

HARINGEY ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES

MINUTES OF THE HANHW QUARTERLY MEETING

Civic Centre, Wood Green

15th October 2015 at 7pm

Present:

DC Chris Dawson (Guest Speaker), Geoffrey Rendle (CAB Guest Speaker), A/Insp Lorna Taylor (Guest Speaker), Linda Alliston, Alison Atkinson, Bisi Awoniyi, Martin Ball, Celia Bower, Bridget Cudd, Friedrich Ernst, Renee Fletcher, Lesley Flynn, Patrick Flynn, Maggie Gennin, Lauritz Hansen-Bay, Sheryl Hendrickson, Mary Holtby, Martin Iles, Tony Jackson, Eric Jury, Debbie Lambrou, Wendy Lee, Arthur Leigh, Cllr. Toni Mallett, Gerry Newby, Ray Parker, Hazel Penry, Vivien Rodgers, Joyce Rosser, Gail Stean, Nick Summers, Pauline Syddell, Hilary West, Rosie Yarrow

Apologies received from:

Cllr. David Beacham, Jennifer Bell, Joseph Boyle, Richard Green, Wendy Hill, Gillian Kilby, Brian Livingston, Gemma Minguel, Cllr. Liz Morris, Joan Morrison, Sally Mustoe, Christine Nickles, Mary Rawitzer, Jacqueline Servat, Alison Smith, Ian Sygrave, John Walters, Cllr. Ann Waters, Reg White, Cllr. Bernice Vanier

1. Introductions:

- Neighbourhood Watch Link Manager Pauline Syddell is standing in for the deputy Chair for this meeting.
- There are now 305 watches since the last meeting.
- **New Watches**– Wembury Road, Sylvan Avenue, Seymour Road, Coldford Estate, Fortis Green & Muswell Hill RA.
- Two Neighbourhood Watch members have sadly recently passed away: Albert Barnwell (Alexandra) and Beryl Wayne (Fortis Green) – this meeting is dedicated to them.
- Pauline reminded members to always sign in their attendance via the sign-in sheet.
- “Compost Giveaway” event announcement from Joyce Rosser.
- The event will take place on Sunday 18th October 2015 at Alexandra Park.
- 28 tonnes of compost made at the London Waste Eco Park from our garden and food waste will be given away between 10 – 3pm.
- Those wanting to take compost will need to load their own bags.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 25th June 2015:

- Approved

3. Guest Speaker: Chris Dawson from the police SC&07 Organised Crime Command. Presentation on scams and fraud, and how to avoid being a victim.

- Chris works for the new Falcon Unit, responsible for fraud and online crime (e.g. cybercrime).
- This department has been set up for 18 months.
- Cybercrime is not one of the Mayor's priorities; however it was felt it should be at the top of the list, as some proceeds from fraud are known to fund extremist groups and terrorism.
- Robbing a bank offers criminals less rewards now than it might have done in the past.
- There is a Met team of 10 officers who cover the whole of London to try to uncover crime trends on this topic.
- The aim of this team is to improve people's awareness and make it harder for criminals to carry out their fraudulent behaviour.
- Reporting of fraud should be made direct to Action Fraud, at <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>, or by calling 0300 123 2040.
- Via this web link you can report/log details on any fraud or crime that has taken place on a computer, via mail or phone.
- If a crime is taking place in the moment, and there is a chance the police could apprehend the suspect, then please call 999.
- Fraud can take place at home as well, via "doorstep fraud".
- E.g. a dodgy builder might suggest your roof needs repairing, when in fact there is nothing wrong with the roof.
- Chris recommended the "Little Book of Big Scams" which offers fraud prevention advice; this is available at most Nat West Bank Branches.
- There exists a network of fraud prevention agencies within constabularies across the country that work in partnership with each other.
- Some agencies specialise in collecting data, others only publish the information.
- Fraud is a borderless crime, so it is imperative that communities/agencies communicate with each other.
- Cybercrime is a hot topic at the moment and police are doing their best to make people aware of how they can protect themselves online.
- It is not just about what you do online (e.g. criminals tracking your activity) but also about protecting your identity from being stolen.
- Fraud and cybercrime are linked.
- When someone's house is burgled, they call the police, however if someone were to receive scam mail in the post (e.g. pay £10 to win an online lottery!), they do not necessarily link this to fraud and the activity will not be reported.
- It is estimated that only 2% of the public report scams.
- Chris highlighted the need for members of the public to report instances of fraud and attempted fraud. If the numbers do not accurately reflect the reality, then the resources/budget will not be allocated accurately to combat this issue. There will be a disproportionate response.
- 2013/2014 there was a reported loss of 1.8 billion in the UK due to fraudulent activities - a great detriment to the economy.
- 10% was due to investment fraud alone.
- Investment fraud concerns companies setting up a bogus business and cold calling the public/other companies with the sole purpose of defrauding their victims. The company can be registered with the government's Companies House; however it is not necessarily verified (e.g. checking the address).

