



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Registered Charity No 1078269

2018 – Issue 1 (Jan – Mar)

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

Firstly, I should like to wish everyone the happiest, healthiest and most crime-free of years possible in 2018.

My next pleasure is then to welcome you to the latest edition of our Association's Quarterly Newsletter and to commend its content to you. Creating variety in our newsletter is a constant challenge so we are always interested to hear from anyone with suggestions for possible future content – via our editor, Neal, at (nealf@talktalk.net).

The feature on the new 2018 Data Protection Regulations mentions the **Members' Survey**, which has now begun, with very grateful assistance from one of our Police Volunteers, Brenda Hunter. She will be trying to contact co-ordinators, by 'phone in the first instance, for a short conversation about how NHW is going for you. It will be a gradual process across the coming year so please do not be offended if we don't get to you for a while – and remember that you can always contact us either by phone (NHW Office at Herne Bay Police Station: 01227 744746) or email: canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com

Also of special interest in this issue should be the article about loneliness. This is something we've touched on before – but no apologies for reminding and passing on some valuable ideas and resources. Of course, being aware of those of our neighbours who might be 'vulnerable' for a whole range of different reasons is, I'm sure, something that we all have in our minds throughout the year – and how much more important when the worst of winter weather, and loneliness for some, is likely still to lie ahead.

As many of you will already know our **2018 Conference / AGM is on the morning of Saturday 10th March** – at the usual venue of the Canterbury Academy. Further details will come out to you by early February but please write this very important event in our NHW year into your diaries. We will have the usual Canterbury policing update and then be devoting content to current concerns regarding a couple of population groups, who are particularly vulnerable to crime. In addition, there will be the usual opportunities to network with others, enjoy some Crime Prevention displays – and also refreshments.

And finally – my thanks as always to NHW Co-ordinators and Deputies for all their support for their neighbours, and extra special thanks to Committee Members for their hard work on behalf of Canterbury NHW in 2017.

C&DNHWA Growth Since Last Newsletter

The Committee offers thanks to the following for support of NHW in their communities:

New Schemes:

Dargate Road, Dargate, Whitstable – Chris Payne
Foxdene Road, Seasalter – Mike Lynch

New Coordinators:

Maydowns Road, Chestfield – Mike Poole

The Wise Old Owl Is Back!

Last year C&DNHWA provided Owl Card-Minders for sale to its members. Our stock dwindled quickly, assisted no doubt by press articles which confirmed our belief that criminal 'lifting' of data from contactless debt and credit cards is on the rise in the UK. The banks remain tight-lipped about this and the police, in Kent at least, have no reported instances of fraud occasioned by this means, which is hardly surprising given that victims wouldn't have been aware if their card had been read by someone standing next to them in a crowded place! What we do know is that several of our own members have had issues with their contactless cards being read when they didn't offer them up for use. Others have been the victim of fraud occasioned by cloned cards which they believe were produced from data taken by card readers. These experiences have convinced them, and us, that protection for contactless cards is a very sensible, and cheap, precaution that we should all take. We have, therefore, obtained a new stock of Card-Minder sleeves, which once again cost just £1 each. If you, your members, friends or

family would like to purchase some please email our vice Chair at nealf@talktalk.net for further information.



