

Neighbourhood Watch

Regional Crime. Within the last month there have been at least three reports of sheep rustling within our area. Two lots of 10 lambs were stolen from fields in the Ludlow area and one lot of 37 ewes were stolen from fields near Martley, Worcester. Obviously such thefts involve the use of trucks or trailers so if you see anything suspicious call the police.

House Burglary. There have been reports of 'forced-entry' house and business property burglaries in the region where patio doors or other locks have been forced. In October 2015 Building Regulation guidance on locks was updated to improve the resistance of door locks to forced entry efforts. As a result, all new door and window locks should now be either PAS24:2012 rated or Secured By Design (SBD). This development is supported by the UK Insurance industry so if you are considering building renovations involving external doors or windows ensure the items meet the latest standard.

SCAMs. The recent national news has included reports of scams where people have lost thousands of pounds and where some of the money may even have been used to fund international terrorism! Current concerns are **Farmers not as terrorists but scam victims!**

The concern is that the scammers will be targeting farmers because at this time of the year EU grants are being paid. Farmers are being warned to be extremely wary of any suspicious calls, texts or emails as fraudsters begin to specifically target the agricultural sector as payments begin to arrive into bank accounts, through the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) which is the EU's main rural payment scheme. Information about those in receipt of the funds - including their name and how much they are to be paid - is publicly available, which allows criminals to directly target victims, making the con more convincing.

Con artists typically call, email or text their victims, claiming that a fraud has been detected on their account and then persuade them to hand over financial information or ask them to transfer money to what they claim is a 'safe account'. If you receive such a call or message, hang up the phone and do not reply directly. Instead, wait five minutes and ring your bank to alert them to the scam, using a phone number that you trust.

Always be on your guard for:

- **Any calls, texts or emails purporting to be from your bank, the police, a Government body or other organisation asking for personal or financial details, or for you to transfer money.**
- **Cold callers who suggest you hang up the phone and call them back. Fraudsters can keep your phone line open by not putting down the receiver at their end.**
- **Neither the Police nor your bank will ever ask for your 4-digit PIN or your online banking password, or for you to transfer money to a new account for "fraud reasons".**
- **If you receive a suspicious call, hang up, wait five minutes to clear the line, or where possible use a different phone line, then call your bank or card issuer to report the fraud.**

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Useful Contacts:

To report a fraud call **Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040**. You can now also sign up for free to Action Fraud Alert to receive direct, verified, accurate information about scams and fraud in your area by email, recorded voice and text message. <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk>

National Fraud Intelligence Bureau	www.nfib.police.uk	0207 601 6999
ABTA	www.abta.com	Travel Companies Trade Body
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	0844 111 444
Crimestoppers	www.crimestoppers-uk.org	0800 555 111
Get Safe Online	www.getsafeonline.com	
Office of Fair Trading	www.of.gov.uk	0300 123 3333
Insurance Fraud Bureau	www.insurancefraudbureau.org	0800 4220 421
Phonepay Plus	www.phonepayplus.org.uk	0207 940 7474 UK premium rate regulator
Retailers against Crime	www.retailersagainstcrime.org	01786 471 451 UK consortium
Trading Standards Institute	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk	0845 4040 506
UK Payments Administration	www.ukpayments.org.uk	0203 217 8200
Victim Support	www.victimsupport.org.uk	0845 3030 900

Police Contact. We are all familiar with using 999 to report an ongoing crime or emergency. Likewise, we are getting used to 101 as a means of speaking to the police on a non-urgent basis.

Sometimes we might even meet our local police person in the village or attending the village coffee morning in the village hall. Our CSO is Peter Knight and he covers N Herefordshire Rural which is a large area with lots of different communities. Therefore, he is pretty busy and cannot attend every coffee morning!

If you wish to speak face-to-face with a policeman only certain police stations have a manned 'front 'desk'. These are Hereford, Kidderminster, Redditch, Telford and Worcester police stations which have front counters open to the public from 8am-8pm six days a week and 10am-4pm on Sunday and bank holidays. Whilst Shrewsbury Police Station is open to the public from 8am-4pm Mon –Fri, 9am-5pm Sat and 10am-4pm on Sundays and bank holidays.

Leominster, Bridgnorth, Bromsgrove, Bromyard, Church Stretton, Droitwich, Kington, Ledbury, Ludlow, Malvern, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Peterchurch, Ross on Wye, Rubery, Shrewsbury Town, South Wye, Stourport, Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch Police Stations will have no front counter provision but contact points installed to connect the visitor to a police call-taker 24/7 via telephone intercom.

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These changes were brought about to improve the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the police service. In some cases, only one or two members of the public visited a manned 'front desk' in a day and it was deemed more efficient to use the phone (101) or email with a centralised control. In theory if you need to see or speak to our CSO you can call 101 and be redirected to him or leave a message for him to contact you. However, he is a busy man so don't waste his time unless it is necessary!

NEW YEARS RESOLUTION

The Police are encouraging all business owners to make the following resolution:

"I am going to make all these crime prevention measures part of my normal working practices".

- When you shut down for holidays lock away everything, you can. e.g. Laptops.
- Leave no cash on the premises.
- Leave till drawers open or remove them.
- Close and lock external doors, close Fire Doors.
- Remove spare door keys from the premises or lock them away securely.
- Check all windows are closed and valuable property is screened.
- Park vehicles securely inside your premises if possible.
- Remove vehicle keys from the premises or lock them away securely.
- Cancel deliveries that may come during the holiday period.
- Do you need someone to call in and move your post?
- Leave no rubbish, pallets etc. outside your premises that can be used to start fires.
- Secure external bins away from your building to prevent them being used in crime.
- Remove anything outside that might help a criminal to break in.
- Ensure your key holder list with Alarm Companies is up to date.
- Ensure you have updated your internal key holder and call out lists.
- Back up all your computer systems and store a copy of your data off premises.
- When you return ensure your computer virus software is updated before downloading email or using the Internet.

**Ian Robertson
NHW Coord.**

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