

Neighbourhood Watch Community News

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

SPRING

ISSUE

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March 2024

to

May 2024

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The Watch AGM



**Ferndown South and
West Parley Watch**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, MARCH 2024

You are invited to our NHW AGM on Tuesday 16th April at 7.30pm at St Mark's Church, New Road, West Parley. This is your opportunity to get an update on what is happening in the Watch, ask questions and provide us with feedback. We are very pleased to have our local Dorset Councillor, Andrew Parry, as our Guest Speaker.

**

We are updating our Trusted Trader list, published every two years and due to be revised and republished soon. Some traders offer discounts for NHW members and might ask to see your annual NHW membership card. The 2024 membership card is printed in this issue to cut out and keep.

Only traders who have been recommended by members are on the list. If you have a trader you would recommend to other NHW members please email details to me.

**

The people of Dorset will elect a Police and Crime Commissioner on Thursday 2 May. Candidates must register by 5 April, when the full list will be published. However, we know that David Sidwick will stand for re-election. He has held the position since 2021.

The PCC is the voice of the people and is responsible for the totality of policing in the county. It is an extremely important and influential role that impacts on all our daily lives. More information is on Pages 4 to 6.

PCCs answer to the public, who vote them in or out every four years.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE

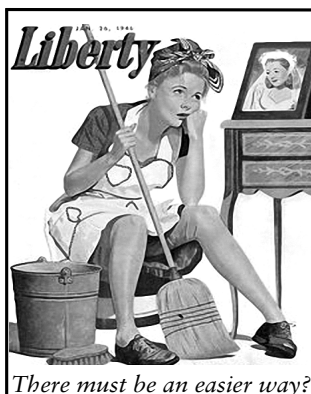
You can apply online to vote by post. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Wednesday 17 April. You must be registered to vote by 11:59pm on Tuesday 16 April. You also need to reapply for a postal vote every three years. Postal voting papers will be sent out soon after 17 April, once ballot papers have been printed.

**

Finally, my sincere thanks to our Coordinators and Contacts who keep the Watch going. At a time when so many people seem to seem to be focused on 'self' and we see so much negativity in the media, it is great to have so many residents who are happy to offer their time and expertise to give something back to their community and feeling they are contributing to society and not just taking.

Take care and stay safe.

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.

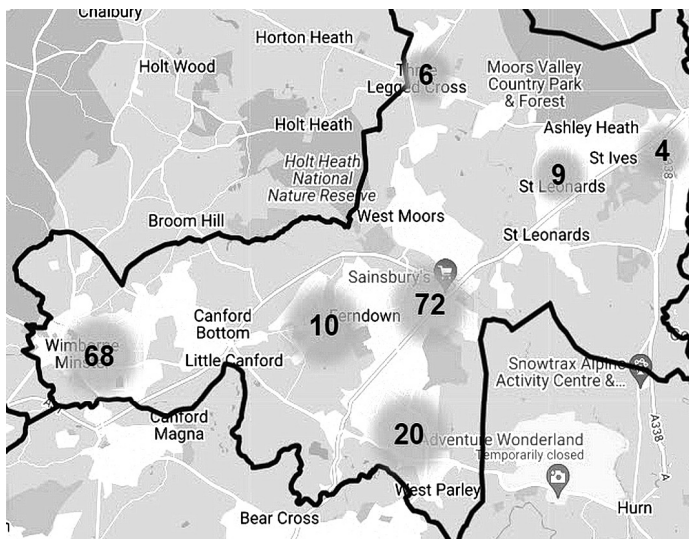
Our Dorset (Urban) area stretches from Corfe Mullen to Verwood. Such a large 'patch' is best policed by a local Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) whose members remain in post for long periods, getting to know the trouble-makers and crime hot spots.

In this we are reassured that our Ferndown and West Parley team is unchanged in the last quarter: Police Sergeant Steve Payne, PCs Kate Davies and Phil Robbins, PCSOs Adam Fitzwalter and James Marsh.

Crime figures for the months of November and December 2023 show a relatively constant pattern month by month and a decade ago.

Offences	Dec 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2022
Violence, Sexual Offences	73	103	97
Anti-social Behaviour	57	47	55
Criminal Damage & Arson	21	29	39
Other Crimes	107	101	93
Total all Crimes	258	280	284

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



CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REVIEW OF 2023

Chief Constable Amanda Pearson reflects on the "fantastic work of our 3,071 officers, staff and volunteers in delivering a safer Dorset"

In writing to thank all members of Dorset Police for their work in 2023, Chief Constable Amanda Pearson released some useful facts and figures that illustrate the extent of police activity. See the graphic below.



