

# Bedford and District Neighbourhood Watch

## Member's Handbook



**Neighbourhood Watch is one of the most effective crime reduction initiatives ever. It's all about neighbours getting together and actively having a positive impact on crime in their area.**

# What is Neighbourhood Watch?

**It is quoted as being the largest voluntary organisation in the country**

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are community run initiatives, supported by the Police, but not run by them.

The effectiveness of a scheme is dependent on the efforts and enthusiasm of those involved.

In Bedford Borough, each street is covered by a Street Coordinator; several streets form an area which is covered by an Area Coordinator.

The amount and type of activities run by a scheme are decided by its members. At a basic level, being a Neighbourhood Watch member means being aware of what is going on in the local area. It means taking simple crime reduction precautions to prevent and reduce crime occurring, plus being alert of anything suspicious in an area and reporting it.

A more active scheme may want to organise events to raise awareness of security in the house and home, and local area.

It is possible to be a member with no other members locally. In this situation, you will be supported, either from or through central office. However we would encourage that member to consider starting a scheme as we believe it would benefit both them and the locality where they live.

Neighbourhood Watch signs can be displayed in windows, and in the street. These act as a deterrent to a would be criminal, alerting them to the fact that property is security marked and residents are not afraid to report anything suspicious.

## Our Aims

1. **To develop safer local communities and improve their quality of life.**
2. **To involve the local community in the prevention and reduction of crime.**
3. **To raise community confidence by reducing the fear of crime.**

## Our Mission

**Neighbourhood Watch supports people in the development of safer communities by:**

**Helping them to have a personal influence on the reduction of crime.**

**Improving the quality of life for themselves and others in their neighbourhood.**

**Neighbourhood Watch Help To:**

- **Reduced the opportunities for crime to occur.**
- **Reduce the fear of crime.**
- **Create a community spirit.**
- **Promote community safety.**
- **Improve the quality of life.**

**“The more members put into a scheme, the more successful it will be.”**

# Roles and Responsibilities

## The Coordinators are the link people in any scheme between residents and Central Office.

- Welcome new residents to the area and encourage new membership. When new residents arrive in your Area we want to encourage them to join your scheme, by registering either through a paper copy or directly onto the database:

[bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk](http://bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk)

Copies of the registration form can be obtained from our Central Office (01234 842043).

- Encourage residents to report crime

NW members are the eyes and ears of the Police, who welcome the input our members can bring; so we would encourage all residents to report any unacceptable behaviour or suspicious activity, (101) or when a crime is taking place. (999).

There may be circumstances where residents are aware of information relating to a crime and can remain anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers (0800 555 111).

- Liaise with local PCSO's.

Bedford & District Neighbourhood Watch has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bedfordshire Police. Part of this concerns building a good working relationship between our Members and local PCSO's, in order to work together to keep our neighbourhoods safer and secure.

- Have regular communication with neighbours.

We would encourage schemes to meet together regularly. This could be in someone's home, local hall or even the local pub; the choice is yours.

However in today's busy society, communication is often through email, text, Facebook, Twitter etc. But don't worry if you don't have a computer, you can still communicate the old fashioned way, talking to each other!

- Attend Quarterly meetings and any appropriate training.

Bedford & District Neighbourhood Watch hold quarterly meetings at Police HQ, where we have discussions on topical issues and interesting guest speakers. All Area Coordinators have the right to vote at these meetings so your presence is important.

**These meetings are open to ALL Members**

Dates and times of these meeting are advertised, in advance, on the website.

[bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk](http://bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk)

**OURWATCH is the website for National Neighbourhood Watch.**

**Our membership database is incorporated here, in our own dedicated section and our dedicated website for Bedford and District Neighbourhood Watch is also incorporated. This is where most information can be found and where new residents are able to join on line.**

# Data Protection - Guidelines for Members

The Data Protection Act is there to ensure that we all know what information is being held about us. It also protects our rights to have access to the data.

