

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COMMUNITY NEWS

AUTUMN  
ISSUE

SEPTEMBER  
2015



A quarterly Journal produced by and for Ferndown S. and West Parley Neighbourhood Watch in close association with the Dorset Police.

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comments, letters and  
suggestions addressed to  
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## Chairman's Report

Welcome to the September edition of our newsletter. Since June we have had a good mixture of British weather; from very hot and sunny through to torrential downpours and thunder storms. I am pleased to state that crime in our area has been far more consistent, remaining fairly low. It is still important to be careful and to ensure all security measures are in place, especially those relating to our computers, tablets and other mobile devices.

As the evenings start to draw in we may see less of our neighbours and may not be aware if they need any simple assistance. In turn, it may be more difficult for them to ask for a little help. Earlier this year a Good Neighbour scheme was introduced where people can ring up and request assistance with everyday simple tasks such as changing a light bulb, posting a letter or replacing batteries in a smoke alarm or TV control. The list of simple everyday tasks that many people find themselves no longer able to complete is almost endless.

For the Good Neighbour scheme to be effective in our area the scheme requires people in the Ferndown and West Parley area to volunteer to assist others within their community with simple, basic tasks that should not take very long to complete. Those volunteering will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check to provide confidence to those requiring assistance. Some of the objectives of the Good Neighbour scheme are to increase the quality of life for those within our community, promote good community cohesion and to reduce to potential for members of our community to become a victim of crime. There is no formal fee for the work completed but those availing themselves of the service may wish to make a small voluntary contribution to assist with the running costs of the scheme.

For anyone wishing to volunteer to assist with the Good Neighbour scheme or requiring their services please telephone 01202 861832 and leave a message.

One of the highest concerns raised by members of our community relates to inappropriate speed of motor vehicles. It is very easy to exceed the speed limit. A vehicle travelling at 30mph covers a distance of 45 feet (around 13.8 metres) every second. Sometimes people exceed the speed limit because they are distracted. Such distractions can be altering the car stereo system, talking to other occupants or using a mobile phone. It is very easy to spot people reading a text or texting on their mobile phone as they keep looking down. Travelling at 45 feet per second and not looking at the road head can mean the road conditions have changed. This could result in a £100



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fine and three points on your driving licence. The worst case scenario is a serious or fatal road traffic collision. A text can wait until you are able to pull over and stop in a safe place. Please drive carefully and consider your safety and the safety of others.

*Chairman David Ayres*

Contact email: david.ayres5@btopenworld.com  
or mobile: 07796 546 904

## TRADERS LIST

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***Scams and fraud are on the increase  
so we have decided to dedicate this  
newsletter to identify some of them.***

## NEWS FROM TRADING STANDARDS

### Spot Scams, Stop Scams

Each year millions of people in the UK fall prey to scammers. Some frontline scam fighters estimate the cost to consumers of mass-marketed scams could be as much as £5 billion pounds. The truth is, with reporting levels as low as 5% for some types of scams, we don't really know.

So the figures don't always help. Talking in hundreds, thousands, millions or even billions of pounds undervalues the true cost of scams such as the blight they bring to lonely lives, the emotional trauma for families, the widespread loss of confidence among consumers.

Sometimes the impact is ruinous with a lifetime of careful planning and saving wiped clean in the space of a telephone conversation, at the stroke of a pen, in the click of a mouse. For other scams smaller losses can build considerably month by month over long periods of time

Scams can come in all shapes and sizes and include fake lotteries and prize draws, fancy goods catalogues, vitamins and healthcare products, investments, romance agencies and clairvoyants to name but a few.

Dorset County Council trading standards' top tips for spotting a scam:

- The call, letter, email or text has arrived unexpectedly.
- It can have a sense of authority such as crests, seals or come from important sounding people but you have never heard of them before.
- You are asked to send money in advance.
- You're being urged to respond quickly so you don't have time to think about it or talk to family or friends.
- They are telling you to keep it a secret.

To help identify scams check unexpected calls, letters and online contacts with a trusted friend, relative or neighbour.

If it looks like a scam then get advice and report it to the

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Citizens Advice consumer service on 03454 04 05 06 who can pass details on to trading standards.

Where we identify people who need our help trading standards offer practical advice and support to reduce this type of crime, increase consumer confidence and help to maintain independent living.

