

# WATCHWORD

NEWSLETTER OF THE THANET NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

(tel : 01843 845933)

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of Thanet NWA was held on Monday 19 November 2007 at the Pavilion, Broadstairs,



attended by more than 90 coordinators.

Guests included Annette Varker from the Probation Service, Superintendent Chris Hogben, who has taken over from Superintendent Joanna Young as Deputy Commander, East Kent Police Area, Chief Inspector Andy Hedley-Smith, now Commander of the Thanet District, Inspector Simon Morris and three Police Community Support Officers, as well as representatives from the Canterbury & District NW Association Committee and Detective Chief Inspector Lee Russell, Commander of the Canterbury District.

Annette Varker's description of the work of the Probation Service, including details of one particular case involving a young man, produced interesting interaction with and among the audience about the need for integration of rehabilitation and punishment. Further dis

cussion centred on dealing with drug users, finding prison places and the high cost of keeping people incarcerated.

Chief Inspector Hedley-Smith then gave an illustrated presentation on the development and work of community policing in Thanet, including integration of the immigrant community, other population influxes, drug related crime, alcohol abuse, personal violence, licencing problems, anti-social behaviour, problem families, work in schools and difficulty in allocating resources. Overall, crime in general had been brought down over the last 8 months by 3% with 136 fewer burglaries and criminal damage reduced by 15.5%.

Terry McCormick, Watch Liaison Office thanked all coordinators, zone committees and liaison office staff for their hard work and outlined the work that had been done in NW following the merger of the Thanet and Canterbury police areas.



In his report, the Chairman noted the welcome addition of two new

volunteers for the Liaison Office and the loss of free printing for the quarterly newsletter "Watchword". As a result TNWA could need to find additional sources of income to meet commercial printing costs. He also referred to problems with the Kent Community Messaging Service (Ringmaster) but assured coordinators that the system now appeared to be functioning efficiently and reliably. Certain amendments to the TNWA Constitution were needed to reflect the way in which TNWA and the Committee were constituted and operated. Copies of the new Constitution had been provided for all attendees and there was no comment or dissenting voice from the floor in regard to the amendments concerned. The Treasurer produced the annual audit for the period to 30 September 2007, showing a balance of £2945.83, which was approved; David Hayward was re-appointed a Honorary Auditor for the current year. The meeting concluded with a vote of appreciation for the continuing support of Thorley Taverns through the Pavilion, Broadstairs and the Fayrency Hotel at Kingsgate.

# Let's continue to make our neighbourhoods safer

No doubt you have at one time or another heard from a neighbour, friend or family member who had suffered a burglary.



In many such cases the neighbour will have been away and entry to the property will have

been effected through a window at the rear of the house, and often in broad daylight.

An experience of this sort can be very traumatic. Even in those cases where relatively little physical damage has been caused, the victim will feel that his personal space has been violated. Sometimes the burglar will wreck furniture or other fittings and make an untidy search before making off with a range of electrical items and appliances, not to mention jewellery and other valuables. This can cause



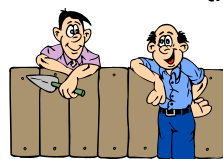
considerable inconvenience particularly in the case of lost computers.

However, assuming that you

have household insurance, many items can be replaced while incurring the expense of the excess charge stipulated in the policy. A more significant matter involves the loss of items which can never be replaced, e.g. a silver picture frame containing the only remaining picture of a loved member of the family. Alternatively it could have been an artefact that has been passed down through the family for generations.

The value of being a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is well documented. Take for example burglaries like the scenario mentioned above. Did you know that only 9% of Thanet burglaries took place in Neighbourhood Watch streets and roads; 91% of burglaries took place in areas that did not have Neighbourhood Watch. That is a very significant statistic. And did you know that many household and car insurers give a significant reduction in the premiums for Neighbourhood Watch members?

Being a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator or even a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme does require commitment. The co-ordinator acts as the liaison person between the street/road members and the police. A deputy co-ordinator may also be required in a large scheme in order to provide assistance especially during holidays and in the distribution of crime related information, newsletters and other literature. Members are vital in themselves in instilling a greater sense of community in their scheme and



generating the sort of neighbourly mutual assistance which

can play a significant role in spotting and reporting suspicious activity and in keeping an eye on neighbouring property. Everyone involved in Neighbourhood Watch has the dedicated support of the Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer, Terry McCormick, at Margate police station and the Liaison Office volunteers. Valuable support can be also provided by other dedicated

Neighbourhood Watch members who can advise on how to set up and run a scheme. There is also literature that helps to explain how the scheme works. All schemes become part of Thanet and Kent Neighbourhood Watch. A range of literature providing advice on crime prevention/reduction and the organisation of schemes is available from the Liaison Office (tel 01843 222214), along with NW window stickers and tamper proof vehicle licence holders (the latter at a cost of £1 each).

It is vital for everyone that we maintain and strive to extend Neighbourhood Watch street coverage throughout Thanet. Should you know of anyone who is willing to help, please refer them or provide details to the Liaison Office (tel 01843 222214).

