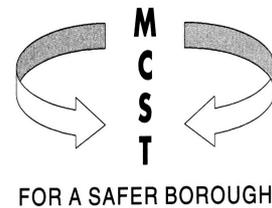




ISSUE 1 2005

Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association

Merton Watch



YOUNGSTERS MOVE IN ON WATCH

by **Christine Matthews**
Chairman

It is encouraging that NHW is going from strength to strength with in excess of 25,000 members and with new schemes being set up across the Borough, it is nice to see the younger generation getting involved as co-ordinators. Our co-operation with the Police is first class and their encouragement and assistance is invaluable.

It is reassuring to see that there is now a full complement of Beat Managers and this is an opportunity to get to know them. The beat manager in my own area carries out his patrols on a mountain bike, he is mobile, very visible and has already made the area feel safer. NHW is about getting information to as many residents as quickly as possible. E-mail is being used to create local "alert" systems across the borough that allow us to provide early warning of any significant crime development in your area. The local library and two local shops in my area have agreed to allow these NHW alerts to be displayed.

Rewarding

It can also be rewarding, so if you have friends in roads without a NHW scheme, encourage them to set one up. NHW manager Lee Roberts has all the information required, you can contact Lee Roberts at lee.roberts@met.police.uk

(see also Numbers to Note Page 2)

Boyhood dream fulfilled...

Something of a boyhood dream is about to materialise for our popular Wimbledon Sector Inspector Alan Heaton who is leaving Wimbledon to become national co-ordinator of major incidents and emergency procedures at Scotland Yard - a top intelligence job which involves co-ordinating police, military and emergency services in the event of a national disaster. Says Alan: "When I was a kid I was always the quiet one in the gang who was picked for the intelligence job. So the Yard challenge will be tough-but it's something of a dream come true". Our best wishes to him.

Beatmen win plaudits in new community poll...

Regular newsletters and easy contact with a friendly beat officer are the public's leading demands in the drive towards improved community policing now under way across the borough. The findings come in a nationwide consultation document in which a number of Merton co-ordinators took part and which recently led to new government proposals aimed at improving public relationships with the police. These include a requirement that every beat officer should be publicly accessible by mobile phone. By substantial majorities the public viewed talking to beat officers as the most effective way of keeping in touch with local crime and a similar majority wanted to know the identity of officers and how they could be contacted.

Home Office minister Hazel Blears MP acknowledged, "We want a service in which officers at all levels are more visible, accessible and responsive and have deeper and stronger connections with the communities they serve". And a Home Office report on the findings found that the public were less interested in general statistics but primarily concerned with what is happening in their local area. Overall, the Home Office conceded, the principal requirement was for "dedicated neighbourhood officers who were in post for sufficient time to become familiar to the community and build up trust".

This is very much in line with Merton policing policy, as the Borough Commander outlines on this page. A recent survey showed that 45 per cent now say they have noticed more uniformed officers on our streets in the past year and two in three of these say they feel safer as a result. Views on the impact of these changes on crime and anti-social behaviour varied more widely, with roughly half those questioned believing criminal activity had been reduced as a result, while a similar proportion supposed it had made little difference. Interestingly, women were overall more aware of the added police presence and a greater proportion of men believed that more uniformed officers on the streets had led to a reduction in neighbourhood crime.

My pledge to community policing

By **Chief Supt Michael Wood**,
Borough Commander

These are exciting times for the Merton community we serve. Latest figures show that from April last year, street robbery is down by 30%, burglary down by almost 15% and vehicle crime by 12% in the year. That is 400 fewer crimes - clearly good news. We are preparing for the extension of Safer Neighbourhood policing across the borough, the objective being to have all neighbourhood areas covered by these police and community support teams in the next two to three years.

Mobile phones

For those areas that may have to wait a bit longer, I have given my commitment that every ward will have a beat manager in place and I will do my best to keep these officers on their wards as much as possible. I know you have frustrations about contacting police and I will be giving each officer their own phone and will ensure numbers are widely circulated so that you will be able to leave a message in the knowledge that they will receive it. I am absolutely committed to community policing and want to emphasise how much harder our work would be without the fantastic support of NHW co-ordinators and members across the borough. Keep up your excellent work and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during my time as Borough Commander.

