

London Neighbourhood Watch Association NEWSLETTER #51

Welcome to LNWA Newsletter - Issue 51. This Newsletter is produced to maintain your contact with LNWA and is e-mailed to all 32 Boroughs plus the City. Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) are regularly updated so, if you are receiving it for the first time, it's because you are identified as a Neighbourhood Watch Contact in your Borough. LNWA is anxious information reaches the "grass roots" so please ensure, as far as possible, that everyone in your Watch is encouraged to read this Newsletter which is also accessible via our website, www.lnwa.net.

NEIGHBOURHOOD & HOME WATCH NETWORK (NHWN)

The latest copy of "Our News", NHWN's e-newsletter is now available. Sign up here for your free copy: http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/get_involved/get_our_newsletter/

CHARITY COMMISSION NEWS

For those of you with Neighbourhood Watch Associations that are registered charities, the autumn edition of Charity Commission News is now on the Charity Commission website at: http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/About_the_Commission/newslist.aspx This special edition explains how the Commission is changing following a strategic review and highlights examples of its new approach. It also sets out the principles behind the Commission's new investment guidance and presents the findings of research into new charities joining the register.

VICTIM SUPPORT FOCUS GROUPS

Neighbourhood Watch members are invited to take part in focus groups/interviews hosted by Victim Support over the next 3 months as part of a national project to raise awareness of important issues facing victims and witnesses. The project is aimed at victims and witnesses across who have experienced crime within the last 2 years and are not currently involved in criminal justice proceedings or a court case relating to the crime. Findings will be collated by Victim Support to make sure each new police and crime commissioner has victim and witness issues on their agenda when they are elected in November 2012. If anyone in your Borough is interested in taking part and would like to find out more, please go to: http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/news_and_events/news/victims_and_witnesses_invited_to_take_part_in_victim_support_focus_groups/

ADVICE FROM BROMLEY POLICE

Following a spate of burglaries in the Borough, Bromley Police asked us to pass on the following message of caution.

The main point of entry is via rear, patio doors, where the glass is smashed using bricks or doors are forced open with tools (sometimes taken from sheds). The second favoured method is via the front door, in particular uPVC doors that have not been locked, or wooden doors without Chubb locks. Suspects will use a "loop" instrument via the letterbox to pull the handle down to open the doors. Bromley Police offer the following crime prevention steps:

- 1 - When leaving home make sure the Yale and Chubb locks are operated;
- 2 - During night hours make sure uPVC doors are locked with a key;
- 3 - Make sure all valuables (including Christmas presents, door and car keys) are out of sight;
- 4 - Make sure all PIR lights are well maintained and fitted both at the front and rear;
- 5 - When leaving home, make sure all windows are locked/closed;
- 6 - If you have an alarm, use it and make sure it is well maintained;
- 7 - If on holiday, ask neighbours to keep an eye on your home; and
- 8 - Create a list of serial numbers and take photographs of sentimental/high value property.

NEW WEBSITE

We have been made aware by the Police of a new Neighbourhood Watch website launched at: www.nhwo.co.uk (Neighbourhood Watch Online). The site is **not** supported by either Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network (NHWN) or LNWA and has no links with either, even though NHWN has been open for discussions with the owner. Marketing of the website is pitched to NW members to register scheme to obtain membership resources. This may lead to confusion, especially following the launch of the NHWN website (www.ourwatch.org.uk) in June 2011 and recent changes in obtaining members resources such as window stickers.

Can you please reassure your members of the benefits of registering their schemes with the

Our Watch website. Membership of NHWN and LNWA is FREE and you are all aware that we are working alongside you, the Police, ACPO and the Home Office to ensure effective processes are in place across England and Wales.

We have concerns regarding the www.nhwo.co.uk website for the following reasons:

- 1 - There are no owner contact details on the website who we believe may be a sole trader.
2. - People are invited to start a scheme with no reference to Police or NW Associations.
- 3 – There is no reference to good practice; it is implied all you need to do is to ask a majority of your neighbours to sign up to register their interest and you will have set up a scheme using the site's tools. As you are aware, the way schemes are recognised varies greatly and NHWN is currently building a process for 'verifying' schemes via a network of administrators.
- 4 - There is no mention of Public Liability Insurance and the way it is suggested schemes set themselves up, they would not be covered by the current, **free** PLI via the NCVO and Case.
- 5 - They cannot use the NW logo as they need a licence from the Home Office.
- 6 - They state you can obtain members resources by signing up and market a 'coordinators pack' for £39.99 that includes 2 street signs, stickers and high visibility vest, with "Neighbourhood Watch coordinator" on the back. We are concerned by the lack of local coordination and recognition of schemes, along with no mention of Police partnership working. The supply of a high-vis jacket is open to misuse. The whole process, with a total lack of vetting, could lead to an increase in distraction burglary.
- 7 - The site suggests you can report crime and ASB via the site but no mention of where the report goes to and how it is actioned once sent.
- 8 – Marketing of the website is open to misinterpretation by members and partners who may not be fully aware of the background.

NHWN will be discussing these concerns with ACPO, the Home Office and the Scottish NHW Association with a letter listing its concerns to the sole trader who owns the site in due course. Obviously, you are all free to choose whatever resources and publications you see fit for the use by your schemes and associations but we feel it is only right to state our position.

A WARNING FROM TRADING STANDARDS

Trading Standards Institute is urging consumers to be aware of rogue telephone, cold callers offering energy saving devices after branches up and down the country reported hundreds of complaints. The Institute is currently dealing with more than 200 complaints about calls from people claiming to be the person's energy supplier, or working in partnership with them, offering a plug-in device that they say can save 40 per cent on energy bills. Trading Standards have tested a number of these items, which not only failed to satisfy electrical safety standards but did not deliver any tangible energy savings.

That's all for this month. On behalf of LNWA, thank you for your work and support.