

Neighbourhood Watch Community News

For the 2,500 members in the Ferndown South and West Parley Neighbourhood Watch

WINTER
ISSUE

*

December 2023
to
March 2024

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**Ferndown South and
West Parley Watch**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, NOVEMBER 2023

Welcome SID! After many years of trying, we are delighted that funding has been released for Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) on roads in Ferndown and West Parley. Many thanks to our West Parley Parish and Ferndown Town Councils, and to Ron Cross, the energetic Coordinator of our local Community Speed Watch. See more detail on Page 4, but don't forget that **the 30mph speed limit has been extended on the A348 Ringwood Road from the Longham double roundabout to Turbary roundabout, effective from 9th November.**

There is more good news from Dorset Police on a major funding grant to enable important action on 'Safer Streets' and on an excellent initiative to allow police and prosecutors to dispense 'Immediate Justice' with swift and visible punishments for those who have committed ASB and other low-level crimes. Details on these measures plus notes on e-scooters and 'laughing gas' are on Pages 2-5. I know that residents will welcome these new approaches to secure the King's Peace in our communities.

In addition to our reports in Community News, our NHW members can keep up to date with police and security issues by registering with the Dorset Police information system called *Dorset Alert*.

It really is worthwhile. We can help the Police by responding to appeals for information and reporting problems through this website. This is all part of the community helping itself. You can register online at www.dorsetalert.co.uk

Members can keep up to date with local issues through local council websites and local magazines, including *The Stour and Avon* magazine and *Viewpoint*.

NHW encourages residents to give something back to the community. Many do, as Parley Volunteers and others, such as Neighbourcar drivers. Simple things like litter-picking make a difference. At this time of year we should also be aware of others in need, often close at hand. Research shows that it is likely that someone living near you is either lonely or needs a helping hand. Please help if you can, perhaps helping with shopping or calling in for a cuppa.

Finally, our 2024 AGM is to be held on 16th April 2024. Please make a diary note to come along and give us your feedback on how the Watch works for you. There will be more details in our Spring issue.

With Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year

John Cullen at johncullen.nhw@hotmail.com; phone 01202 582662



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POLICE & CRIME UPDATES

The number of crimes in our area remains relatively constant both this year and last.

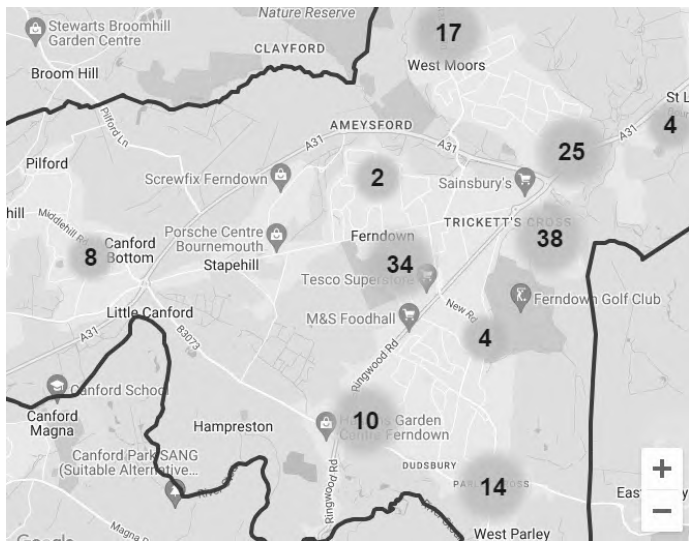
Our Dorset (Urban) area stretches from Corfe Mullen to Verwood. Such a large 'patch' is best policed by a local Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) whose members remain in post for long periods, getting to know the trouble-makers and crime hot spots.

Fortunately the Ferndown and West Parley team is unchanged: Police Sergeant Steve Payne, PCs Kate Davies and Phil Robbins, PCSOs Adam Fitzwalter and James Marsh.

Crime figures for the months of August and September 2023 show a relatively constant pattern, even with data for the same period last year.

Offences	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Sep 2022
Violence, Sexual Offences	85	101	107
Anti-social Behaviour	89	63	65
Criminal Damage & Arson	28	31	38
Other Crimes	99	95	82
Total all Crimes	301	290	292

The distribution of incidents within our Ferndown and West Parley show small concentrations on the crime map:



These maps and the detailed information they reveal can be seen at the Dorset Police East Dorset Urban website; it is well worth visiting the site.

The NPT priorities continue to reflect those of the public: tackling anti-social behaviour, illegal drugs and burglary. An important element of detection and enforcement programmes is that members of the public should be able to report incidents to the police.