### Crime does not pay

You may be interested to know that 7 out of every 10 crimes committed are acquisitive crime, those are crimes where the perpetrator has gained financially from their wrong doing.

In 2002 the Government introduced the Proceeds of Crime Act, a law allowing enforcement agencies including Trading Standards the ability to identify, freeze, and through the courts apply for confiscation of criminal property gained from crime. Criminal property includes both savings and assets, such as houses and other lifestyle goods. The philosophy behind this is that when criminal finance is removed then further funding of criminal enterprises will stop.

In 2012 /2013 in excess of £12 million was recovered from convicted criminals by Trading Standards nationally using this process. The types of crime that Trading Standards Services have been using this legislation for include:

- Food fraud
- Supplying unsafe goods
- Selling counterfeit goods such as clothing and electrical products
- Rogue trading often targeting the vulnerable
- Car traders who are not truthful about the description of cars
- Scams whether by post, phone or the internet
- Illegal livestock slaughterhouses

Any money confiscated through the courts is redistributed by the Home Office and a percentage is given back to the Local Authority to be used specifically on local crime prevention initiatives.

If you suspect you have been a victim of crime by someone selling you goods or services then why not let us know about it. Call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06 where all calls are treated confidentially. Working with Citizens Advice we may be able to help you resolve the problem, seek to obtain money back and prevent the same happening to someone else.

### Microsoft Scam

Two incidents have occurred recently in Dorset, where a

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male offender has telephoned the victim claiming he was from Microsoft and that he could assist with a virus on the victims computer.

The fraudster tried to trick the victim into paying an amount of money into a foreign bank account for the services and requested bank account details.

In the second incident the offender gained remote access to the victim's computer and said he would help with the setting up process. He then requested a significant sum of money from the victim for the services. This was paid in to a foreign bank; on both occasions the offender is said to have spoken with an Indian accent.

Detective Sergeant Alan Marks, of Dorset Police's Force Intelligence Bureau, said:

"I would like to bring these incidents to the public's awareness."

"As with all phone scams, offenders can be highly convincing and I ask people to remain vigilant and ensure friends and family are also aware of such offences."

"I am also appealing to anyone in the county who has been targeted by these scams to report them to the police."



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## Police Reports

### Communications

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Telephone: 01202 876219

### East Dorset Police Report

*from Inspector Dave Kewley, East Dorset Neighbourhood Inspector.*

Hello, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I'm Acting Inspector Dave Kewley and for the next few months I will be your new Neighbourhood Inspector whilst Mr Nock has moved up in the world and is now the Acting Chief Inspector for this side of the county.

We as a section continue to improve and are developing new ways we can tackle crime and better serve you as a community and part of this involves the implementation and use of new technology. I am aware Inspector Perry shared some excellent collaborative work we had undertaken with Police in Swindon securing convictions for thieves operating in multiple counties. Well, we as a force have introduced a new system called NICHE and this is the same system as used in many other forces around the country allowing us to share information with our neighbouring forces far more easily with the goal of having a far wider reaching impact on criminals who are still insistent on coming into the county with the sole aim to commit crime.

Part of this has been the introduction of new touch screen computers which our patrol vehicles are now equipped with, meaning officers no longer need to go back to the Police Station to complete their work and meaning that statements and other important enquiries can be completed there and then at the scene of an incident making the service we provide truly mobile and more time can be spent where it matters, being out and about being seen.

A recent incident of dwelling burglary has highlighted just how important modern technology can be. Following a burglary PS 2368 Scott MCFARLAND took it upon himself to re-visit the area during a night shift where he used a thermal imaging camera to search the area. He was able to see a human figure in the grounds of the property and was able to detain the male who was later identified as the person responsible for the burglary. It would have been impossible to locate this male without the help of the camera and we are hoping to increase its use to target and prosecute poachers.

I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the previous messages given to you by ACI Nock and Insp Perry that as a Section at this time of year we do see an increase in rogue traders offering roofing, gardening and driveway work, often cold calling on the elderly. Also we do still fall foul of opportunistic thieves stealing valuables from vehicles, which have been left out on display.

Please continue to look out for your neighbours, especially those more vulnerable and don't make it easy for thieves. Remove all valuables from your cars, make sure you lock up your sheds and don't leave your house insecure when you go away. If you see anything suspicious, report it on 101 or via crimestoppers. You are our eyes and ears, and without you, our job is a great deal harder.

Thank you for your continued support.

Inspector Dave Kerley.

