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Alert system issues

You will notice that the newsletter is a little later than usual this month. We're so sorry for the delay.

The Neighbourhood Alert system we use to send it is an online, secure community messaging system that allows authorised administrators to log in and send messages to registered people in the community. Unfortunately, last week the system experienced some disruption, that needed some time to fix.

According to VISAV, the company that manage Alert, the problem was related to an anomaly with their database, creating an unexpected loop. It has been very challenging for them to find and fix. and they have been working to prevent it happening again.



Mobile phone theft survey results

P 2

With mobile phone theft on the rise across the UK, we asked people to share their experiences. More than 31,000 respondents took part in our survey, revealing important insights about where, when and how thefts occur.

Of those who had their phone stolen, 14% experienced the theft within the last year, while 57% had their phone taken more than five years ago.

Where and when thefts happen

Phone thefts occur across a wide range of locations. According to our survey:

- 19% of thefts happened on the street
- 14% occurred on public transport or at transport hubs
- 12% took place in or outside shops



Other common locations included pubs, festivals, from cars, and while on holiday. In terms of timing, the majority, 65%, happen in the afternoon or evening.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who shared their experiences and views with us. We'll be using this information to improve our mobile phone resources. [Read the full results on our website.](#)





A clear visible deterrent

Most forced entry burglaries are committed through the weakest point at the rear of the property, usually the Patio or French doors. The modern white design of the PATLOCK provides a clear visible deterrent throughout the day and when you need it most, at night.

PATLOCK is an effective and user-friendly addition to your home security. As a highly visible security product, it can discourage potential intruders from attempting a break-in, and with its ease of use you can secure your doors in seconds, providing instant peace of mind.

- ✓ Instant French door security.
- ✓ The only French door lock recommended by UK Police Forces.
- ✓ No keys or number codes required.
- ✓ Easily fitted and released in seconds.
- ✓ Locks patio doors securely, designed to deter and stop intruders.

CLICK HERE



**to purchase PATLOCK
at the Neighbourhood Watch
discounted price of
£42.50**

Keep your home properly protected this winter with expert advice from ERA

P 4

Whether you're planning to take advantage of Black Friday deals to update your tech, or you're already making progress with your Christmas shopping, many of us will have more valuable items in our homes at this time of the year.

Sumier Foster-Shah is Customer Service Manager at ERA – one of the UK's leading home security providers, and a long-standing partner of Neighbourhood Watch. Here, he shares his top tips for making sure your property is properly protected over the coming months.

Burglaries tend to spike in the winter months, with thieves taking advantage of the longer, darker evenings – but there are some simple steps you can take to keep your home and belongings safe.

Don't forget the basics

Most burglars enter the home through the front door, so it's essential you make sure yours is properly secure. A 5-lever mortice lock is a great option – look out for the British Standard kitemark that means the lock is resistant to drilling, hacksawing, and picking through steel plates.

Alternatively, a multi-point lock is a robust and secure solution – hooks, bolts rollers and mushrooms lock into sections of your door frame for maximum security. ERA has a range of 5 lever mortice and multi-point locks so you can find the one best suited for your front door.

Keep valuables hidden away

Many burglaries are crimes of opportunity; if you have a stack of Amazon packages with your Black Friday purchases left in your porch, or a mountain of presents under the Christmas tree visible to passersby through your windows, your property will look more appealing to potential thieves. Make sure any packages are taken in promptly and stored away and keep Christmas gifts away from prying eyes wherever possible.

Rely on your community

One simple way to stay aware of burglaries in your area is to join any local groups, whether on WhatsApp, Facebook, or elsewhere. Locals will often post about burglaries (and attempted burglaries) to warn their neighbours, so keep an eye on these and make sure you're on alert if thieves are operating in your area.

Be smart about your security

Visible security solutions act as a deterrent to potential thieves – by installing a smart alarm system you'll make them think twice about targeting your home. ERA's 7-piece smart alarm kit includes a live siren and replica siren which can be easily installed outside your property, with the comfort flashing lights constantly active, indicating to potential intruders that the alarm system is live.

To learn more about ERA's range of home security solutions, visit <https://eraprotect.com>



Connected Together

How to support friends and family with the digital landline switchover

P 5

Landlines are changing and the UK's telephone network is going digital. These changes will affect everyone who has a landline they'd like to keep using.

What's happening?

The analogue network that most home phones work on today is no longer fit for purpose and can't keep up with the demands of modern life. The outdated network will be switched off for all landline providers in January 2027.

BT's new home phone service is called Digital Voice. The landline is not going away, and for most, the switch is simple. No one will be left disconnected.

To make things easier, BT has put together a Conversation Starter Pack – a straightforward, practical guide designed to help you talk with a friend or family member about what the switch means and how you can support them.

