

# Ten Tips for running a successful Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

## **1. Get to know your Neighbours**

If you want to make your neighbourhood safer, start by introducing yourself to the people in your street and getting to know them. Find out who is at home during the day, who has children and who spends a lot of time away from their property. All this information will help you understand the rhythm of your neighbourhood and make it easier to spot any suspicious activity.

## **2. Sign up to E-Watch**

If you haven't already, you should sign up to E-Watch. E-watch is a website that details crime reports, safety information, press releases and much more in West Kent. If you sign up you can receive bi-weekly crime reports via email for your local area.

You can now look at the crime statistics in your area via the Kent Police Website too.

## **3. Share your movements (only with people you trust!)**

If you are planning to go on holiday or be away from home, let a trusted neighbour/s know so they can keep an eye on your property – and you can do the same for them. This kind of community spirit benefits everyone and boosts your security.

## **4. Take notice of the crime in your area**

If you haven't already, browse the E-watch website and make yourself aware of the crimes reported in your area of residence. What can your scheme do to reduce the likelihood that people in your community will be victims of crime? Notice any patterns and trends and look at the Kent Police Website so that you know what crime reduction methods your community need to implement.

## **5. Set up a Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page or Whatsapp group for your scheme**

Using Facebook or Whatsapp is a great way to share information with the members of your scheme quickly and efficiently. It is recommended that you create a private Facebook page rather than a public one as this way you can regulate who sees the information you are sharing. Current schemes with Facebook pages use this platform to share safety information as well as any information specific to their area, e.g. a dog missing or sightings of a suspicious vehicle.

## **6. Hold regular meetings to discuss the aims of your scheme**

Think about specific neighbourhood concerns and what Neighbourhood Watch members can do to reduce them. What do you hope to achieve with your scheme and what can you do to make it better? How can you recruit more members? Consider meeting with neighbouring Co-ordinators or schemes to share and discuss ideas. This can be arranged through me (Pria Webster) – please let me know if you would like to get in touch with Neighbouring schemes.

## **7. Invest in a property marking kit for your scheme**

Property marking is a great way to protect your belongings; purchase some security marking pens and offer to mark your members' property for them. This also acts as an incentive for new members. Read about property marking here:

<https://www.kent.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/residential-burglary/mark-your-property/>

Example of a property-marking pen:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Permanent-Violet-Marker-Security-Markers/dp/B005CWXL5W/ref=asc\\_df\\_B005CWXL5W/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=309954632560&hvpos=1o3&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=1640491200527417801&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9041088&hvtargid=pla-699209138065&psc=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Permanent-Violet-Marker-Security-Markers/dp/B005CWXL5W/ref=asc_df_B005CWXL5W/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=309954632560&hvpos=1o3&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=1640491200527417801&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9041088&hvtargid=pla-699209138065&psc=1)

## **8. Protect the vulnerable**

The vulnerable are at a greater risk of being a victim of crime. When recruiting members note any condition that could make someone vulnerable e.g. age, dementia, illness or a disability; this will allow you to deliver specific messages, alerts or advice to these people.

Examples of specialist advice may be:

- Unwanted callers
- Distraction burglaries
- Halloween
- Dark winter nights
- Telephone faults across an area (threats to the lifeline system)

You may find it helpful to record the next of kin or supporting friends/neighbours and their details. Consider enrolling next of kin or supporting persons so they also receive specific message or alerts for the area in question.

## 9. Take note of CCTV

When you are enrolling new members, it is a good idea to ask the following questions:

- Do you have CCTV?
- Would you allow police to have access to it?
- Please can I make a note of this information?

Make a note of this information so that you can assist with police press appeals and crime reports if needed. For example, if there is a crime reported in Tunstall Road and you know number 5, 12 and 15 have CCTV you can aid the police appeal by calling 101 and quoting the crime reference number – informing them of the location of CCTV so that they can investigate further. It is always important to remember that the more evidence police have, the more able they are to investigate and prosecute.

## 10. Work with your PCSO

Many Neighbourhood Watch schemes work closely with their PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) to combat minor crime.

The PCSOs benefit from having good relationships with their NHW Co-ordinators as they offer an opportunity to obtain up-to-date intelligence. Co-ordinators also help PCSOs understand the needs and concerns of their communities.

PCSOs often have an excellent area overview and so can work with communities to pinpoint areas of improvement and areas that would benefit from a NHW Scheme.

If you would like to know who your PCSO is, please contact me (Pria Webster) or find the information on the Kent Police website – <https://www.kent.police.uk/>

- Enter your postcode under 'find your area', scroll down to the 'Introducing your Community Safety Unit' section and click on 'Your Team'.