Dorset Police have a full range of online forms for reporting, at www.dorset.police.uk. Start here:



'Report' reveals 13 types of report. Click/tap on the relevant type to complete and submit the report. This works well for most incidents but the system seems not to allow reports on 'minor' events such as low level ASB, which is the level of most occurrences in our area. When asked, the police answer that the reporting system is a UK-wide design to enable standard methodology.

Thus it seems that our issues at the lower levels of nuisance do not warrant logging by higher command. Sadly, where low-level ASB is not challenged, it becomes persistent and a serious assault on our quality of life.

Therefore our NPT has the following advice for ASB such as harassment of residents at home, trespass on people's gardens, banging on front doors etc:

- Try to report the incident as it is happening, by calling 101. This will get the incident logged and messaged to our NPT, who will task a patrol to respond if possible.
- For residents whose houses have an intruder alarm, you can usually set the system to sound the siren at the push of a button to frighten off nuisance-makers

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outside the house. Your Newsletter editor asked his alarm supplier to set his own intruder alarm this way. It works!

- For more protection consider fitting a video-capable doorbell. These will deter nuisance makers, whose movements and actions will be videoed and can be shared with the police.

Video doorbells act like digital receptionists for your home. Alongside ringing like a normal doorbell, these internet-connected doorbells let you see who is on your doorstep via a built-in camera and to talk directly to them from your smartphone.

As well as letting you greet visitors, smart doorbells can help increase security at your home. They detect motion in front of your house, from wandering pets to possible burglars, and alert you to take action if required.

There are many makes of these doorbells and many distributors. You can find out more by searching 'video doorbells'.

The Consumers' Association *Which?* tested smart video doorbells from all the big brands, including Ring, Nest, Arlo, Eufy and more, from cheap £50 doorbells to ones that cost well over £200. Their tests and recommendations were published in October 2023. There are many factors to consider when choosing one, not just price. You might wish to explore the *Which?* website at www.which.co.uk.

UPDATE ON ASKNED

In our autumn edition of the Newsletter we reported the disappearance of the Dorset Police 'AskNED' service, a non-emergency directory of police and partner services.



A requirement, effective from March 2023, on all police forces in England and Wales caused Dorset Police to reorganise their website to conform to a national police standard, named

'Single Online Home', which provides a consistent online contact platform for England and Wales.

The AskNED service has been subsumed within the new structure. To access all Dorset Police functions and services, just go to www.dorset.police.uk and follow the links.

ANOTHER POLICE AND LEGAL RESOURCE - 'ASK THE POLICE'

Following the loss of AskNED the Newsletter has viewed another official national police and legal resource, 'Ask the Police' that provides the answers to a large volume of policing questions frequently asked by the general public.

It offers an alternative online option, reducing calls to the police, freeing up resources and saving public money. The website

provides links to relevant national organisations plus the facility to rate the answer and email a specific question



directly. Questions are answered within 48 working hours by a legal team. Police forces are separately able to input additional local police information and advice for the benefit of their communities.

The website is at www.askthepolice.uk. The resource was created 25 years ago by the Police National Legal Database (PNLD), together with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to provide up to date, accurate online criminal law information.

It is comprehensive, easy to navigate and authoritative... a website that is genuinely helpful!

NOTES FROM THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The PCC, David Sidwick, writes frequently on issues of local concern, published at www.dorset.pcc.police.uk. Recent items of interest include two significant initiatives to tackle the key priorities of the Police and Crime Plan – cutting anti-social behaviour, putting victims and communities first, fighting violent crime and rural crime.

Immediate Justice - Yes Please!

This year's annual crime survey confirmed that anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains the main concern for 71% of residents of Dorset. Operation Relentless continues apace, with hot spot patrols across the county. Prompt and firm action is having a positive impact, with incidents of ASB falling by 13% compared to 2021-22.

'Immediate Justice', is a new scheme Dorset Police is piloting under the Government's ASB Plan along with nine other forces. The scheme is designed so swift and visible punishments are delivered to those who have committed ASB and other low-level crimes. There is a government funding grant to support the initiative.

The PCC is asking for our help. He wants to hear from us about what type of actions we would like to see take place under the scheme. He proposes about a dozen actions. For example, would we like those who have done wrong to clean-up graffiti or maintain parks and public spaces? Our answers will get Immediate Justice right for everyone in Dorset.

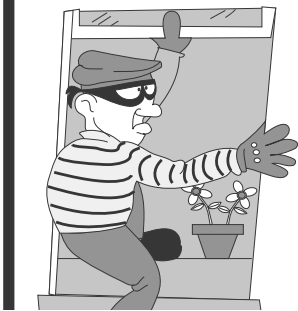
Our input is vital. Please take the short survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IJWEB.