What you can do

- Download the Conversation Starter Pack on BT's Connected Together website for helpful advice on how to talk about the switch
- If you, or someone you know has additional needs and needs extra support making the switch, contact the landline provider. BT customers they can register via webform on the Connected Together website or by calling the Customer Care team.
- Talk to a friend, neighbour or family member who might benefit from early support

Start the conversation today.

Find out more at: www.bt.com/about/all-ip/connected-together or call 0330 1234 150.

Protect what matters: extending Neighbourhood Watch values to your family

P 7

As a Neighbourhood Watch member, you're dedicated to keeping your community safe. But have you taken steps to protect your own family's future?

Estate planning is about more than paperwork or wealth - it's about peace of mind, acting with care, and ensuring those closest to you are looked after, whatever life brings. The same vigilance you bring to your neighbourhood can provide real security at home.

Why it matters to everyone

Without a clear plan, the law - not you - will decide what happens to your home, finances, and the care of your loved ones. This can result in delays, family conflict, and unnecessary costs at the very time loved ones most need comfort and clarity. Estate planning ensures your wishes are respected and your family is protected.

Essentials every household should have

Taking a few practical steps now delivers lifelong benefits for you and your loved ones:

- A Will that reflects your wishes - specifying who inherits your assets and who cares for any dependent children.
- Lasting Powers of Attorney - appointing trusted people to make decisions on your behalf about health and finances if you can't.
- Guardianship instructions - ensuring children under 18 are looked after by those you trust.
- Organised assets - from savings and pensions to digital passwords and keepsakes.
- Personal wishes recorded - funeral arrangements or messages, providing guidance and support for your family.

Making these choices is a caring, responsible act - and it's not just for the wealthy or elderly. Every family deserves security.

Exclusive advice and offer

Neighbourhood Watch has teamed up with Future-Proof Estate Planning (FPEP), who specialise in personal, attentive service - because every family is different. As a member, you can claim an exclusive 20% discount on FPEP's most popular packages:

- 2 Lasting Powers of Attorney + Free Will - £479 (normally £599)
- 4 Lasting Powers of Attorney + Free Mirror Will - £957 (normally £1,199)

You can arrange your plan from home or speak directly to an expert adviser who'll guide you every step of the way.

Call 0800 847 7150 (quote "Neighbourhood Watch") or visit: ourwatch.org.uk/estate-planning. You look out for your neighbourhood - now take action to protect your family's future, too.

Congratulations to Lynn Farrar!

Lynn is Board Member at [Derbyshire Neighbourhood Watch](#) for winning Trustee of the Year. She was given the prestigious award by The Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Volunteer Centre.

Lynn has led Neighbourhood Watch through legal and strategic change, creating a modern and forward-thinking charity. She expanded it from a traditional crime-prevention group, to a community focused network, tackling issues like domestic abuse, fraud, scams and anti-social behaviour.

She has dedicated decades of her life to community safety. We could not be more proud and delighted for her.



Latest stats on knife crime

The new figures show a 10% reduction in offences under this government across the seven police forces most impacted by knife crime, with areas like West Midlands seeing a 30% drop, following targeted policing efforts.

Interventions include the use of hotspot policing, acting on better intelligence on offenders, increased patrols using knife arches, drones and plain clothes officers.

A dedicated taskforce was set up in October 2024 for an initial six months to turbo-charge this work after seeing a stark rise in incidents between July 2023-June 2024, bringing together the Metropolitan Police, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Avon & Somerset, and British Transport Police. [Read the full story.](#)



Headingley Ash Road NW

How wonderful to see the 8th Annual welcome event for new residents in Ash Road.

The street party was held by the Headingley Ash Road NW group in Leeds. It was also kindly sponsored by local business **My Primos**.

Offering free food and a tombola as well as special offers, it's a fabulous way to bring neighbours and new arrivals together. Well done, what a warm welcome to the neighbourhood!



Hawthorne Neighbourhood Watch

Excellent work by Hawthorn Neighbourhood Watch on their fabulous community litter pick.

The weather gods smiled and nearly seven bags of litter were collected across the alleys and roads of Hawthorn by children and adults.

And it sounds like the children did a lot of the heavy lifting - a two-year-old pulled the trolley! The kids also climbed up banks to dig out very old rubbish. Everyone had a good time.

There were prizes for the best scary costume and most interesting finds and then everyone had warm drinks and biscuits at the Hawthorn Community Centre.

What a fantastic way for neighbours of all ages to come together and look after the environment.



Protecting your home and water: a simple guide to avoiding plumbing rogue traders

P 9

As active members of Neighbourhood Watch, you're brilliant at looking out for your community. But home safety isn't just about security alarms - it also means protecting your water supply and your wallet from unqualified traders. This article, brought to you by WaterSafe, the national register for approved plumbers, offers simple, friendly advice to help you avoid rogue plumbers and choose a qualified professional you can trust.

