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A new Community Speed Watch group in Crewkerne

POLICE News

ISSUE 4 2013

SUPPORTING YOU TO BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE

SHUTTING THE GATE ON RURAL CRIME

Action on the farm to combat rural crime

Dozens of officers and volunteers visited farms across South Somerset in a special day of action to combat rural crime.

We spoke to many farmers, giving them crime prevention advice and reassurance on how to protect their property, homes and livestock. Many farmers also took the opportunity to arrange a personal crime prevention survey with us.

It was all part of our on-going drive to improve day-to-day security on farms and cut the amount of theft and burglaries.



PCSO Matt Tailby said: "We are passionate about working with farmers and helping them protect their livelihood.

"What we need is for people in the countryside to be vigilant and to phone the police as soon as they see something suspicious, no matter how minor they think it may be."

Farmers are being urged to join the Farm Watch scheme and to work together and with the police to cut rural crime.

You can read more about Farm Watch on our website www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

See Page 3 for more on rural crime and how to prevent it.

Chard, Crewkerne, Martock, Somerton & area



CRIME PREVENTION

Protect your property by making your shed or outbuilding secure

We're advising householders to be alert to thieves and to take more stringent security measures after a number of high-value thefts from sheds and outbuildings.

In Martock seven expensive road bikes and tools were stolen in one night. A detached studio in a garden was also burgled and valuable model cars and train sets were taken.

That same weekend, but thought to be unconnected, three bikes were stolen from a shed in Crewkerne, and horse tack and tools from another outbuilding in a nearby street.

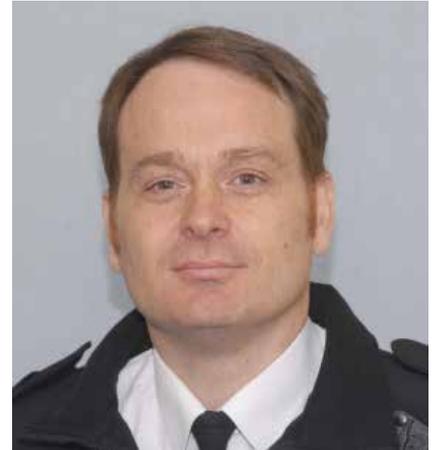
We're advising all homeowners to make sure their property is locked and secured, and even to consider if a shed or

outbuilding is the safest place to store expensive items.

Neighbourhood Sgt Rob Jameson said: "We believe the Martock burglaries are linked and that the thieves knew what they were looking for.

"Our advice is to make sure you have the best lock you can afford on your shed, and fit grills to the windows. You should lock items like bikes or power tools to a secure point, insure your property and use electronic tagging or property marking products."

More bike security advice is available on our website www.avonandsomerset.police.uk under the Crime Prevention heading.



"Our advice is to make sure you have the best lock you can afford on your shed, and fit grills to the windows. You should lock items like bikes and power tools to a secure fixed point."
Sgt Rob Jameson

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Loving the job after one year in office – bring on 2014

It's been a non-stop 365 days for Sue Mountstevens who, in November, marked her one year in office. She said: "I love the job. It's been an extremely challenging year, but it's a worthwhile job and one that I thoroughly enjoy."

As well as addressing her priorities in the area, Somerset has seen Sue launch its own tailored Police and Crime Plan, issue total funding of £207,000 to tackle crime and disorder, and support local community groups and visit local people on out and about days.

She said: "The year has gone so fast,

it's unreal. It's a hectic job, but you hear the expression 'if you love what you're doing it's not your job anymore,' and that's what it's become really.

"I would love to be able to divide myself into more people to be able to attend all the phenomenal things that I get invited to, but sadly there's only one of me – although for some people that would probably be enough!"

Have you been a victim of crime?

Sue wants to hear about your experiences to help shape the future support for victims. Have your say on www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk until Friday Jan 10, 2014.



Dates & Information

Jan 9 – Sue will be visiting Somerset. If you'd like to chat to her please contact us.

Contact the PCC via the website www.avonandsomersetpcc.gov.uk

Call 01275 816 377 You can also find us on Facebook by liking AandSPCC or Twitter @AandSPCC



RURAL CRIME

Crime in the countryside – more action days planned

We'll be holding more rural crime days of action after the positive response to our first one in October.

During the day police visited 190 farms in: Felton, Kilmersdon, Holcombe, Coleford, Chewton Mendip, The Horringtons, Oakhill, Emborough, West Compton, Butleigh, Walton, villages around Street, Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster, Yeovil, Yeovil Marsh, Keinton Mandeville, Pendermer, Wincanton, Temple Combe, Bruton, Somerton, Langport and Martock.