Safer Streets – Especially for Women and Girls

PCC and policing partners have been awarded almost £1million for projects that focus on the safety of women and girls, and for tackling crime in our rural communities.

The funding will include the introduction of a Women's Night Safety Charter, 'Theft and Burglary' prevention packs to mark rural farm property as well as more CCTV cameras in places across Dorset.

Thanks to this substantial funding, communities across the county will be able to feel safer on the streets.



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COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Welcome SID!

New Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) have been introduced in Ferndown and West Parley to help motorists observe local speed limits. These illuminated signs are activated by



approaching vehicles that are exceeding the speed limit. Slowing down to within the speed limit causes the sign to say 'Thank You'. To the harassed driver, SIDs feel as if they are 'on our side'.

Our current allocation is for three SIDs funded by CSW, Ferndown Town and West Parley councils. The siting of the SIDs is decided by Dorset Highways based on measurements of traffic flow, speed etc at known hot spots.

The SIDs are moved by Ferndown Town Council staff at regular intervals so as to share the benefits. Very occasionally they fail to operate. In such cases residents are asked to report it to Ferndown Council on 01202 892249 or customerservices@ferndown.gov.uk.

There are over 90 SIDs located across Dorset at over 240 locations, including Ferndown Industrial Estate and sites at West Moors, Colehill and Verwood.

CSW Activity Report

In recent months our CSW group has concentrated on known speeding hot spots in their mission to raise awareness of local speed limits and doing their best to encourage speeding motorists to slow down.

The team did fewer roadside sessions but logged a record number of speeding motorists. In total they completed 60 roadside checks, were seen by over 38,000 motorists and reported 1,857 speeding motorists to Dorset Police. The detail is quite disturbing.

On Ringwood Road and Wimborne Road East they spotted one or two speeding motorists every minute; on Dudsbury Avenue they averaged one speeding motorist every two to three minutes and in Glenmoor Road, close to the local primary school, they averaged one speeding motorist every four to five minutes.

Most of these speeding motorists received an Advice Letter from Dorset Police that politely asks them to adhere

to the speed limits. Sadly, there was also an increase in the number of cases where the police visited the vehicle owner at their registered address to issue an official warning.

The CSW has recognised motorists' frustrations caused by the extensive roadworks around our town and the poorly promoted change to the speed limit along the entire length of Wimborne Road East. CSW did several roadside sessions to promote the change. Hundreds of motorists were unaware of the change, some chose to ignore it, but many slowed down when they saw our CSW signs.

Dorset Police welcome feedback, especially if residents have particular concerns about speeding and dangerous driving in our neighbourhood. You can report in confidence on the Dorset Road Safe website www.dorsetroadsafe.org.uk or email to csw@dorset.pnn.police.uk. Include dash cam footage and photographic evidence of dangerous driving incidents. For more information go to www.dorset.police.uk/opsnap.

CSW Coordinator, Ron Cross, regularly receives requests for patrols on specific roads but our CSW relies solely on the help of volunteers. We have a lively, enthusiastic group who just need a little more help from local residents, so if you would like to help and can spare two hours a month, please phone Ron on 07592 790199.

IN THE NEWS: E-SCOOTERS

Dorset Police say, don't buy an E-scooter this Christmas

Beryl e-scooters continue to be driven carelessly on pavements and there are discarded 'piles' of e-scooters abandoned on walkways and pavements. In the face of this nuisance the public feel that seems to be no way to complain to anyone about the problem.

Dorset Police and Beryl UK are working closely to reduce this dangerous public nuisance. There has been the introduction of geofenced speed limits (reduced to 3mph) at events such as the Bournemouth Christmas Market; more education in Universities and in Higher Education; regular partnership meetings with Dorset Police to highlight hot spot areas, and an improvement in the way members of the public contact Beryl UK to make com-

plaints and for more action to be taken against dangerous behaviour by e-scooter riders..

Representing the public's view, the Dorset PCC has emphasised that "people think they can ride an e-scooter anywhere". He said, "Quite simply, they can't."

"Privately owned e-scooters are illegal to use on public roads, yet there is confusion over their use, probably because we see them being used illegally on the streets and people assume that they can just buy one and use it.

"Irresponsible retailers who sell these items are misleading the public. You cannot buy and use an e-scooter on any public land. That includes roads, pavements, pathways, or walkways. So, unless you personally own swathes of land in Dorset you cannot ride these machines legally.

"My advice this Christmas is don't buy an e-scooter unless you want it to be seized by the Police. It's as simple as that."

