

# COMMUNITY SAFETY NEWSLETTER

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE - FEBRUARY/MARCH 2010

It has been a challenging few months for South Oxfordshire and we have been working with our partners to ensure we are tackling local issues of crime and anti-social behaviour effectively as well as exploring some different ways of letting you know what we have been doing.



Supt. Amanda Pearson  
Area Commander South Oxfordshire



In November we launched South Oxfordshire's first Joint Tasking and Co-ordination Group (JTAC), which means that all community safety agencies can get together every 4 weeks to ensure we are focusing activity in the right places and are making the most of each other's resources to make South Oxfordshire a safer place to live. For example, through this group, the issue of increasing assaults was addressed and a joint plan put in around strengthening Operation Night-safe over the weekend before Christmas, which included joint licensing visits, enhanced police patrols with early intervention, communication through Pub-watch and monitoring of the taxi rank. This led to a significant reduction in assaults compared to the same weekend the previous year, and will be rolled out across the other towns.

The nature of South Oxfordshire as you know, is that we can be vulnerable to travelling criminality and I was particularly disappointed to see an increase in

burglaries in the past period, particularly those where offenders targeted older people, using distraction to enable them to gain entry to their home. I would like to thank those of you who responded to community messaging with information and to those who passed on helpful information to those who might be at risk of becoming a victim. You will be pleased to know that as a result of a cross-border operation, 2 groups of offenders committing this type of crime were arrested and remanded in custody. This included the offences where a young boy was claiming his football was lost in the victim's garden, which some of you will have heard about.

In October we launched a number of pilots around how we keep you informed about what we are doing and the results we have had. This included using billboards in Wallingford shops, changing the emphasis of some of the community messaging, and using existing sites such as [fixmystreet.com](http://fixmystreet.com) to highlight and address issues.

We are waiting for the results of these pilots, but what has become increasingly clear is that we need to use different approaches in different areas and not everyone wants a leaflet through their door! Some of the feedback we have had is that we are still not letting you know about the good work we are doing and the great results we have had, so we will be trying to improve this over the coming months - any good ideas, please let us know.

Despite the increase in some crime areas, we are still pleased to see an overall reduction in crime in South Oxfordshire and it remains a safe place to live, work and visit. And as one of our residents, I will keep working with my teams and our partners to ensure it only gets safer.

**WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES**



## CAR CRIME DOWN

Car Crime in South Oxfordshire is down. Figures for the period April to December 2009, compared to the same period in the previous year show 34 fewer offences for vehicle interference, 53 less for theft of vehicle, and 52 less for theft from vehicle. Please help us to reduce this even further by making sure all valuables are removed from your vehicles, including sat navs, handbags, mobile phones, wallets and cash.

# WINDOW SHOPPING



Burglars are more active during the day, this is when most burglaries take place, they will either distract the occupant or enter the house while it is empty.

Leaving items on display in full view of windows, such as a laptop computer, mobile phone, a wallet or a handbag, car keys left on a hall table or window sill can attract a burglar to your property.



You may think it will never happen to you, but it is far better to be safe than sorry and avoid any temptation by NOT leaving any valuables on display.

## DO YOU HAVE A TEMPTING WINDOW DISPLAY?

Figures show, one in three burglaries, that entry is gained via an unlocked door, thieves are opportunists, **don't make it easy for them.** A simple change in our behaviours can help decrease crime.



You can help by checking all your doors and windows are locked at night and when going out and that keys are not left by front doors or open windows. Make sure you have nothing on view to attract a burglar.

## PROPERTY MARKING

If your valuables get stolen, you may be able to replace your TV and DVD player, but what about your things that have sentimental value?

Every year, property worth hundreds of pounds is recovered by police but because it can't be identified, it is not returned to its rightful owners. This also means that police officers can not prove that they were stolen and may mean thieves will keep your valuables.

Please mark your property, then advertise it has been marked by placing a sign or sticker near your front and rear doors to help deter burglars.

Further information on property marking can be found in the Thames Valley Police "Make Your Mark" Leaflet.

