We still live there, but now with the addition of 2 miniature long haired dachshunds and three cats! However, it wasn't until I retired after 35 years of teaching in schools, as well as in Further and Higher Education, that I decided I wanted to do more than pay my NHW subs each year and attend the odd AGM. I had always intended to use some of my new found freedom to help in the community and envisaged working in charity shops or providing reading support in primary schools. Instead, when our NHW scheme coordinator decided to step down, I decided to step up, feeling assured that 35 years



of teaching experience would provide the confidence, administrative and social skills needed to fulfil the role. I put myself forward and was elected in October 2015. In 2016 our scheme was expanded to include the streets in lower Headcorn Drive and this year **Headcorn Drive NHW** will operate within the recently launched **Headcorn Drive Area Residents' Association**. The area in which I operate has its own distinct characteristics and challenges. Fortunately, a high crime rate is not one of them! Approximately, 70% of households are Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) rented by university students. In one street of 77 residences only 16 are known to be owner occupied. Students are statistically more likely to be victims of crime and every year at the start of the Autumn Term our team of Street Link Persons try to visit every household to offer advice on crime prevention and safety. The 'Student Welcome Booklet', I launched in 2016, also contains a section 'Protect Yourself from Crime', alongside other information about living in the community. The permanent residents, who are very much in the minority, are mainly seniors or families with older children. Inevitably this has led to lifestyle conflicts with a number of student households and I have, therefore, ended up dealing with a range of anti-social issues, and sometimes illegal behaviour, which has had a negative impact on the surrounding community. This includes excessive noise, waste mismanagement issues, inappropriate parking, as well as alcohol and drug misuse. It is also not surprising that many, particularly the elderly and those who live alone, feel isolated and vulnerable within the 'sea' of students around them. For them our scheme serves a wider social function. Regular contact with us through Newsletters, crime alerts etc, the presence of Link Persons and NHW community events is very much appreciated. I frequently walk the dogs around our scheme area and stop for a chat with people I meet. I know that what my team and I do really does make a difference and the words of one lady always stay with me: "Before you came we felt so alone, now we feel much safer. Having NHW in our area feels like a warm hug". *Brilliant, well done Alex - Editor*

News In Brief

It's a dead give-away – Did you know that a dead squirrel could warn you of an impending scam? Or that a day's fishing could land you in deep water? No? Then a browse through the summer edition of Kent Police's Rural Matters newsletter will set you straight. It contains both answers to these conundrums and useful information about the many other fascinating aspects of the Rural Police Team's work. The Newsletter is accessible online at <https://www.kent.police.uk/getmedia/f7573550-3c17-447e-8388-5d48cefc9739/Rural-matters-08-online.pdf> It is well worth a read – even if you live in the centre of town!

