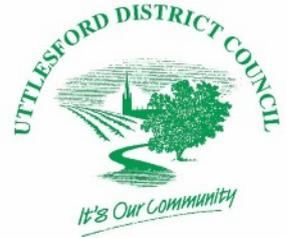




# The Watch



## Uttlesford District Neighbourhood Watch - Together we are stronger - Issue 01-19

### What is Neighbourhood Watch?

The aim of Neighbourhood Watch (NhW) is to bring neighbours together to create a strong, friendly, active community where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen. NhW is supported by Uttlesford District Council, Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The aim is to promote home security and other measures to reduce crime. Members are encouraged to report suspicious activity to the Police and support vulnerable people in the community. We also promote home fire safety and last but not least, we encourage neighbourliness and closer communities.

Anyone can join the scheme, so if you are interested and want to get involved, please contact your local coordinator shown on page 4. Alternatively, visit our website: [www.uttlesfordnhw.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordnhw.org.uk)

### Vehicle watch

Theft from cars and vans is on the increase. It can take as little as 10 seconds for a thief to steal something from your car. However, most vehicle crime is preventable and the best way to protect your belongings is to lock your car whenever you leave it, even if it's only for a few minutes. Other things you can do include:

- Removing everything from the car; don't even leave a jacket where it can be seen.
- Closing all windows and sun roof when you leave the car.
- Not storing things in the boot; take them with you.
- Storing car ownership information in your home, not your car.
- Having a routine to ensure you always take the keys out of the ignition.
- Taking removable stereos and sat-nav equipment with you.
- Using secure (theft resistant) number plates making your plates less attractive to thieves.
- Parking in a public place where there are street lights.

#### How to keep your car safe at home

Thieves sometimes break into houses looking for car keys. They can also use wires and hooks to try and drag

your keys through the letterbox. Keep your keys away from doors and windows and tucked away out of sight. If you have a keyless entry vehicle, keep your keys in a signal blocking pouch. These pouches block the signal emitted from the key to the vehicle. Take it with you when you go away too (available to purchase from Uttlesford NhW). Have your vehicle's windows etched with its registration number or the last seven digits of the vehicle identification number (VIN). This can put criminals off, as it makes your car more difficult to sell and it also makes it easier for police to get your car back if it is stolen.



**Protect your vehicle - don't give thieves an easy ride!**

#### Parking on pavements and verges

Inconsiderate parking causes issues throughout Uttlesford. Often there is not enough space left on pavements for pushchairs, wheelchairs, or mobility vehicles to pass.



Road space needs to be left for access by emergency vehicles – it could be you or your neighbour that needs that fire engine or ambulance. Obstruction is an offence and parking on or damage to

pavements and verges also contravenes local by-laws. Please show consideration to others.

## Home Watch



Simple steps to protect your home will prevent virtually all but the most determined thief from entering your property.

### **Make it look like you're in**

When you go out during the day, make it look like your home isn't empty. Leave a radio on, don't leave the house too tidy and / or place a vacuum cleaner in sight (with the plug out of sight and unplugged). These simple displays make it look like you're home. When you go out in the evening consider using timer switches or daylight sensors to turn your lights on whilst you're out. Remember, put lights on timers in rooms that you'd normally be in.

### **When you are away on holiday**

Before you go on holiday, take a few steps to make it look like you're home. Ask a friend to open or shut curtains or, if that's not possible, leave them open, never half-closed. A TV simulator makes it look like your TV is on and has its own timer. Also ask a friend to collect your post or use Royal Mail KeepSafe. Sharing too much information on social media could be giving burglars information about when your house is empty. Think about who might be able to read your social media posts. Check your privacy settings and only have people on your social media accounts that you know and trust.

### **Back in a sec or out for the day...**

Whether you're popping to the shops or heading out to work, secure your house in the same way. Even if you're in the back garden, secure your house as burglars look for easy opportunities to take items from open windows or unlocked garages. Keys should not be left in the door as these can be used to manipulate the lock, removed and used from the outside to enter.

### **Door security**

Good locks keep your door secure but these need to be supported by strong door frames. If you need to replace your damaged or weak doorframe, ensure the door set is certified to British Standard PAS 24.

