

# Neighbourhood Watch – July 2016

Generally, we live in a peaceful and safe area but it helps to be aware of the threats that are out there!!

## **Rural crime alert**

Police have appealed to communities in our area to remain vigilant following a spate of rural burglaries in the area.

The attacks, which have targeted outbuildings, insecure barns and sheds have occurred across the region during the night. Tools, farm machinery, and diesel are just some of the items which have been stolen, and Crime Prevention Officers are urging residents to use some simple security measures in order to reduce the risk towards their property.

People have been advised to ensure that all outbuildings are locked when not in use, and to use weatherproof padlocks and to reverse the hinges on shed doors so that they cannot be unscrewed. Residents are also reminded to lock tools and machinery away and out of sight when not in use as not only could they be at risk of theft but tools can be used to gain access to surrounding buildings. Other advice is not to leave keys or valuables in farm vehicles/machinery, to always keep gates padlocked shut and make sure all tools and valuables are security marked and warning signs placed around properties to deter potential thieves.

Officers are conducting extra patrols in these areas to provide reassurance to victims and communities. To assist the police in their efforts to catch these criminals, residents in rural areas are being asked to be extra vigilant and to report any suspicious activity or vehicles they see.

## **Ticket and Online Booking Fraud**

With summer holidays fast approaching, individuals are often more exposed to travel booking frauds when looking for last minute package deals / cheap flights. Whether paying upfront for a family holiday or simply booking a flight, payments are transferred only to discover that the holiday / airline ticket does not exist and was sold to you by a bogus travel company. Fraudsters will often lure in potential customers with low prices and 'one time only' offers that are simply too good to pass up, requesting payment by the preferred method of direct bank transfer.

### **Avoid**

Paying for a holiday / airline tickets / accommodation via direct bank transfer. No reputable company will ever request payment via this method.

Responding to unsolicited calls, texts or emails offering holidays at incredibly low prices.

### **Protect Yourself**

- Whenever possible, pay for your holiday by credit card as it offers increased protection.
- Always remember to look for the 'https' and locked padlock icon in the address bar before entering your payment details.
- Never feel pressured to make a booking for fear that you will miss out on this 'low price' opportunity. If you have never used the company before, take your time to do some online research to ensure they are reputable.
- Should you make a flight or hotel booking through a travel company, feel free to separately check with

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the hotel / particular airline that your booking does indeed exist.

If you have been affected by this, or any other scam, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visiting [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

## **Commissioner Starts Work on New Victim's Charter**

Police and Crime Commissioner John Champion has started work on delivering one of his key election pledges – a new Victim's Charter for West Mercia, which he is inviting people to help shape. The Charter will make it clear exactly what support and services people across West Mercia can expect should they become a victim of crime.

The Commissioner has started a consultation exercise, inviting people to share their opinions and experiences, to help make sure the new Charter reflects our communities' priorities. The aim of the Charter will be to make sure that the best possible support is made available to victims to help people cope and recover from crime and to get on with living their lives.

## **Useful Contacts:**

The nearest manned public service counter is at Hereford Police Station, Bath Street.

Open: Monday to Saturday: 8am to 8 pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays: 10am to 4pm

Leominster Police Station has a phone system at its entrance where members of the public can speak to the police and get help.

Victim Support	01432 347208
ChildLine	0800 1111
Domestic Violence Helpline	0800 7831359
National Drugs Helpline	0800 776 600
National Neighbourhood Watch Association	02079 630160
Herefordshire Road Safety Hotline	01432 364582
Police Website:	<a href="http://www.westmercia.police.uk">www.westmercia.police.uk</a>
HFD NHW:	<a href="http://www.communigate.co.uk/here/hfdsneiwatch/">www.communigate.co.uk/here/hfdsneiwatch/</a>

Contact the police on a non-urgent basis on 101 or via 0300 333 3000 and give your details to the operator.

In emergency dial 999.

If you would like to report anything anonymously, please call CRIMESTOPPERS on 0800 555 111.