## FREE ADVICE PACK

A free advice pack is available from the Home Office for people concerned about becoming victims of burglary that provides simple and practical advice on what they can do to prevent it. The pack contains leaflets on burglary, discount vouchers for home security products from DIY stores, including B&Q & Focus, a home security self assessment checklist and a copy of the policing pledge.

**PLEASE PHONE FREE ON 0800 456 1213 for a free pack**

You can contact your Crime Reduction Advisor at Thames Valley Police if you require **FREE** crime reduction advice, or Neighbourhood Watch Administrator for supplies of crime reduction leaflets or door/window stickers on **08458 505 505**.



Make Your Mark Leaflet.



Ultra-violet (UV) Marker Pen.



Burglars Beware: OUR PROPERTY IS POSTCODED window /door sticker.



The stop chain check door sticker has been updated to include lock, a reminder for older people to keep doors locked at all times even when they are at home.

## THEFT OF TOOLS

Tools have been stolen from residents sheds and outbuildings, and from workmens vehicles when leaving them parked insecure whilst on site. Residents are advised to secure their sheds and outbuildings and property mark any high value power tools and gardening equipment. Please ask any workmen at your property NOT to leave their vehicles insecure at any time.

**Neighbourhood Watch Office**  
**Abingdon Police Station**  
**Colwell Drive**  
**Abingdon**  
**OX14 1AU**  
**Telephone: (01235) 556957**



## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**What is anti-social behaviour?** There is a wide range of activity that could be classed as anti-social behaviour or ASB. Some of the activities are low crime and should be reported to the police as soon as possible. Some of the activities are what we class as environmental crimes and should be reported to the council.

The Following is a list of some of the better known and more obvious behaviours:

- Threats, intimidation and violence towards residents and passers-by
- Verbal abuse
- Vandalism
- Large groups of rowdy people
- Graffiti
- Vehicle related nuisance (e.g. loud exhaust and radios, 'showing off' and racing)
- Fly tipping (dumped rubbish)
- Racism
- Neighbour noise nuisance
- Criminal damage (e.g. intentional damage to property including cars and buildings)
- Noise nuisance
- Substance (drug and alcohol) misuse
- Joy-riding
- Begging
- Smoking or drinking alcohol under age and/or in non designated areas
- Throwing missiles
- Abandoned vehicles
- Fly posting

### How do I report anti-social behaviour?

- Contact Thames Valley Police on **08458 505 505**
- Use the 'report racism' website, [www.reportracismoxon.com](http://www.reportracismoxon.com)
- Complete the antisocial behaviour report form on the council's website, [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)
- Contact your Housing Association if you are a housing association tenant (e.g. Soha, A2 dominion, Sovereign Vale)
- Contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** where you can make your report anonymously

#### **If the anti-social behaviour is caused through, fly tipping / graffiti or noise**

- Contact the council's Environmental Health service on **01491 823000** or see the website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) or use the online form <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/content/webmaster/inline-forms/report-anti-social-behaviour-online.en>
- If you witness fly tipping or wish to report dumped rubbish, please contact Verdant on **03000 610 610** or email, [admin.southoxford@verdant-group.co.uk](mailto:admin.southoxford@verdant-group.co.uk) or use the online form <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/flytipping/>

Please provide the following information where possible:

- |                                 |                               |                                       |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • <b>Date &amp; time</b>        | • <b>Vehicle registration</b> | • <b>Type &amp; quantity of waste</b> |
| • <b>Name of person/company</b> | • <b>location</b>             |                                       |

You can report persistent **littering, flyposting, graffiti and dog fouling** to Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) who have new powers to issue fixed penalty notices for those offences.

You can also report local problems such as graffiti, fly-tipping, broken paving slabs or street lighting online at [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) the website then sends your report to the authority responsible for fixing it.

Report **abandoned vehicles** by contacting South Oxfordshire District Council on **01491 823416** or email, [environmental.services@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.services@southoxon.gov.uk) or use the online form <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/transport-and-streets/abandoned-vehicles/>

## HOW DO WE DEAL WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**Positive Activities:** The council, police, youth services and others work together to identify programmes of positive activities to divert groups of young people who appear to be taking part in anti-social activities on a regular basis in a specific area.