### **PVCu-Doors**

Most of these are fitted with a multi-point locking system comprising of a latch and mortice bolt at the centre, and either a further mortice bolt or hook bolt above and below this. If your house is fitted with one of these make sure that you always lock the door with a key. Simply closing ....

the door and pushing the handle up won't stop a burglar. Make sure at all times you fully engage the multi-locking mechanism and that the door is securely locked. Fitting additional locks or security measures to PVCu doors may invalidate your warranty.

### **Wooden Doors**

Your front door or the door you use to come and go should be fitted with at least two locking points. These locks should be to British Standard BS3621 and ideally a night latch and a five lever mortice lock. Rear doors can be fitted with a mortice sash lock and either lockable bolts or mortice rack bolts top and bottom. Note! With 'stable' type doors treat each door of the set as separate doors.

### **Patio Doors**

Most modern patio doors are fitted with a multi-point locking system which includes locking hook bolts and anti-lift systems. If you have older patio doors you may want to think about supplementing the existing locks with additional patio door locks.

### **Windows**

Restrict access via open windows, even when you're in the house. If you are indoors, use fanlight windows for ventilation and lock the lower windows. If you do not have these, use lockable window restrictors.

### **Keys**

Ensure that all your windows have locks, if you do not have multi-point locking systems. There are a number of good locks on the market which are available relatively cheaply.

### **House keys**

Remove your keys from sight and place them in a secure location away from the front door but ensure they are easily accessible in case of a fire.

### **Car keys**

Some burglars break in to steal your car using your car keys. Never keep your car keys by the front door or in view of a window. Store them somewhere difficult to find or maybe in a drawer that is noisy to open. To avoid confrontation though, never take your car keys to the bedroom at night.

### **Shed and garages**

Fit strong British Standard locks to your outbuildings. Store away any tools or ladders so they can't be taken or used to aid burglars. If you have any doors which connect directly to your house, they should be treated in the same way you would an external door.

### **Security lights**

Good outdoor lighting on your property can deter a burglar. To the front of the house use lamps with energy ....

efficient bulbs operated by a daylight sensor so they come on automatically when it's dark. To the rear of the house use lamps operated by a PIR movement sensor but be aware that animal movements might set them off and make you jump! Any light fitted should be compatible with any CCTV equipment you have.

## Wheelie bins

Burglars have been known to use wheelie bins and other rubbish storing items as a way to get over fences into your back and side gardens. Don't let a burglar turn a bin into a stepladder. Storing these away keeps your garden safe. Intruder alarms deter burglars who will avoid breaking into a property with an alarm and will find easier opportunities.

## Alarms

Beware of cold calling alarm companies. We recommend getting at least three quotes from installers who are affiliated to the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) or Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board (SSAIB).

If you have an intruder alarm, use it. If you tell your insurance company you have one but you don't use it, you may have insurance claims rejected if you're the victim of crime.

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## Van owners beware:

Thefts from vans are on the increase. Take the following precautions and prevent yourself from becoming a victim:

- If you are staying in a hotel, where possible remove your tools from your van and keep them in your room overnight. Don't assume your vehicle has locked properly using a key fob lock. Criminals can use devices which block the signal. Always check your doors are locked before leaving your vehicle unattended.
- If you have a garage, use it and if your van is parked on a driveway, consider installing security lighting. If neither of these apply, try to park in well-lit areas.
- Consider alarming the vehicle or fitting an internal security cage when tools and equipment are not being used, ensure they are kept securely in a lockable store rather than in your vehicle.
- Consider whether the storage area can be alarmed. If the equipment is portable, take it with you.
- Don't leave tools in vehicles unattended or overnight, and place a sign in the window stating they have been removed.
- Lock and immobilise vehicles and equipment when not in use.
- Visibly mark your machinery and tools using an engraving or chemical etching kit or use a forensic marking kit. Place a sticker in your window to say you have done so - the signage alone, can be a very effective deterrent.
- Keep a list of tools, together with serial numbers and any identifying marks. You can do this at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com). This will help to trace them back to you if they are recovered.

## Cyber Watch

### Be aware when you are online

The vast majority of consumers use the Internet without any problems. However, anyone can fall prey to cyber criminals if they do not take basic security precautions when online.

