



FLEET & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

www.fleetnhw.co.uk

NEWSLETTER

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Notice-board

Computer scams Telephone calls from callers, purporting to be from well known computer companies, advising that there may be a virus that they could clean by entering a special code on your computer. Do not offer any personal information or give them access to your computer.

Metal & lead thefts Scrap metal and lead thefts are still occurring. Do not leave any laying about in your garden and make sure your scooters and bikes are secure.

Rogue traders Currently rogue traders are cold calling in north Hampshire to carry out paving and tarmac work. Allegedly these traders do not provide cancellation rights and increase agreed prices once work starts. Advice from Trading Standards is do not agree to work that is instigated as a result of a cold call or a leaflet drop. Consumers should get at least 3 written quotes from reputable traders who belong to a recognised trade association, such as the Hampshire County Council's 'Buy With Confidence Scheme'. If anyone has information about traders who are cold calling or requires any advice on doorstep crime they can contact Hampshire County Council's Quick Response Team by telephone: 01962-833666 (Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm) where specially trained officers are on hand to provide assistance.

Our thanks to all the NHW members who attended the AGM held at the Civic Offices, Hart District Council in Fleet on 15 September. In addition to the normal agenda items, the meeting included a presentation on 'The Magistracy'. This edition provides our readers with extracts from the AGM.

Annual General Meeting - 15 September 2011

Chairman's Report

After welcoming those present, the Chairman reported that membership of NHW continued to grow slowly. Over the past year approximately 30 new members had been enrolled. He felt that this growth was not good enough and that more people needed to be involved. It was recognised that people living in a small avenue or close may feel that they do not need the NHW as they are in control of their own environment, but we should remember that criminals are no respecters of our thoughts or wishes. We are often chased by bogus callers who profess to be from an official organisation such as the Inland Revenue or Water Authority. They will offer various services in an attempt to gain access to your property and bank details. Be aware of all callers and check their identity with their company before allowing entry or agreeing to costs. If in doubt do not agree to anything at the door and ask them to write for an appointment. If they are bogus this usually frightens them off.

Sometimes we are asked what does the NHW do? We work with police and local authorities as their additional eyes and ears. Our district has not remained one of the lowest crime areas in the country by accident, but because we all work together to keep our area safe. If criminals think we are looking out for each other they are more likely to go elsewhere.

The committee suffered two resignations this year. Our secretary moved abroad and our Ancells Farm representative had to leave due to illness in the family. As a result of advertising in the newsletter, Tom Callaghan and Eric Jessop have kindly volunteered their services to fill these posts. Soon we may need to engage someone to manage our website as our current volunteer finds it difficult due to work commitments. If anyone is interested and has the necessary skills please contact a member of the committee.

NHW signs are our first and foremost line of defence and remind people of our presence. Poorly maintained signs give the wrong impression of what we are. Please contact the Chairman or any committee member to register a problem with signs and we will try to arrange refurbishment or replacement within a week or two.

Please try to help us and the police by working proactively with us. It is your district, not ours. Help protect it by passing the word to others less inclined to participate.

(AGM summary continues on page 2)

Calls to the Police:

999 Emergencies and crimes in progress

0800 555 111 Crimestoppers - free, anonymous crime-related calls

101 Non-emergency and anti-social behaviour issues: vandalism and graffiti, noise nuisance, threatening and abusive behaviour, abandoned vehicles, dumping and fly-tipping, drunk and rowdy groups, drug related anti-social behaviour

0845 045 4545 Routine Police matters and for crime related issues that have already occurred

Annual General Meeting 2011 - Police Presentation by Sergeant David Hill

Sgt Hill explained that he had been the Safer Neighbourhood Sgt since November 2007 and that this was a long time to be in post. The reason was that the Government had identified that keeping Safer Neighbourhood officers in post led to them becoming established in the communities they served. The bonus for him and his team was that they enjoyed the job and the challenges it brought. It was known last year that Hampshire Police would face challenges that would result in budget cuts that the Police had never experienced before. This had forced senior officers to seek reductions in staff and rationalise the use of buildings. Fleet Police Station had been selected as being suitable for closure and that this would happen within two years. The money saved by the sale of Hampshire Constabulary's Police stations would be used to invest in new and improved custodial facilities. His officers would move into new accommodation in Fleet before that happened. He emphasised that they were moving, not leaving. In early 2012 the front office would probably close, leaving Aldershot as the nearest Police office. Beat Surgeries would continue monthly and Beat Officers would still be contactable on the 101 or 0845 045 45 45 numbers. The overriding aim of management had been to ensure, where possible, that the cuts did not affect the communities they served. To achieve that aim locally they had reviewed their style of policing. As a policing district they had merged with Rushmoor, with Response Teams working out of Yateley and Farnborough. Mobile data technology had led to patrolling officers being equipped with laptop computers. This reduced the need to return to Police stations to complete paperwork or enquiries. Consequently, Police patrols were out more of the time as a visible deterrent. The traditional uniformed resources that used to be known as Targeted Patrol Teams and Safer Neighbourhood Teams had seen a reduction in staff to create a Uniformed Investigation Team. This would reduce the number of protracted investigations that officers carried on their case load. This in turn should lead to increased patrolling, a more visible presence, better engagement, improved response times and higher quality investigations. The numbers remained the same but the roles were specialised and the right people were being put in the right places to try and improve the service.