FRAUDSTERS TARGET THE CASH POINTS

by P.C. Sandy Bayliss
Crime Reduction Officer

Cash machines are an obvious target for fraudsters, as wherever there is cash potentially there is crime. But it is still much safer to carry a card around than cash, and if you are a victim of card fraud you will not suffer any financial losses unless you have been negligent (for instance if you have written down your PIN). Most credit card losses are a result of cardholders keeping PINs with cards that are subsequently lost or stolen. Cash machine fraud breaks up into various categories.

- Skimming involves the use of a device attached to the card entry slot to record magnetic stripe details without the cardholder's knowledge. A miniature camera is hidden over the PIN pad. This enables the criminal to produce a counterfeit card and withdraw money at a cash machine using the legitimate PIN.

- Shoulder surfing occurs when the fraudster looks over the cash machine user's shoulder to watch the PIN being entered, then steals the card by distracting or even pick-pocketing the user.

- Card trapping devices involves insertion by the fraudster of a device which traps and retains the customer's card. The criminal poses as a 'helpful bystander' and tricks the victim into re-entering their PIN, which the criminal observes and memorises or records. After the cardholder gives up trying to get their card back the fraudster removes the device, along with the card. Withdrawal of cash often happens immediately, before the cardholder has reported the cards loss to their bank.

When using cash machines

- Put your personal safety first
- Look around you
- Check for obvious signs of tampering and unusual attachments
- Shield the keypad while entering your PIN
- Never keep your pin number in a purse or wallet

Purchasing goods by card generates a huge amount of paperwork, with personal details invaluable to fraudsters. A good investment is a shredding machine that can be purchased in various sizes and price ranges.

This Newsletter is sponsored by

Safer Merton

Focus on Crime

Merton is divided into two police areas, Wimbledon and Mitcham. Here the men in charge of each sector assess their crime priorities

Managing the binge nights

By Inspector Alan Heaton, Wimbledon

Crime has reduced in Wimbledon, in particular burglary and robbery. In some Wards these falls have been considerable - to the extent that I fear that from now on the figures can only go up! Meanwhile partnership is the key word in the work we are doing with the council to reduce anti-social behaviour with agreed policies on control of binge drinking and graffiti. Constables need to feel part of a team, especially Beat Managers, who are unique amongst the staff at the station in that they invariably patrol by themselves.

Team Community

The team spirit has been fantastic this year with the beat managers looking on every crime committed on their ward as something personal. They are acknowledged as a prize asset through the job they do and their reward for the hard work is moving on to other (often higher) things. So keeping officers in post is difficult and at times can cause for concern to resident groups

This is frustrating for all of us. I look to the day when Neighbourhood policing will enable more staff to remain dedicated to the ward. The challenge for 2005 is to find a way of involving more people in helping to make their own neighbourhood a safe, happy place. Often it's the same people that end up doing all the work. Frustrations remain, in spite of huge success by the Abbey ward team (awarded the Team Community prize by Merton Council last year) a recent survey showed a high level of unawareness and a unanimous fear that crime was still rising. The need to spread the message was never greater.

Bridging the gap with the public

By Inspector Chris Fowles, Mitcham

Mitcham over the last year has gone from strength to strength. I took over in Nov 2003 and had one sergeant and 10 Constables. Now I am in charge of five sergeants, 15 Constables and 20 Police Community Officers (PCSO's) and more are starting in 2005. PCSO's are a real success.

They are able to bridge the gap between the police and the public. Yes it *does* work and the resultant increase in staff has proved worthwhile in the overall reduction in crime. For example two PCSO's working on the Cricket Green Ward had gained the trust of members of the community. As a result of this they were provided with some information as to where certain items of stolen property were being housed.

This intelligence was developed and within two days we had executed a search warrant at the address and the suspect was arrested for handling stolen goods and recently received a custodial sentence. The main concerns in Mitcham with regards to crime is youths and anti-social behaviour.

PCSO's are given an area to work, which is overseen by their beat sergeant. They are an important part of this new style of policing. This resultant style of tasking has given ownership to a problem and has provided the public with that reassurance they have been lacking. They have set up Problem Solving Process (PSP) teams for Gopeds, Mopeds and Graffiti.

Your Neighbourhood
Watch Co-ordinator is:

Numbers to Note

Emergencies	999 or 112
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Crime Prevention Office	020 8649 3249
NHW Manager	020 8649 3213

For non-emergencies

Merton Police	020 8947 1212
Wimbledon Sector Office	020 8649 3144/3145
Mitcham Sector Office	020 8649 3218/3267
Morden Station Office	020 8649 3125