It led to 30 new Farm Watch sign-ups, two intelligence reports and 25 crime reduction survey requests. For those visits where residents were not in, 'Sorry we missed you' calling cards were left resulting in a legacy of our attendance. This may lead to further requests for sign up or crime reduction surveys.

It was the idea of Mendip Inspector Mark Nicholson, who was surprised when he visited a farm in the summer to find property insecure and vehicles left unattended with keys in the ignition.

He said: "It just struck me that this was an open invitation to thieves. I know farms are

working places, but with so much valuable equipment on site it seems common sense to encourage people to take some sensible and practical security measures."

Rural crime officer PC Rowan Hawkins said: "Farmers need to know that we understand the long-term effect that crime can have on their business and day-to-day working environment. For example, having diesel stolen can severely damage your ability to get the harvest in – particularly if you only have a short window in the weather – and that can cost a farmer thousands of pounds in lost crop production."

David White, pictured above with PC Hawkins and Insp Nicholson on his land near Wells, is a victim of rural crime and is now a Farm Watch member.

He said: "Farm Watch is really quite reassuring. We get texts and information, my farm equipment is now all security-tagged and the buildings alarmed, and the farming community is working together to help each other. It's good to see the police out and about on farms, to see that they are taking this seriously."



NEWS IN BRIEF

Help us to beat the burglars

We're reminding householders always to be aware and to take sensible security precautions to protect your property and valuables. Burglaries are thankfully very rare in our area, but they do happen and everyone can help to prevent them. There were three break-ins in one day in November, two on the outskirts of Ilminster and one in Broadway. Cash and jewellery were stolen. We're reminding everyone to keep your valuables safe and your home secure – including not leaving keys in the lock in the inside of doors.

Street art – or vandalism?

Our beat teams in Bruton have been concentrating their efforts on identifying whoever's responsible for graffiti in the town. In the wrong place it isn't art, it can offend people and it costs local authorities thousands of pounds a year to clean up and remove. Call us on 101 if graffiti is a problem where you live.

“Have your say”

See our HQ call staff in action

Staff at the Force Service Centre at our Portishead HQ are offering the chance to see our call handlers at work, taking general and urgent calls and dispatching officers to incidents. Each two-hour visit starts at 7pm on: April 3, June 12, August 7 and October 2 in 2014. To find out more and book your place, contact Lindsey at the NHW office in Bridgwater on 01823 363348 or email lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk. Places are very limited so you're advised to book early.

Meet your Chard police team

A help desk has been set up at Chard Town Hall, staffed by the local beat team every Friday morning. Crime reports can still be made at Chard police station, but this is a chance to speak to local officers about problems such as anti-social behaviour or obtain advice on other matters.

KEEPING YOU SAFE

Be our eyes and ears and help us make Crewkerne a safer place for all

As well as asking people to make their homes, sheds and garages secure against thieves, we're reminding drivers to help us to help you to avoid becoming a victim of crime.

Crewkerne has historically experienced a persistent trend of theft from motor cars. It's still below the national average and we're working hard to reduce the number, but there's always work to do.

Sgt Richard Barnett said: "The vast majority of offences come from valuables left on display in vehicles, with GPS

systems being targeted and computers and tablets.

"We'd ask everyone to not just lock your vehicle but to remove all valuables – including any small change that's often left on display.

"When our beat teams are on their patrols they'll be looking for vehicles with items left insecure and we will try to contact the owner to offer crime prevention advice. As ever, please be our eyes and ears, call us on 101 and help us to make Crewkerne a safer place for all."

KILL YOUR SPEED

New speed watch group for Crewkerne

Motorists in Crewkerne are being urged to curb their fast driving with the launch of a new Community Speed Watch scheme in the town. (Photo, Western Gazette)

It's been set up by volunteers who, with police support, will monitor traffic speeds at hotspots like the A30 during peak commuting times.

Stuart Hunter, South Somerset Community Speed Watch Group chairman, said: "It's been a long time



coming but now we have finally got a team of volunteers together.

"We are really trying to make the community safer, especially when young children are going to school. The aim is to remind people of the speed they should be going and to encourage them to slow down in certain areas."

How can you set your community priorities, shape local policing and have your say?

Log on to our website to find out when we are holding your nearest beat surgery or "Have Your Say" meeting. You can also register your priorities online. Log on to the "In Your Area" section of our website for more news and details on local meetings.