- People often feel embarrassed when they have been the victim of fraud, but these offenders are good old fashioned conmen and should not be allowed to perpetuate their crimes.
- If you feel that something doesn't feel right, simply hang up the phone/ cease communications.
- Storage and parking are hot areas of investment fraud – one of the most costly types. The business plans with relation to this do not add up.
- Chris relayed that he was trying to help a woman who had lost £90K due to this type of fraud.
- Courier Fraud - is when fraudsters call and trick you into handing your cards and PIN numbers to a courier on your doorstep. There are many variations of the scam, but it usually follows this method: A fraudster will cold call you on a landline, claiming to be from your bank or the police.
- The fraudsters use “tone recognising technology” to carry out this crime.
- The victim may think that they are on a secure dial tone when they are instructed to call the bank/police, however the dial tone is fake, as is the person on the other end to whom they speak (e.g. you divulge your bank details unwittingly to someone whom you think is a bank staff member but is actually a criminal).
- Other fraud includes online shopping, online auction fraud where a product is falsely advertised (e.g. EBay).
- If it's too good to be true, it usually is.
- Do not trust unknown numbers or emails that you are not familiar with as these can be disguised.
- Chris asks that if members are part of other community groups/societies they might want to share this information and advice on fraud.
- Operation Sterling is the team who deal with fraud and provide resources to help combating this type of crime.

Q: A member of the public relays how he was a victim of fraud using tone recognising technology where someone can receive a fraudulent phone call and hang up but the line stays open for fraudsters to listen/track any private information that is divulged over the phone. How is this possible?

A: Chris relayed that this is feasible through the old wired telephone system. The Met is working with the telecom operators to get the response time (the time that the line remains open) down to 0. It is a challenge because the issue needs to be resolved manually.

- Pauline relayed that the Little Book of Big Scams is also available at Nat West bank branches.
- Chris mentioned there is also a similar book geared towards providing businesses with scam prevention advice.
- The police will send any of the publications for free, simply ask.

Q: Cybercrime – how do you report that you have been a victim of this type of crime, how does it help with national statistics if it's international?

A: Any incidents reported of international crime certainly still give us a picture; we are working in partnership with international agencies.

Q: Can you change your email password? If you have received information which you feel is scam related, is this a viable option?

A: Yes this can be done. Be vigilant.

Q: Is there a list of approved companies that can be looked up if we want to verify whether a company is genuine?

A: Sadly, no. If you're not sure, hang up the phone. If there is an investment opportunity, then why don't they make the money themselves?

- A member stated that one trick he uses when he is not sure of a number is to answer the phone speaking a different language.

Q: A member relayed an instance when a friend had contacted the police after a call from a scam artist (who happened to be sitting in the front drive of the victim's house) and the police responded that no action could be taken as the activity was classified as an "attempt" and nothing of detriment had actually occurred. Why is this the case?

A: Two years ago, this might have been the common message, however things have changed now. This would be classified as an emergency response for police.

Q: We bought a house, is there any way we can prevent people from still using our new address? E.g. some financial institutions share information.

A: It is common for fraudsters to use the old address to commit bad deeds. Report any issues to the bank or whomever.

Q: Certain members of the community are more vulnerable than others (individuals with mental health issues, older members of the community). How can I alert the police to any suspicions I have about fraudsters who might be taking advantage of these individuals?

A: Boroughs have been given funding to visit the various communities to discuss these prevention techniques, please distribute/share any knowledge, learning materials. It might be worthwhile to log anything suspicious with 101. Also, any issues related to children being taken advantage of can be recorded under the Merlin database (a child protection database run by the Met).

Q: Contactless cards? What's the story on this?

A: There are products you can use to protect yourself against fraud that may occur with credit cards.

- A member relayed that a disgruntled bank employee who became redundant stole money from their bank account.
- Chris classified this as "Insider Fraud" which is the threat that current, former or contract employees will abuse system access to compromise data, operations or security.

Q: What is your advice about online banking?

A: There are various apps you can use to log into your bank securely which very few people will be able to intercept. One tip is **not** to access your bank account using a free/public Wi-Fi connection as there is no guarantee of the security of the network.

4. Guest Speaker: Geoffrey Rendle: Research and Campaign coordinator for the Citizen Advice Bureau. Scam awareness; don't be rushed, don't be hushed.