IN THE NEWS: 'LAUGHING GAS'

The ban on nitrous oxide has been welcomed by Dorset Police (Credit: Andy Jones, Dorset Echo)

Nitrous oxide is a colourless gas, also known as 'laughing gas' or 'NOS', that can be misused by inhalation for its psychoactive effects to 'get a high'.

Concerned at the rise in reports of health and social harms as a result of the substance, as well as its widespread use and availability among young people, it is to be categorised as a Class C drug. Possession, supply or use of laughing gas for its psychoactive effects will carry a sentence of up to two years in prison.



Dorset PCC, David Sidwick, has been at the forefront of the pressure for change. He said, "In my role as Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)

Joint Lead for Addictions and Substance Misuse, I have repeatedly raised concerns over the past two years – publicly and directly with the government – about the prevalence of nitrous oxide in a bid for stronger legislation surrounding this harmful drug.

"From initially leading calls for a review on nitrous oxide, to vigorously lobbying the Home Office for a potential crackdown on the drug, I am proud to have been part of the fight to achieve this vital change, protecting our young people and communities in Dorset and beyond."

Commonly seen as discarded small gas cartridges, NOS



is also sold in larger containers, for inflating balloons, in whipped cream dispensers manufactured by companies such as 'Fastgas'.

SCAM NEWS: HACKS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Last year 18,000 people reported their social media accounts hacked

A recent report from Action Fraud shows that a number of people in Dorset have been targeted by scammers attempting to take control of their WhatsApp account.

Email and social media account hacking is the most reported cyber-dependent crime in the UK. Nationally, a staggering 18,000 people reported their accounts hacked in the 2021/22 financial year, with many more going unreported.

In the current scam affecting Dorset residents, criminals add their victim's phone number to a new phone, which prompts an app to request a code for two-step verification (2SV). The scammer will then contact the victim and one way or another persuade them to provide the code. Once they have the code, the scammer can then take over the account and use it for further fraud.

Used correctly, 2SV is a way of double checking that you really are who you are claiming to be when online. It can keep criminals out of your account, even if they know your password.

Never give your code to someone else, no matter how hard they try to convince you.

No single age group is more likely to be targeted. It can happen to anyone. Dorset Police offer free cyber-awareness sessions and regularly speak to community groups, businesses, schools, and charities.

The sessions offer impartial advice and guidance about common cyber threats like phishing, malware, and email scams, as well as providing advice on how you can keep your online accounts safe.

If you are interested in booking a cyber-awareness session for you, your business or community group please visit the Dorset Police website:

www.dorset.police.uk/cyber

For more general information about protecting your accounts, see www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home

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SCAM NEWS: QR CODES

What are they, how to protect against them

In the last month observers of website scams have noticed a rise in phishing attempts involving QR codes. A QR or 'quick response' code is a popular type of barcode that allows anyone with a smartphone to scan and read the code's digital content.

Cybercriminals have been exploiting this trend in the use of QR codes because when used on your smartphone they have fewer layers of protection than more traditional website links on your laptop or desktop. Cybercriminals are using several methods, online and offline, to direct you to fraudulent websites to gain access to your sensitive information.

The Newsletter looks at different types of QR code scams, how to recognise them, and how to protect yourself.



While many people are aware that QR codes can open a website address, they can be less aware of the other actions that QR codes can initiate on a user's device. These include directing you to downloads where the website attempts to install malware, as well as adding contacts or composing emails. The three top types of QR code scams are:

1. Within phishing emails

Like traditional phishing emails, the scammer will pose as a reputable company but include a QR code instead of a weblink. Once you scan the code, you're taken to a website which asks you to enter your personal information. One email security company has reported a 2,400% increase in malicious QR code phishing volume since May 2023.

2. Delivered to you as postal items

Scammers may also send out QR codes by post, claiming that "you have won a prize giveaway" or "missed a

parcel delivery", with directions for how to make a claim.

3. Distributed in the public space

Last month in England, there were several reports of fraudsters planting fake QR codes on parking meters to capture payment card information from car park users. The scammers went on to withdraw of money from the accounts. As one victim remarked, "These criminals are very clever. They only take a small amount of money each month and if you're not the sort of person who religiously checks their account, this can go unnoticed for a very long time."



How to spot a malicious QR Code

Scrutinise the surrounding content as you would any other phishing email. If something about a QR code within an email seems off or suspicious, trust your instincts and don't scan it.

Install a reputable QR code scanner app on your smartphone like your camera app, Microsoft or Google Lens. These may offer options to copy the link as well as open it, so you can paste elsewhere and check its validity. You should also check your device settings to ensure that alerts for malicious websites are turned on.