**Restorative Justice:** The team may arrange for 'Restorative Justice' sessions where the victim and the perpetrator of the anti-social behaviour are brought together to discuss the effect of the behaviour on the victim and their family. This will often result in an apology to the victim and the 'offending' being reduced or stopped altogether.

**Mediation:** Mediation is another way of bringing together both parties. In this case, an expert mediation worker gains agreement from both parties about their behaviour. Housing Associations often use this solution in neighbour disputes.

**Warning Letters:** The ASB team deals with some early reports of anti-social behaviour by issuing a warning letter to the person responsible for the behaviour. If the offender is under eighteen, their parents will also receive a letter. We do this when young people have been reported to us because they are under the legal age for drinking alcohol and have had their alcohol taken away from them by police officers, or PCSO's.

**Parental Contracts:** Where young people have been identified as being in persistent ASB their parents could be subject to a parental contract where they agree to certain actions and conditions. The aim of the contract is to give the parent some helpful guidelines for their child's behaviour.

**Family Support Referrals:** Are made by either police or housing associations to give the family support at a difficult time in their lives.

**Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)** An ABC is an informal agreement between a person responsible for anti-social behaviour (offender) and the ASB team or police and partners e.g. housing association. We ask the offender to sign a contract agreeing that they will not take part in specific activities for six months. We offer support to the offender and/or their family where it is appropriate, for example, help in job seeking, parental support through parenting classes.

If the offender keeps to the agreement, a final interview may provide the appropriate feedback and no more action is taken.

If the offender breaks the agreement (breaches the ABC) we invite him or her to another interview to remind them of our agreement. In all cases they will have been warned that a breach of the ABC may be used as evidence for an ASBO or another legal intervention such as an injunction. In some cases, where the person is a housing association tenant, a breach could lead, in extreme cases to an eviction order, because taking part in anti-social behaviour is also a breach of their tenancy contract.

**What are ASBO's?** An anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) is the last stage of the process to tackle anti-social behaviour after all other measures have failed to stop the behaviour. An ASBO is valid for a minimum of two years. If the offender breaches an ASBO they may be arrested with a maximum prison sentence of five years.

**Housing Issues:** Most landlords, especially Housing Associations, have an agreement with their tenants that the tenant is responsible for their own actions and the behaviour of other members of their household and visitors. Housing Associations take complaints of ASB seriously and work closely with the police, district councils and other agencies to resolve the problems. Landlords, including Housing Associations, can consider a range of actions against families who persist in anti-social behaviour, these include serving Notice of seeking possession, demotion orders, injunctions and eviction orders.

**The South Oxfordshire ASB Team:** Are based at South Oxfordshire District Council and work to tackle ASB with other organisations such as; Housing Associations, the council's housing, environmental services, licensing and planning, primary and secondary schools, colleges, OCC youth service and youth offending service (YOS), probation service and parish councils.

**Who is in the Team:** The Community Safety Partnership's ASB Co-ordinator, Hilary Green, Thames Valley Police ASB Officer, PC Robert Steel and Thames Valley Police Assistant ASB Officer, Mrs Simmons.

**General Community Safety Enquiries:** Tel: [01491 823615](tel:01491823615) email: [community.safety@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@southoxon.gov.uk)

# CCTV GETS RESULTS

**CCTV** operators supported over 1200 incidents in the towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame & Wallingford, during the period April to December 2009. The following are some examples of incidents they have dealt with:



## DIDCOT

The operator observed a possible attempted robbery during a routine camera patrol.

**RESULT:** The police attended and made an arrest

Police confiscated the alcohol from three underage males, following a report from the CCTV operator.

**RESULT:** A letter was sent by the ASB Team to the parents.



## HENLEY

A member of the business watch scheme reported a team of shoplifters in their shop. The CCTV operator guided the police as the team left the shop and went to their vehicle.

**RESULT:** The driver and two other people were arrested.

The operator monitored a male approaching the nightclub with two sticks concealed in his clothing.

