



# MERTON WATCH

The Official Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter for Merton



**Issue 16**

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## A word from the Borough Commander

### News in brief

#### Doorstep Sellers

Criminals often pose as officials or ask for your help with something, for further advice.

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#### Keep your cards safe this christmas

Merton Police are asking residents and visitors to Merton town centres this Christmas to be extra vigilant when using Cash Machines (ATMs).

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#### Focus on Crime

Staying safe at Christmas is often overlooked by being pre-occupied with other things during the festive season, for further details.

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#### Another 5 minutes with...

Elif Chambers was a PCSO on Lavender Fields Ward. She is now a Merton Police Constable, Catch up with her story so far.

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Your NHW  
Co-ordinator is:



Darren Williams is the new Police Borough Commander for Merton, the Merton NHW Association approached the Borough Commander for a few words on his vision for Merton, this is what he had to say.

I am extremely proud to take up my new role as Borough Commander here at Merton.

I am in my 24th year of service in the Metropolitan Police Service following time in the Army.

I have been a Detective Superintendent for 4 years, my most recent role was a Deputy Borough Commander at Bexley.

Before that I had roles leading the Pan London Crime Squad and as Public Protection / Hate Crime lead for the Metropolitan Police Service.

I have volunteered for this role and I find it a unique situation in that Merton's reputation is based upon the dedication and professionalism of its staff and the strength of relationships with the community.

Like the rest of the Metropolitan Police Service, we face challenging times because of the budgetary impact across public services and the constant need to deliver quality policing with ever reducing resources.

#### My Key Promises

I will make 3 key promises to you.

Firstly - I will reduce crime on this Borough.

Secondly - I will put more officers onto the streets. My Senior Management Team are currently reviewing functions done by officers in non-operational roles to make this happen.

Thirdly - I will keep you informed of how we are getting on. I already do this via my weekly message that appears on Merton Borough's home page of the Metropolitan Police website.

I will ensure I engage with you all as regularly as I can so we can have open and honest discussions about issues that are affecting you. I look forward to meeting with you as soon as possible.

### Follow Merton Police on twitter

Merton police can now be followed on **Twitter - @ MPSMerton**

It shows fast time crime alerts and also advertises burglary and robbery crimes that occurred the previous day. You can also see many other issues of interest to the community.





## Beware of Doorstep sellers

Avoid falling victim to distraction burglars or bogus traders. If you're not sure who is at your door, don't open it!

Criminals often pose as officials or ask for your help with something. They make up a story to get into your home.

A genuine caller will happily wait outside while you check on them by calling their organisation or calling a family member, friend or neighbour.

Rogue traders call at your door and offer to do work on your home or garden that will be either unnecessary or vastly over-priced. Don't allow anyone to pressure you into having work carried out, and don't agree to anything on the spot.

If you feel that some work needs carrying out on your property, discuss it with a friend or relative who can help you find a reputable trader.

If you suspect a bogus caller has visited you, even if you didn't let them in, call the police straight away



**SANTA**

BUSY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR  
USES CHIMNEY TO GET IN  
LEAVES PRESENTS  
DISAPPEARS ON SLEIGH  
POPULAR WITH CHILDREN

## Two men that could visit this Christmas

*There are two men that like visiting houses at Christmas,  
One of them goes Ho, Ho, Ho,  
The other stays quiet,  
One of them arrives in a sparkling red sleigh,  
The other arrives in an old van,  
One of them is popular with children,  
The other is unpopular with everyone,  
One of them leaves lots of presents,  
The other leaves with lots of presents,  
Don't let a burglar spoil your Christmas.*

For further information and advice on how to protect yourself and your family this Christmas visit [www.mertonnhw.co.uk](http://www.mertonnhw.co.uk)

## Keep your cards safe this christmas

Police at Merton are asking residents and visitors to Merton town centres this Christmas to be extra vigilant when using Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). Police have received reports from victims claiming they were deliberately distracted whilst using a cash machine, which later resulted in money being taken from their bank accounts.

### ATMs (Cash Machines)

General Advice:

- Try and use a machine that is in a place where you feel safe and secure, like in the bank or a supermarket.
- Be aware of who is around you. If you see anyone acting suspiciously then use another machine.
- If you are distracted at the cash point or think that someone has seen your PIN, cancel the transaction and leave.
- Check the machine to see if there is anything stuck to it or if anything else looks out of place. Run your finger along the slot for your card. If there is something odd, do not use the machine.

### Skimming

This is when a skimming device is 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/fake card and withdraw money at a cash machine using the legitimate PIN. The cardholder does not know this has happened and so it is often some time before they or the bank notice unusual transactions.

### Shoulder surfing

This is when criminals look over a cash machine user's shoulder to watch the PIN being entered, then steal the card using distraction techniques or pick pocketing. Distraction techniques include telling the person using the cash point that they have dropped something or 'accidentally' spilling a drink over them.

