



## NEWSLINE | Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch | Issue 05 | May 2026

### *Working Together for a Safer Norfolk*

#### **Increased Growth, New Digital Initiatives and Community Success Across Norfolk**

From expanding local schemes to strengthening digital communication, Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch continues to build safer, more connected communities while tackling emerging challenges across the county.

#### **Strong Growth and Digital Progress**

Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch continues to expand, with new schemes being established across the county. A key priority remains the move towards a digital-first approach, including the redevelopment of the website to simplify membership registration, improve communication, and support coordinators more effectively.

#### **Celebrating Success**

Congratulations to **Smriti Jha**! Smriti is leading our website redevelopment project and has recently received a national award for Artificial Intelligence development in her government role. This outstanding achievement was warmly recognised in a ceremony in London.

#### **Community Engagement – What Works?**

The strongest and most resilient schemes continue to be those focused on hyper-local engagement.

##### **Case Study: St Giles Park**

St Giles Park provides an excellent example of a thriving local scheme:

- More than 65 residents actively engaged through WhatsApp
- Recruitment driven by word-of-mouth recommendations, newsletters and QR codes
- Activities focused on community safety, wellbeing and neighbourhood pride

#### **Community Activities Driving Success**

Local engagement continues to grow through visible and practical initiatives including:

- Community litter-picking events
- No Cold Calling Zones
- Traffic awareness campaigns
- Pet welfare support initiatives
- Community newsletters and social events

These activities not only improve neighbourhoods but also strengthen local relationships and encourage greater participation.

## Digital Tools Leading the Way

WhatsApp groups remain one of the most effective ways to connect communities, enabling rapid communication, strong participation and local problem-solving.

Coordinators are encouraged to remain mindful of:

- Group moderation and administration
- Privacy and data protection considerations
- Managing notification overload for members

## Looking Ahead – Key Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch Priorities for 2026

The focus for the coming months includes:

- ✓ Improving digital communication and coordinator support
- ✓ Increasing recruitment and volunteer engagement
- ✓ Strengthening relationships with police and partner organisations
- ✓ Sharing local success stories and best practice
- ✓ Exploring new funding opportunities to support schemes
- ✓ Expanding community safety initiatives across Norfolk

## Crime & Community Safety

### Concerns over Police Visibility

Coordinators across Norfolk continue to report concerns regarding reduced police visibility within local communities. Fewer officers are attending community meetings and many residents feel they are seeing less neighbourhood policing activity than in previous years.

Neighbourhood Watch recognises the significant pressures facing local policing teams. However, many members point to the loss of approximately 150 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) across Norfolk as a major factor affecting community engagement and visible policing.

Communities are also reporting increasing concerns regarding:

- Antisocial behaviour
- Drug-related activity and county lines operations
- Youth disorder in some areas
- General concerns about community safety and reassurance

### Police & Crime Commissioner Update

Sarah Taylor has resigned from her position as Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner with immediate effect.

One of the initiatives previously highlighted within her Crime Plan was the proposed Heritage Watch programme, which Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch had expressed an interest in supporting.

While it remains possible that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner may continue to develop aspects of the project, its future direction is currently unclear.

Looking ahead, wider reforms to local governance may result in changes to the Police and Crime Commissioner model in the coming years.

### **Major Crime Investigation - Seven Men Charged Following Norfolk Investigation**

Seven Afghan men have been charged with a total of 40 offences linked to the alleged sexual exploitation of two teenage girls in Norfolk.

According to police, the alleged offences took place between August 2023 and May 2025. The investigation began following a disclosure made by one of the girls in September 2023.

Following enquiries and a number of police operations across Norwich, seven suspects were arrested and subsequently charged.

The defendants appeared before Norwich Magistrates' Court and were remanded in custody. A further hearing is scheduled for 19 June 2026.

The charges reportedly include allegations of rape, conspiracy to rape, facilitating human trafficking and perverting the course of justice.

As criminal proceedings are ongoing, all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in court.

### **National Debate on Policing**

Recent public discussion has focused on the challenges facing modern policing, including balancing equality, community confidence and effective law enforcement.

Politicians, commentators and policing experts have debated whether concerns about discrimination, bias and community relations can sometimes influence operational decision-making.

These discussions have intensified following several high-profile criminal cases and have contributed to wider public debate about police priorities, accountability and public confidence.

Views on these issues remain varied and strongly contested. Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch encourages respectful discussion and continued support for effective community policing that serves all residents fairly and consistently.

### **Serious Violence & Knife Crime Initiative**

Discussions are underway regarding a potential Serious Violence and Knife Crime project in Norwich involving Grace Richardson and Chief Inspector Kerry Woodvine.

Further updates will be shared as plans develop.

## NNW Community Noticeboard

### Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch Signs Available

More than 100 Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch signs have now been relocated to AVIVA's Norwich site and are available for local schemes.

Please contact the team if your scheme would benefit from additional signage.



### Get Involved

There are many ways to support Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch.

Whether through volunteering, helping with local schemes, supporting events or joining future committee roles, every contribution helps build stronger and safer communities.

If you would like to become involved, please contact the team.

### Coordinator Teams meeting (held on the last Thursday of the month) - next meeting 25 June 2026 | 7:00pm

Our regular online Coordinator meetings provide an opportunity to share local concerns, discuss successful initiatives, seek advice from the Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch team, and connect with experienced coordinators from across the county.

Whether you're an established coordinator or new to Neighbourhood Watch, these sessions are an excellent way to learn what works and help shape future priorities. Contact us for a link, or check your inbox for an email invitation sent to all Coordinators.

### Ways to support

**Easyfundraising** turns your daily shopping into free donations. Partnered with over 8,000 retailers, who will donate part of what you spend to Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch, registering and agreeing to support us won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the retailer. Visit [Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch Easyfundraising](#) to register and start supporting us through your daily shopping!

**GivingLottery** - Who doesn't like a win-win relationship? For as little as £1 per week, you can enter to win as much as £25,000 in the Giving Machine Lottery weekly draw. Enrolling is simple, just visit [givinglottery - norfolk neighbourhood watch](#), select your lucky numbers and decide the length of time you would like to enter for.

We love to hear from you! Get in touch with any ideas or suggestions:  
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**Best wishes,**  
*The NNW Team*

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