



# Village Watch NEWS

Your monthly Newsletter from  
Birstall and Wanlip Neighbourhood Watch  
**DECEMBER 2018**

For the latest news on crime in the area visit our website: [www.villagewatch.co.uk](http://www.villagewatch.co.uk) – or join our group on Facebook



Please remember our new Telephone Number – **0756 2422 756**

*The Neighbourhood Watch Committee would like to wish all of our Members a Very Happy Christmas and a Crime-Free New Year*

## Police Resources

We regularly hear from members who are dissatisfied with the response they get from the police when they contact them.

A report by Parliament's Home Affairs Committee says that police forces are struggling to cope with falling staff numbers and rising crime. It warns that there will be "dire consequences" for public safety without additional funding.

Data gathered by the Committee suggests that, on average, forces have lost at least a fifth of their neighbourhood policing capacity since 2010.

The Committee's Chair, Yvette Cooper MP, said officers were performing a remarkable public service in increasingly difficult circumstances but were badly overstretched and struggling to respond to growing challenges.

The Committee found that only a tiny proportion of online fraud cases are ever investigated and that forces are "woefully under-resourced" for the volume of online child sexual abuse investigations they must carry out.

A Home Office spokesman said it was engaging with forces to understand the demand and changing nature of crime they face. "The Home Secretary has already been clear that he will prioritise funding for the police."

In the last four years Leicestershire's recorded crime has risen by 38% (36% nationally). Charges are down by 11% (16% nationally) while charges for drugs offences have fallen by 33%.

## Software Updates

Cyber-criminals use weaknesses in software and apps to attack your devices and steal your identity. Software updates are designed to fix these weaknesses but they only work if they are installed. Always install them as soon as possible to keep your devices and data secure.

Updates do not have to get in the way of what you are doing. You can choose when and how to install them, such as overnight when your device is plugged in and connected to Wi-Fi. You can configure most devices to install updates automatically. Check the manual to learn how.

For more information on how to stay secure online, visit:

[www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk) or @CyberprotectukTwitter.

## Burglar Alarms

Several members have asked how to report nuisance burglar alarms that sound incessantly for long periods, especially at night and at weekends. The Police will only respond if there is an actual crime in progress.

We have sought the advice of Charnwood Borough Council who has the power to enter premises to silence nuisance alarms. They will take reasonable steps to contact the key-holders but when they cannot be reached or are not expected to return within a reasonable time, the Council will silence the alarm.

However, they do not operate an out-of-hours service.

Instead, you can advise them of nuisance alarms using the forms available on their website at:

[https://vof.charnwood.gov.uk/form/auto/eh\\_report\\_noise](https://vof.charnwood.gov.uk/form/auto/eh_report_noise)

Or you can leave a message on their answer-phone, **01509 634626**. They try to respond within 24 hours of receipt of such a report or on the next working day, whichever is the earliest.

Their full response and advice can be read on our website:

[www.villagewatch.co.uk/?page\\_id=2442](http://www.villagewatch.co.uk/?page_id=2442)

## Fake Reviews

The consumer group Which? has found that some online sellers are offering people free goods in return for positive product reviews. Although this practice is against the rules of companies like Amazon and Facebook, it is still happening.

If you are looking at items online, do not accept a high number of five star ratings just on the face of it. Be canny and look behind them.

1. Do not rely simply on ratings but delve deeper and read the actual written reviews.
2. Check the dates to see when the reviews were written. If many of them were posted in a short space of time, it could mean there has been a push for reviews on Facebook groups or other platforms.
3. How impartial are the reviews – click on some reviewers and check their history – do they give everything five stars?
4. Look at the pattern of the ratings. Are they at opposite ends of the scale with very little in between? It is very rare for people to be completely polarised about a product.

**Saturday Advice Shop**  
**15th December 2018**  
10 a.m. to 12 noon  
Parish Council Building  
10 Sibson Road

The Crew from Birstall Fire Station will be at the Advice Shop from 11 a.m. to give advice and information on keeping your family and home safe

## Beat News

The most recent *Beat News* is published in full on the *Police News* pages of our website – [www.villagewatch.co.uk](http://www.villagewatch.co.uk)

The reports are also printed each month in the *Birstall Post*.

