

Business Watch Launch



from left: PCSO Holland-Baker; Lesley Peterson (NHW); Belinda Carty (Sainsbury's); Alpesh Patel (Londis)

A Business Watch scheme covering shops in Hackbridge has been set up by a local Police Community Support Officer. The purpose is to encourage businesses to be vigilant and share information with each other as well as Police and Sutton Council about criminal activities, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues.

These issues could include the passing of counterfeit currency, an aggressive customer, a shoplifter, graffiti, littering or fly-tipping. A total of 29 local shops and businesses have signed up to the scheme. Members are being asked to:

- encourage their staff to report anyone acting suspiciously to police immediately on 999
- establish regular contact with neighbouring businesses to share relevant information
- report environmental issues to Sutton Council
- raise issues at regular meetings which local police officers will attend
- set up a scheme to ban anyone that causes problems related to crime and anti-social behaviour

PCSO Sarah Holland-Baker, of Wandle Valley Safer Neighbourhoods Team, who has been working with local businesses over the last few weeks to launch the scheme, said police are keen to have regular contact with businesses and to work with them to reduce crime and keep the local area safe.

"Any suspicious activities will be shared and reported to police so we can deal quickly with any criminal or anti-social behaviour. Hackbridge is undergoing major development at the moment and we are keen to play our part by helping grow the sense of local community and to encourage the shops and businesses to improve the contact they have with each other," said PCSO Holland-Baker.

Alpesh Patel, store manager at Londis, said: "It's all about businesses working together and making this a good place for customers to shop."

Belinda Carty, store manager at Sainsbury's, said: "It's important we work together to build a sense of community for the benefit of everyone who lives or works around here."

The Hackbridge Business Watch co-ordinator is Whitney Farmer at the Red Lion pub. Tel: 020 8647 3184.

Members of the scheme have also applied to join Neighbourhood Watch in Sutton, which has the largest NHW membership of all the 32 London boroughs with 3,800 enrolled members in 1,099 Watches covering 72% of the borough.

Lesley Peterson, local Neighbourhood Watch Ward Co-ordinator, said: "I'm thrilled that Business Watch in Hackbridge has got off the ground and I believe this can only enhance the Neighbourhood Watch concept of looking out for each other."