We might sometimes wonder where are the police? What are they doing? The answers are in these figures and in associated activities, for example:

- Responding to 31,000 concerns for welfare and 8,700 incidents involving mental health crises, working with partners in the NHS to ensure those in need receive the right care at their time of need from a medical professional.
- Disrupting organised drug gangs as part of Operation Scorpion and Operation Viper by focusing on organised criminality and those who prey on our communities.
- Tasking family liaison officers to support 329 people who have been seriously injured on our roads and the

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families of 14 people who lost their lives.

- Our road safety team detected over 66,000 offences where drivers were caught speeding or driving through red lights. Around half received speed awareness training and half either receiving points and a fine or referral to the courts. One driver who went to court was found to be driving at 97mph in a 30mph zone in Corfe Mullen, three times over the speed limit.

The Chief Constable says, "We are one of the safest counties in the country, which is a testament to the hard work and determination of everyone to be tough on crime, keep people safe and put our victims and witnesses first.

"We work collaboratively and don't strive for individual glory or ego. I have seen our people come together in times of crisis and go the extra mile, working additional hours, supporting each other during trauma to keep themselves well and delivering exceptional policing for Dorset.

"Dorset is a police force where people care and where the values of public service, integrity and professionalism run deep".

DORSET ALERT

Keep informed about local crimes and incidents

Frequent references in past issues of the Newsletter to Dorset Alert have encouraged many residents to register for updates on local policing concerns.

Dorset Alert is a two-way community messaging system operated by Dorset Police to exchange information about crime and anti-social behaviour, witness appeals, crime prevention, community events and local good news.



It is an excellent tool for keeping informed and is being relaunched as a new Dorset-wide service named 'Informed Community' with a new website 'My Safer Dorset', at www.mysaferdorset.com. It also links with the national NHW organisation.

Once registered, users will not be notified about every crime or incident that happens in their neighbourhood but where the police believe to do so will reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour, or will help Dorset Police to solve a crime.

For example, in late February Dorset Alert posted a report of vehicle crime on Pinewood Road in Ferndown.

A male, approximately 35 years of age and 5'9" tall, accessed the driveway of this property via a neighbouring garden. A vehicle parked on the driveway was broken into. Some bags containing designer clothes, a passport and the keys to another vehicle were stolen...

The report included a Case Number and details of how to

respond if the reader had information useful to the police.

Dorset Alert often offers advice on crime prevention, as in this case, on how to protect your keyless entry car:

- When at home keep your car key (and the spare) well away from the car.
- Put the keys in a screened or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag, and check if the bag or pouch is still working every few months.
- Re-programme your keys if you buy a used car.
- Turn off wireless signals on your fob when it's not being used.

REPORT IT RIGHT

Dorset Alert advice on reporting incidents

Police call handlers receive thousands of calls every year asking for help which the police are unable to give, such as noisy neighbours and lost dogs.

Dorset Police ask people to remember the slogan "When something's wrong, *Report it Right*" to ensure callers get the best help from the most appropriate service and without taking up the time of police staff who may otherwise be dealing with more urgent queries.



Chief Superintendent Gavin Dudfield said, "We see a significant number of calls reporting issues relating to parking, noisy neighbours and lost dogs which should be reported to the local council or other agencies.

"Please try to speak with the right people from the start."

Examples of concerns which police cannot help with include:

- **Noise Pollution:** This is dealt with by the Environmental Health Department of your local council.
- **Lost or found dogs:** The local dog warden should be able to help with this.
- **Bad Parking:** The council's parking enforcement department deals with this.
- **Legal Advice:** Citizens Advice may be able to help with this.
- **Power Outages:** There is a dedicated emergency line on 105, for power cuts.

More guidance is available at: www.dorset.police.uk and at the new website www.mysaferdorset.com.

There is also a useful source of police and legal information at 'Ask the Police', as described in the Winter issue of the Newsletter. As a source of up to date, accurate online criminal law information it includes the facility to email specific questions. It is a comprehensive, easy to navigate, authoritative and genuinely helpful. www.ask.thepolice.uk





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ELECTION OF THE NEXT DORSET PCC

On 2nd May, the 41 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in England and Wales will be elected to make sure the police are run properly. Dorset's PCC, David Sidwick will be one.

