

Beware of Bogus Council Workers

There have recently been a couple of incidents in different areas of Essex where 'Bogus Callers' claimed that they were from the local council and had come to investigate and remove rats' nests in the loft. These bogus callers have then proceeded to take a deposit of cash (or in at least one case with a card reader) and said they would return to remove the nest and then disappeared.

If you do get a caller using this story, they are likely to be fraudulent. Please ring your local council direct to confirm that any caller is bona fide. Fraudsters can produce fake ID badges. If an unknown trader knocks on your door at any time, don't open it unless you use a door chain.

Preferably, open a small window either upstairs or downstairs and speak through the window. To verify someone's identity please ring the organisation they claim to be from. Use a number from a bill or telephone directory that you have looked up yourself - never use a telephone number provided by the caller. A bona fide caller will wait outside whilst you verify their validity - a bogus caller is also likely to disappear as soon as they know you are telephoning to check identity. Please do not let anyone into your home if you are not expecting them.

If you do need work undertaken on your property, Trading Standards operate a 'Buy With Confidence' scheme, which enables residents to identify approved local traders who have readily demonstrated a commitment to high working standards, high levels of customer care and a fair trading policy.

The 'Buy with Confidence' scheme is available via the internet <https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/> or by telephone 03454 040506.

REMEMBER:

Your door - Your house - Your choice.

Not sure? Don't Open the Door!

Don't Become a Cyber Crime Victim

Essex Fraud and Cyber Data

- Essex is 4th highest force in terms of fraud reports alone
- In the 12 months from April 2016 – March 2017 there were over 15000 reports from Essex, accounting for over **£42 million in losses**, but many victims fail to report this type of crime
- Business victims account for 70% of the reported crime above
- Of the enablers recorded cyber is highest with 62%
- Biggest standalone cybercrime tool is Ransomware

The Basic Protection You Need

Download software updates

Download software and app updates as soon as they appear. They contain vital security upgrades that keep your devices and business information safe.

Use strong passwords

Use strong passwords made up of at least three random words. Using lower and uppercase letters, numbers and symbols will make your passwords even stronger. Don't post password answers on social media - pets names etc.

Delete suspicious emails

Delete suspicious emails as they may contain fraudulent requests for information or links to viruses

Use anti-virus software

Your computers, tablets and smart phones can easily become infected by small pieces of software known as viruses or malware. Install internet security software like anti-virus on all your devices to help prevent infection.

Security Shop

We normally use the back page of the Observer to promote our range of home security products. However, we are updating the range to bring even more useful crime prevention tools and we'll feature these in the next edition of the Observer.

In the meantime, you can browse and buy on line using uttlesfordnhw.org.uk, so check us out there.



The Observer

Together we are Stronger

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Newsletter for the Uttlesford District Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Find us at www.uttlesfordnhw.org.uk and www.facebook.com

NOT SURE? Don't open the door!

When traders turn up on your doorstep, they often tell you;

- they are in the area and have spotted a problem with your home or garden
- they can offer to carry out work cheaply but then charge an extortionate price after it has been completed.

With your door chain in place, just politely tell them you are not interested, and then report any suspicious persons/behaviour/incidents to the police on 101 or dial 999 in an emergency.

Bogus Callers!!!

We have been informed that some dubious cold calling Tree Surgeons/Landscape Gardeners are working in our area and there are reports that they have been committing offences. "Your Doorstep, Your Choice", we would advise you to think twice about engaging cold calling traders. If you need a trader for a particular job and do not have a trader by personal recommendation contact Trading Standards "Buy with Confidence Scheme" on 0345 404 0506.

Want More From Neighbourhood Watch? Just Ask!

Here is the latest edition of your Neighbourhood Watch Observer - We hope that it provides you with some helpful reading. But we have more to offer as we strive to improve the service we give our members.

We especially want to improve the way we provide you with useful and timely information - and we can offer this service if you sign up to receive our weekly NhW Bulletin. This is delivered to your computer or any e-device,

and provides information from NhW, the latest crimes in your area and, most importantly, advice on crime prevention.

All you need to do is sign up and we will add your details to the confidential database (which means that no one else will see your details and this will not be passed to any other third-party organisation).

So, sign up today and the Bulletin service will be sent to you weekly.

I WANT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION BULLETINS (by e-mail)

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Phone:

E-Mail:

Details are in held in accordance with the Data Protection Act and are not passed to third parties. Please tick box to agree permission to pass your details to your local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and add these to the NWN database

Please return to: nhw@acjohnson4.plus.com

Tick

or Essex Police Front Desk, c/o Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Thefts from Vans

- Think about security especially when working away from home and parking at a hotel. If you have tools on board remove them overnight if possible and add signage to your vehicle to indicate you have done so.
- Make a point of property marking your equipment both overtly and covertly.

