



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Registered Charity No 1078269

2017 - Issue 2 (Apr – Jun)

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

As always welcome to the latest edition of our regular Association newsletter, which I trust you will find makes the usual very informative reading. Special thanks again, as always, to Neal Fowler – our expert Editor.

This issue contains a report of this year's Conference / AGM, at which it was good to see so many friends 'old' and new. We really appreciated the great support received both from our three main presenters and members of our Community Safety Partner Agencies. The short 'guest slot' from our Lord Mayor was an added bonus! My only slight, and continuing, disappointment is that we were not able to get more schemes represented at, what again, proved to be a very useful and enjoyable event. If you don't usually attend but have suggestions as to what we might do differently to address that please do make contact – see change to email contact address below.

Whilst the Canterbury District remains a fairly low crime/safe area, recent shocking events in Westminster serve to remind us all to be watchful for, and report, any sort of really unusual or suspicious behaviour. When reporting anything, including general concerns via '101' or emergencies/crimes in progress via '999', please do try to remember to say that you are an NHW member, and ask for your call to be 'tagged' for NHW, to help confirm Commander Mitchell Fox's assertion that we really are a great force in crime prevention. Whilst on the subject of thanks, I would like to officially congratulate Andrew Judd, our new VWLO, for the crime prevention advice that he is now adding to KCMS daily crime report messages – it is really helpful. At Conference Andrew issued a plea for volunteers to assist in sending out these messages and was rewarded with a few expressions of interest – but I know he would appreciate more, so if you are able to offer an hour or two each week to help out please let us know and we will gladly pass on the details to Andrew. And on the subject of volunteering, one Committee member vacancy still remains available to be filled, so if you are a coordinator or deputy interested in assisting the work of the Committee please do consider putting yourself forward to be co-opted. Lastly an important issue to note: Orange mail is closing down in May so we have had to open a new email account for the Association. Previously we had two email addresses, now there will be just one canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com

C&DNHWA Growth Since Last Newsletter

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

New Schemes: Fletcher Rd, Marlowe Cl, Chaucer Ave, Whitstable – Stacey Baston

Extended Schemes: Harkness Dr, Friary Way, Roseland Gdns, Foxdown & Rushmeand Cl, C/bury – Terry Westgate
Kensing Gdns, Otham Cl, Ulcombe Gdns, Sandhurst Cl, Sundridge Cl, Lower Headcorn Dr, Canterbury – Alex Bull

The Owl's No Pussycat When It Comes To Card-Minding

In the last edition of Watching Brief there was an article which provided update regarding the ongoing debate about the safety of contactless credit/debit cards and the growing number of companies marketing products which sell security items to guard against fraud when carrying contactless cards in public places. Protection is relatively simply achieved by preventing the chip from being scanned by thieves. A thin layer of material, which stops radio wave access, is all that is needed to do this. Many of the commercial products available, however, are quite pricy, but protection can be afforded more cheaply. Kent police have, for some time been offering customers at Bluewater the 'Owl Card Minder' sleeve for just £1 – and now NHW can also provide this simple solution for the same great price. This is something that would benefit every member of the family that has a contactless card. So if you are interested in keeping your card safe by placing an order for one/some please contact the Editor at nealf@talktalk.net for more details.

Please note that a small charge for P&P will have to be made for orders of less than 10, so why not make the most of the offer and club together with friends and neighbours to benefit from free P&P.



Conference / AGM 2017

The theme at Conference this year was 'work in the community' and featured speakers providing input on Speedwatch, Crimestoppers and the very successful smartphone 'Country Eye App'. The event was opened by the **Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr George Metcalfe**, who praised the work undertaken by NHW and told some intriguing tales of his own associations with the long arm of the law whilst hitchhiking his way around the USA and Canada as a young man [only in seeking cheap lodgings in Jailhouses!]. The first speaker, **Chief Inspector Mitchell Fox** – Commander of Canterbury and Dover area – gave an overview of: Local crime statistics; The challenges of policing a diverse population, which for most of the year includes 40,000 students; and Introduction of a risk/threat based policing model to prioritise resources following staff reductions – a model which Her Majesty's Inspector has categorised as 'outstanding' during assessments undertaken over the past two years. In kindly extolling the virtues of NHW, CI Fox particularly praised the recent vigilance of a coordinator which provided information leading to arrests and seizure of a large amount of drugs. **Peter Rolington** [third left below] expanded the theme of public involvement, as he explained the work of Crimestoppers [of which he is the Kent Chairman] and operation of the Country Eye App, which he pioneered in



