



OUR NEWS

the e-newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters

FEBRUARY 2019 EDITION

Neighbourhood Watch Week will be more than you expected!

Whether it's preventing fraud, educating young people about knives or accompanying a person to a doctors' appointment, Neighbourhood Watch volunteers are doing incredible work to make their communities safer and stronger.

This year's Neighbourhood Watch Week, which runs from 17 – 23 June, will celebrate our volunteers and the work they do under the theme of #MoreThanYouExpect.

Much of the public think Neighbourhood Watch is purely a crime prevention movement – we know that's not the whole picture and we want to give people a

more rounded sense of what Neighbourhood Watch is all about. This year's theme will allow us to highlight both the traditional work our groups do around crime prevention and reporting as well as celebrate the unexpected projects our volunteers work on.

Each day of the week will have a different focus. For example, one day will focus on our members helping to stop burglaries in their area, another day will look at how Neighbourhood Watch groups are tackling loneliness and social isolation.

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of the Neighbourhood Watch Network,

said the theme allowed the organisation to highlight the breadth and depth of its work.

"So much of the great work our members do flies under the radar", he said. "People assume that Neighbourhood Watch is about preventing crime and that's it. Although that is a large part of our work, we have a bigger story to tell.

"We would love our volunteers to highlight the work they do to create safer and stronger communities and if you're doing something that is not traditionally associated with Neighbourhood Watch, we would love to hear from you."

Neighbourhood Watch volunteers will be encouraged to share the work they do on social media using the hashtag #MoreThanYouExpect during the week.

In preparation for the week, volunteers can also send in examples of the work they do, traditional or not, to the Central Support Team. These case studies will be used to highlight the incredible work our volunteers do day in, day out.

Let us know about the work you do for Neighbourhood Watch which is more than expected!

Email William.Murphy@ourwatch.org.uk using the subject line: 'More Than You Expect'



Big enthusiasm for new West Midlands Association

Over 80 enthusiastic Neighbourhood Watch volunteers met at the pre-launch of a new Force Association that will cover the West Midlands.

A force association represents Neighbourhood Watch schemes within a police force boundary. They are the voice between the people and the police.

Speaking at the meeting Police Commander Kenny Bell welcomed the new initiative saying that as crime had evolved, so too policing needed to change. He revealed that in the West Midlands they were having to adapt to 2,000 fewer police officers on the beat in the region.

Inspector Bel Sixsmith, who manages community policing, said she was enthused about restarting the Force Association saying that in the past the police had not engaged fully with Neighbourhood Watch but now that would change.

As part of her presentation, Sixsmith showed two maps detailing where crimes had been committed in two different parts of Birmingham that had the same demographics, area spread and socio-economic population.

One map was crowded with crime reports whereas the other had minimal reports of any criminal activity



whatsoever. The only difference between the two areas was the latter had a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in place. This was proof Neighbourhood Watch worked, attendees heard.

Later in the evening volunteers were asked to nominate themselves for places on the force association committee with an emphasis on 'diverse skill-sets' to ensure that the committee was able to focus on 'doing, not talking'.

Craig Cox, force association lead for the neighboring West Mercia area, spoke of his experiences of starting an association. He said it needed to be more than a talking shop; it required people taking action.

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of Neighbourhood Watch Network, delivered a presentation on the organisation's three-year strategy to ensure it was more relevant to its members and growing the number of schemes throughout England and Wales.

New Window Stickers Issued

A new batch of 250,000 window stickers bearing the famous Neighbourhood Watch roundel have been printed and issued to force associations.

Paid for by ERA Security, the window stickers highlight to criminals that a scheme is in place and the neighbours are watching – a crime deterrent all in themselves.

A reserve of stickers is held by the Central Support Team for force associations requiring a top up.





Working groups

Three working groups have been convened to improve the operation and service the Neighbourhood Watch Network offers its members and volunteers.

The groups, made up of Trustees, volunteers and Central Support Team staff, are focused on three key areas. They are to improve the organization's IT, developing a national offer and to create a good practice database for coordinators.

The IT group are looking at ways to make it easier for people to sign up, join or create new Neighbourhood Watch schemes as well as improving the national website for users.

The Good Practice group are developing an online database to house accessible advice on running schemes. The database will initially have 50 areas of good practice and will launch in the summer.

The National Offer group are determining what the benefits are of joining Neighbourhood Watch nationally to current and potential members.

Prison print project



Prisoners at HMP Moorland have produced 10,000 Neighbourhood Watch leaflets for free as part of a restorative justice project.

The category C prison has its own printing workshop and produced the leaflets for Doncaster West Neighbourhood Watch.

“These leaflets will assist in expanding the coverage of Neighbourhood Watch in Doncaster but they also demonstrate the prison's willingness to assist in our crime prevention work”, said Supt Neil Thomas, South Yorkshire police lead for Neighbourhood Watch.

“We are grateful for the cooperation of HMP Moorland management in providing the services of their printing workshop”.

Prisoners work in the printing workshop in order to learn new skills that will help them after release.

Police Minister to address Strategy Conference



The government's policing minister will be the guest speaker at Neighbourhood Watch Network's annual strategy conference taking place in London on 14 March.

Nick Hurd MP will speak about why it is important for citizens to be a member of Neighbourhood Watch.

Attendees at the strategy day will also hear from CEO John Hayward-Cripps who will give an update on the organisation's three-year strategy.

There will also be talks from

coordinators and members on subjects close to the heart of many Neighbourhood Watch volunteers including street patrols, using social media and engaging students.

Those in attendance will have an opportunity to feed into the strategic priorities about improving the organisation IT, measuring the impact of NW and the development of the national NW offer (i.e. what are the benefits of joining Neighbourhood Watch).