Please also take on board the following advice

- DON'T tempt thieves by leaving any items on display.
- DO clean the SatNav ring marking off of the windscreen?
- DO turn Bluetooth off anything left in the car - it can be detected when on.
- DO lock your vehicle, close windows, and set the alarm, even when parked on your driveway or when carrying out any work.
- DO park with your vehicles rear doors up against garage doors to prevent access where possible.
- DO NOT just press the button on your fob to lock your vehicle - Look at your car to see the lights flash etc to confirm locking; someone may be nearby with a "remote blocker" and stop your car from locking.
- DO try to park in a secure, well-lit area where possible.



parking at a hotel try and park within view of reception, CCTV cameras or your room.

- Do mark tools and property visibly with your post code and house number, and consider products such as CRE Mark, Selecta DNA and Smart Water.
- DO register serial numbers of your property on www.immobilise.com This is a completely free service. Visit the website for more information.
- DO consider having additional security door locks fitted, they make it harder for the thief and are a great visual deterrent.
- DO consider having a safe box secured within the vehicle and keep it locked.
- DO consider a PIR alarm that calls you on the mobile phone when activated. Although intended for sheds, this works

just as well in a van.

- If using a public car park - Try to use a "Parkmark" approved car park www.parkmark.co.uk

Empty your van or car before someone else does!! .

For further crime prevention advice see <https://www.essex.police.uk/advice/your-property/vehicles/> or dial 101 and ask for your local Crime Prevention Officer.

Braintree and Uttlesford Crime Prevention Officer - stephen.armsonsmith@essex.pnn.police.uk - **Tel 101 ext 407110**

If you know who is committing crime call 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**

Your coordinator is:

Are Your MOT Details Accurate?

Following a clarification by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), we are urging used car buyers to check MOT details online, rather than relying on the paper certificate.



In response to a Freedom of Information request, the DVSA's MOT Scheme Management Team confirmed: "...the view of DVSA is that the test certificate is a receipt style certificate and it is the database holds the correct record.

DVSA advice is that if a customer has concerns to the validity of the certificate or wishes to, they can confirm the details via the gov.uk website."

"This important clarification should signal a change in consumer best practice. Most car buyers accept the paper MOT at face value, but 25 years of investigating cloned and clocked vehicles has taught us not to be so trusting. The first thing we do with any claim is check the MOT on the primary source, the government website. It is a great free service and you can see at a glance the recorded mileages going back years and any advisory notes on the condition of the vehicle. Any discrepancy between this data and the paper certificate should set alarm bells ringing. Vehicle crime has become highly sophisticated but when it comes to paper MOTs a lot of the tactics are rudimentary, commonly simple photocopies with the mileage altered.

In one recent case, someone had downloaded the sample certificate from the government website, filled it in and passed it off as genuine. They should at least put a watermark on that because they've inadvertently provided a handy resource for fraudsters."

MOT history – <https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history>

MOT (current) & tax – <https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax>

ACTIVE CITIZENS

Essex Police are looking for members of the community to become Active Citizens.

The volunteers will become part of a group of reliable and professional people, keen to make a difference in the community and become a valuable local resource. They should be a visual deterrent and a link between the public and Police, to achieve more cohesive communities, interact with residents and help to make policing more transparent.

If you are interested in Volunteering for Essex Police or want more information then see the link at - [Police Volunteers](#)

You can email your interest to active.citizen@essex.pnn.police.uk

Make a difference in your local community

Victim Support helps people affected by crime feel stronger, understood and able to move forward with their lives. Last year in Essex, our team of trained volunteers and staff supported over 3,000 people affected by crime across the county.

We are looking for reliable volunteers with great listening skills, who have 4 hours or more to spare a week, to join our team in Essex.

We will train you to offer practical and emotional support to people affected by crime.

Whether you want to help people in your local community, give something back, or learn new skills, this could be the rewarding role you are looking for. Successful applicants could be on our next four day fully accredited training course in Chelmsford this September (21st, 22nd, 29th & 30th).

Interested? Find out more by emailing essexvolunteering@victimsupport.org.uk or calling the Essex Service Delivery team on 01277 357557. Victim Support is an independent charity. Our services are free and available to everyone, whether or not the crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened. If you have been affected by crime, call us on **0300 30 30 165**. www.victimsupport.org.uk