### Ferndown South and West Parley Report

Since our last newsletter, the Safer Neighbourhood Team has undergone some changes; Sgt Tim Travers still leads the team with PC Mike Burt as your Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer along with PCSO Cheryl Belfield and PCSO Phillip King.

This year Dorset Police are focusing on the increasing problem of Cyber Crime and Telephone Fraud. Cyber Crime and Telephone Fraud is a national problem and encompasses any criminal act dealing with computers and networks for example; telemarketing and Internet fraud, identity theft, and credit card account thefts are considered to be cybercrimes when the illegal activities are committed through the use of a computer and the Internet. Cybercrimes can affect anybody but are especially targeting the elderly and vulnerable; basic advice to prevent you becoming a victim is as simple as hanging up the phone to any sales calls or banks.

- If you are unsure about a person ask for ID or phone the company for verification.
- If you receive calls regarding your financial accounts hang up and visit the local branch.

The message 'Hang Up On Fraudsters' is being spread throughout Dorset in response to a spate of offences within the last 12 months. Victim losses within the region are in excess of £2,000,000, with 700 reported crimes, and potentially many more unreported.

Crime rates have fallen from last year with a decrease in the number of dwelling and other burglaries as well as theft from motor vehicles, however theft has increased on last year although several individuals known for theft offences have now been given prison sentences.

Our existing Speedwatch programme is up and running once again with regular sessions scheduled. Speeding around West Parley and Ferndown is a concern that has arisen from residents and Neighbourhood Watches to become a local priority. The Community Speed Watch program plays an important part in targeting this behaviour by showing a visual presence and consequence to those that speed, to keep the community safer. We are actively looking for more volunteers from the community to join us, if you are interested in joining the Speed Watch programme please get in touch through our contact details shown below.

Many Thanks, PCSO Phil King,

Ferndown Safer Neighbourhood Team [ferndowncentralsnt@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ferndowncentralsnt@dorset.pnn.police.uk)

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## Scams and fraud – *continued*

### **e-mail scam**

Corfe Mullen SNT (Safer Neighbourhood) have received an e-mail from a Home Watch member reporting a scam e-mail posing to be from Amazon. In the e-mail it explains they were unable to process your most recent payment. To prevent any interrupted service they invite you to click on a link to update your payment information

The e-mail does look very convincing, it's an almost identical copy of a legitimate e-mail from Amazon.

The advice we would recommend is if you receive such an e-mail from an internet based retailer not to follow any links on the e-mail but to go onto their main webpage and contact them directly. This scam e-mail has been reported to Amazon themselves and they are looking into it.

### **Pension Fraud**

Fraudsters are bombarding people aged over 55 years old with cold calls and emails offering bogus pension opportunities as they look to take up the new retirement freedoms, according to new evidence from Citizens Advice.

Four months after the pension reforms came into effect, figures from the consumer body showed that two in five members of Citizens Advice staff helping to offer the Government's new Pension Wise guidance service have seen people repeatedly targeted with pension scams. A further one in ten pension staff saw people who had either responded or fallen prey to a scam.

Pension Wise is a free service offered to help people decide what to do with their money in the light of the new flexibilities, which mean that people are no longer required to buy a retirement income called an annuity with their pension savings when they retire. Citizens Advice offers face-to-face guidance as part of the Pension Wise service.

Half of Citizens Advice pension workers think that pension scams are evolving into investment scams, targeting the cash lump sums people can release from their pension pots. A further third of staff from across the service think that scams targeting the over 55s have increased.

Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said: "Opportunistic fraudsters are finding new ways to go after people's pension pots including offering free pension reviews and promising to invest in funds that don't necessarily exist.

### **HMRC issues scam tax rebate warning**

'Convincing' scam emails say taxpayers are due a rebate and request bank account and other details to receive a payment.

Taxpayers are being warned not to respond to emails promising them a refund, which are really a phishing scam designed to get hold of their bank account details.

HM Revenue & Customs said it would never send customers emails to arrange refunds, and urged anyone receiving one to report it.

In 2013, customers reported more than 91,000 phishing emails to HMRC, and in the three months running up to the self-assessment deadline on 31 January the number of scam messages reported was up by 47% on the previous year.

The department closed down 1,476 bogus websites over the year, and 178 in January alone, but scammers are still active and sending out emails.

HMRC said the messages often looked very convincing and typically offered refunds of £120 or £150, amounts which were unlikely to arouse a taxpayer's suspicions.