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Striking back against stereotypes

Once dismissed as curtain twitchers and busy bodies, Neighbourhood Watch is hitting back by calling out ‘lazy stereotypes’ of its volunteers.

Negative stereotypes of Neighbourhood Watch members as nosy, curtain twitchers are offensive, unproductive and responsible for putting people off joining the crime prevention movement. But now Neighbourhood Watch is hitting back against that image.

In recent weeks, the Neighbourhood Watch Network highlighted two prominent examples of how its volunteers are unfairly maligned, rather than the community minded souls we know them to be.

The ITV Sunday night crime drama Vera, starring Brenda Blethyn as the titular mac wearing sleuth, featured a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator who interfered with police investigations and is seen at one-point tracking suspects involved in a murder. The coordinator is characterised as an obvious long-standing pain in the proverbial backside for the show’s fictional Northumberland and City Police Force.

More recently, a Guardian column by comic David Mitchell inferred that putting Neighbourhood Watch members in charge of law enforcement would result in crimes such as speeding and burglary being prioritised over online child abuse and modern slavery.

“Neighbourhood Watch volunteers are often characterized as a group of middle-class keyhole Kate’s – spying on the neighbours, interfering in people’s lives”, said John Hayward-Cripps. “This lazy stereotyping is harmful and does not reflect the real work of the modern Neighbourhood Watch.

“The idea that our members are only concerned with certain types of crime is baffling. Our volunteers run workshops to stop young people carrying knives, we teach older people to spots the signs of potential scams and we have produced crime prevention toolkits that tackle human trafficking and terrorism.

“The majority of police officers embrace the local knowledge and insight that our volunteers bring with them. We are viewed as vital partners in the effort to create safer and stronger communities. Neighbourhood Watch is a grassroots movement open to anyone who wants to make their community a safer place. We would urge people to think twice before making assumptions about us.”

Media outlets jumped on the story including The Times which published the news item on it’s front page (see picture). John Hayward-Cripps took part in series of BBC radio interviews and in a rare moment of agreement, panelists on the topical Sky News debate show The Pledge agreed that Neighbourhood Watch volunteers should not be undermined.

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Stereotypes

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Opinion pieces in The Telegraph and Sunday Times followed with the headlines “Pity the criminal who falls foul of Britain’s curtain-twitching Neighbourhood Watch heroes” and “Reasons to celebrate Neighbourhood Watch” respectively. It capped off a great show of support for our movement and our amazing volunteers.



HOME FRONT
 FEBRUARY 10 2019, 12:01AM, THE SUNDAY TIMES

Reasons to celebrate Neighbourhood Watch

HELEN DAVIES



Let's celebrate the nation's curtain-twitchers — or should that be plantation shutterers? They certainly get my meaningful vote. Whether you side

News

Pity the criminal who falls foul of Britain's curtain-twitching Neighbourhood Watch heroes

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Messages of support from the public:

- “I’m glad my street is covered by Neighbourhood Watch people. Mostly because we haven’t seen any police for many months. At least the concerned residents share information when something happens.”*
- “Neighbourhood Watch is really just another name for what used to be called community. Neighbours looking out for one another. It should be encouraged, not derided.”*
- “I don’t see any problem with Neighbourhood Watch schemes monitoring low level crime as turning a blind eye to rowdiness and minor vandalism sends a message to antisocial type that residents don’t care and the crime will escalate.”*



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Fundraising chief joins network

Amy Mawby has joined the Neighbourhood Watch Network as its new Head of Fundraising. Previously she was the Fundraising Manager at Welcare, a child and family support charity, and spent three years at the Firefighters' Charity in various fundraising and supporter care roles.

Her role at NW is to diversify and increase income for the organisation and support fundraising and good practice across the organisation, both locally and across England and Wales.

Over the next 12 months, Amy will be ensuring the fundraising areas on the website are updated, relevant and most of all useful to our members; organising and leading a series of local fundraising workshops alongside Will Murphy, Senior Communications and Digital Manager, who will lead social media workshops; and leading a working group on what the benefits and motivations are and could be to becoming a member of Neighbourhood Watch and what that means for future membership.

"I am so excited to be joining the Neighbourhood Watch Central Support Team at this exciting time", Amy says. "In these unsettling times, the need for a movement like Neighbourhood Watch is more relevant than ever. Our role, alongside our amazing volunteers up and down the country, is to leverage the recognition and resilience of the organisation to meet the needs within communities - of feeling safe, included, connected and heard. I look forward to working with and supporting you all!"

Fundraising website and workshops

The fundraising area on www.ourwatch.org.uk has been updated. We hope this is a useful resource for our members and will encourage you to use it to help your fundraising locally. We will continue to build on the information and tools available around fundraising. Please do let us know your opinions about the updates and the information – is it helpful, is it easy to navigate, have we missed anything, do you have any new ideas for us? Please send your comments and queries to enquiries@ourwatch.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

In order to support you better with your local fundraising, we will be running a programme of fundraising and social media workshops. This is a new venture, so we will be very keen to hear your feedback and develop them according to your needs. Find out more at www.ourwatch.org.uk/fundraising

Award for Ernest Hooker

A long-standing NW coordinator has been commended for his work.

Ernest Hooker, 92, received the National Police Association's Commanders Certificate for Outstanding Work.

The Leicestershire coordinator has taken a brief respite from NW duties in recent months but plans to return to his role later this year.

However, he's keeping busy in his temporary retirement, recruiting 2 more people to roles in NW.



Ernest Hooker receiving his Award from NPA Commander Inspector Emma Maxwell and Sergeant Dave Cleaver at Hinckley Police Station. October 2018