

Neighbourhood Watch Community News

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

WINTER
ISSUE

*

December 2022
to
February 2023

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...and a Very Happy Christmas



South Ferndown and
West Parley Watch

Chairman's Report, December 2022

Our local Neighbourhood Policing Team has been reinforced by one PC and is now better able to help 'keep the King's Peace'. Team Leader PS Steve Payne spoke to our editor recently on the policing priorities for East Dorset and Ferndown, and the challenges that this presents to a small team; see Page 2.

We all face the continuing assault on the public from scammers, see Page 4 for an update. I would also recommend two national initiatives to help prevent people falling for scams: 'Take Five' and 'Friends Against Scams'. See www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/ and www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/.

'Take Five' urges us all to **Stop** and take time to think; **Challenge** to be sure they really are who they claim to be and not a fake; and **Protect** your personal information and money by contacting your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam.

'Friends Against Scams' is a national initiative to highlight the scale of the problem of fraud by getting communities to talk about scams, thereby changing perceptions of why people become scam victims and how to preventing people from becoming or continuing to be a scam victim. It also encourages people to join the fight against scams, turning knowledge into action. We can all share the need to protect 'My Money, My Info'. These two schemes, plus others, can help us to do that.

Community Speed Watch remains very active within our community, as described at Page 3. For those living in West Parley, please help the parish council with evidence and comments to reinforce the case for lower speed limits on some local roads: please contact cllrandrew.parry@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

As Christmas approaches I must add a note on a particular risk for young children. Dorset Trading Standards warn of the dangers of button batteries, used to power everyday items such as car keys, remotes and children's toys. If swallowed, they can stick in the throat or reach the stomach. They react to produce caustic soda, which can burn a hole through gut linings causing major damage or death. Please keep all batteries out of the reach of children!

Finally, some people can become especially lonely over the long Christmas holiday. Please keep a look out for them. See Page 6 about *The Silver Line*, originally set up by Dame Esther Rantzen of 'Childline' fame. The Silver Line offers older people friendship and advice 24 hours a day, especially over Christmas.

David Ayres at dayres.nhw@btinternet.com; phone 07796 546 904



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Police Updates

An extra 113 student police officers for Dorset; a full local team for neighbourhood policing; activities and priorities for South Ferndown and West Parley.

In 2019 the Government announced plans to recruit an extra 20,000 officers over three years. By the end of September 2022 a total of 15,343 additional officers had been recruited by police forces across England and Wales.

In Dorset the uplift will add 166 police officers by the end of March 2023; by the end of September 2022, 113 had joined the force. This recruitment is on top of existing planned recruitment and intakes are already planned for the coming five months to enable the Force to meet the 166 target.

Recruits have entered by a variety of entry routes, including the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, Degree Holder Entry Programme, Detective Degree Holder Entry Programme, as well as a number of officers re-joining the service and transferring to Dorset from other forces. Since April 2020, some 44% of new recruits are female. There are also 50% more ethnic officers in Dorset than there were three years ago. All good news!

Might you, or someone you know be interested in joining Dorset Police? Applications are open now. *You don't need a degree to join the police.* Dorset police offer the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) entry route which is a mixture of dynamic practical on-the-job learning alongside academic classroom-based theory and learning. You'll be a police officer from your first day on the job so you can earn while you learn.

To find out more, go to www.recruitment-dcp-dp.org/dorset-your-police-career/police-officers/.

The Local Situation

We are delighted to report that our South Ferndown and West Parley Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) is now at full strength:

Police Sergeant Steve Payne

PCs Kate Adie and Phil Robbins

PCSOs James Marsh and Adam Fitzwalter

More may be added in 2023.

In a recent update on the NPT, PS Payne and PC Adie spoke of the most frequent neighbourhood incidents that come to police attention. The continuing assault on the public from scammers is the most pressing concern – see Page 4 for more on current scams.

Less frequent but still prevalent is the behaviour of rogue traders. Despite the publicity and the warnings, local residents, especially the elderly, are suffering at the hands of these criminals.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains the top priority for Dorset Police, and our NPT respond swiftly to local incidents, targeting known areas that attract ASB. That our neighbourhood remains one of relative peace is the product of good neighbours, a sense of community, a good NHW network, litter-free roads, well-maintained front gardens, all backed up by our NPT.

