



APRIL 2021 EDITION

# OUR NEWS

> THE E-NEWSLETTER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS

## CELEBRATING NEIGHBOURS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES

Dear supporters,

At Neighbourhood Watch Network, our Central Support Team have been working on our national campaigns and ambitions for the year, laying the foundations to attract new, younger and more diverse people to the movement. This month we are launching our [PROTECT YOUR CAR](#) campaign on our social media channels and ask you to share this far and wide within your communities.

We are also in the process of developing and consulting on our volunteer programme, including **support, training and recognition** of volunteers who want to be more active in their communities which is very exciting.

Next year, in 2022, we will be celebrating **Neighbourhood Watch's 40th Anniversary** and we want to hear from you how you would like to see this celebrated. Please take a minute [to give us your views here](#).

Yours sincerely

**John Hayward-Cripps**  
CEO - Neighbourhood Watch Network



## PROTECT YOUR CAR with our new campaign

Due to Covid-19 and repeated lockdowns, people haven't been using their cars as much as they used to. However, car crime remains a pressing problem in the UK – alarmingly, one car is stolen every ten minutes. The latest figures from the Police National Computer indicate car crime decreased during Covid-19 restrictions but with the expectation of social restrictions soon easing we could see a surge in car crime.

We have launched a new campaign to encourage everyone to keep their car's safety top of mind. Shockingly 44% of cars are broken into through an unlocked door. 80% of car crime occurs during the evening or at night. We know that leaving valuables on display attracts car thieves. We are asking car owners to remember to **LEAVE YOUR CAR: LOCKED, LIT AND EMPTY.**

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# PROTECT YOUR CAR with our new campaign

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of Neighbourhood Watch Network, says “Most car crimes happen because cars are left unlocked. There is a misconception that some cars are auto-locking and lock themselves if left unattended after a period of time. This isn’t always correct.

Another misconception is that your car is too old and no one will bother stealing it. This is also incorrect – both new and old cars are at risk. Having a car stolen or broken into is more than simply a hassle, it can impact on people’s livelihoods.

The good news is that there are simple steps everyone can take to help reduce the risk to their car. With only a 46% recovery rate<sup>3</sup> we’re reminding everyone to leave your car locked, lit and empty.”

## Leave your car:

1. **Locked:** A simple mistake that can prove calamitous: 44% of cars are broken into via an unlocked door. See our [Leave Your Car Locked](#) video.
2. **Lit:** 80% of car crime occurs during the evening or at night. Parking near streetlamps or in a busy area can deter thieves. See our [Leave Your Car Lit](#) video.
3. **Empty** (or with no items on show): Owners often forget that personal belongings are at as much risk of being stolen as the car itself. See our [Leave Your Car Empty](#) video.

Hayward-Cripps continues “Car thieves are opportunists. Leaving items on a car seat or forgetting to lock your car can act as an invitation for crime. We want to instil the habit of double-checking where and how you’ve parked with our three simple steps: **leave it locked, lit and empty.**

As a local charity with a trusted voice in the community, we’re asking everyone to proactively support their neighbours and friends by sharing our three steps with three others. By spreading the word, we’re confident we can crack down on car crime which can be deeply distressing and debilitating for its victims.”

## How to support our campaign:

- **LEARN:** Visit [ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar](https://ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar) for top tips and advice
- **FOLLOW:** Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to share our messages within your communities. Tag #ProtectYourCar
- **SHARE:** Download [this image](#) to share on WhatsApp with the follow message ‘Car crime remains a pressing problem in the UK – alarmingly, one car is stolen every ten minutes. The vast majority of car crimes happen to unlocked cars, parked in badly lit areas and where there are visible items to steal. Remember these simple steps to keep your car safe... LEAVE IT LOCKED, LIT AND EMPTY. For more top tips visit [ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar](https://ourwatch.org.uk/protectyourcar).’

For more information contact our Senior Communications and Digital Manager, Deborah Waller, on [Deborah.waller@ourwatch.org.uk](mailto:Deborah.waller@ourwatch.org.uk)

Data sourced from: [ITV](#), [ONS data](#) and [OPAL and Police National Database](#).