Protect yourself from fraudulent QR codes

Very few companies will use QR codes as a point of entry for payment. Organisations that do use QR codes, such as HMRC, will present QR codes only *after you have logged into a secure portal*.

If you aren't sure whether the QR code is legitimate, look up the company details online and ask them to confirm its authenticity. Don't use the details provided in the email you are scrutinising.

Keep your devices, especially your smartphone updated with the latest security patches.



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SCAM NEWS: IMPERSONATION

Nearly half of young adults have been targeted by impersonation scams

Figures from UK Finance, a body representing banks and building societies, show that just over half of those targeted had shared personal information or made a payment to a fraudster. It received 45,000 reports in 2022, with losses of £178m.

Young adults were the group most confident of spotting an impersonation scam, with 90% of respondents aged 18-24 saying they were confident they would be able to spot a fake online request for personal information.

But complacency could put people at risk of falling victim. Only 27% of young adults said they always take steps to check if an organisation or person can be trusted if they receive a message out of the blue. This figure rises to 60% of over-55s, who were far more cautious about unexpected messages. Points for protection:

Phone scams: never disclose financial information over the phone. If you're suspicious, end the call. If you receive a call claiming to be from your bank, hang up and call back using the number on the back of your bank card. Alternatively, call 159 to ensure you're put through to a genuine customer service line. If someone asks you to download software onto your device, hang up.

Email scams: if you receive an email from a company asking you to take action, don't click on any links. Check the sender's email address – this can be a giveaway sign of a scam. Instead, navigate to the organisation's website and log in to your account that way.

Text message and WhatsApp scams: don't follow links from unsolicited messages or reply to the messages. It's always better to contact the organisation directly.

WhatsApp and social media message scams: if you receive a suspicious-looking message from a friend or family member, don't respond or click on any links. Get in touch with the person using a different method.

But... if you've entered your details on a dodgy website, immediately change your password.

If you've given away your bank details, call your bank immediately and explain what's happened. Provide as much detail as possible so it can investigate.

WHAT A BLOOMING GOOD DISPLAY

Fantastic efforts of the West Parley Volunteers

Thanks to the superb efforts of the Parley Volunteers, the floral planters on New Road, Christchurch Road and Glenmoor Road have looked fantastic this year, as have displays on the barrier railings around Parley Cross and 13 larger planters at prominent sites around the village.

Funding for the planters comes from West Parley Parish Council and the overall effect has been to show a community that works hard to improve the look of the village.

The care taken in creating the whole display reflects well on our community. Thousands of residents and those passing through are able to enjoy the mass of colourful



flowers throughout the year.

It takes a lot of work to keep everything looking so good. The planters have to be cleared out twice a year for replanting in the Spring and

Autumn and they are watered three times a week. The Volunteers spend many hours doing this work.

Particular credit for the excellent display goes to Volunteers John and Anne Smith who designed the layout, collected the plants from local suppliers, planted and deadheaded them during the seasons. Our thanks to you both!

Besides doing this work the Volunteers also put up the Christmas decorations every year, maintain the Millennium Gardens, Recreation Ground, gazebo and adjoining car park, Parley Wood, the area round the shops at Parley Cross, all public seating and all the verges and footpaths. It's a huge amount of work, all done free, simply for our benefit.

The Volunteers are called on for one-off tasks, such as helping to clear up after the fire at the Memorial Hall early this year. Some of the Volunteers are also active litter pickers, Neighbourcar drivers and Neighbourhood Watch activists.

Many thanks to everyone!



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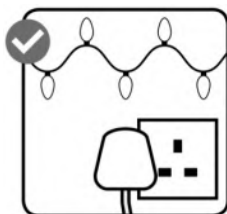
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A Seasonal Safety Reminder

Christmas is a special time for celebration but extra hazards are likely to be present in the home. Don't let the festivities end in tragedy because of the Fairy Lights!



Fairy Lights

- Check the fuses are the right type.
- If bulbs blow, replace them.
- Don't leave fairy lights on when you go out or when you go to sleep.
- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can burn easily, like paper.
- Don't overload sockets.



Candles

- Keep candles, lighters and matches out of children's reach.
- Never leave lighted candles in an empty room.



Cookers

- Most fires start in the kitchen.
- Avoid leaving the cooker unattended.
- Avoid cooking when under the influence of alcohol.



Decorations

- Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily.
- Don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- Don't put them immediately above or around the fireplace.
- Keep them away from candles.



Christmas Trees

- Never place candles near your tree, or near flammable materials.
- A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

*...and your NHW Committee wishes all our residents
the very best of the season's greetings...*