Your vote is important, for the outcome will affect all aspects of urban and rural policing for the next four years. The Newsletter met with our PCC, David Sidwick, who has been in post since May 2021. The appointment is normally for four years but 2020 was lost when all elections were postponed during the Covid pandemic.

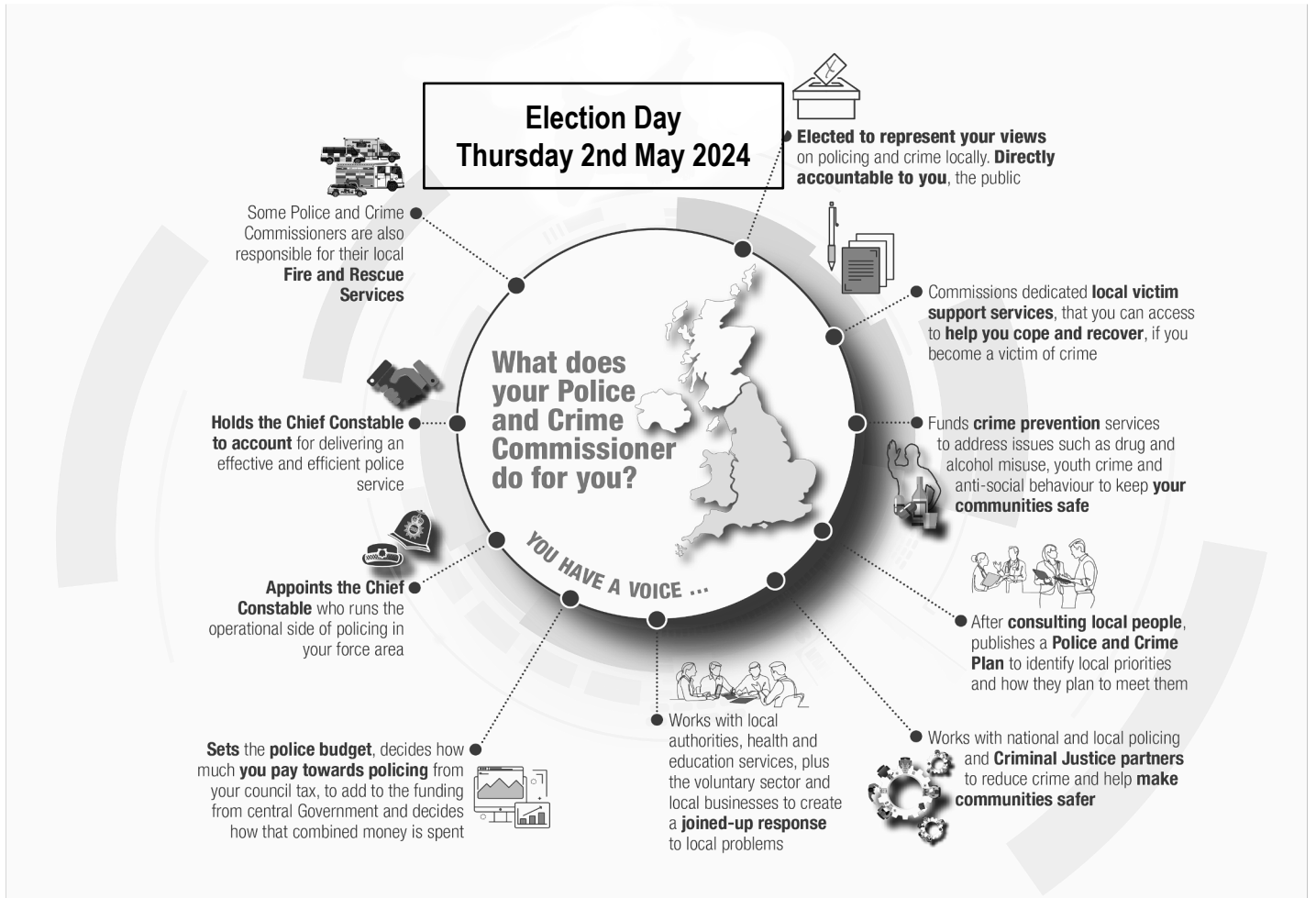
The person elected on 2 May will remain in post until 2028. So far, we know only of David Sidwick's intention to

run for re-election. Any other candidates must be nominated by 5 April 2024, although residents can expect to receive election material delivered to our homes in the coming weeks, and there is helpful material online.