## PROTECT YOUR CAR, LEAVE IT:

**1. LOCKED**  
LOCK YOUR CAR WHEN YOU LEAVE IT

**2. LIT**  
PARK IN A WELL-LIT AREA

**3. EMPTY**  
HIDE ANY ITEMS ON SHOW

**SHARE THESE 3 STEPS  
WITH 3 FRIENDS**



[www.ourwatch.org.uk](https://www.ourwatch.org.uk)

Neighbourhood Watch Network is a charity registered in England & Wales, CIO no: 1173349

## New fleeceware scams discovered on the Google Play and Apple App Store

In March, our partner, Avast's threat researchers discovered more than 200 new fleeceware applications on the Apple App Store and the Google PlayStore. So far, the apps have been downloaded approximately one billion times and have accrued over \$400 million in revenue to date\*. Avast has reported the fleeceware applications to both Apple and Google for review.

**Fleeceware is a recently coined term that refers to mobile applications that come with excessive subscription fees.**

The applications attract users with the promise of a free 3-day trial, but once the trial is over, they are charged a recurring subscription fee - even if they deleted the app by that time - until they cancel the subscription in their device's app subscription settings. One of the apps, for example, offers a short free trial followed by a \$66 (£47.73) per week subscription, potentially costing the victim \$3,432 (£2,482.19) per year unless cancelled. These fleeceware applications are actively advertised on major social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok\*.

*"The fleeceware applications we've discovered consist predominantly of musical instrument apps, palm readers, image editors, camera filters, fortune tellers, QR code and PDF readers, and 'slime simulators'. While the applications generally fulfil their intended purpose, it is unlikely that a user would knowingly want to pay such a significant recurring fee for these applications, especially when there are cheaper or even free alternatives on the market,"* said Avast's Threat Analyst, Jakub Vávra, in a blog post.

*"It appears that part of the fleeceware strategy is to target younger audiences through playful themes and catchy advertisements on popular social networks with promises of 'free installation' or 'free to download'. By the time parents notice the weekly payments, the fleeceware may have already extracted significant amounts of money,"* continued Vávra.

Avast researchers discovered the Android fleeceware applications via its mobile threat intelligence platform [apklab.io](#), and then expanded their research to the Apple App Store. The apps, with their estimated downloads and revenue, can be found here\* (Google Play Store) and here\* (Apple App Store).

### How to avoid Fleeceware apps

With subscriptions becoming more prevalent in app stores, people are encouraged to be vigilant when downloading and using applications. To avoid fleeceware, Avast has offered the following advice:

- **Be careful with free trials of less than a week**

Applications that offer free trials for very short periods should be handled with caution. Make sure you understand how much you will be charged and that the app is worth the recurring fee.

- **Be sceptical of viral advertisements for apps**

The advertisements for fleeceware are likely to have enticing messaging and images to attract users' attention. They likely do not reflect the actual functionality of the application.

- **Read the small print**

A closer look will likely reveal the true price of the app. Read the application's details carefully, paying close attention to the 'In-app purchases' sections. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the conditions of what you're subscribing to, even if it is a free trial, as there may be automatic charges thereafter.

- **Secure your payments**

Ensure that your payment methods are locked behind a password or biometric check. This can prevent accidental subscriptions by children as well.

*\*Source: Estimates and Ad Intelligence from Sensor Tower, a mobile apps marketing intelligence and insights company*



## Which? free scam alert service

# Which?

Unfortunately email, text, phone and social media scams are on the rise. People are falling victim every day with scammers stealing billions of pounds. Which? is aiming to arm the public with the knowledge of how to spot and avoid scams.

**Which?'s free scam alerts** are regular email updates on the latest scams. They also include practical advice and next steps for victims.

The latest alert included information about a fake Covid-19 vaccine text that's been circulating. It unpicks the scam, what to look out for and how to protect yourself if you've been targeted.

If you are interested in signing up to [Which?'s free Scam Alert](#) service click [here](#).