No bank or card issuer will contact you by email and ask you to enter all your personal and financial details online. If you receive a message requesting this, report it to your bank, and then delete it. If you get an email from an unknown source, do not open and do not click on any attachments. Make sure your anti-virus software is up-to-date.

Never follow the messages from anti-virus software you encounter whilst on the Internet. Only follow anti-virus instructions from the software you have installed on your PC. Install an anti-spyware package and always use a firewall. Ensure your software is up-to-date, for example Windows software is routinely updated on the 2nd Tuesday of every month and security updates are issued on that date. Should a critical update be necessary between monthly updates, make sure it is installed immediately.

### Frauds and Scams: The Risks

A scam is a fraud. Who is at risk? We all are; you are more likely to become a victim of fraud than any other crime. The villains involved are ruthless, care little about their victims and do not discriminate. People of all ages and the vulnerable are all liable to fall victim to this crime, the biggest risk is thinking 'it could not happen to me'. Programs like 'Hustle' glamorise fraud but there is nothing glamorous about being a victim: it can and does destroy people's lives. Fraud comes from many directions and in many forms, constantly evolving and by no means limited to the few examples listed below:

**Postal delivery:** Lottery and holiday wins (be suspicious when you have not even entered!); sales pitches involving a continued commitment; someone stranded abroad in need of cash; inheritance: these are all examples of fraudulent communications by post.

**ATM and Shops:** Distraction at the ATM i.e.: dropped cash and 'shoulder surfing' for your PIN; devices attached to the ATM to hold your card and/or read your PIN; 'shoulder surfing' at the till in a shop followed by a distraction in the car park while you are getting in your car in order to steal your card. Contactless cards can be read by unauthorised readers: this can be prevented by keeping them in foil wallets available to purchase from Uttlesford NhW. Be aware of your surroundings when out and about.

**Telephone, Computers and the Internet:** You are told either by telephone or in an email that you have a virus on your computer and that you need to give them remote access to your computer; your telephone bill has not been paid and your telephone/broadband will be cut off; there has been unusual activity on your bank account and .....

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wanting to send a courier to your house to collect your card; wanting to buy shares you have in such and such a company as part of a hostile takeover – there will be a fee; shopping frauds; carbon credit frauds; telephone call saying your Internet connection will be cut off in 24 hours. These are among many examples of this type of fraud.

## Personal Watch

### Don't be a victim of rogue traders

There continue to be incidents of rogue trader type offences where residents (primarily elderly) have responded to leaflet drops. No matter how charming they may be, always ask for the callers ID. If you are thinking of following up on a service, check online and look for verified reviews. Is the business address verifiable? Check any phone numbers provided. Ask relatives or friends to check out the trader or company on your behalf. Check out Essex Trading Standards website for Trusted Traders – you'll get piece of mind that it's not a scam.

Be aware of promised discounts for 'sign up now' offers. Be aware of any trader requesting a deposit, especially cash. Never accompany a trader to a bank – if you're asked to do so you know it's a bad sign. Rogue traders will not accompany you into banks because they don't want to get caught on CCTV. However, be aware that high street banks do have additional security measures and protocols in place. They will inform police and decline cash withdrawals if they are concerned about you and the nature of the withdrawal.

### Bogus Callers

Bogus callers and traders continue to operate in the area and the advice remains the same: Do not buy anything at the door unless you are 100% certain who you are buying from. Never invite them into your home. If you do decide to purchase anything then shut your door whilst you get the money and when you return only hold the cash in your hand, not your wallet or purse. If you feel you are being bullied or pressured, shut your door and call for assistance either from a neighbour or the police.



For help, advice and lots of other information, please log on to: [www.essex.police.uk/your-area/](http://www.essex.police.uk/your-area/) and choose Braintree-uttlesford.

Reporting a crime: Report a non-urgent matter to the police by dialling 101 or alternatively by logging on to Essex Police website and clicking on 'Do it Online'. For urgent/emergency calls dial 999.



## Security Devices

Available from Uttlesford Neighbourhood Watch



Credit Card Signal Blocker pouch 50p



Door Alarm £6



Padlock Alarm £12



Window shock Alarm £6



Car Key Blocker £5



Fake TV £18

Your local Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator is:

For more information visit: [www.uttlesfordnhw.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordnhw.org.uk)