In the next few weeks the NPT will be focusing on acquisitive crime – 'bonus time' around Christmas for petty thieves. PS Payne asks that we all stay alert for theft and burglary by heeding this:

Secure Your Home, the 10-Point Checklist:

1. **Doors:** Keep doors locked, even when you're home or in your back garden. Take keys out of locks..
2. **Alarm:** Install a burglar alarm. Make sure all household members know how to work it and use it daily.
3. **Windows:** Close and lock them! Open or closed curtains is always a tricky decision. Closed during the day makes it look like there's no one at home so best to leave them open and get security lighting.
4. **Paths:** A gravel path/driveway makes anyone approaching the house easier to hear.
5. **Shed:** Secure tools and ladders to a heavy object.
6. **Fencing:** At the back of your property, put up high fences or plant prickly bushes.
7. **Gates:** Make sure they cannot be climbed over and secure them with appropriate locks.
8. **Amazon etc Deliveries:** Make sure you register a Safe Place for deliveries that will arrive at your empty home. Ask a neighbour to check for these and for newspaper deliveries and regular deliveries.



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9. *Driveway*: Ask a trusted neighbour or friend to keep an eye on your home. Perhaps ask them to park their car on your driveway or on the road outside of your house, to make it appear that someone is home.

10. *Lighting*: Use external motion-sensor lights on paths.

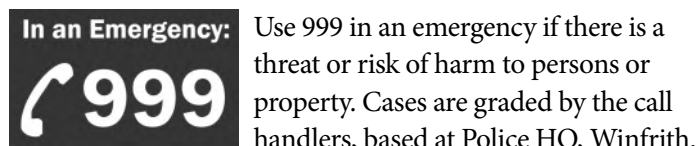
The Importance of Reporting Incidents

PS Payne emphasises the importance of reporting incidents, even the seemingly minor. “If it’s not reported, we won’t know about it and we won’t do anything about it!” His insistence reveals a concern throughout police forces that the public are tending to assume that the police are too busy filling in forms to attend incidents and that ‘It’s a waste of time reporting it because nothing will be done’.

Not all policing is flawless but Dorset Police rank high in the league of efficient, trusted and effective forces, ranking sixth of 43 forces in England and Wales (up from seventh place in March 2022).


However, some myths remain, for example with shoplifting: ‘The police won’t come out for thefts of goods under £50’. PS Payne’s first question is ‘Did you report it?’

There are several ways to report crimes and related concerns:



Use 999 in an emergency if there is a threat or risk of harm to persons or property. Cases are graded by the call handlers, based at Police HQ, Winfrith.

- Grade 1, Serious road traffic collision, serious crimes in progress and domestic abuse incidents where there are allegations of aggression, respond in 20 minutes.
- Grade 2: No immediate threat to life or serious injury with a lower risk level, possibly a dispute or shoplifter detained, have a target response time of an hour.
- Grade 3: A crime has been recorded and there are investigative opportunities but it is not critical for officers to attend. Respond or other resolution within 48 hours.

 101 is for non-emergency calls such as to give the police information about crime in your area or to speak to the police about a police related enquiry. For example:

- Your car has been stolen
- Your property has been damaged
- You suspect drug use or dealing in your local area
- You want to report a minor traffic accident

The police will assess the impact on the person(s) involved, for example to spot trends in type and location, and will act appropriately. That might not involve a call back by a PC. “But,” said PS Payne, “the report will have been seen, assessed and actioned.”

For much more on every aspect of Dorset Police policies and operations, search for *Ask NED Dorset*. From an A-Z of topics from Abandoned Vehicles to Wildlife Crime, you’ll be amazed at what you can find there.

Community Speedwatch

In the first nine months of 2022, CSW Ferndown roadside monitors were seen by over 46,000 motorists. Most motorists observed the speed limit or slowed when they saw their speed was being monitored.

Regrettably, in those nine months, CSW reported 1,440 speeding motorists to Dorset Police – 400 more than the same period in 2021.

To help motorists stick to local speed limits Ferndown Town Council has agreed to install Speed Indicator Devices (SID) at four or five speeding hotspots around the town.

SIDs are temporary signs that use radar to detect and display the speed of approaching motorists to encourage them to keep within the speed limit. It is hoped that the SIDs will be in use early in 2023.

Speed limits in West Parley

For over 10 years the Parish Council and Residents’ Association have been pressing Dorset Council to reduce the speed limits on West Parley’s main roads to 30mph.

This was one of the most important targets outlined in the 2011 Parish Plan but no progress has been made by Dorset Council on this and the Parish Council has been told that nothing is scheduled.

The main consideration for changing speed limits is a poor road safety record. Current average traffic speeds are also important.

Dorset Council’s statistics show that the number of collisions is low and the average traffic speed is below the existing 40mph limit. However, the collision figures do not include the numerous times that speeding cars go off the road on the bends on New Road causing extensive damage.

