

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

An Introduction...

NHW is the largest voluntary organisation in the UK – one in seven homes across the country is a member of a scheme and they work with each other and the Police to reduce crime and the fear of crime in their community. In Hampshire we have over 10,000 schemes covering over 300,000 homes. In a time of cuts, the Police can't deal with all the problems and issues arising from crime and anti social behaviour alone, they need the help of the whole community. NHW provides a way for local people to play an important part in addressing this balance and making their communities safer.

What?

NHW is a community initiative, and so how it looks depends on what the members choose to do

- A scheme is a group of residents or neighbours
- It can be as few as 5 or 6 homes or as many as 100 or more – it just depends on the layout of the street
- One resident is elected to be the Scheme Coordinator and usually has a deputy

Why?

All over the County, communities face different challenges and different levels of crime, NHW can help:

- Reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime
- Improve communications between residents & the Police
- Get residents working together to increase the sense of community spirit

How?

- By getting to know your neighbours
- By keeping an eye out for suspicious activity in the area and reporting it to the Police
- By being informed about any criminal activity in the neighbourhood - so you can protect yourself
- By getting advice on how to improve your home and personal security
- By being encouraged to think about your vulnerable neighbours – who can attract crime to the area
- Through assistance of scheme coordinators who will find out the top concerns of the neighbourhood and together NHW can look for solutions to the problems
- By bringing people closer together and involving them in local life

Role of Street Coordinator:

- Keeping contact details of scheme members
- Welcome new residents, explain NHW and encourage them to join
- Have a system that allows information to be quickly distributed – i.e. warnings about crimes/incidents, scams etc. (this is best done by email)
- Encourage neighbours to inform the Police and then you, of any suspicious or criminal activity in the area so it can be passed on to the neighbours
- Encourage neighbours to talk to each other
- Arrange stalls at local events, and socials for members
- Identify your vulnerable neighbours – keep in touch with them

Role of Scheme member:

An effective scheme relies on the members looking out for each other. A scheme member should:

- Make sure your home is kept secure
- Always keep doors locked – whether you are in your house, garage or garden
- Make an effort to get to know your neighbours
- Take note of what's going on around you - it's not being nosy – its just trying to recognise what's normal and what's unusual
- Ask your neighbour to keep an eye on your property when you are out – and do the same for them
- If you see something that worries you - whether it affects you or your neighbours – call the Police. Be aware that reporting a suspicious person may not result in Police attendance – but it helps to build a picture for the Police

What you should report:

- Strangers knocking on front doors or peering through windows or disappearing round the back
- Strangers hanging around schools, playing fields etc or approaching children
- Open windows in houses where you know the residents are away
- Strangers trying car doors
- Anything you think is suspicious

How to start a scheme

Speak to a few of your neighbours and see if there is any interest and then contact Bob Coombes on bobcombes@talktalk.net.

'Be the change you wish to see in your community'

