

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) update (Mar'18)

The following is a summary extract based upon the latest local Police statistics.

Yearly Comparison - by latest month													
Month	Count of Vehicle crime	Count of Burglary	Count of Antisocial Behaviour	Count of Other Theft	Count of Criminal damage arson	Count of Drugs	Count of Robbery	Count of Violent crime	Count of Possession of Weapons	Count of Bicycle Theft	Count of Other Crime	Count of Public Order	Totals
Jan/2015			1		1			1					3
Jan/2016			2					2					4
Jan/2017	1	1	1	2									5
Jan/2018	1	1			1			5				1	9

Conclusion: Overall crime levels remain low although the latest figures include a sharp increase in reported incidents of violent crime (the month total being 1/3rd the level seen for the full years of 2017 and 2016).

General messages received from Ashford Police.

Protect your Garden

- Maintain hedges and fences to prevent unwanted visitors from entering your garden
- Close your garden gate and lock it from the inside
- Store bins and ladders carefully so they can't be used as climbing aids
- Store tools and equipment somewhere secure after use so they don't get stolen or used to break into your home
- Secure sheds and garages with suitable locks and consider fitting shed alarms and security lights
- Disable lawn mowers and other large machinery when not in use and chain items together or to a solid anchor point
- Security mark valuable items – taking photographs and recording details such as serial numbers and identifying marks can also help to identify items if they get lost or stolen.
- Consider registering valuables on a property database such as www.immobilise.com

Protect your personal information.

Email accounts contain a wealth of sensitive information. Criminals can use your email to reset passwords or obtain personal and financial information, such as your bank details, full address or DOB, leaving you vulnerable to identity theft and fraud.

Secure your email account with two simple steps:-

- 1 - Use a strong, separate password
- 2 - Enable two-factor authentication

Phantom Debt Fraud

Action Fraud has recently experienced an increase in the number of calls to members of the public by fraudsters requesting payments for a "phantom" debt. The fraud involves being cold-called by someone purporting to be a debt collector, bailiff or other type of enforcement agent. The fraudster may claim to be working under instruction of a court, business or other body and suggest they are recovering funds for a non-existent debt.

The fraudsters are requesting payment, sometimes by bank transfer and if refused, they threaten to visit homes or workplaces in order to recover the supposed debt that is owed. In some cases, the victim is also threatened with arrest. From the reports Action Fraud has received, this type of fraud is presently occurring throughout the UK.

You can report suspicious calls like these to Action Fraud by visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Knife crime awareness activities

Young people in Ashford were warned about the dangers of carrying knives during a two-week awareness campaign by Kent Police. Officers, Police Community Support Officers and Volunteer Police Cadets visited a number of schools, colleges and youth clubs in the area between Monday 5 February and Friday 16 February 2018.

They provided talks, sharing stories and encouraging young people to make better life choices with the aim to promote safety in the district, reduce knife crime and associated offences and tackle anti-social behaviour. School children and students were provided with an opportunity to ask questions.

Chief Inspector Andrew Somerville said: 'Kent Police is committed to tackling knife crime and removing dangerous weapons such as knives from our communities. The aim of this specific campaign was to help educate young people by further raising awareness of the dangers of carrying knives and highlight some of the serious repercussions and devastating consequences of doing so.

'We will not be complacent when it comes to knife crime and it is important that we work with youngsters at an early age as carrying knives can never become socially acceptable and it is more likely they will get hurt or arrested than stay safe.

'Our officers will also be visiting popular areas of Ashford, where we know large groups of young people congregate, and will continue to build a strong relationship with them and others in our community.

'We will also be working with partner agencies to identify any vulnerable individuals who are at risk and need to be signposted to the most appropriate support.'

Residents of Ashford may have seen posters and leaflets on display, which promoted the anti-knife campaign, in various retail outlets including shops that sell knives and officers were on hand to answer questions and provide information in the County Square on Thursday 15 and Friday 16 February 2018.

To close

For those with access to the internet, regular updates and current items are published on both Nextdoor (https://nextdoor.co.uk/neighborhood_feed/) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1721139798106705/>). Additionally a dedicated page is being developed upon the Parish Council website which will include current and past reports (<http://www.shadoxhurstpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/parish/neighbourhood-watch/>).

Peter Webb

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Shadoxhurst