This year Early Intervention Patrols were introduced for the licensed premises in Fleet. This involved two Police officers going into some of the busier licensed premises on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to support the staff working in the establishment and to remind the clientele to behave. It also ensured that any offences or breaches of licensing legislation were quickly highlighted. Late night patrols had continued in the town centre to reduce disorder relating to the night-time economy. The Police also targeted the main routes out of Fleet where those affected by alcohol sometimes caused problems. One of the officers had been trained to use a laser speed gun and he was able to target certain roads once the road had been assessed. This was in addition to the Roads Policing Unit who continued to target speeding drivers in our communities. Over the past year speeding drivers had been caught on various roads in Fleet. The majority of these drivers were locals who had no excuse and should have known better. Those below a set level were given driver awareness training, those over that level were fined plus points on their licence. We recently had a sudden and steep rise in vehicle crime in Fleet. The common theme was that no damage was caused to the vehicles and expensive electronics were stolen. A suspect was arrested, his home address searched and a Satnav found. This was traced back to the owner and after two interviews the suspect admitted his actions. He had walked the streets of Fleet on four nights trying every car door on every driveway. He tried 100s of cars and, as a result, sold 30 Satnavs in one week! To put this into context, we had 21 thefts from motor vehicles during the whole of last year. Every one of these crimes was preventable if the owners had removed the valuables and locked their car doors. We live and work in a low crime area and the communities in Fleet are, by enlarge, more prosperous than some of the neighbouring communities. Consequently, it was highly likely that travelling criminals from neighbouring areas would target us if we failed to secure our property. As times get harder people will be increasingly tempted. Now is not the time to neglect our homes and property.

(AGM - Police Presentation continued on page 4)



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Annual General Meeting - Presentation on "The Magistracy"

Mr Owen Durrett JP is a magistrate and chairman of the North East Hampshire Bench. In his informative and well-received presentation he explained the role of the magistrates, otherwise known as Justices of the Peace (JP). His presentation covered: the history; eligibility required to become a magistrate; court composition and the types of crimes dealt with by magistrates; the process following a plea of 'guilty' or 'not guilty'; and the types of sentencing and the guidelines used by magistrates. He also outlined the role of other courts which involved specially trained magistrates: namely: The Family Proceedings Court which dealt with the protection of children, child contact, adoption and parental responsibility; and the Youth Court Justice which was held in a less formal setting and dealt with 10 to 17 year olds. Sentences were aimed to change attitudes and behaviour, and parents were often involved in the outcome.



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The Police were now using community resolutions for low level offences by youths when the suspect had no previous history and the victim supported the action. The aim of this common sense approach to crime was to try and divert offenders away from the caution clinic. So far the resolutions had ranged from letters of apology to buying an expensive new BMX bike. Hopefully this was a better and more structured way of dealing with young offenders than a 10 minute lecture by an Inspector plus a caution that marked them until they were 19.

An example of the Police working with other agencies was last Halloween when plans were made to reduce ASB. Posters were put in shops advising people that egg and flour would not be sold to children, 'No Trick or Treat' posters were offered to those who did not want to participate, the Safer Hart Team gave talks to schools, and leave was cancelled for the Beat Officers. On Halloween night the Police were out on foot and initially lots of young children accompanied by parents were having a wonderful time but, sadly, by 8pm about 50 youths were causing damage to pumpkins on Elvetham Heath. The Police corralled them in Morrison's car park and handed them over to Hampshire Youth Services who had opened up just in case. The youths were escorted towards the Point Youth Club, distracted from further bad behaviour and then dispersed in small groups.

Ancells Farm recently suffered a series of burglaries which led to a suspect being convicted. The burglaries were linked to a house on Zebon Copse which was being used for drugs. The house was closed using a 'crack house closure order' which put an immediate stop to that series of burglaries. Subsequently a civil eviction was granted and the landlord was able to find new tenants, no doubt checking their references more carefully!

The Police continued to work with other agencies to reduce crime and ASB, aiming to improve the quality of life for the residents of Fleet. Current priorities were ASB in Oakley Park, Town Centre problems relating to the night-time economy, Basingbourne Park, Calthorpe Park, Quetta Park, Ridgeway Parade and Elvetham Heath. These areas had been targeted by the Police and other agencies to reduce the impact and deal with offenders and their families. Sgt Hill ended by thanking the members for their support of NHW and the local communities.

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For further information please contact: **Lynn on 07748 498024** or e-mail waterfall_therapies@yahoo.co.uk

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