A good starting place to find the websites and Facebook links is www.whocanivotefor.co.uk. Enter your postcode to see the details and links for all the candidates. The website also carries the candidates' 'Statement to Voters'.

Why do we have PCCs?

First introduced in England in 2012, PCCs replaced the old police authorities, which had earlier replaced Police Watch Committees. Neither was adequate in ensuring democratic accountability and strategic reach.



What do they do?

Their roles are illustrated in the diagram below. They hold the police budget, appoint and dismiss the Chief Constable and set their strategic objectives. *The PCC is the voice of the people* and is responsible for the totality of policing in the county. They answer to the public, who vote them in every four years and can vote them out again.

Politics?

The 'political' question is less obvious but the pre-PCC bodies were constituted as committees of local government, and thus were deeply political. The PCC system ensures the independence of the police is enshrined in law. PCCs in their oath of service clearly state they will not interfere with the operational effectiveness of the police force.

There is no operational benefit in attaching Westminster political parties to PCCs, although they may be involved in initial selection. The incumbent PCC does not answer to any political authority; his relationship is directly with the public through the ballot box.

Making it Work

The relationship of the PCC with the Chief Constable is neither directive nor too close to avoid risking operational independence. The system guarantees that the police are never political but are subject to strategic direction and oversight by the PCC – always answerable to the public.

The PCC's governance role relies on the strategic Police and Crime Plan (PCP), drawn up by the PCC and the Chief Constable who provides the operational expertise.

A PCC must have an understanding of the strategic process: from communication with the electorate to an overarching vision; with a clear mission and objective-bound priorities that can be directly linked to impartial operational effectiveness.

Preparation for the Role

Having sold his pharmaceutical business in 2020 David Sidwick spent three years preparing for the role, spending time with Dorset and other counties' PCCs and police, and on research around the complexities of crime and policing.

Thus, on election, he was ready to work immediately with the Chief Constable to write the Dorset Police & Crime Plan. The PCP covers seven years, 2021 to 2028. It has six key priorities as shown in the graphic above. There has been commendable progress in all areas.

There is much to celebrate about the strategic success of the PCP, which can be found at www.dorset.pcc.police.uk. Some of the highlights in 2023 were:

Crime and ASB.

The PCP places Neighbourhood policing as the first priority for Dorset Police. Incidents of ASB are measurably down by 25% (although higher in some hot spots), and by 40% in Weymouth. Burglaries from dwellings are down and the perpetrators are being caught.

The PCC's new Op Relentless community fund has supported 31 organisations across Dorset with more than £117,000 of funding.

New joint working with business partners are tackling shoplifting more effectively under Op Shopkeeper.

Visible and Connected Policing

"I never see a police officer around here" is the frequent complaint, but target-busting recruiting is raising the numbers. In addition there are new pop-up 'Community Contact Points', where local police and PCSOs set up in supermarkets and places of high public footfall to meet, discuss issues, report concerns etc. There are now 72 such teams in Dorset.

Boscombe police station has reopened a base for local policing. Three previously unused police stations have been reopened at Swanage, Blandford and Lyme Regis, with more to come.

To maximise the time officers spend on active policing and the minimum on bureaucracy and form-filling, an internal scrutiny of processes has brought welcome changes, such as 10% faster response for 999 responses, from initial call to full completion.

Fight Violent Crime and High Harm

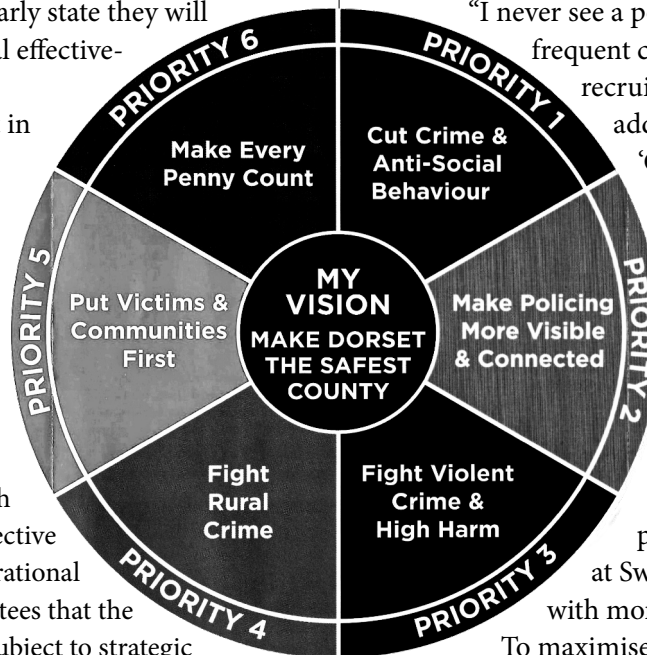
Dorset has the second lowest rate of knife crime across England and Wales. The policing effort continues with the launch of the Bournemouth Town Team with Dorset Police and our partners. The PCC funded knife wands for every patrol car as well as a portable knife arch and the Force-led Op Fireglow and Op Nightjar to target ASB and serious crime.