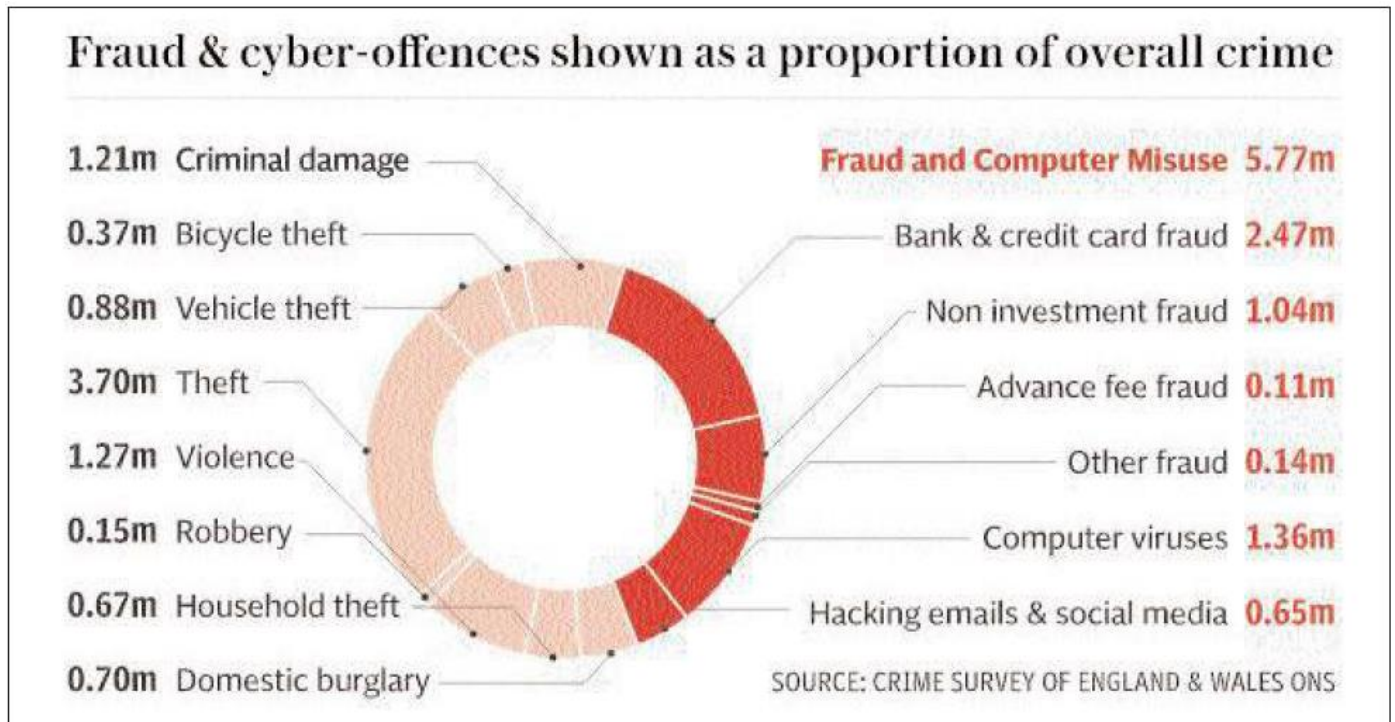
Medical Records online – Did you know that, in addition to making a doctor's appointment or ordering a repeat prescription online you can now also access some of your medical records that way too? You can register to make this service available to you, and find out more about options relating to online booking facilities at <https://www.emishealth.com/media/1537/04-16-medical-records-access-patient-guide.pdf>

Offer Alert – Watch out for a "special offer" spam email offering cut-price security software supposedly from Norton or McAfee. Victims who accept the offer are taken to a fake installation web page which says the software couldn't install and then asked to call a 1-800 number. This connects to a phony tech support service, where the fraudsters set up remote access to the victim's PC, putting them at risk of malware, ransomware or a straight rip-off repair bill. Our advice is only buy security software from a reputable retailer or the company's official website.

Generally Swings & Roundabouts - But Fraud Is Still On The Slide

According to figures recently released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), one in 10 of us is now a victim of some form of offence or fraud online. Figures show that we are 20 times more likely to be robbed while at our computer by criminals, who are often based overseas, than being held up in the street. The explosion in online fraud and cybercrime saw almost six million offences committed last year alone, meaning around one in ten adults in the population were preyed upon. Fraud has now become the most prevalent crime in the UK with people ten times more likely to become a victim of that than to suffer any other kind of theft. Unlike many traditional crimes, those affected by cyber offences cover all age groups and social backgrounds from every geographical region of the country, meaning that no-one who uses a computer regularly can be complacent.

Excluding figures for fraud and cyber offences, crime dropped by six per cent over the past 12 months, with 6.3 million people saying that they had been a victim of some sort of offence, even if they hadn't reported it. The admittedly much lower figures for murder, knife / gun crime and sex offences were, however, all up year on year.