Attitudes are changing and people are more aware of the environmental impact of road vehicles: traffic noise, speeding – often linked to high traffic volumes – and air pollution at the roadside. In Ferndown and West Parley we see and hear cars and motorcycles tearing away from traffic lights, jumping the traffic lights and exceeding the speed limit, especially on the straighter parts of New Road.

These issues affect the whole community, especially on those living next to our main roads. Many more houses are planned for the next few years, imposing more traffic and increased impact on residents.

Whilst much of the air pollution and traffic noise result from the long queues of stationary traffic, reducing the speed limits will lead to a significant improvement in the safety and quality of residents’ lives.

There have been cycle lanes in West Parley for a number of years with no effect on traffic speeds.

The Parish Council needs to make a stronger case for change. Please provide the Chairman, Cllr Andrew Parry with more evidence on the impact of speeding traffic on your lives. Please email your comments to him on cllrandrew.parry@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.



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Update on Current Scams

Which? research has found the impact of scams on victim wellbeing costs £9.3bn a year, a personal cost of £2,509 each.

Some commentators believe that government plans to tackle online scams in the proposed 'Online Safety' Bill are not comprehensive enough to deal with everyday threats faced by consumers and do not reflect the scale and urgency of the problem.

The debate will continue but we should not hold out too much hope of there being a solution that eliminates the international scale of fraud on 'ordinary people' like us. We must sharpen our own defences against the fraudsters.

In June, Citizens Advice warned that in 2022 more than three quarters of UK adults have been targeted by a scam, a 14% increase on the same time last year. In our Autumn Newsletter (Sep–Nov 2022) we set out the ten most important things we must do to stay safe, and what to do if you are scammed.

The most common scams in 2022 are:

- Council Tax and Energy Rebate scams
- Parcel delivery fraud
- Social media scams
- 'Hello Mum' WhatsApp scam
- Romance and dating scams
- Bank impersonation scams

Council Tax and Energy Price Cap scams

In April the government offered a one-off council tax rebate of £150 to households in council tax bands A to D.

If you pay your council tax by direct debit, your local council will have paid the rebate directly into your bank account. You didn't need to do anything, but if you not receive the payment, you should contact Dorset Council. .

If you do not pay by direct debit, you will probably need to apply via the council's website. For all queries, start at revenueservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or 0345 034 4569

What should not happen is that you receive a text message, email or phone call asking for your bank details so that your rebate can be paid – it will probably be a scam. As Age UK, the charity for older people, has pointed out: "Local councils say they would never cold-call. Do

not give out your details."

Do not click on any suspicious website links that are sent to you, nor give your bank details to someone who contacts you. If you are unsure, call your local council directly.

A related scam involves fake messages or emails claiming to be from the energy regulator Ofgem asking people to apply for the £400 energy rebate. Here is an example of a fake text offering the rebate. Note the suspicious link to "bill-uk-gov.com". Just delete it!

GOVUK: You are eligible for a discounted energy bill under the Energy Bills Support Scheme. You can apply here: <https://bill-uk-gov.com/>

Parcel Delivery scams

This type of scam reached a record high during the pandemic as online shopping rocketed.

Scam messages target consumers by purporting to be trusted organisations. They often contain a link to a fraudulent website that replicates a legitimate site, asking the victim to enter personal and sensitive information.

Royal Mail: Your package has a £2.99 shipping fee, to pay this now visit royalmail-redelivery.support. Actions will be taken if you do not pay this fee

The message may claim to be from a parcel giant such as the Post Office, Royal Mail, Parcelforce, DPD, Hermes etc, asking you to pay an outstanding fee or reschedule a delivery date.

The criminal will often copy the organisation's phone number, enabling the text to appear in a previous chain of texts from the purported sender.

Once you have clicked on the link, you may be asked for your personal information, such as name, address, contact details, bank or credit card information. Stop! Don't do it!

If you receive a message about a missed delivery, always proceed with caution. Also be very suspicious of requests

for your personal information.

Most companies will not request a payment via text or email, so check on the company's website for official guidance.

Social Media scams

Social media has become a hotbed of criminal activity with scammers using sites such as Instagram and Facebook. Examples include bitcoin scams that fraudulently use brand logos to appear legitimate.

In the cost of living crisis, food voucher scams have increased online. People are being promised supermarket coupons and dining-out vouchers if they sign up, giving their personal details. In July, for example, a Morrisons food box scam claimed that those who clicked 'like' or 'share' on a Facebook post will get free food and a voucher.

