



# Merton Watch

The Official Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter for Merton

ISSUE 12 2010

## News in brief

### Wiping out car crime

Get your free sat nav dusters/screen wipes as part of an ongoing campaign to drive out vehicle crime in the Borough

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### Council warns of bogus bin man

Merton Council is warning residents against a bogus bin man operating in the borough.

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### Are you secure this summer?

Merton NHW Association, Safer Merton and Merton Police offer you tips and advice on how to stay safe and don't give burglars the opportunities to burgle your home this summer.

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### The adder side of police work

Prior to the creation of SN Teams a Beat Manager would run the patch with the help of volunteers to deliver leaflets.

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Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator is:

# Standing together against hate crime

Hate crime is the targeting of individuals, groups and communities because of who they are.

It targets people because of elements which go to the core of their identities – their race, their religious beliefs (or lack of them), their disability, their sexual orientation or that they are transgender.

Hate crime can take many forms including, name calling, arson/fire, spitting, verbal abuse and harassment, graffiti, attacks or violence, damage to property or belongings (such as your car or home), threats and intimidation, psychological and emotional violence and abusive telephone calls.

### Why should I report a Hate Crime?

By reporting Hate Crime you can help us to help you. By reporting hate crime you help us to understand and respond to hate crime in the borough. Your report can help us understand where things happen and how they happen, helping us prevent others from becoming victims.

### No incident is too small to report.

Many incidents are not reported through fear, or victims feeling that they won't be believed or that nothing can or will be done about it. There are specially trained colleagues in support agencies and police officers, who you can talk to in confidence and anonymously if you wish. You do not need to suffer in silence.

### To report a crime to the police you can in one of the following ways:

In an emergency - **999**  
In a non-emergency - **0300 1231212**  
On-line at [www.online.met.police.uk](http://www.online.met.police.uk) or at one of Merton's 3 Police Stations or offices.

### Stop Hate UK

If you do not wish to report to the police you can get in touch with Stop Hate UK who are an independent charity, who provide emotional and practical support for anyone who has experienced hate crime. You can report Hate Crime to Stop Hate UK 24 hours a day.



Everything you tell them is kept confidential and you have the option to remain anonymous. They can be contacted by phone, email, text, post and online. Stop Hate UK can speak to victims in their preferred language if required

Telephone: **0800 138 1625**  
Website: [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)  
Email: [talk@stophateuk.org](mailto:talk@stophateuk.org)

Further information on how to report hate crime can be found at the following website [www.merton.gov.uk/hatecrime](http://www.merton.gov.uk/hatecrime)

### Merton Hate Crime Strategy and Action Plan

The Merton Hate Crime Management Board have produced a draft Hate Crime Strategy and Action plan, which is available to view on-line at [www.merton.gov.uk/hatecrime](http://www.merton.gov.uk/hatecrime)

This strategy has been developed on behalf of the London Borough of Merton and the Safer Merton Partnership, the borough's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). It is the first Hate Crime Strategy for the borough,

We welcome your comments on the strategy, which we may use to inform our work in the future. Comments need to be received by 18th June 2010. If you require a hard copy, have any questions or comments, please contact Safer Merton on 020 8545 4146

## ***The Chair's corner***

Welcome to our twelfth edition of the "Merton Watch" Newsletter, which once again is full to the brim with useful information and tips on keeping safe.

The people of Merton are continuing to show a keen interest in setting up Neighbourhood Watch schemes in their local areas, which are consequently on the increase throughout the Borough with an average of one per week in 2009.

Currently we have one ward with 100% coverage and another following close behind.

This is good news for everyone. Our long term aim would be to see every area and street in every ward with an active scheme.

If you know of anyone who lives within the Borough and does not have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, please try to encourage them to become a coordinator.

## ***Council warns of bogus bin man***

Merton Council is warning residents against a bogus bin man operating in the borough.

The council has received several reports from residents saying a 45-year-old black man, 5"10 tall of stocky build and wearing either an orange or yellow high viz coat, has been calling at residential properties throughout the borough offering to take away residents' rubbish and bulky items for a fee.

He times his round just ahead of the legitimate council-employed dustmen.

Once he seals the deal with unsuspecting householders, he dumps the refuse and bulky items in the street, walking away cash in hand.

The council is asking residents to contact its enforcement section on **020 8545 3170** if they are approached by someone offering to remove their rubbish and bulky waste for a cash fee. Residents needing their bulky waste collected can call the council on **020 8274 4902** or log on to **[www.merton.gov.uk/refuse/bulky](http://www.merton.gov.uk/refuse/bulky)** for further information.