The emails often begin with a sentence such as, "We have reviewed your tax return; according to our calculations of your last year's accounts a tax refund of XXXX is due", and goes on to request details including the recipient's date of birth, bank account number, sort code. HMRC never contacts customers who are due a tax refund via email – They always send a letter through the post. HMRC can, and do, close these websites down, and do all they can to ensure taxpayers stay safe online by working with law enforcement agencies around the world to target the criminals behind these scams."

Legitimate tax rebate forms (P800s) from HMRC contain a payment order.

To report a scam email, forward it to [phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Rental Fraud**

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) has received several reports of rental fraud whereby empty premises are being targeted and the locks are being changed for the purpose of adding legitimacy to a rental fraud.

The suspect(s) will find and enter an empty property for the purposes of changing the locks and then advertising it on online platforms, such as Gumtree, as a rental property. The suspect(s) then invite interested victims to visit the property for a viewing. Those victims which are interested in renting the property are then requested to pay a deposit and/or rent upfront in cash.

In some instances the victims have moved into the property only to be evicted by the real property owner, or have found that the locks have been changed, once they have received



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the keys. There are several instances where this fraud has left victims homeless.

#### *Property Owners:*

- If you or someone you know currently has an empty property, encourage them to visit the property regularly to make sure that the locks have not been changed and no damage has occurred.

#### *Prevention Advice:*

- Avoid communication with only email or mobile phone, request to see the property owner and ask for valid ID. Check ownership of the property using the Land Registry.
- The landlord will carry out their own due diligence and should request all of your details, references and proof that you will be able to afford to rent the property. Make sure that these checks are completed prior to paying a deposit / rent.
- Always view the property and the tenancy agreement before paying any upfront costs.

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by this fraud or any other scam, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

## **Business Scam**

Action Fraud has seen an increase in the number of small to medium sized businesses being contacted by fake bailiffs requesting payments for a phantom debt. The scam involves the business being cold called from someone purporting they are bailiffs working on behalf of a court, attempting to recover funds for a non-existent debt. The caller will then request payment by means of bank transfer and if this is refused, will threaten to visit the premises to recover the debt that is owed. A range of different businesses are being targeted; including Nurseries, Manufacturers, Hotels and Taxi Services.

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## **Protect Yourself**

- Confirm what the debt is regarding; bailiffs are only used to recover certain debts such as council tax, child support and compensation orders. Bailiffs are not used to recover debts relating to private advertisement; these would be collected by debt collectors. Debt collectors do not have the same legal powers as bailiffs and will not have special court authorisation to act. For more details regarding this, please look at the Citizens Advice website.
- Double check with the Court or originating company to confirm whether the suspects are legitimate; if you use a landline make sure you hear the dialling tone prior to dialling as the suspects could still be on the line.
- Request details of the debt in writing to access its legitimacy.
- Do not feel rushed or intimidated to make a decision based on a phone call.

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by this fraud or any other scam, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

## **Rogue Traders**

Dorset Police and Trading Standards Officers are warning householders in Dorset, particularly pensioners, to be extra vigilant after receiving a large number of calls from across the county relating to suspected rogue traders going door to door. The offenders offer services including; power washing driveways, cutting down trees and tending gardens and selling chainsaws and generators. They also carry out general building work including drive and path tarmac work, in exchange for cash. Police believe that criminals who carry out this type of fraud are doing so whilst travelling through the county, but there are also people who live in the area who try to con the elderly.

Dorset Police's Crime Prevention Advisor, Debbie Oldfield, said: "Reports have come in from all over Dorset, but we are experiencing a higher volume of calls from elderly people in the areas in and around Ferndown, Poole and Bournemouth.

"We ask that the residents of Dorset be vigilant and not forced or coerced into commissioning work, even if you are told it's urgent. The work is often costly and unnecessary.



“Do not buy tools from people selling them from their vehicles, as they could be stolen or counterfeit. You could get arrested for handling stolen goods if you are found in possession of them.

Tell the trader ‘no thank you’, shut the door and call the Police on 101, giving as much detail as you can, including descriptions and vehicle registration numbers if possible. If the trader won’t leave your house, dial 999.”

Debbie also advises against giving details out to cold callers – a scam where fraudsters pretend to be from a reputable company and then defraud victims.