## Our condolences

We are sad to report that one of the founder members of Neighbourhood Watch in Hawthorn, Mr. Arthur Evans, passed away from Covid-19 just a few days before Captain Sir Tom Moore.

Arthur celebrated his 100th birthday last year, and Neighbourhood Watch in Hawthorn would not be what it is today without the hard work and dedication put in by Arthur and his friends.

Arthur was a valued member of the community, always looking for ways to improve the needs of the older and younger generations and finding ways to be a good neighbour. He was recognised for his work and was named Community Safety Volunteer of the Year by South Wales Police. His special birthday was covered by both the Pontypridd Observer and Neighbourhood Watch Network.

Following Arthur's death, the BBC X-Ray programme included a story about Arthur and his daughter in relation to an emergency plumber from Kidwelly whose labour rate was £89 per half hour. The job took nearly nine hours to complete, so that the fee paid was higher than one would have expected - the X-Ray program stated that it should have taken about three hours. Arthur's family wished to highlight this upsetting experience so that other families would not suffer in the same way that they did. Watch the [BBC X-Ray programme](#) to find out more.

## Thank you Douglas

We wish to say a big thank you to Douglas who is 101 years old and has been a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for Burnett Road in Plymouth since its inception nearly 40 years ago!



Douglas was born in Wales. He joined the Ministry of Defence and was posted to Malta during the war, and after the war to a number of overseas and UK locations. He came to his final posting at HM Dockyard Plymouth in the 1970s.

He and his family took up residence in Burnett Road and he took on the Neighbourhood Watch scheme as soon as it started. Douglas is a keen fisherman and was a keen continental caravaner right up to his early 90s.

He was an active contributor in the Burnett Road annual street parties that took place until recently for over 40 years.

Douglas received the Queen's 100 years birthday card in August 2020 and is very active and still enjoys gardening.

Thank you Douglas for your service to Neighbourhood Watch. You are truly inspirational and Burnett Road residents are hopeful that in August they can get together and toast your 101st birthday!

## Spotlight on HertsWatch

Way back in 2006, the Chief Constable's staff officer was given the task of pulling a fragmented Neighbourhood Watch movement together across Hertfordshire. Schemes had been established in most areas but there was little cohesion and certainly no direction, sharing of ideas or continuity. HertsWatch was born out of this enterprising development.

**This month we hear from Sue Thompson, Chair of HertsWatch** 'I had the privilege of being involved with the development of the group from that time, and have seen the amazing growth in each of the ten districts. In the early days, the then Police Authority governed our development. We found volunteer representatives from each district to sit on the committee and we had the backing of senior police staff. A county conference was organised in which each district was allocated 10 places and partner agencies, like Crimestoppers, were invited to attend. The success of the event resulted in the movement gathering pace and interest.

At the same time as these foundations were being laid, the Constabulary realised the advantages of having a county database of members and a method of contacting each member to relay local crime information, to offer security and crime prevention advice and to advertise local events.

Online Watch Link (OWL) soon arrived on the scene and Herts has never looked back.

Several years later, HertsWatch decided that it was strong enough to stand alone as a volunteer body, and we took charge of our own governance. A Memorandum of Understanding was put together, so that volunteers and police teams had a sound guidance document of what to expect from each other. This continues to the present day and the document is revised at regular intervals.

In 2010 the Chief Constable instigated a new team of Watch Liaison Officers to work with Neighbourhood Watch. The creation of Safer Neighbourhood teams and the introduction of Police Community Support Officers all added to the expansion of the partnership idea. When we organise events, we always include representatives from partner agencies, such as Trading Standards, the Fire Service, Mind, Herts Health and Crimestoppers. The Police and Crime Commissioner has supported us financially for a number of years, even including a section on Neighbourhood Watch in his annual Policing Plan.

From these small beginnings **Neighbourhood Watch in Hertfordshire has grown to 162,000 directly contactable member households** - representing 1 in 3 homes across the county.