It is important to note that if you don't check that the person offering a waste removal service is legitimate and has a licence, you may be liable to pay any fines for illegally-dumped rubbish that can be traced back to you.

## ***Can't Agree? Need Help to Talk?***

Merton & Sutton Mediation is an independent charity. We help people to sort out all kinds of disagreements.

The sort of cases we deal with include:

- problems between neighbours, including those involving anti-social behaviour
- disputes within families (although we do not currently provide mediation for couples who are separating)
- disputes at work
- disputes in schools involving children, parents and teachers

The neighbour dispute resolution service is free to Merton residents. You can be referred by your housing officer, the ASB team, a Neighbourhood Warden or the police, who will approach the other person involved on your behalf, to see if they are willing to take part.

Alternatively you can approach us yourself, and we will write to the other person involved, offering our services. Any information that you give us will not be shared without your permission.

We aim to help you and the other person involved to reach your own solution to the situation if possible. We do not take sides, or tell anyone what to do. We do this by meeting with everyone involved separately, and then looking at the best way to resolve the problem, if possible by bringing you together for a meeting.

Loud music and teenagers – an example of a case we have dealt with:

Mr & Mrs A had been living in their property for about 30 years and used to get on well with their neighbour Mrs B, who lived in her property with her two teenage children.

Mr & Mrs A complained that Mrs B's teenage daughter has friends over till late into the morning and plays music.

Their neighbour said her daughter didn't have friends over very often and felt her neighbours were upset as she didn't speak to them any more.

After mediators had visited both families at home, the neighbours met for a face-to-face meeting, facilitated by the mediators. With our help they were able to reach agreement about the above issues.

For more information, including in other languages, please visit our website at **[www.mertonandsuttonmediation.com](http://www.mertonandsuttonmediation.com)** or contact the Mediation Co-ordinator, Anne Jones, on **0208 545 3499**.

## ***Wiping out car crime***

Get your free sat nav dusters/screen wipes as part of an ongoing campaign to drive out vehicle crime in the Borough. Merton Police and Safer Merton are handing out the complimentary wipes and dusters to wipe away the suction marks left by a satellite navigation system on your car windscreen.

Even if you have taken your 'sat nav' with you, thieves spotting a suction mark may break in to see if it has been hidden in the glove box.

Getting rid of the marks will hopefully deter criminals looking for the tell tale signs and reduce the risk of unnecessary damage and cost to your vehicle.

Supt Pete Dobson, Partnership lead for Merton Police said, "I fully support this scheme and I urge the public of Merton to secure their vehicles, keep them free of valuables and remove suction marks to help reduce vehicle crime".

Merton Police Crime Reduction Advisor Pc Greg HUNT said, "The Partnership is committed to keeping crime low by reducing vehicle crime.

The theft of satellite navigation systems is one of the highest crimes at the moment, so taking a few seconds to get rid of the suction mark on your windscreen may save you hundreds of pounds in repairing a broken window and paying for a new sat nav".

Screen wipes and sat nav dusters are available free of charge at the Partnership Roadshows through the year or by contacting your local SN Team. For further crime reduction advice contact your local SN Team.

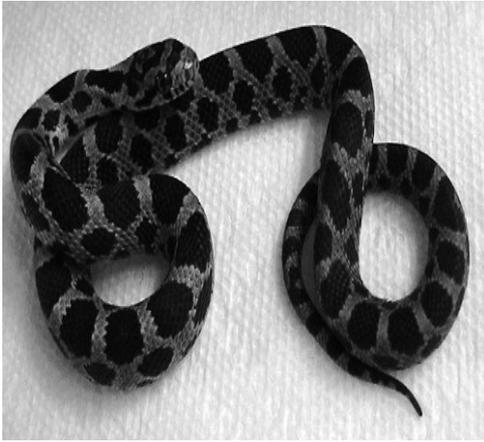
## ***Can you spare a few hours a month?***

Merton NHW Association was set up in Dec 2003. At that time there were 8 members. Each member played an important role in supporting the work of NHW. Sadly, due to ill health and other commitments, that number has fallen to just 4.

We urgently need your help to continue our work. The role of a committee member is not too time consuming-one meeting every 6-weeks and maybe a few hours in between, depending on what you would like to get involved in. The role can be very rewarding. For an informal chat please call Lee Roberts, **NHW Manager, 020 8649 3213 or [mertonnhw@met.police.uk](mailto:mertonnhw@met.police.uk)**

# The adder side of police work

By Peter Steiner



Prior to the creation of the SNTeams, we would have a Saturday coffee morning for the Beat Manager and Volunteers, who helped distribute NHW information to all the homes on his beat.