The police can count successes in tackling drugs and county lines. Between April and December 2023, the Force closed down 42 county lines and Op Scorpion, described by the PCC as 'a ring of steel around Dorset', has taken £1.3m of drugs off the streets, through 620 arrests.

The Newsletter Winter issue reported the reclassification of 'laughing gas' as a Class C drug; a campaign long pursued by the PCC to protect the most vulnerable.

Fight Rural Crime

Dorset is blessed with strong, proud rural communities. Yet like other agricultural counties, there has been a



dramatic increase in crime. Rural crime was largely neglected until given a new focus in the current Police & Crime Plan. The Rural Crime Team now numbers 18, up from just three. The NFU Mutual's annual report shows a 28% drop in the cost of crime for Dorset, compared to an increase of 22.1% nationally. The police have returned material valued at £1.3m to the owners.

The new Rural Mounted Volunteers are the eyes and ears for rural communities, similar to Neighbourhood Watch groups. Volunteers on horseback work closely with the Police Rural Crime Team, providing intelligence and information to help support crime prevention.

The PCC has obtained funding to enable further enforcement of fly-tipping offenders in Dorset, an issue of great concern to the rural community.

Put Victims and Communities First

Dorset also has the country's second highest number of prosecutions for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences, a huge success in the PCC's determination to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG).

A new Improvement Panel reviews the police VAWG agenda, ensuring the Force is delivering the most effective and compassionate service for victims. They have announced the 'Immediate Justice' pilot scheme, which will deliver swift and visible punishments to those who have committed ASB and other low-level crimes.

Make Every Penny Count

Dorset is one of the best performing counties in England in measurements of overall safety from crime; the result of hard work by the police. But it remains one of the worst funded forces; second from bottom in the table of 41 forces, meaning more must come from the precept: £13 a month just to be able to maintain a 'stand still point'.

Since becoming our PCC in 2021, David Sidwick has been relentless in lobbying directly for a fairer funding deal for Dorset. We need the government to consider 'seasonality and sparsity' – how busy our officers are especially over summer, along with the size and 'rurality' of the county. We can see 13 million people visiting Dorset on day trips

It is plain to see why we must fight for a fairer deal!



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FOUR SCAMS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

From deep fakes of the Prime Minister to false QR codes and screens on your phone, the scammers proliferate

What follows is based on information from across the Internet and especially from the outstanding analysis, reports and recommendations published by the Consumers' Association in *Which? Magazine*. Over 450,000 people have joined the association's free Scam Alert service, at www.which.co.uk. Your NHW recommends that you sign up for this service to:

- Stay ahead of the latest scams
- Spot scams and protect yourself
- Take steps if you've been scammed
- Understand the way scams work.



Knowledge is the best defence against Internet scams. While advances are made to make us safer, new threats emerge in the form of AI images and individually targeted multi-step scams. These are ones to be alert to:

Spear Phishing

You've almost certainly heard of phishing, where scammers trick you with a message or email purporting to be from a reputable bank, business or government body. Such scams result from mass mailings in the expectation that a small number of people will fall for the traps.

Spear phishing is described as a personally targeted phishing attempt, in which fraudsters use your own information – obtained at an earlier stage – to convince you they are an organisation that you normally trust.

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Personal data used in spear phishing can come from many sources, including large-scale data breaches, open social media profiles or previous scams in which you've handed over your data without realising.

How to Stay Safe

If you suspect an email might be from a scammer, don't click on any links or download any attachments. Stay security-aware and ensure your antivirus software is always up to date. It will provide a strong extra layer of protection.

Tabnapping

'Tabnapping' people are those who keep multiple tabs open in their browser, often for long periods of time. The fraudsters can use powerful programming language to change the contents and tab name of an open, but inactive, tab to resemble the log-in screen of a bank, email provider or online shopping store.