### Welcome Packs

When residents sign up they are given a Welcome Pack consisting of a series of security and safety leaflets, and an anti-doorstep selling sticker. Leaflets cover scam and fraud awareness, protecting your money, cybercrime and protecting your property. The Welcome Packs fit neatly into a small, sealable plastic bag. Coordinators can include additional leaflets, local information, cards or contact details. On occasions, a property marking pen or a bank card minder wallet have also been added to the pack.

### Recognition

In 2016 HertsWatch was awarded the Voluntary Service Award and in 2018 they were nominated to receive the Queens Award for

Voluntary Service. Sue represented the HertsWatch committee at Buckingham Palace, and the award was presented by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the County.

### The future

Before the lockdown HertsWatch were adding approximately 1,000 households a month to their database, but since then all outdoor events have been put on hold. Once lockdown ends, they plan to get back to participating in Street Meets, Coffee with a Cop sessions, Older Persons Active Learning Scheme (OPALS) meetings, and other local events across the county. They also hope to engage in some new projects involving students, as well as community projects with young families.

## Do you know someone at risk of predatory marriage?

**Predatory Marriage** is a term that comes from Canada originally. It is usually defined as when a younger person moves into a caring role with an older person who lacks mental capacity to understand, and subsequently marries them. Because a marriage revokes a Will, the predator then inherits the first £270,000 of the estate. Daphne Franks shares her experience.

*My mother, Joan Blass, was nearly ninety-two. She'd always been highly intelligent and extremely fit but now she had advanced vascular dementia – diagnosed in 2011 – and terminal cancer.*

*Three days after she died in March 2016 we learned, in a phone call from a slightly panicky-sounding GP, that a much-younger man had married her in total secrecy five months previously. He had arrived at the GP practice with a marriage certificate and was telling them that he was her “personal representative” and was now in charge of everything.*

*Mum lived in a house that had been built in the garden of the old family home. She lived less than thirty yards away from us – her daughter and son-in-law – and we saw her several times a day.*

*She had a diagnosis of worsening dementia dating back five years, documented throughout her medical records. I had registered Power of Attorney.*

*Registrars at a marriage, however, have no access to medical records and are not trained to assess mental capacity. There is no link at all between marriage and Power of Attorney. There is a huge incentive to marry elderly people because marriage revokes any existing Will. There are a growing number of cases of predatory marriage globally, because of the rise in dementia.*



Above: Daphne Franks with her mother Joan Blass on Joan's 90th birthday

*My mother's predator had her buried in an unmarked grave and inherited her entire estate. There was nothing that we could do.*

*We started a campaign [www.predatorymarriage.uk](http://www.predatorymarriage.uk) and the issue has been raised in Parliament (The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Consent) Bill) but ran out of time. We hope to have it back there soon.*

*We had been suspicious of the man for several years and had sought help from the Social Services, Police, her GP and a solicitor who had assured us that she would not be able to marry because of her dementia. Please **visit our website** for the full story, and for our goals. At the moment Predatory Marriage could happen to any of our older loved ones. Please **write to your MP** and tell them about it.*

*If - as we did - you observe a relationship that doesn't feel quite right, it may well not be. Predatory Marriage must be stopped.*

**Find out more on [www.predatorymarriage.uk](http://www.predatorymarriage.uk).**

### ARE YOU ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

**If you are on social media why not consider following Neighbourhood Watch Network on one or more of our social media channels.**

**It's a great way to keep up to date with national campaigns, partner campaigns, and crime prevention messages.**

**Follow us.. [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#) / [LinkedIn](#)**

## HEADS UP! Look out for...

### Grace Everett in Hampshire explains how their Whatsapp group is effective in preventing rural crime.

Living in a rural area in Hampshire, we experience some different crimes to those experienced in more urban locations. Forced entry into outbuildings, farm buildings, sheds and garages for the theft of fuel and machinery, whether it's a tractor, trailer or a ride-on mower, down to much more portable items, such as strimmers, chainsaws, tools, etc. are unfortunately, a common occurrence. Poaching is another familiar crime in the countryside. This ranges from stealing pheasants/partridges, hare coursing, the theft of fish from rivers and the killing of deer and badgers by various means.