Kent. In respect of the latter, he said that the system allows users of iOS and Android mobile devices to photograph/ identify issues, pinpoint locations through use of GPS technology and instantly report these to the Police or relevant County Council Organisation, thus providing them with time/date stamped evidence of the problem. When first introduced it was thought that fly-tipping notifications would be its primary use but now the system is being expanded to assist in the reporting and

detection of crimes as diverse as poaching and theft from heritage sites – of which Kent boasts an amazing 17,000. The App has already been successfully used to apprehend fly-tippers and poachers. It promises to assist detection of crime in urban areas too as its role is extended and usage increases. The final presentation was given by **Alan Watson** [pictured left above] who, in addition to being Kent's Community Speedwatch Manager, is also an Inspector with Kent Constabulary's Special Roads Crime Team. He explained the enormous value that Speedwatch volunteers provide in assisting to monitor traffic speeds at nearly 200 sites in Kent. Whilst their efforts resulted in identification of nearly 2000 drivers travelling in excess of the speed limit on two or more occasions during 2016, the real benefit of their work is highlighted by the reduction of speeding offences, over time, in critical locations – an example being through the village of Lower Hardres, where the incidence of speeding vehicles along Stone Street dropped dramatically as a result of volunteers' dedication over the past months. Statistics show that an impressive 89% of offenders caught by Speedwatch are not subsequently identified as reoffenders within the following 12



month period. Conference was once again well supported by exhibitors, which this year included exhibits from our new Volunteer & Watch Liaison Officer, **Andrew Judd**; **Crimestoppers**; **Kent County Wardens** and **Hames & Sons** who continue to generously support our newsletters through their advertisement. Before the AGM got underway presentation of the **David Turner Award** was made to this year's recipient **Maralyn Whamond** – coordinator for Woodvale Avenue, Chestfield. Maralyn has been a coordinator for more than 8 years and for most of that time has produced, and more importantly shared, a monthly newsletter with all of the other coordinators in the village, saving

them hours of work replicating effort in preparing their own newsletters. In commending Maralyn on her sterling altruistic support, the Association's Chair, David Hayward urged others to consider a similar approach – and to let the Committee know about it for use in consideration of future Award nominations. Pictured above: Presentation of the Award to Maralyn by Patricia Turner [left] and congratulated by Inspector Tyler [right]. At the AGM the Chair reported on activities and achievements during the past year, all of which have been submitted to the Charity Commission in the 'Annual Trustees' Report', a copy of which will be available on the Association's web page <http://www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/index.html> The Treasurer reported maintenance of a healthy bank balance at end of year, largely as a result of fortuitous income from the Canterbury Crime Prevention Panel, which sadly closed during the period. The meeting confirmed reappointment of the existing 8 members of the C&DNHWA Committee, who remain committed to the service and support of the District's 170 coordinators and schemes. Officers within the Committee were elected at the first meeting held shortly after Conference: Chair – David Hayward; Vice chair – Neal Fowler; Secretary – Mike Pocock; Treasurer – David Whamond.

Smart Yes - But Can They Outwit The Hackers?

Once upon a time a smarter home probably meant that it had just had a new lick of paint, but today the phrase has a completely different meaning. A smart-home these days is one that contains devices and appliances [colloquially termed Internet of Things 'IoT' gadgets] that are connected to the World Wide Web. These 'smart devices' which numbered more than 4.6 billion in use in our homes during 2016, can range from washing machines and TVs to coffee

makers and baby alarms. While many can be controlled by an 'App' (application program) on a smartphone, most users opt for control via a 'smart-home-hub'. This is a device that connects to the Internet router and acts as a 'home-base' communicating with, and managing all of the other Internet-connected smart-home gadgets in the property. Many IoT devices are voice activated, helping to automate the overall 'connected-home-experience' by providing, for example, a means for remotely adjusting heating and lighting systems. Whilst the gadgets offer convenience they do not come without some risk. One leading internet



security company reports that it believes IoT devices are now being attacked, on average, once every two minutes in the USA. And since many of them contain tiny computers capable of collecting all sorts of data, in order to improve functionality, it is essential to ensure that smart-home devices are not vulnerable to hacking and cyber-attack. The importance of this has been highlighted very recently following concerns that smart TVs might be capable of eaves-dropping in on conversations in our homes. So what should you do to protect yourself?