- Geoffrey shared that there are several sources of information that members might find useful in their Neighbourhood Watches to help educate other members on the topic of scams.
- The Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) aims to do 2 things:
 1. Offer free confidential, impartial advice
 2. Engage with local bodies to provide a service

- For example, if we come across an issue with a rogue trader, the bureau might put an article in the local paper highlighting this issue. Geoffrey has a responsibility to tell people about problems that come to his attention and any trends that he might identify.
- The Town Hall is no longer providing CAB services, there are drop in services at Tottenham, opposite Aldi on Tuesday's and Thursdays.
- Sessions also take place at health centres and children's centres.
- Advice can be garnered through: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> and there is also a telephone service 03444 889626.
- Like the drop in service, sometimes demands via telephone exceed what we can cater for; however there is information available online.
- Services include housing benefits, health related issues, debts, consumer queries.
- It is hard to find records of people who have been a victim of a scam.
- The figures show about 5% of people who have been scammed, however this figure only reflects those that have reported their issue.
- The CAB slogan is "Don't be rushed, don't be hushed".
- If you click on the national website <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>, and type "I've been scammed" into the search field, several search results will pop up providing advice on how to report a scam, how to stop a scam, how to help prevent someone vulnerable from being scammed.
- There are various videos, interactive exercises, quizzes – all things that can be shared within the neighbourhood watches, in local community centres, and via religious societies.
- Geoffrey's personal email is geoffrey.rendle@haringeycabx.org.uk.

Q: Ducketts Common? Are you still there?

A: No, we have now moved down the road from that location.

Q: In general, what would you say is the main CAB issue of the people you come across?

A: People bring to us issues of housing benefit claims, issues of being harshly treated (e.g. bad landlords, private rental accommodation which may be discriminatory).

5. Acting Inspector Laura Taylor - update on Safer Neighbourhoods, question and answer session.

- Inspector Taylor has been based in Haringey for 14 months.
- She is the Acting Inspector for the North Area (e.g. Woodside, White Hart Lane, Wood Green).
- She has previously worked in Enfield.
- What's going on in neighbourhood policing?
- Pick-pocketing is high around this time, in particular after school hours.
- There are plain clothes officers out and about on Wood Green High Road.
- Prime targets of this crime are the elderly and mothers with bags on the back of their trolleys/buggies?.
- Inspector Taylor urges members to remind members not to leave bags unattended/open and to remain alert.
- The plain clothes police team working for Safer Transport had a lot of success while working for about a month at Wood Green tube station, Turnpike Lane.
- If members are keen on having up to date/in the moment crime prevention advice, news stories, information on what the patrol teams are up to, they can check out the corporate address on twitter [@MPSHaringey](https://twitter.com/MPSHaringey)

- As part of a recent Operation, there were three weapon sweeps per week in various locations of Haringey to find hidden knives that have been involved in gang crimes; any knives found would undergo DNA testing.
- Operation “Autumn Nights” will be taking place between 26th October and 7th November.
- This operational activity concerns anti-social behaviour during the Halloween/Bonfire period.
- Staff will be taken from the day shift to conduct the night shift and the Emergency Response Team will be on hand as well.
- Another initiative from the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has been the launch of “Operation Omega” which is targeted at reducing crime in 7 key areas within particular boroughs.
- The 7 key areas which have a high impact on victims are: burglary, criminal damage, robbery, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a person, theft of a motor vehicle and violence with injury.
- In future, the public can expect a different way of allocating policing resources. For example, guarding Julian Assange cost the government a lot. Also, officers will no longer have as much presence at sporting events. The use of security guards as an alternative will be looked at.
- All this depends on what the budget findings are at the end of the year.

Q: What’s being done about the loiterers within the doorstep of Costa Coffee and betting shops at Turnpike Lane?

A: This activity falls under the policing that is being done on/around Ducketts Common. The teams are aware of this occurrence and where possible are issuing individuals with dispersal notices.

Q: During/after sporting events, groups are dispersed by police around Seven Sisters in a manner that does not seem very operationally effective and can impact the quality of life of those who live in that area.

A: The crowds are escorted depending on various circumstances that may arise at the time (e.g. overcrowding in a particular spot/at a tube station). The chaperoning of individuals is done with the best intentions of public safety.

Q: Hearing a lot of conflicting information from the Commissioner and Mayor of London on the status of the force. Who should we believe?

A: Apologies, I will not be able to answer that question.

Q: What is the latest status on the operational numbers in the Haringey Borough?

A: At this time nothing has been decided. After Christmas we will know what cutbacks will need to be implemented (e.g. the budget allocations).

Q: Have there been any reviews of the local policing model? There are not enough Safer Neighbourhood police on the street.

A: The local policing model was implemented in June 2013; it was piloted for 18 months after which the model moved away from Safer Neighbourhoods to a Neighbourhood Policing team. Then, after 18 months, it went back to Safer Neighbourhoods. The reason for this reshuffle is because the Assistant Commissioner reviewed the new model and said it was not working. New responsibilities that were allocated were taking police away from the street. There was a shift pattern change in 2015; this should enable neighbourhoods to now see more police on the street.

6. Any Other Business

- Next Meeting on 28th January 2016