**RESULT:** Police were notified and a man arrested

## THAME

The operator reported people damaging signs and attempting to damage a vehicle behind a shop in the town centre.

**RESULT:** Police arrested three people.

The operator observed and reported suspicious behaviour near one of the town centre shops.

**RESULT:** Police attended and made three arrests for theft.

## WALLINGFORD

Police requested the operator to look out for a specific vehicle; the driver of which they suspected was disqualified and drunk.

**RESULT:** The operator found and reported the whereabouts of the vehicle and its direction of travel. Police made an arrest.

The operator reported a man making a nuisance of himself in the town centre. He was banging on a bus door and using the emergency exit button.

**RESULT:** Police attended and arrested a man, despite his attempts to resist.

**CCTV** is part of an integrated, multi-agency approach to reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime. In addition, the cameras play a role in the prevention of incidents and proactive policing.

**CCTV** is an additional tool that has a significant impact in crime reduction. This includes deterring crime, the detection of crime and a reduction in the fear of crime. There are currently 62 operational CCTV cameras in South Oxfordshire. The CCTV control room is located at Abingdon Police Station, where camera operators are employed to monitor the cameras. The district council, town councils and police all contribute to paying for the CCTV service.



# SCAMS

BE ON YOUR GUARD

**SCHEMING  
CRAFTY  
AGGRESSIVE  
MALICIOUS**  
DON'T LET THEM CON YOU

A scam is a scheme designed to con you out of your cash. There's a scam out there for everyone, if you let down your guard and think that you won't be fooled, then you too could become a victim.

There are hundreds of types of scams, fake lotteries and prize draws, incredible schemes to make money quickly, fake investment plans, work from home schemes, the list goes on and on.

Research from the Office of Fair Trading indicates that around three million UK consumers lose a total of £3.5 billion to scams every year.

The following publications and scam awareness DVD are available **FREE OF CHARGE** from the Office of Fair Trading:

- **Step by step guide to scams**
- **How to recognise a scam**
- **Don't let them con you**
- **Can you stop the person you care for from being scammed?** (A guide for carers and care professionals)
- **DVD OFT894 Scams awareness**

**Tel:** 0800 389 3158

**Email:** [oft@ecgroup.co.uk](mailto:oft@ecgroup.co.uk)

**Post:** OFT, PO Box 366, Hayes, UB3 1XB



**PUPPY DOG SCAM** on the internet. They cannot be picked up but incur a delivery charge. No cash is accepted but instead you have to pay by money transfer. Result, no puppy and theft of your money.

**COUNCIL TAX REBATES SCAM** the Valuation Office Agency (VOA is part of HM Revenue & Customs) is warning about unsolicited, scam phone calls offering rebates on Council Tax because of rebanding of your home. Sometimes they claim that your local District or County Council are involved. Again, this is an attempt at identity theft. This agency NEVER approaches individuals in this way and DO NOT ask for your PIN or BANK A/C details.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU DISCOVER A SCAM:

Anyone who thinks they have been the victim of a scam, or suspects a scam is being attempted, can contact Consumer Direct for clear, practical advice.

**Tel:** 08454 04 05 06 or visit: [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

## SNOW DISRUPTION

**Henley on Thames:** On Monday 21st December severe cold weather conditions set in across our area. The Police control room created a detailed log URN 0750, relating to road traffic collisions, broken down and abandoned vehicles and blocked roads.

Officers from the early shift 07:00hrs to 17:00hrs and Neighbourhood Team 14:00hrs to 23:00hrs, completed their normal duties and then worked on, in order to assist the later shifts, who were overwhelmed by the volume of calls for service by stranded motorists and other people desperate for assistance. The early shift worked until 03:00hrs and were scheduled to start work again at 07:00hrs the next morning. In order to ensure that they would be at work to fulfill their duties to the organisation and the community, they actually slept at the Police station. This proved to be a wise decision as the one officer who was able to get home, was not able to get back to the station the next morning, due to the state of the roads.