The difficulty of living in the countryside is that by definition we are in either very small hamlets or in isolated locations - factors that help thieves but make life difficult for those trying to stop them. However, we have found that modern technology has proved to be helpful as a deterrent.



In August 2019, we created a WhatsApp group, called "HEADS UP! Look out for...." which now covers an area of just under 90km<sup>2</sup>. Members of the group include people you would expect to live in a rural area: farmers, gamekeepers, river-keepers, agricultural workers, landowners, foresters, etc. and it allows us to have eyes everywhere. But more importantly it means we can circulate important information efficiently because it's instant.

As soon as anyone in our group spots a vehicle/people behaving suspiciously, if there's been any attempted break-ins, or any criminal activity, whatever it happens to be, it's circulated via our WhatsApp group. The Police are on HEADS UP as silent witnesses, so it's also a way of helping them keep abreast of what's going on in our area with minimal effort and resources being used in the process.

There is little or no chit-chat on HEADS UP, it is purely used for either asking for or circulating information that will be helpful in either preventing crimes taking place at the time, or helping to lessen further crimes taking place in the future.

The biggest advantage of having a WhatsApp group such as HEADS UP is that it would be nearly impossible to be aware of the crimes or attempted crimes taking place locally without it. The old fashioned way would be by word of mouth, but again, as we are in such isolated locations word spreads slowly and not everyone would get to hear the news - now it's out there and everyone knows immediately so we can all take appropriate action.



HM Government



## The Windrush Help Team

Here to support you and your family

Call **0800 678 1925** or visit **Gov.UK/WindrushHelpTeam**



Many people believe that the Windrush Help Line is only to help people who came to the UK from Jamaica on the ship Empire Windrush.

This is not true. The Help Line is there to help anyone who came to the UK from many other countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Find out more [here](#).

## Moving house sustainably

If you're moving house you'll probably already have an extensive to-do list. It's worth considering how you can make each stage as eco-friendly as possible. Alongside the environmental benefits, making your house move more sustainable can increase efficiency and save money.



### Reduce Your Possessions

There's no point in moving things you don't want to keep, so go through all your possessions beforehand and get rid of anything you don't need or love. This will cut down on the weight and space needed in your removal van, which can lead to a smaller vehicle. This means lower emissions and less money being spent. The items no longer wanted or needed can be sold, donated to charity, or given to friends and family.

### Recyclable Packing Boxes

Ask your local supermarket to give you their leftover delivery boxes. They have an abundance of boxes that might otherwise be thrown away. Otherwise you can rent reusable packing crates. Companies offer services that allow you to rent plastic boxes to pack your belongings and once you have moved you return them, and they can be used again.

### Packing

Instead of wrapping breakables in bubble wrap, try using things you already own, such as clothing, bedding and towels. Smaller

items such as socks and scarves are perfect for filling and padding boxes. Old newspapers and magazines can be useful as well so start collecting them as soon as you know you'll be moving. If you do need to use bubble wrap try to reuse it or source biodegradable bubble wrap.

### Eco-friendly Cleaning

Once you're packed up you will usually have to clean your house (and often the house you are moving into). Try to use 'greener' cleaning products which are usually sourced more sustainably and leave a smaller carbon footprint than mainstream products.

### Choose a Sustainable Mover

If you need to hire a van or removal company, try to find a removal company which is at EEV Standard (Enhanced Environmentally friendly Vehicles) which means the company only uses vehicles with low-emission.



5TH - 11TH JUNE 2021

If the pandemic has taught us one thing, it is that neighbourliness and community spirit is just as important as ever, if not more so.

Neighbourhood Watch Week 2021 will be an opportunity for us to ensure that we build on the existing and new neighbourly relationships formed throughout the pandemic.

**Save the date and read our update on how to get involved in the next newsletter.**

[WWW.OURWATCH.ORG.UK/NWEEK](http://WWW.OURWATCH.ORG.UK/NWEEK)

Neighbourhood Watch Network is a charity registered in England & Wales. CIO No. 1173349