## IMPORTANT

**When reporting a crime, please ensure that you emphasise that you are a member of Neighbourhood Watch.**

**This will ensure that the report is tagged and not only provide useful statistics on NW activity but also facilitate feedback on successful outcomes.**

## **Policing in Thanet - a report from Inspector Simon Morris, Chief of Staff, East Kent Police, Thanet District**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address you all via your newsletter. I enjoyed being able to meet some of you at the recent neighbourhood watch AGM at the Pavilion, and it was useful to be able to listen to some of your concerns and be allowed the opportunity to address them. I thought that, in your newsletter, you might appreciate an update on the continued rollout of the neighbourhood policing concept in Thanet district, and an appreciation of some of the other less visible business that we do in order to reduce crime and disorder. Each of the 23 local authority wards in Thanet now has at least one dedicated member of staff working within the ward. Some wards have more than one, depending on their profile, and this level of staffing has been agreed in partnership with our other statutory partners. Of the 23 wards, 13 now have a formal Partners and Communities Together (PACT) panel running, where members of the community select the top three priorities that they would like their panel to address. Examples of such priorities are things like anti social behaviour, litter, dog fouling and so on. These priorities, once agreed by the panel, are then acted on by the most appropriate authority. Outcomes are then reported back and new priorities generated as appropriate. It is our aspiration that these PACT panels are rolled out across the remaining 10 wards in Thanet, albeit this depends on support from partners, many of whom have received no additional staffing to facilitate this initiative. In terms of the other work we do, one of our primary concerns in the Neighbourhood Team is the accessibility of alcohol to young people, and the problems this can generate in communities. We are working together with retailers on this issue, but are also carrying out enforcement operations, in particular against establishments where alcohol may be being sold to underage people. This activity links into our concerns over both violent crime and anti-social behaviour, as there appears to be a clear link between the increase in alcohol consumption in so-

ciety and these crime issues. There does now appear to be recognition from government that there is a correlation between these two issues, and hopefully with this we may be given more tools with which to ensure that the effect of alcohol consumption on communities is minimised. We will continue to monitor developments, but also ensure that existing legislation is used as far as possible to deal with issues that affect you. On a final and very positive note, I would wish to reassure you that crime is still falling. In the Thanet district, crime of all types has reduced from last year to this year by 7.2%, or 699 less offences. House burglaries, which I know are of concern to you all, are 28.3% lower than last year, or 181 less victims of crime. These very encouraging figures mean that you are less likely to be a victim of crime than ever, and the work you all do plays a vital part in ensuring that we all continue to drive crime ever further in the right direction. Thank you to you all.

### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/WEBSITES**

**Thanet NW Liaison Office - 01843 222214**

**Crime Reporting - general advice & to report online at - [www.reportacrime.kent.police.uk](http://www.reportacrime.kent.police.uk)**

**In emergency only - dial 999**

**To report non-urgent crime 01843 231055**

**To report a crime in complete anonymity 0800 555111 or online at : [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)**

**To contact Kent Trading Standards re doorstep crime etc. telephone 0845 3450210 or online at : [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent)**

**For advice on all aspects of consumer issues tel Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 or go to [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)**

**Fire Safety - 01843 863015**

**Thanet District Council - telephone 01843 577000 or online at : [www.thanet.gov.uk](http://www.thanet.gov.uk)**

**Anti Social Behaviour Hotline - 01843 577888**

**Street Lighting - 08458 247800**



## TEL'S TALES - YOUR LIAISON OFFICER, TERRY MCCORMICK REPORTS .....

### EVERY CONTACT LEAVES A TRACE

In your role as Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your street, it is possible that at some time you could find yourself at the scene of a burglary before the police arrive.

Scene preservation has always been vitally important as the accidental destruction of just one piece of evidence can mean that the offender is not caught or convicted.

We now live in the era of D.N.A. and the crime scene can contain lots of evidence which may not be immediately obvious. For instance, 20 years ago a trace of blood at the point of entry would indicate no more than the offender's blood group. Today, with D.N.A. profiling, it will provide an exact match to an individual. If that person is on the police record then he may well have signed his name at the scene. Of course, D.N.A. is not restricted to blood. Hair, saliva, sweat (even dried) etc. serve the same purpose. Every contact leaves a trace, and will provide an exact match to an offender.

The Kent Force has an extensive list of circumstances under which the provision of D.N.A. samples is mandatory.

The implications for crime investigation are obvious, and therefore equally so is the importance of crime scene preservation.

Burglary is an invasion of privacy. It can throw our lives and homes into disorder and an immediate reaction can be to try to restore that order by clearing up. To do so before the opportunity for a crime scene examination will reduce the chance of catching the offender.

Wherever possible, preserve the scene and await police.

**THAT WHICH YOU VALUE THE MOST NEED NOT BE THE MOST  
VALUABLE - YOU CANNOT INSURE YOUR SENTIMENTS  
POST CODE OR PHOTOGRAPH YOUR PROPERTY**

### SAFER WINTER CAMPAIGN

Kent Police have published a pamphlet entitled "Safer Winter" which details the sorts of problems which can arise at this difficult time of the year and offers simple, sensible and effective advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of opportunistic crime and how to deal with wintry road conditions. A copy of this pamphlet is enclosed for your attention. Copies are also being distributed by neighbourhood policemen and PCSOs