Krack Is Harmful, No Matter Which Way It's Spelt

Computer science continues to evolve at an incredible pace, so too, it seems, do the risks associated with this technology. In late October news broke of yet another threat, dubbed 'KRACK' (Key Reinstallation AttaCKs). KRACK we were told could have an impact for anyone who uses Wi-Fi, at home, in the workplace or when out and about. It could, potentially allow hackers access to important information like credit card numbers, passwords, and emails that are transmitted over Wi-Fi networks. Many of the larger IT companies, including Microsoft, Apple and Google are believed to have issued software updates to overcome the risks of KRACK – but users need to check that they have received and installed these on their devices to be sure that they remain protected. The 'KRACK' vulnerability is actually a group of multiple vulnerabilities that, when successfully exploited, could allow attackers to intercept and steal data transmitted across a Wi-Fi network or allow them to potentially infect devices with malware or ransomware. The vast majority of devices that use Wi-Fi transmit and receive information in an encrypted form using a system known as Wi-Fi Protected Access 2 (WPA2). This provides unique encryption keys for each wireless client that connects to a network. Security researchers have, however, discovered that WPA2 had a major potential weakness which made connected devices vulnerable to intrusion, resulting in possible installation of malware and / or theft of data. At present there are no known instances of criminals manipulating the KRACK vulnerability, but it is expected to be only a matter of time before hackers find ways to exploit the weakness on unprotected devices. So what can we mere mortals do about this risk? Well, the official advice from the IT security industry is that Wi-Fi users should update their Wi-Fi-enabled devices as soon as software patches are made available. Wi-Fi enabled devices can be anything that connects to the Internet i.e. laptops, tablets, smartphones and smart devices such as wearables and home appliances. Changing router passwords will not provide any protection because KRACK affects the devices and the Wi-Fi communication, not the router per se. It is thought that a KRACK attack could be "especially catastrophic" against version 2.4 and above of *wpa_supplicant*, a Wi-Fi client commonly used on Linux and Android 6.0 and above devices, (*wpa_supplicant is a program that runs in the background and acts as the backend component controlling the wireless connection*). Android phone users need to go the manufacturer's website to see if there is a new patch available to counter this vulnerability. In the meantime security protection companies are suggesting that we install and use a reputable *virtual private network* (VPN) on all mobile devices and computers, which of course they are happy to provide at modest cost. VPNs create a 'secure tunnel' in which information sent over a Wi-Fi connection is encrypted, making data sent to and from devices more secure. Additionally, use of only HTTPS-enabled websites helps too, because web traffic is encrypted by SSL and so may be safer from attack.



New Data Protection Regulations On The Way

For many years legislation in the UK has laid down specific rules affecting the collection / use of our private data by companies and public / private bodies. On 25 May 2018 those rules are getting a facelift, courtesy of a European



Directive which will require all member states to adopt an enhanced common approach. In the UK they will be enforced via the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Brexit will not affect their implementation. Many of the fundamental principles of the new Regulations are already enshrined in this Country's existing Data Protection Act, but the new law will add significant improvements that will help to stop data being sold-on or shared among companies without consent from the data subjects i.e. you and me. For example, companies will no longer be able to 'assume' that they have your permission to 'process' your personal information simply because you omitted to tick a box to decline consent. They will only be able to use your data if you have clearly and freely opted-in to consent and even then there will be tighter restrictions applying on usage. Also, significantly, organisations holding data will have to be able to prove that they are complying with the new legislation. If they can't they could face large multi-million pound fines. These new rules will also affect charitable organisations, including our own Association, which holds information about members. We have, therefore, reviewed our data privacy policy to ensure that we will comply and published a new policy statement – see <http://www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/Docs/PrivacyPolicy.pdf> detailing the use of personal data and the means by which members can check the information held on them and request withdrawal of consent, if they so wish. We have also revised our procedures for the secure storing and handling of your data. As a further safeguard, over the next few months, we will be confirming our member's consent for use of their contact details/data, primarily by means of the members' survey – details of which are given in the Chairman's opening address above.

Loneliness – This Season’s Silent Scourge

Winter is traditionally the time of the year when many of us can feel lonely and isolated, with the long winter evenings robbing us of the informal social contact that we might have with neighbours and friends during the warmer months.



Loneliness is a deeply personal experience, unique to every individual, which can have different causes and consequences for each and every one of us. We can feel lonely for any number of reasons: the loss of a loved one, including pets; moving home to a different area; retirement or health problems that make it difficult to get out and about. There is now a greater understanding of the impact that loneliness has on our health. Experts consider that the effect can be more damaging than obesity, and as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Loneliness can lead to

depression, sleep disorders, impaired cognitive health, heightened vascular resistance, hypertension, psychological stress and mental health issues. There are a number of things that can be done to tackle the problem though. The list below offers some advice to those that are feeling the effects of loneliness:

- Take advantage of services that tackle loneliness. Don't bottle it up, talk to someone about it – a counsellor, family member or friend. It's far better to acknowledge your feelings and understand that they are valid / real rather than let the problem cause health issues. Many organisations are on hand to offer assistance, either on-line or by phone. Good examples are **The Silver Line** <https://www.silverline.org.uk/> and **Campaign to End Loneliness** <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/> – but there are plenty of others too.
- If you like having a chat but find it hard to get out, you could speak to like-minded folk on **Gransnet** <https://www.gransnet.com> or find out more about the **Independent Age** organisation on-line at <https://www.independentage.org/about-us> where, every few weeks, a group of six people meet up over the phone to discuss books, films and more general topics. Independent Age will call you so there's no cost.
- If you have sight loss, you can join RNIB's telephone book club to talk monthly, for a small cost.
- You might want to consider joining a friendship group. This can be a good way to regain confidence and build new and meaningful acquaintances.
- **Contact the Elderly** <http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk/> hold monthly afternoon tea parties for people aged over 75, who live on their own with little chance to otherwise socialise.
- If you're missing the social connections you had through work, you could consider volunteering or perhaps going to classes through **The University of the Third Age** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about>

