



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

## Holiday Fraud

Now is the time to book summer holidays but beware of scams that offer you holidays at very low prices.

Fraudsters advertise holidays on the internet at temptingly low prices while, in reality, they either do not exist or you will get much less than promised. You might get a flight but find there is nowhere to stay when you get there, for example.

### Protect yourself from holiday fraud

- ? Make sure you can find the company's name and full postal address; and check that it actually exists.
- ? Keep an eye out for bad spelling and grammar; this is often a sign of fraud.
- ? See if the company has only recently been set up or changed hands; this can be another sign of fraud.
- ? Ensure that the company is a member of a trade body such as ABTA, the Travel Association or ATOL, the Air Travel Organisers Licensing.
- ? Make sure that their website uses the padlock symbol to indicate it is secure.
- ? **Never pay by cash** or through money transfer agents such as Western Union.
- ? If possible, pay by credit card to protect your payment.
- ? Make sure the details on your paperwork match what you booked and always check the terms and conditions to confirm exactly what you are being sold.
- ? Double check your booking just before you travel, especially if there is a long time between the booking and travel dates.
- ? **If you have any doubts do not book it!**

### If you book accommodation separately

Always book directly with an established hotel or through a reputable travel company.

Be very careful to ensure that you are dealing directly with the genuine property owner or letting agent.

Research the property or hotel that you are booking with web searches and online maps to verify that it really exists. Check that the images match those on the advert and whether there are any reviews from previous visitors.

Ask the owner about the property and the local area in detail and then do your own research to confirm that what they have told you is true.

If you use a letting agent, use a search engine to check them and look for any reviews. Ask them what checks they make on the properties and their owners.

**Do not be tempted by cheap deals that seem too good to be true – because they usually are!**

## Membership still only £1

Despite inflation, the cost of being a member of this Neighbourhood Watch has not risen for many years.

You will have received an envelope with this edition of the Newsletter asking you to renew your membership for another year. Once again, we suggest just **One Pound per household** (although we are always pleasantly surprised by those who choose to give a little more).

Your contributions pay for general running costs and:

- Street signs
- This Newsletter
- Our Website
- Open Meetings
- The Watch Phone
- Leaflets, stickers and other items free to members
- Maintaining the Beat Team Speed Gun

They also enable us to buy useful security products such as personal alarms, shed alarms, padlocks, fence spikes, television simulators, bicycle locks etc. that we then sell to members at cost or subsidised prices.

Some members have negotiated reduced home insurance premiums on production of their membership card.

**Please make sure you put your address on your envelope and return it as soon as possible to your Coordinator who will later deliver your Membership Card.**

*(This does not apply to members in Wanlip who have their subscriptions paid directly by the Parish Meeting.)*

## Carjacking

Carjacking is relatively rare but there have been a number of instances recently, although not in our immediate area. Targeted cars tend to be new, more expensive models but not exclusively.

Criminals fold in wing mirrors on parked cars and hope that the owners will not notice until they have started their engines. If they get out to re-position them and leave the keys in the ignition, the thieves simply jump in and drive off.

Other tricks are to put wheelie bins on drives or supermarket trolleys in the road, so that a driver has to get out to move them.

**If you come across similar or other odd situations at any time of the day but especially at night, think carefully before deciding what to do. Check your surroundings and make sure your doors are locked. If you have any concerns, drive away from that spot, turning around if necessary, until you consider it safe to get out. Never leave the keys in the ignition unattended.**

**Saturday Advice Shop**  
**16th February 2019**  
10 a.m. to 12 noon  
Parish Council Building  
10 Sibson Road

Our Advice Shop runs together with the local Police Beat Surgery. We have security devices for sale to members at near to cost price and various free items that can help you to keep safe.

There is also the opportunity to speak in confidence to a local Police Officer about any of your concerns.

Call in for a chat, friendly advice and even a cup of tea.

## 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 December *Beat News* from PC Dave Jaeckels:

- There were fifty-three crimes reported in December, a slight increase on fifty-one in November.
- There were three house burglaries reported, a welcome decrease from eleven in November. Two of them were of garages with no access gained to the main houses.
- Fifteen cases of theft from vehicles were reported, nine of them over the Christmas period.
- There were eight vehicles stolen, two of them motorcycles from outside houses.
- There were reports of six incidents of assault.

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

## Crime Prevention Advice

We sometimes get reports about suspicious 'devices' being attached to cash (ATM) machines. These are used by criminals to 'read' bank cards or 'trap' them, allowing the criminal to later retrieve it themselves. Follow these simple rules to avoid becoming a victim:

1. If you see anything suspicious attached to an ATM machine, do not use it and inform the bank or shop that it is attached to as soon as possible.
2. Be aware of people standing uncomfortably close to you when using ATMs because, if they have fitted a device to the machine to trap the card, they may be trying to see you enter your PIN number with the intention of retrieving it and using it later.
3. **Never** disclose your PIN number to anyone, even if you think they are trying to help you.
4. Keep your cards safe at all times and if you lose them, report it to the bank immediately.

## Neighbourhood update

Theft from vehicles continues to be the main threat on the beat, so this month we have been out delivering vehicle crime leaflets in the areas that have been affected.

We have also received a few complaints this month about mopeds being ridden in a dangerous manner around the Harrowgate Drive and Hallam Fields area. I am pleased to report that one rider has been identified and issued with a warning under *Section 59* of the *Police Reform Act*. This means that if he is caught again in the next twelve months, his bike can be seized from him.

## Phone Number Scam

This scam is aimed at people who search online for official telephone numbers. It displays a phone number for the relevant department and, if you use it, you will be put through to the right department. However, you will be paying a very high connection charge. One victim was charged £137 for a lengthy conversation with the Tax Office about a £54 tax refund!

Calling the department directly using the correct phone number is either free or charged at normal rates. Searches for car tax, driving licence renewals and completing tax returns are some of the services prone to these premium-rate number scams. The numbers to avoid are those beginning with **084-**, **087-**, or **09-**. **No official government service ever uses these numbers.**

You can easily find official telephone numbers without using a search engine. You will always be able to find the right number to call directly by going straight to the official UK Government website:

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## Police Beat Surgeries

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

- **Friday, 8th February** at the Tesco Store on Sibson Road between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.
- **Saturday, 16th February** in the NHW Advice Shop at 10 Sibson Road between 10 a.m. and 12 noon

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

## Useful Websites

Search for safe contact details of Government departments:  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Report crime or your suspicions anonymously:  
[crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org)

Register your valuables on the Police supported database:  
[www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)

Learn how to protect your personal data from cyber criminals:  
[www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)

Learn about the latest scams and how to report them:  
[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

Get trusted advice on a whole range of issues:  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF  
WHY SOMEBODY  
WOULD WANT YOU TO  
GIVE THEM YOUR  
PERSONAL DETAILS**

## 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)