If you think that you have been a victim of fraud you should first report it to **Action Fraud**, the national reporting centre for cybercrime and fraud (contact details at the foot of page 4). They pass reports on to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, who identify any viable lines of enquiry that the police could follow. Sadly though, according to the independent charity *'The Fraud Advisory Panel'* the police may not have sufficient resources to investigate every report received – especially outside of London. Kent Police announced last year the introduction of a task force to assist in tackling the increasing threat of fraud and identity theft related crime. They advocate following advice in the *'Take Five Campaign'* which urges us all to just stop and think before giving out personal information to, or accepting the credentials of, persons who contact us claiming to be representatives of banks, utility companies, government departments, service agencies, private concerns – or even the police. Figures collated by the ONS at present only cover the first six months, so are still regarded as 'experimental' by statisticians. They do, however, suggest that fraud and computer misuse accounted for 5.8 million crimes last year. Of those, 2.5 million were bank and credit card fraud, one million consisted of online shopping scams and around 108,000 were romance / dating scams. Around 1.4 million people suffered computer virus attacks, and almost 650,000 people reported that their email or social media profile had been hacked. With so many cyber criminals being based overseas it is extremely difficult for the police to investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. Computer users are, therefore, urged to carefully consider all necessary precautions when liaising online or engaging in financial transactions. According to new statistics from the Government's cyber security campaign, *'Cyber Aware'*, 82% of households have double locks or deadlocks on doors at home and 89% have window locks, but when it comes to online security only 32% create strong online passwords and only 52% of us regularly download the latest security software or app updates when they are first available. The new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), a part of GCHQ, advises use of **three random words** to create a strong password and always downloading the latest software or app updates. *Grateful thanks to Watchout Magazine for some content in this article – Editor.*

It's Nearly 'That' Time Again

Although it seems incredible, it really is only a few short weeks until this year's Halloween celebrations begin. So it must be time again to fish-out and dust off the notices that can be used to, politely, deter revellers from the doorsteps of the elderly, or not so elderly, who would prefer not to be involved in Trick or Treating activities. And if you can't immediately put your finger on last year's flyer, then head over to our webpage to print another one off. <http://www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/minutes/Halloweenposter.pdf>

Who Would Have Thought It!

The South East of England is invariably considered to be a fairly affluent part of the country and, although there are areas of deprivation within the region, Canterbury wouldn't readily be considered to be one of them. But amazingly within the district there are over 4,000 children living in 'poverty', i.e. in households with an income



below 60% of that enjoyed by an average household of similar size. As a result the city now needs its own food bank, distributing rations to a growing number of people that can't adequately provide for themselves! The Canterbury Food Bank, based in Wincheap, is a volunteer-led community charity (registration no. 1153791) which provides emergency (three-day) food parcels to individuals and families across Canterbury, Whitstable, and Herne Bay, when they find themselves unable to afford food and essential supplies. Such difficulties could be caused by a 'one-off' catastrophic event or simply an overload of demand on sparse family resources caused by: family break up; illness; an unexpected

bill; delay in benefit payments; redundancy or even reduced working hours. Even school holidays can cause serious hardship for some families as free school meals cease to be available to assist in feeding hungry youngsters. Support for the foodbank comes from community grocery / cash donations and sponsorship given by local businesses and national companies. You might have noticed the donation receptacles at the supermarket where you do your weekly shop. These collect all manner of food and household items that can be used to keep the shelves of the foodbank adequately stocked. If you haven't noticed them before, please seek them out and consider making a donation, however small, to assist – but please no perishable items. Volunteers sort and pack the donations into emergency parcels designed to last for 3 days. Thirty two different support agencies, including Family Liaison, Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK and the British Red Cross are able to supply Canterbury Food Bank vouchers to people that are in need through crisis. The vouchers are then exchanged for a food parcel at one of 3 distribution centres held across the district each week. Tea, coffee and refreshments are also offered to recipients when they pick up their food parcel. This contact affords opportunity for recipients to talk to volunteers about further support that may be available to them. For more information, and details of how you might be able to help the work undertaken by Canterbury Food Bank, visit their webpage at www.canterburyfoodbank.org/index.html

Useful Contacts:

canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com – C&DNHWA email
www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/ – C&DNHWA website
www.canterburycsp.org.uk/ – Community Safety Partnership
www.scambusters.org/ – Online Protection Advice
[environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com/](mailto:environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com) – CCC Fly-Tipping
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/ – Trading-standards

Editorial & Layout – Neal Fowler

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www.actionfraud.police.uk/ – Report Fraud