Here is a summary of the September *Beat News* from PC Dave Jaeckels:

- There were fifty-one crimes reported in October, two less than in August.
- Seventeen reports were of theft from vehicles. A man has been arrested for a number of such offences in Thurmaston and it is suspected that he may also have been responsible for some of these in Birstall.
- There were six reports of vehicles being stolen and three of vehicle damage.
- Six reports were of Public Order Offences and seven of assault.
- **No house burglaries were reported** and only two of non-dwelling houses.

Further information can be found at:  
[www.police.uk/leicestershire/NL60](http://www.police.uk/leicestershire/NL60)

## Crime Prevention Advice

Modern cars are very difficult to steal without the keys and these simple steps can prevent you from becoming a victim:

1. Never leave your keys in the ignition, thieves can jump in and drive away before you have time to react.
2. Do not leave your engine running unattended when defrosting it in the morning.
3. If possible, lock your car in a garage at night or park it on a driveway, vehicles left on roads are more likely to be stolen.
4. Hide any spare car keys so that they are not easily accessible to burglars.

REMEMBER - Your insurance may not pay out if you have been negligent with your car keys!

## Neighbourhood update

The Beat Team has been doing a lot of work this month in conjunction with Charnwood Borough Council following complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) occurring at various addresses in the village. If you are experiencing ASB, please report it to either the Police on 101 or Charnwood Borough Council on 01509 263151.

## Fuel Theft could be Stopped at a Stroke

Our local Beat Team's crime figures are regularly inflated by the number of fuel thefts from the local filling station on the A6/A46 roundabout over which they have little control.

In a recent interview with the *Daily Telegraph* our Chief Constable, Simon Cole, criticised petrol giants for putting profits before crime reduction with a business model aimed at encouraging drivers into forecourt shops to boost sales. He said that the companies could end "bilking" at a stroke by requiring motorists to pay in advance, as they do in many other countries. This would prevent drive-off thefts and allow the Police to focus on other crimes like violence and burglary.

## Sales at Home

A member was contacted by telephone and persuaded to make an appointment for a salesperson to call at their home. They then had second thoughts but had difficulty in making contact to cancel the visit, although they did so eventually.

It is likely that had the appointment gone ahead they would have been subject to a high-pressure sales talk designed to get people to sign agreements for, often overpriced, goods and services they do not really want or need.

It is best not to sign anything in the first place unless you are sure you want what is offered but, in any case, you usually have fourteen days to change your mind. See the *Citizens Advice* website for more information:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer)

## Police Beat Surgeries

You can meet one of our local Police Officers to discuss, in confidence, any issues that concern you on:

- Sunday, 9th December at the Coop Store on Wanlip Lane between 2.45 p.m. and 3.45 p.m.
- Sunday, 9th December at the One Stop Shop on Hallam Fields between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.
- Saturday, 15th December in the NHW Advice Shop at 10 Sibson Road between 10 a.m. and 12 noon
- Monday, 17th December on Kingsgate Shopping Parade between 11 a.m. and 12 noon
- Thursday, 20th December at the Tesco Store on Sibson Road between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.

(These times are always subject to Officers not being required elsewhere in an emergency.)

## What do You think of this Newsletter?

Do you have:

- any views on the content?
- any ideas about how it could be improved?
- any suggestions about what it should include?

Please let us know by emailing us:  
[watch@villagewatch.co.uk](mailto:watch@villagewatch.co.uk)

**IT IS VERY UNLIKELY  
THAT YOU HAVE A BILL  
OR A REFUND THAT  
YOU DO NOT KNOW  
ABOUT ALREADY**

## Contacting Birstall and Wanlip Neighbourhood Watch

Email: [watch@villagewatch.co.uk](mailto:watch@villagewatch.co.uk)

Phone: 0756 2422 756

Calls go to our answering service but we always try to reply within 24 hours  
Please remember to leave your number

Write: c/o Birstall Parish Council  
Council Office, Birstall Road,  
Birstall, Leicester, LE4 4DH

We also have a locked post box on the counter in the Council Office

Thank you to Birstall Parish Council for continuing to support the Watch – [www.birstallparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.birstallparishcouncil.org.uk)