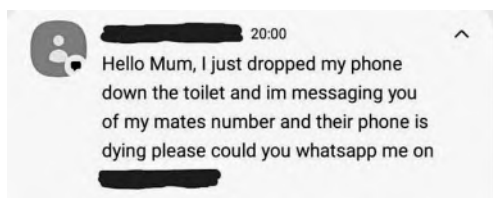
A similar scam used the Wetherspoons Facebook site to 'offer' food vouchers in exchange for users who commented on posts.

Again, be alert, recognise that if it looks too good to be true, it probably isn't. Don't be tempted to explore the links!

'Hello Mum' WhatsApp scam

You'll receive a WhatsApp message supposedly from a family member, saying that they've got a new phone number and need money to pay a bill urgently. Messages often start with 'Hello mum' or 'Hello dad'. They will then provide bank details for you to transfer money across to them.

Below is a common example of one of these texts. It mentions the phone dying in order to sound more urgent, prompting immediate action without checking.



Romance and Dating scams

Two in five people dated someone they met online were asked for money. Over half who were asked for money said that they gave it or lent it and they would continue to message someone despite the other person being reluctant to meet in person or video call after the first few conversations.

Playing with someone's affections is a cruel deception and falling victim to this type of fraud can have a huge emotional impact. Victims often feel embarrassed and don't want to tell people what's happened, even though they are not to blame.

Lloyds Bank reported a 16% increase in romance scams in 2021, with victims losing around £8,650 on average.

Though victims between the ages of 55 and 64 still lose the highest amount on average (£15,957), the typical age of a victim has fallen, with people between 45 and 54 now the most likely to be tricked into sending money to a

fraudster masquerading as a romantic partner.

If you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling, contact Victim Support either online or via their support line on 0808 1689111, or 'Think Jessica', a charity committed to protecting older people from fraud and scams. You can also contact the Samaritans at any time of the day or night on 116 123.

If a scam has left you struggling financially, contact Citizens Advice to help you find a way forward. You can speak to an adviser through its national phone service Adviceline, on 03444 111 444, which is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Tips to stay safe from romance scammers:

1. **Don't send money to someone you've never met in real life.** A romance scam targets your emotions, so the fraudster will not hesitate to lie about family or legal issues, business problems or medical bills
2. **Don't believe everything you see.** It's simple to take an image from the internet and use it as a profile picture. Lookout for professional quality photos as these may be stolen from social media accounts of models or celebrities, particularly people who are not based in the UK, so are less likely to be recognisable.
3. **Pause to do your own research.** Slow down if a person is putting pressure on you to send money quickly. Speak to a trusted friend or family member, or do some research online on reputable dating sites about what you're being asked to do.
4. **Keep your personal details private.** Never share your personal banking details, card information, or log-ins to financial websites.
5. **Don't move money for someone else.** Scammers try to fool people into moving the proceeds of crime around for them, in a tactic called 'money muling.' Even if you're not aware that you've moved illegal funds, you can still be prosecuted, so never agree to move money for people you don't know.

Always Report it!

Don't be embarrassed; you're in good company. Always report scams to ActionFraud any time, day or night, using their online reporting tool at:

www.actionfraud.police.uk

Reporting online is quick and easy. A tool will guide you through simple questions to identify what has happened, and Action Fraud advisors are available 24/7 to give you help and advice.

When reporting online you will be given the option to register, login to an existing account or continue as a guest. By registering you will be able to track progress of your report and to call ActionFraud about your report.

You can also report by phone by calling 0300 123 2040 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm.

If you are calling from abroad, use +44 300 123 2040.

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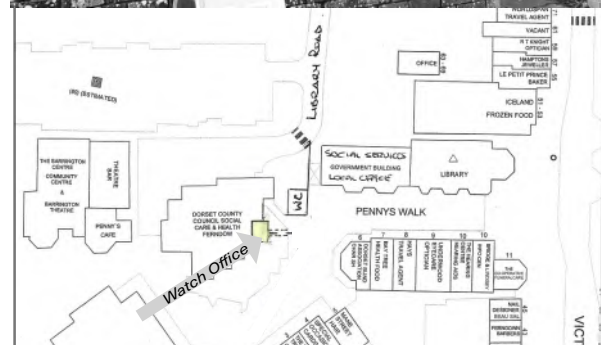
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...and where is the Community Office?

The Community Office is no longer in the Barrington, but is now just a few paces from the public lavatories in Penny's Walk.

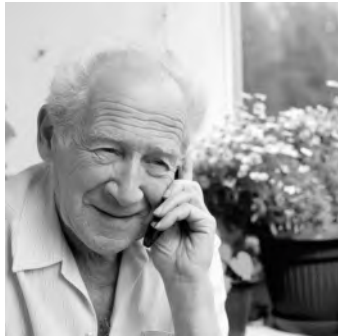


The Silver Line

Sometimes everyone, no matter who they are, needs someone to talk to and connect with.