**Didcot:** During the snow PCSO Hinks called on and checked the welfare of all the elderly people in her area in Didcot. In addition she took lists from them and collected essential shopping items they needed PCSO Hinks also took calls during her rest days from the Sheltered Housing Warden who was unable to get to Didcot. As a result of these links, the elderly care has been assured throughout the cold spell.

# WANT TO BEAT THE COWBOYS?

Ask Oxfordshire Trading Standards

We all know the story, your central heating has stopped working, the garden needs sorting out, you need a plumber in a hurry or you fancy a new driveway. You may find lots of trader adverts in the local paper or business directory, but which one can you rely on?



How do you find a local trader that has reasonable and clear information about costs, who issues written quotes, is trustworthy and reliable enough to properly carry out work around your home and garden?

That is why Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards set up the **BUY WITH CONFIDENCE Approved Trader Scheme**. This brings together a list of gardeners, plumbers, builders and other types of businesses offering home improvements, repair and services, from all over Oxfordshire.

These Oxfordshire traders have been individually checked for trustworthiness and compliance with consumer protection laws. They are visited by a Trading Standards Officer. Only when they have passed stringent checks are they accepted onto the scheme. We cannot guarantee that nothing will ever go wrong, but if you have a problem, members must deal with any complaint in a fair manner.



- **Are you a local trader who wants more information about applying?**
- **Do you know a trader who might like to join?**
- **Do you want a copy of the list of the Oxfordshire approved traders?**
- **Would you like to know more about the scheme?**



For further information about becoming a member of the scheme, or to request a list of the current approved Oxfordshire traders, please phone **0845 051 0845** or visit **[www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)**

## OXFORDSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS DOORSTEP CRIME TEAM

**What do they do?** Working together with Thames Valley Police and other agencies, they combat Oxfordshire Doorstep Crime. Rogue Traders are really Doorstep Criminals who prey on elderly and vulnerable members of the community. This has become a notable problem which led to the setting up of the **Buy With Confidence** scheme and the **No Cold Calling Zones** in Oxfordshire.

### THE PRIME OFFENDERS ARE:

**Uninvited Cold Callers**  
**Bogus Trades People**  
**Distraction Burglars**

### DOORSTEP CRIME TEAM ADVICE:

**Never deal with traders who cold call at your door**  
**Never reveal that you have cash in your house**  
**Get a door chain fitted to your front door**

**RESULTS:** Since April 2009 the team have dealt with over 300 complaints, arranged for 21 arrests, and taken out 8 prosecutions. 4 criminals have gone to jail with others awaiting sentencing.

It is estimated that Oxfordshire consumers have been conned out of over £574,000 with the team managing to recover and return £82,000.

**TELL US:** If you or a person you know has had work done by a Rogue Trader, you or they are a victim of crime. Be our **EYES and EARS** report any potential Rogue Traders, get as much information as possible, including any leaflets, vehicle registration numbers and descriptions.

Your information will assist us in intervening in these offences. **Tel: 0845 051 0845** (press option 2)

**STREET  
MEETINGS**  
Have Your Say

**FACE TO FACE  
MEETINGS**  
Have Your Say

**MOBILE POLICE  
STATIONS**  
Have Your Say

# HAVE YOUR SAY



## TVP extends NHP consultation

From the start of 2010, Thames Valley Police is extending its neighbourhood consultation by introducing a wider range of publicised opportunities to meet Neighbourhood Teams. The driver for this change is our commitment to the Policing Pledge, which promises open monthly meetings to allow the public to influence our priorities.

**These meetings will be branded as “Have Your Say” opportunities.**

Read more about Have Your Say opportunities on the Thames Valley Police website—just under the Neighbourhood Action Group section.

[www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)

Details of these meetings are also sent out by email or telephone via the Thames Valley Police Community Messaging service. If you want to receive messages from this FREE service, either register online by visiting:

[www.tvpcommunitymessaging.org](http://www.tvpcommunitymessaging.org)

Or contact your Neighbourhood Watch Administrator on the Police non-emergency telephone number, **08458 505 505**.



in an emergency call 999 