More information on the subject of loneliness, can be found on the Age UK webpage at: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/loneliness/your-loneliness-stories/>

High-Flying Pegasus

Kent has a number of small, local airfields that are used quite extensively by light aircraft and micro-light planes etc. Smugglers and people traffickers can easily use these quiet places to ply their illegal trade. Residents local to these facilities are well placed to recognise activity that is 'out of the ordinary' and could be of interest to the Police, Border Force or National Crime Agency. Information can be provided to any or all of these agencies anonymously via Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) or to the police (on 101) – quoting the code name PEGASUS.



All In A Good Cause

It is always encouraging to learn of activities that are held to extend the NHW ethos at the local level, especially when good causes can be assisted along the way. So we were delighted to hear from co-ordinator Alex Bull, who hosted an event at Headcorn Drive, Canterbury to participate in 'The World's Biggest Coffee Morning' on the 29th September. More than 25 members of the area's NHW group, (some of whom are pictured right) raised their cups to collect a total of £134 for the Macmillan Cancer Charity. This is one of the charity's major annual fund raising events, where groups all over the UK hold coffee mornings and donate the proceeds to Macmillan to help them support patients facing cancer, and their families. Well done Alex – a win, win! If you have a story to share about your NHW group's activities please let us know via the usual email address: canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com



Nano-Technology To The Rescue?

The following article of interest has been produced with assistance from the November edition of WatchOut Magazine – a publication produced by Peter Faulkner to highlight crime and scamming issues. Members can read more from the magazine at <http://www.whocanyoutrust.org.uk/>

Fake goods are a multi-billion pound industry worldwide, with everything being copied from drugs to cosmetics, car parts to works of art, sports goods to clothing and much more besides.



All across the globe there are 'fake factories' churning out counterfeit goods which, in 2016 alone, cost the UK economy a staggering £17.3 billion and affected 72,000 British jobs. They have become a huge problem in recent years but scientists may now have a solution that could make counterfeiting a thing of the past, by using 'quantum technology'. Researchers at Lancaster University have come up with a graphene-based identity tag that is completely unique and can be scanned using a smartphone. The researchers, who showcased their work at the Royal Society's Summer Science Exhibition, are confident that their technology

could eliminate counterfeiting in the foreseeable future. "The most exciting thing about this is that it empowers the end-user," said Professor Robert Young, lead scientist at Quantum Base. "So any person with a smartphone can check any tag which has been labelled with our technology and thus verify whether it is genuine or not." So what makes this tag so unique and different from other authenticity identifiers such as holograms, security inks and chemical / physical markers? The answer lies in a special type of graphene invented by two scientists at the University of Manchester who won the Nobel Prize in 2010 for their pioneering work. This material is only one atom thick – hence even the tiniest imperfections, caused by the smallest of changes in the structure of an atom, can be identified. It also makes replicating the tag hard, if not impossible, for fraudsters. "Everything is unique at the atomic scale," explained Prof Young. "These materials come with strange quantum properties and their properties change if you move a single atom. It is these changes that we are measuring. The properties of the materials are sensitive to small scale imperfections. "There is nothing more unique and there is no level below atoms." This exclusive tag, created by Quantum Base, comes with a track-and-trace ability and, more importantly, can be turned off at any point if the product is reported lost or stolen. Scientists say these Nano-scale tags could also be used to help consumers identify the real goods from their fake counterparts. The patented technology is expected to be available for use this year, so the criminals may, at last, be on the way to being beaten on this one.

Sticks And Stones

Here at *Watching Brief* we have warned previously of criminals' use of various coded markers outside of properties (chalk marks on pavements etc) to identify the homes of vulnerable people or unoccupied premises that could be targeted by thieves. Well, now it seems they have a new trick. White stones, placed under the wheels of cars or outside of residences that are not occupied during the day, could be used for similar purposes. In the past the pebbles have been left along with clothing bags carrying a cancer charity's branding. If this is something that you have noticed on driveways, doorsteps or under car tyres please let the police know on 101.

Useful Contacts:

canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com – C&DNHWA email
www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/ – C&DNHWA website
www.canterburycsp.org.uk/ – Community Safety Partnership
www.scambusters.org/ – Online Protection Advice
[environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com/](mailto:environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com) – CCC Fly-Tipping
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/ – Trading-standards

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Editorial & Layout – Neal Fowler

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