The Silver Line, working with AgeUK and other corporate partners, provides a free, 24-hour telephone service for anyone aged 55 or over, offering friendship, support and a listening ear.

It gives people the chance to pick up the phone and enjoy a chat, get some support and feel all the wonderful benefits that come from talking to a friend.



Loneliness can strike at any time of the day or night. When it's very late or very early, it might not be possible to call a family member, friend or loved one. But when those feelings of isolation, worry or loneliness strike, there is always someone you can call

at the Silver Line. It provides two telephone friendship services:

Regular telephone friendship service. Run by AgeUK, the over-60s are matched with a friendly volunteer for regular weekly chats. The service has helped create hundreds of new friendships and many people say their calls are the highlight of their week. To get started, you "just tell the Silver Line a bit about yourself and they will do the rest".

A 24-hour helpline service. Run by the Silver Line, it is a free 24-hour helpline that people can call for a chat, day or night, for whatever reason.

The Telephone Friendship service supports around 9,000 people each year. The Helpline answers around 300,000 calls from older people every year.

Is the Telephone Friendship Service for you?

These services are for people in later life who'd like to talk to someone. You don't need to be feeling lonely (although if you do, they'd like to help), and you don't need to live on your own. Sometimes it's just nice to talk.

To sign up for the regular telephone friendship service, where a volunteer calls each week, you need to:

- Be over 60.
- Have your own landline or mobile phone.
- Be able to hear and be understood over the phone.
- Commit to a regular call at the same time each week.

Points to consider

The telephone friendship services may not be as helpful for people with memory loss, dementia or mental health issues, and who need a higher level of support.

Some users find that it may take time to build a relationship with your new 'telephone friend'; but you'll have been matched on your shared interests, so a few calls are recommended before making a judgement.

Making your regular call is important. Users must let the service know if you can't take their regular call. If you don't, then your telephone friend may be worried about whether you are OK or not.

You will want to make sure that everything is safe and secure. So before you receive a call from your new telephone friend the service will have screened them and,

- Asked them to provide two references.
- Checked their name and date of birth matches at their address, and that they are who they say they are.
- Asked them to declare any unspent criminal convictions.
- Asked them to agree with the terms and conditions.

You won't have to give out your own personal phone number except when registering with the service. Your weekly call are set up automatically. The service expressly asks that you do not share your personal details with your telephone friend.



To register, go to www.ageuk.org.uk and look for 'The Telephone Friendship Service'; or simply Google for 'The Silver Line UK'.

AgeUK Advice Line: 0800 678 1602, 8am to 7pm, 365 days.

The Silver Line: 0800 470 80 90.



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The Queen's Legacy Keeping Up to Date

Understanding what is happening in our community helps residents feel involved and connected to where they live. It adds to community cohesion, which is a key mission for the NHW movement.

We have an excellent range of local publications and newsletters that have traditionally been in print form and only available in some shops, garden centres or Ferndown Library – and rarely seen by many residents. Most are now online, with local news, lists of clubs and societies and details of future local events. The local council web sites are also a good source of information.

The principal online publications:

- New Stour and Avon magazine: www.stourandavon-magazine.co.uk
- View and Viewpoint: www.dorsetview.co.uk
- West Parley Parish Council: www.westparley-pc.co.uk
- Ferndown Town Council: www.ferndown.gov.uk

For current information on crime and policing, register for Dorset Alert at www.dorsetalert.co.uk. You will also be sent the excellent 'Your News' monthly newsletter from NHW national organisation. The lead on The Queen's Legacy is John Cullen, email johncullen50@hotmail.com, phone 01202 582662

...

Volunteer Drivers (are still) Wanted West Parley Neighbourcar

This superb service seeks more volunteers willing to give lifts to those who are mobile but not able to drive, or are unable to use public transport. The service is for West

Parley residents only, for journeys of up to 10 miles distant from West Parley. Volunteer drivers use their own cars and are not committed to regular schedules. *Please contact Clive Butcher on 07592 860104.*

The West Parley Multiple Sclerosis Centre

The excellent MS Centre on Church Lane, West Parley, has a pressing need for volunteer drivers and vehicle assistants for their minibuses. Can you spare just two hours a week to help on a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday morning or afternoon?

No special driving licence is required and training is given to new drivers. *Please call Kay on 01202 570300.*

**

...and there's just space for your NHW Committee to thank you for your invaluable support and concern for all our residents, and to wish you...



Happy Christmas!