

Bedford and District Neighbourhood Watch



Charity No 1062009

December 2014 Newsletter



Welcome to our last Newsletter of 2014. We hope you find it helpful. Our quarterly members meeting on Thursday 4th December 2014, at Police Headquarters was a very positive time together. And we thank David Padgett from Victim Support, who was our guest speaker for the evening, and Detective Inspector Phil McCarthy who gave us information on "Courier Scam." And thanks to all of you, our members, for your continued support in helping keep our communities safe.

David Padgett is Divisional Manager. Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Victim Support and gave us a very interesting insight into his organisation.



Without volunteers, there is no Victim Support. Services in Bedfordshire include a similar emotional and practical support for victims and witnesses attending court whether they be for prosecution or defence. we are totally impartial.

Established in 1974 as a single scheme in Bristol, Victim Support grew into many hundreds of individual schemes across the country which then amalgamated into countywide schemes with the help of government funding and, a few year ago, finally became a single national charity, the largest and oldest victims charity in the world.

Over 90% of our core emotional and practical support for victims is delivered by volunteers; the community supporting the community which mirrors NHW very well. Emotional support can be seen as simply being there for a victim to talk through whatever issues have come up, using a range of active listening skills but it is not putting victims through any therapeutic regime. Practical support can be simply advising how to replace a stolen bank card or pension book or it can be supporting a victim to make a claim for criminal injury compensation; Victim Support is the largest provider of CICA support in the country. Prospective volunteers are interviewed, put into core basic training and taken through an accreditation process that includes a professional discussion and an observation of practice before being allowed to work. New volunteers are closely monitored and supported by paid staff until contact stretches to monthly meetings, de-briefs, regular one-to-one sessions and an annual review. It is vital the volunteers are carefully supported so they can do what they joined to do; the work can be mentally demanding and it is important volunteer welfare is maintained.

This includes pre-trial visits so individuals can be introduced to the court they will be attending, the processes involved, who's who so that the impact can be lessened somewhat when their actual day comes up. This support is also available for anyone, friends and family that come to court with a victim or witness. We also deliver the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service in Luton, an Anti-Social Behaviour caseworker embedded in Bedford Borough Council's ASB team and shortly two caseworkers who will be working with the most vulnerable victims; elderly victims of burglary, victims of Hate Crimes and medium risk Domestic Abuse victims.

Lynne Arch has a new title of County Wide Support Officer. As from the first of December Lynne is now employed by the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and is Based at Bridgebury House.



Lynne's role will remain much the same for you and she will still be your first point of contact for any enquiries.

Lynne will also be helping in developing a working relationship between the three Watches, Speed Watch, and the existing Street Watch in Central Beds.

We wish Lynne well and offer her our support in her new role.





Neighbourhood Watch News

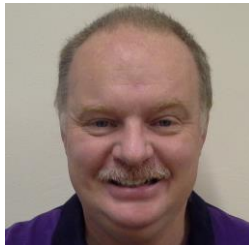
At the first Trustees meeting following the AGM in September, the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected. We are Pleased to say that Pat Maskey was elected as Vice-Chair in place of Dave Girling who stepped down in September. Our other



Trustees remain the same. We have two new Trustees – Rosemary Drewery from Felmersham



and



Mark Everett from Oakley

Changes to our Registration Procedure

Our database membership has risen this year by 20%.

A lot of this has happened through our partnership with the Police on Operation Visions and Days of Action.

Traditionally, a group of residents would get together to start a scheme in their street, with one becoming the link or Street Coordinator.

A group of streets are then covered by an Area Coordinator.

This forms a pyramid structure support system which is built on the Community. And this is still our preferred structure of setting up schemes.

But increasingly, individuals are registering to be part of Neighbourhood Watch and Ringmaster through Op Visions and Days of Action, regardless of whether or not there is an existing scheme where they live.

So we agreed as Trustees to allow people to join Neighbourhood Watch where there is no scheme, but to encourage and support these new members to start a scheme in their road or area. Initially their link person would be our Central Office.

This has already proved valuable, when isolated residents have offered to become Street Coordinators and start a scheme.

As Trustees, we agreed it is better for a lone person or family to be part of the organisation and receive information and benefits from us, even if they are the only ones in their area.

Because of this and in order that Area Coordinators (AC's) are aware of new members or new schemes starting up, AC's will receive a letter asking them to make regular contact with Lynne to find out if there has been any new developments in their area.

As you will appreciate, we don't have the resources to inform AC's each time a new person joins in their area, but we will endeavour to keep AC's up to date as much as we can.

We have also streamlined how information is sent to new members.

We now send out "welcome emails" or letters, to each new member, followed with an envelope containing a window sticker, no cold calling sticker, stay safe booklet and a resources leaflet.

We are encouraging all new members to sign up for Ringmaster as well as being placed on our database. This should ensure a continuous flow of information to all our members and to include more isolated members.

This is a pilot scheme and will be under constant review.

We are grateful for the comments raised by Members at the Quarterly meeting. The Trustees will be discussing these comments in the New Year.

The changes we have made for registering new members should not affect existing schemes and the way they are run.

Our next quarterly meeting on Tuesday 10th March 2015 will be a Member's Forum.



Detective Inspector Phil McCarthy Courier Scams



Detective Inspector Phil McCarthy from Bedfordshire Police came to alert members of a particularly nasty scam which specifically targets older or vulnerable people.

There has been a spate of frauds in Bedfordshire recently, known as “courier frauds”. The scam involves a team of fraudsters calling an elderly victim and telling them that they are a police officer and that their bank cards have been compromised. They tell the victim that they have to call their bank immediately to have their cards cancelled, however they leave the line open, so the victim continues talking to the fraudster believing them to be their bank. During the course of the conversation they persuade the victim to divulge their PIN, bank details and other important personal information. They are ultimately persuaded to hand their cards to a courier for forensic testing. The end result being that the cards are used by the offenders, who withdraw as much money as they possibly can.

We were asked to follow these simple rules if you receive a call of this type

Police officers and banks **NEVER** ask for PIN's

Police officers **NEVER** send couriers

If in doubt, dial 101 on a separate phone, perhaps a mobile or a family members' phone and ask to verify details.

If you think you have divulged any information or compromised your cards, call your bank on a separate phone and have them cancelled.

Memorandum of Understanding; between ourselves and Bedfordshire Police. (Copies are available through Lynne Arch.)

We focussed on two agreements from this document.

The first is Training

Bedfordshire Police have offered the Watch Groups appropriate training in order to make communities a safer place to live and work.

We would encourage our members to take advantage of future training which will be offered by the Police.

Some Members will have attended two seminars. One on Cyber Crime and a second on new legislation relating to Anti-Social Behaviour.

These were excellent presentations and I would encourage you to consider attending any future seminars advertised. These were advertised through Ringmaster and Central Office.



The second is communication.

We want to encourage a good working relationship between Area Coordinators and PCSO's and we are grateful where we know this is already happening. In order to support this, in the New Year, Neighbourhood Watch will be writing to all Area Coordinators asking them to make contact and introduce themselves to their PCSO's if they have not already done so.

The police will also be asking the PCSO's to make contact with Area Coordinators.

We have to work on relationships and this is a two way process. A good working relationship will benefit both parties and the community.

We will be asking for feedback next year.

Bedford & District NHW
Next Quarterly Members Meeting
Tuesday 10 March 2015
Members Forum

Merry
Christmas

The Trustees of Bedford and District Neighbourhood Watch wish all our Members a safe Christmas and a happy New Year.