We assembled one Saturday morning, nibbled through copious amounts of biscuits washed down by the same amounts of tea and coffee, but where was the Beat Manager! I contacted the Duty Inspector who told me that the Beat Manager was involved in a local incident.

Then the husband of one of the volunteers called to say that there was a police car, and police in a local road. I abandoned the meeting and set out to locate the said police incident.

When I found the incident, our Beat Manager pointed dramatically to a large snake in the gutter, basking in the sun. He had been stopped by a member of the public whilst on his way to our meeting, and was waiting for the arrival of the RSPCA.

The snake was picked up (not venomous I might add) and put into a sack and taken away.

Our gallant Beat Manager, then made his way to the meeting for a fresh coffee, and biscuit, but on arrival found no audience!

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



# Focus on Crime

Merton is divided into three police areas, Wimbledon, Mitcham and Morden, supported by Safer Merton.

Here, Merton NHW Association offers advice on keeping your home safe this Summer

## How secure is your home this summer?

The advice from the Merton NHW Association, Safer Merton and Merton Police is to follow the tips below, and don't give burglars the opportunities to burgle your home this summer.

### Lock doors and windows

A third of burglars get in through a back window. Lock your doors and windows even when in the house particularly in an unoccupied room or if you are out in the garden. Make sure doors and frames are strong and in good condition.

### Keep desirable items from view

Valuables should not be easily visible or accessible to passers-by. Keep items including car keys, mobile phones, handbags and wallets out of sight. Car keys should be placed away from windows and front doors where they may be vulnerable to theft by 'fishing' through the letterbox with a stick or similar implement.

### Switch on the lights

Don't advertise your absence, even when you're away on holiday. You can use time switches to turn on lights, radios and other appliances. Some exterior lights have an infra-red sensor that reacts to movement. Cancel all deliveries such as milk and papers and ask a neighbour to pop round and move your post away from the door.

### Install a burglar alarm

Visible alarms make burglars think twice. There is a wide selection of sophisticated alarm systems ranging in price. Consult your insurance company about which would suit your needs.

### Consider a door entry system

If you live in a flat the most vulnerable part is likely to be the front door. Fit hinge bolts to stop the door being pulled off its hinges and consider having a door telephone entry system installed.

### Look out for each other

Consider joining or supporting a Neighbourhood Watch group. Ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your home if you are going away to make sure post does not build up in the letterbox.

### Stay alert to suspicious behaviour

If you do see anything suspicious report it to police immediately.



### Secure garages and garden sheds

All the tools a burglar needs are usually kept here so keep them locked with a strong padlock. Consider installing a shed alarm.

### Check gates and boundaries

An open gate or broken fence can be a temptation to potential thieves. Make sure the front of the house is visible to neighbours or passing pedestrians so a thief cannot work unseen. A thorny hedge along a boundary also provides an effective deterrent.

### Don't hide a spare key outside

Never keep spare keys in a convenient hiding place such as under the doormat or in a flowerpot. These are the first places a thief will look. Give them to a trusted neighbour or family member.

### Neighbourhood Watch Quiz

Why not try the Neighbourhood Watch Quiz, It's interactive and fun to do. You can also get a certificate after you have completed the short quiz. To log onto the quiz just type into your browser bar the following line:  
**www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/neighbourhoodwatch/quiz**  
or visit our website and you will find the link there.





## HANDYMAN? PESTCONTROLLER? BOMB MAKER?

They're making bombs, so naturally terrorists will try to conceal their activities. But sometimes they can leave tell-tale signs. Signs we need your help in spotting. They may load up their vehicles with large amounts of chemicals, fertilisers or gas cylinders, all of which can be used to make bombs. These may be bought with cash. They also have to be stored somewhere like a house, a lock-up or a garage. You might even see discarded material.

If you notice anything suspicious or out of the ordinary

CALL THE CONFIDENTIAL ANTI-TERRORIST HOTLINE ON 0800 789 321

We don't believe any call is a waste of time. If you suspect it, report it.



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## Useful Numbers to Note

Emergencies	<b>999 or 112</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour Unit	<b>020 8274 5974</b>	Highway Safety	<b>020 8545 3206</b>
Crimestoppers	<b>0800 555 111</b>	Fly-Tipping / Fly-Posting	<b>020 8545 3170</b>	Victim Support	<b>020 8685 1637</b>
NHW Office / Manager	<b>020 8649 3213</b>	Crime Prevention Office	<b>020 8649 3245</b>	Abandoned Vehicles	<b>020 8545 3189</b>
Police - Non Emergency	<b>0300 123 1212</b>	Safer Merton	<b>020 8545 4146</b>	Graffiti Helpline	<b>020 8545 3170</b>

### Disclaimer

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