It provides a safeguard as to the manner in which information concerning personal details are retained and used by organisations.

Ourwatch is the National Neighbourhood Watch database system and Bedford and District have chosen to use this as our database for Registered Members.

Our aim is that all personal data on the database will be kept accurate and the system will run its own annual audit.

Members have access to their own information held on the database and can amend it themselves as required.

Members can also request their details be removed from the database at any time.

Through the Ourwatch system, it is possible for our Coordinators to access information from their designated Area/Scheme in order to manage that scheme and to send messages within it.

For Coordinators who are willing to use this system, training and authorisation will be given to facilitate this.

This way of receiving information will be the preferred method as Coordinators will not need to hold personal details elsewhere. New Members can also be identified within their Area/Scheme.

We have two ways to register onto our Ourwatch database.

1) Residents can register at any NW public event or through a local coordinator by filling in a paper registration form which will be destroyed within six months of data activation.

This system requires a trained administrator to feed the information onto the database and entering their details correctly.

2) Residents can register by going to our website (<http://bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk>) and placing their details direct. This can be done by clicking on the "join" icon.

This is our preferred option as it does not involve a third party, thus ensuring accuracy. Doing this also allows new Members to state who they wish to receive information from. ie: Fire Service, Police etc. and the type of information received.

When Coordinators are involved with collecting registration forms from new residents, the information received should be forwarded to the Administration as soon as possible.

It is necessary for Coordinators to have access to, in confidence, details of the residents they support in their role as Coordinators. eg: email addresses and/or telephone numbers. This is necessary in order for each scheme to run successfully. However it would be wise for the Coordinator to ensure that residents are aware that this information is purely for correspondence and information giving.

Where Coordinators change or move, this personal information will be transferred to the safe keeping of the new Coordinator or destroyed if no new Coordinator is available.

If an email is sent, using your own email application, to multiple users, please ensure that all recipients are entered using the "Blind Copy" (BCC) to ensure anonymity.

We expect that when our Coordinators vacate their role, that they contact the Neighbourhood Office to seek advice, in order to ensure our responsibilities within the Act are met.

A copy of the Bedford & District Data Protection Policy is available to all Members, on request, from the Neighbourhood Watch Office.

# Support & Resources

The Trustees of Bedford & District Neighbourhood Watch are committed to support you and see your scheme successful.

We have a range of crime reduction material and advice available and these can be found on our website, ([bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk](http://bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk)) or paper copies of booklets and leaflets obtained from Central Office.

## Local Events

You can organise a local event to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Watch in your area and promote community participation. You could also be part of other local events taking place; for example, these could be “bike marking” or “number plate” securing events and we would support you in these with equipment and resources.

We would encourage our members to support other events; eg: Police led Op Visions, or Days of Action when in your Area. Details of these will be published on our website.

## “Flying the Flag”

In some areas, local newsletters have been introduced or existing parish or local council newsletters have been used to promote safety and security in the local neighbourhood. These articles don't have to focus on crime reduction but anything that adds to, and improves community spirit.

We encourage our members to have their property security marked and we can supply a free UV marker pen.

We recommend the use of **SmartWater** which can be purchased from us at a discounted price of £15.00.

SmartWater is the preferred product of Bedfordshire Police and they screen all retrieved stolen goods for any security marking.

An active and effective scheme gives people the chance to get to know one another better and to provide support from within their community to others in the community, particularly the more vulnerable.

Ultimately, success depends on those involved in a scheme, their initiatives and continuing interest and efforts.



Charity No 1062009

**NEIGHBOURHOOD  
WATCH**

[Bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk](http://Bedfordnhw.ourwatch.org.uk)

**Neighbourhood Watch**

**Central Office**

**Riseley Police Station**

**37 High Street. Riseley.**

**MK44 1DX**

**01234842861**

[bedfordnhwatch@gmail.com](mailto:bedfordnhwatch@gmail.com)

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