When a user returns to the tab they'll see the fake log-in screen and will assume that they have been inadvertently logged out. To reactivate the tab, the users re-enter their user information and password to log back in.

When they enter these details the personal information provided is sent straight to the fraudsters.

The fraudsters may even put an additional message on the fake log-in screen saying that the session has timed out and the user needs to re-enter their log-in details. This is a message that appears on legitimate websites, particularly by banks, increasing the likelihood that the user thinks the log-in screen is trustworthy.

How to Stay Safe

Keep your anti-virus and anti-spyware software up-to-date. Try to create safer habits and don't leave tabs open for long periods. If you're unsure if a log-in screen is legitimate, close the tab down and open a new one, typing in the legitimate URL of the website you want to log-in to.

Quishing

QR codes came fully to the public's attention during the pandemic when, for example, restaurants introduced the codes to place food orders from our phones, minimising interactions with others.

But as with anything, they've been exploited by cyber-criminals to deceive victims into using copycat sites. The scam is known as 'quishing' or QR phishing.

The criminals know that we tend to assume these QR codes are genuine, even more so than barcodes, and that we will scan them without thinking.

For example, as we reported in our Winter Newsletter, fake QR codes stuck on parking meters have misled drivers to reveal their payment card information leading to subsequent theft.

How to Stay Safe

Don't assume all QR codes are safe. The codes reveal a URL that you can inspect as you would for any other webpage link.

AI and Deepfake

It's an election year in the UK and in more than 40 countries around the world. As more than half the world's population goes to the polls, the incentives for criminals to misuse artificial intelligence (AI) have never been higher.

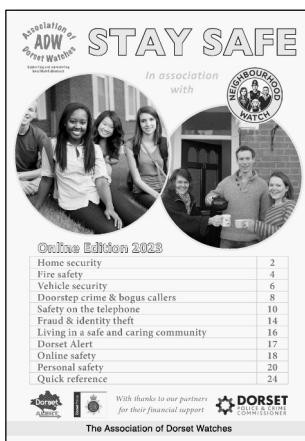
In January, the *Guardian* reported the discovery of more than 100 'deepfake' videos on Facebook impersonating Rishi Sunak. The phoney videos led viewers to webpages mocked up to look like a BBC news article – which then promoted an investment scam.

How to Stay Safe

Facebook and Instagram's parent company Meta has said it will detect and label all AI images so ordinary users know that what they're seeing isn't real. We'll believe that when we see it. All social media users should exert the greatest care when on-line. That which looks innocent might be hiding something much more malicious.

...and don't believe everything you see in the media!

NHW STAY SAFE BOOKLET GOES ON-LINE



Most members of the Watch will have received, in 2019-20, a copy of the 'Stay Safe' booklet, produced by the Association of Dorset Watches.

The booklet is now on-line as a downloadable PDF file, with updated content and links to many useful websites. It can be seen at:

eastdorsetcommunities.org.uk/stay-safe.

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KEEP YOUR HIGH-VALUE BIKE SAFE

Dorset Police report a spate of thefts of high-value bikes following breaks into outbuildings

The stolen bikes include leisure, road, mountain and dirt bikes. They can often be worth thousands of pounds and the loss has a significant impact on victims. Owners can help to protect themselves:

- Be careful of apps on your phone where cycle routes are displayed publicly. The maps may inadvertently lead thieves to your home address.
- If travelling back from an event with your bike, be mindful of being followed.
- Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand within a locked shed or garage.
- Keep a bike covered and hidden from view.
- Property marking your items is advisable. The Newsletter has previously suggested www.bikeregister.com/:



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Our Ferndown South and West Parley NHW will hold its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 16 April 2024, at St Mark's Church, New Road, West Parley, at 7.30pm .

The work of our Watch depends on a team of superb volunteers who would be delighted to welcome other members to this annual event.



Our Neighbourhood police will be present and the guest speaker will be Cllr Andrew Parry, our representative on Dorset Council, who will outline the work of the Council

and the financial and operational challenges that it faces. He will be happy to answer your questions.

Please try to attend – it's your watch and our expression of democratic localism.

Remember the Date:

16 April 2024 at 7.30pm

St Mark's Church, New Road, West Parley

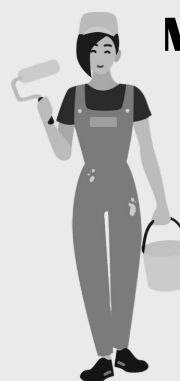
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