- Firstly take a look at your router. If it's the regular one you got from your cable or internet company it may not be as secure as you think. Make sure it isn't using the default password it came with from the factory. Those passwords are easily accessible online by doing a simple Google search, making the device easy to compromise. Change the password to one that you won't forget and one that's also difficult to guess. You should also use WPA2 and AES encryption for your router whenever possible, as these provide the highest level of protection for your wireless network communications.
- Then check each connected device to see if it contains its own password protection. If so then change it/them to something more secure/unique.
- Connected devices are all the rage, so there will be lots of new companies entering the market to supply them over the coming months and years. Some may not have security as a first priority so, before purchasing a new item, go to the manufacturers' website and review their privacy policy/ terms of use and learn what data they will collect about you, and how they plan to safeguard it.

CAB IS FAB

The Citizens Advice Consumer Service [CACS], formally Citizens Advice Bureaux, has been providing free, impartial, practical advice to consumers for over ten years. Advisors are fully trained to give advice on the law and they can

also identify if a trader has potentially breached criminal legislation, which may be of interest to Trading Standards. Consumers can also contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service if they just want to report trader's activities to Trading Standards including, but not limited to, rogue traders, scams and unsafe goods. Each year CACS receives and forwards over 25,000 reports from consumers to KCC Trading Standards. This enables KCC Trading Standards to prioritise more effectively through intelligence-led service delivery, targeting resources where they will have the most impact and achieve long-term benefit. In addition the CACS now has an Alternative Dispute Resolution [ADR] helpdesk which can direct clients to one of 25 ADR schemes. Judges generally expect consumers to exhaust all possible complaint-resolution-avenues, which now includes use of the ADR process, before they take the matter to

court. ADR will often be cheaper and quicker than court action anyway, which is an added benefit for consumers. Further information is available at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/>



All Becomes Clear

The national NHW team at Ourwatch have just published new artwork for use in all future NHW signs and stickers. The more 'eagle-eye' among you might have noticed use of it in the header section of this Watching Brief edition. For those that didn't it is replicated here to save you turning back. Although the basics are unchanged the graphics, and figures depicted in the new design, are clearer which should make them more visible and recognisable. The new style graphic will supersede existing formats as and when the old ones need to be replaced.



Free Watch Insurance Continued

Details of this year's free NHW Public, Product and Employer Liability insurance cover are available for download, in PDF format, from the Ourwatch website <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/knowledge/pli-confirmation-of-cover/> from 1st April 2017. As has been the case for the past few years, all formally recognised NHW schemes, i.e. C&DNHWA members, automatically benefit from this provision, courtesy of a grant provided from the Home Office.

Well I'll be Dashed!

Dashboard cameras, also known as dash cams, are growing in popularity as they become more widely available and affordable. Dash cams are small cameras mounted on the car's dashboard or windscreen that record each journey, making it easy to revisit the events and conditions if an accident occurs. They can help to determine the cause of an accident and speed up insurance claims by making it easier to determine who was at fault. Some insurers give an automatic discount for customers who use an approved dash cam. The camera could save users money in the long run by making it easier to prove when an accident was the fault of another person. According to uSwitch research,



27% of drivers are typically unable to prove that they were not to blame for an accident; a figure which uSwitch believes could be reduced through wider use of dash cams. And as most insurers now accept

dash cam footage when considering claims, their use could prevent unnecessary loss of no-claim discount or increased premiums following an accident. As well as the risk of an accident, insurers base their premiums on the likelihood of a vehicle being stolen, vandalised or attacked by thieves. Adding high-tech security devices can additionally help to reduce insurance costs because insurers consider that extra security features reduce the risk of claims. A professionally fitted alarm will help to deter attack by thieves and vandals. Installing a tracker can also act as a deterrent, and makes it easier to recover a vehicle if it is stolen. And following recent reports that criminals are now using skeleton keys, sourced from the internet, to target trade persons' vans, it would even be worth considering the fitting of movement detection alarms inside any vehicles that are left unattended, especially at night.

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.hoax-slayer.com/ – Online Protection Advice
www.scambusters.org/ – Online Protection Advice
[environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com/](mailto:environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com) – CCC Fly-Tipping

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Editorial & Layout – Neal Fowler