Ms Oldfield continues: “If someone calls you unexpectedly asking for your bank details - again, say ‘no thank you’, put the phone down, dial 1471 and write down the number. Call the police immediately on 101.

If you have already bought services and goods at the door and you are not satisfied, call Citizens Advice on 03454 040506. They will be able to give you advice and report the matter to Trading Standards on your behalf.

We ask friends, family members and neighbours to be mindful that these types of scams are happening and to look out for elderly or vulnerable people they know, especially if they are having work carried out at their property.

By working together we can try and stop this sort of heinous crime.”

There have been 15 reports of rogue trader type offences, between January and July 2014, and 38 reports for the same period in 2015.

Stickers for doors and telephones are available from libraries across Dorset or by calling Trading Standards on 03454 040506. Further information is available on the Buy With Confidence website: [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)

If you know someone who is committing this crime or you want to report suspicious behaviour, please call Dorset Police on 101, Trading Standards on 03454 040506 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.



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#### *Police guidance:*

- Keep your doors locked, even if you’re in the premises, and put a chain on if you have one
- Don’t let anyone into your property that you don’t know
- Don’t accept work from people calling at your door, no matter how urgent they say the work is
- Never go to the bank with someone you don’t know or trust

Call the police on 101 if you think you have been a victim of a crime or you see any suspicious behaviour.

#### **Courier fraud**

Courier fraudsters have been identifying themselves to victims on the telephone as “Detective Constable Martin Benton of New Scotland Yard Fraud Department”. The fraudsters will invent a story regarding fraudulent activity on your card and request your bank/card details. No such person exists at the Metropolitan Police.

If you receive a call from someone purporting to be this individual, terminate the call immediately.

Protect yourself against courier fraud:

- Your bank will never send a courier to your home
- Your bank and the police will never collect your bank card
- Your bank and the police will never ask for your PIN
- If you receive one of these calls end it immediately

#### *Victim Advice:*

- If you have handed over any details to the fraudster, call your bank and cancel your cards immediately.



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- If you want to call your bank, then do it from another telephone.

If you believe that you have been a victim of fraud you can report it online [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or by telephone 0300 123 2040.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- This quarter a rogue trader offering gardening work visited a resident in St. Leonards. He did not offer a written contract for the works he carried out and therefore failed to comply with regulations. We give our thanks to a vigilant neighbour of the victim who reported this male to us at the time on 101, and officers were sent out to deal with the tradesman.
- Approximately one month ago a resident had a scam telephone call from a company claiming they could reduce his energy bills. They requested his payment card details. Although this information has only recently been brought to my attention, I would like to remind residents to NEVER give out card details to anyone who calls you. Simply hang up when you realise a call is unwanted.
- This quarter a trader called on a Ferndown resident and said he was cutting the hedge of a neighbour at the back of her house and had come to remove bits that had fallen into her garden. On gaining access to the back of her garden he suggested that he could trim her shrubs whilst he was there. He did a poor untidy job and scarpered with £180. He was not working in the other garden.
- It would appear that two big men with a van ripped off an elderly lady by cutting her grass and then charging £300 for under an hour's work. This is obviously outrageous bordering on theft so please warn your elderly neighbours or relatives NOT to let cold callers do work for them. There are plenty of trustworthy handymen out there.
- Again this quarter a theft from an unattended motor vehicle occurred in Dudsbury Crescent. A male was arrested and admitted to the theft after forensic evidence confirmed that he was responsible for the offence. He has been charged



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and is awaiting a date for sentencing in court.

- A dwelling burglary occurred on 09/07/15 between 1215-1515 hours at an address in Ameysford Road, Ferndown. Entry was gained via a rear insecure glazed window. A thorough search of the property was made inside, various electrical items and jewellery were stolen.

If you witnessed anything suspicious or have any information regarding the burglary please contact Dorset Police on 101 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 quoting 55150044259.

**Do your neighbours  
know who has your  
keys/alarm code?**

**Register your keyholder with  
the Keyholder Scheme and tell  
your immediate neighbours  
who the keyholder is!**

You can register for free, online at  
[www.dorset.police.uk/default.aspx?page=1343](http://www.dorset.police.uk/default.aspx?page=1343)  
(or search 'keyholder' at [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk))  
or ring 01202 226731 - but please look at the  
website first to ensure you have the correct  
information ready.

**It is worth registering, whether you have an  
alarm or not, so that emergency services know  
who to contact in the event of a problem.**