Why approved plumbers are important

While most traders are honest, rogue traders operate across all industries. Data from consumer safety charities shows thousands of suspected rogue trader reports are made across the UK every year. Our own recent WaterSafe research shows a fifth of residents in parts of the UK have fallen foul of a trader in the last five years who has not carried out the work properly, resulting in them having to employ another plumber to put things right, at an average cost of nearly £400.

Rogue traders often use scare tactics, claiming there's an "urgent" problem with your water supply to pressure you into immediate decisions. Knowing how to spot them is your best defence.

Four simple steps to stay safe

The good news is that protecting your home from rogue traders is straightforward. By following these easy steps, you can stay one step ahead:

1. **Don't Be Pressured:** A trustworthy, reputable professional will never demand immediate payment or pressure you into agreeing to work on the spot. If someone suggests "urgent" work, take a moment to pause, think and seek a second opinion before you part with any cash.
2. **Ask for ID:** A genuine tradesperson will be happy to show their identification. This should clearly show their name and the logo of the approved scheme they belong to. Always ask to see it.
3. **Get a Written Quote:** For any significant work, ask for at least three quotes in writing. This helps you compare costs fairly and prevents you from being surprised by hidden charges later.
4. **Use an Approved Professional:** This is the most effective way to guarantee a safe job. By choosing a WaterSafe-approved contractor, you are guaranteed to be hiring a professional who is fully:
 - Qualified
 - Insured and
 - Trained in the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations, which are in place to keep our drinking water safe.

Take action today

Don't wait until you have a plumbing emergency. Take these two key steps right now:

- **Find your local pro:** Use our easy online directory at www.watersafe.org.uk to find a local approved plumber near you. Save their number in your phone today for when you need it most.
- **Spread the word:** Share this advice with your friends, family, and neighbours (from <https://tinyurl.com/CowboyPlumbers>).
- **By working together and staying vigilant,** we can make it much harder for rogue traders to operate in our community. Let's keep our homes and our water safe, one street at a time!

www.watersafe.org.uk





Opinion: Faith communities are key to crime reduction

P 10

Kardaya Rooprai,
Neighbourhood Watch Network Trustee

Faith communities are often the backbone of our neighbourhoods. We have been building our homes around centres of worship for millennia. I believe they are also key to reducing hate, division and crime.

I recently attended the National Faith Conference, organised by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership. Nearly 180 faith and community leaders came together to create a sense of hope and action. It was an emotional day, especially when people shared their lived experiences. But it was also inspiring to see how people of all faiths want to work together to reduce violence and crime in our communities.

Many faith groups already make a considerable impact and investment in their communities. Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha has been in Handsworth, Birmingham, for over 50 years. During that time, they have invested approximately £60 million into the local area. Another example is the Cinnamon Network. In Essex, they facilitated a partnership between local churches to support the most vulnerable in their community. This alleviated pressure on local police to respond to non-crime-related calls by training Street Pastors to provide support.

Faith was, and I would argue continues to be, the cornerstone of our society's ethics, morals and values. These principles are what faith communities bring to the table that no other groups can. If we have no values, we cannot forgive. If we cannot forgive, we imprison ourselves. I am not saying we should not seek justice; however, both in society and in our communities, we should be working more towards prevention. We need to help our community members steer clear of a path towards crime. By working in partnership with faith communities, we can have a greater impact on preventing and reducing crime.

We are living in a time of social division. Misinformation is a challenge for everyone, which is why we must come together to help make communities stronger, more resilient, self-reliant, engaged, informed and proactive. As a membership organisation representing over 2.3 million households, Neighbourhood Watch has a real opportunity to unite people from different backgrounds, make them safer and reduce feelings of fear, vulnerability and isolation.

At a time of increasing social divisions and rising hate crime, there has never been a greater need to come together. Latest crime statistics show a 3% increase in police-recorded religious hate crime over the last year and a 19% rise in religious hate crimes targeted at Muslims. Tragically, there was also the recent attack on the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation synagogue in Manchester. That act of antisemitic terrorism left two people dead and at least three injured. It targeted innocent worshippers on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

Faith communities do much of the heavy lifting at times of need. We saw that during COVID-19 and in the community response to the racially aggravated sexual assault in Oldbury. They also provide consistency. Elected officials, local authority personnel and police officers come and go, whilst churches, temples, mosques, synagogues, gurudwaras and meeting houses remain. Hate can come in many forms, but we have so much more in common than that which keeps us apart. The key lesson from the conference was that we all value peace. Faith communities have a vital role to play in bringing about community cohesion and crime reduction. When faith communities work together to tackle these issues that society and the police are facing, communities can be transformed.