### Card trapping devices

A device is inserted by a criminal into the cash machine's card slot, which traps and retains the card. After the cardholder gives up trying to get their card back and leaves, the criminal removes the device, along with the card. Withdrawal of cash often happens immediately, before the cardholder has reported the card's loss to their bank. On occasions the criminal poses as a 'helpful bystander' and tricks the victim into re-entering their PIN, which the criminal observes and memorises or records.

## CRIME CAN PAY

If you have information about any crime, phone CRIMESTOPPERS on 0800 555 111.

Your call is free, you can remain anonymous and you may receive a reward



# Focus on Crime

## Keeping your vehicles and home safe this Christmas



For most people, buying a vehicle will be the second most expensive item they will ever purchase, whether it is new or second hand. But despite this, residents of Merton are leaving their cars and contents vulnerable to thieves.

The borough of Merton has seen a rise in vehicle crime in recent months.

### ***Theft from motor vehicles***

The highest ranked items stolen were Number Plates and satellite navigation units. The most common entry to vehicles is by smashing side windows.

### ***What can you do?***

#### ***Keep valuables and possessions safe***

Remove ALL items such as satellite navigation (including the holder), radios, bags, purses, loose change and items of clothing like coats from your vehicle whenever you leave it, even if it's only for a short time. If you really can't take items with you then put them in the boot out of sight, preferably at the start of your journey. Wipe away any tell-tale suction marks left by your satellite navigation holder.

#### ***Protect your number plate***

Motorists can replace the regular screws that attach the number plate to their car with clutch screws. These cannot be unscrewed once in place.

Clutch screws are available from car part and hardware stores. They are relatively inexpensive and easy to fit and using them could save motorists the inconvenience, time and expense of having new number plates fitted.

### ***Theft of Motor Vehicles***

Is also continuing to climb, although to a lesser degree.

### ***What can you do?***

#### ***Immobilisers and alarms***

These are particularly beneficial in putting off car thieves but they must be fitted by main dealers or installers accredited by the vehicle security installation board.

Mechanical immobilisers such as a steering wheel lock can act as a visual deterrent. Don't forget locking wheel nuts, as wheels are an easy target for car thieves.

#### ***Keep your car keys safe***

Always take your keys out of the ignition when leaving your vehicle, even if it's only for a short time.

At home, always keep your car keys in a safe place, out of sight and away from doors and windows to prevent suspects fishing for the keys via your letterbox or open window.

#### ***Parking your car***

If you have a garage, use it. If you don't have a garage always try to park your car in a well lit open space. Thieves tend to steal cars or contents from cars that are parked in places where they run the least risk of being seen.

### ***Keeping your home safe***

- The best burglary deterrent is to make the home look occupied.

- Unless a room is obviously a bedroom to people outside the home, don't close your curtains in the daytime. Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to close them for you when it goes dark. Neighbours can help each other in many ways. They can keep the home looking occupied by maintaining the garden to even parking their car on your driveway, or leaving footprints in the snow if we have a white Christmas!

- Use automatic timer-switches to turn your lights on when it goes dark – don't forget bedrooms.

- Cut the lawn before you go and trim back any plants that burglars could hide behind.

- If there is a chance that mail will pile up on your doorstep whilst you are away, consider the Post Office's 'Keepsafe' service. For a small fee, they can hold back your delivery of mail for up to two months.

- Consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members or a bank.

- If you buy expensive new items such as a TV, don't leave the empty box by the bin as an advert.

- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries.

- Avoid discussing holiday plans in front of strangers.

- If you normally leave valuable pedal cycles or similar items in your shed, consider putting them in the house.

- If neighbours keep your keys, advise them not to put your surname, address or even your house number on in case they fall into the wrong hands.

- Make sure that you've locked all outside doors and windows and, if you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is set.

**CRIME**  
**LET'S BRING IT**  
**DOWN**

## Another 5 minutes with...

Elif Chambers was a PCSO on Lavender Fields Ward. Earlier this year she successfully applied for and became a police constable with Merton Police

### How long were you training and where?

The first part of my training was once a week, class based in central London. The second part of my training was full time in Richmond for 9 weeks. Here, I learnt the practical side of my new role.

### What are the differences for you between being a PCSO in a Safer Neighbourhoods team and a Police Officer in a Response team?

It is very different. As a PCSO I had a chance to get to know and help the local residents in my ward. Mainly my job was crime prevention, being a visible deterrent and to reassure the community. Working with a Response Team is very busy. We answer all 999 calls within the whole borough of Merton - not just one ward.



## Has being a PCSO been of use to you prior to becoming a Police Officer?

Yes, the PCSO role showed me the diversity of people. It taught me how to deal with different people. Everyone is different requiring a different response.

### Have you had any involvement with Neighbourhood Watch since becoming a Police Officer?

I am not involved directly like I used to be, but when I come across an incident where I think that the residents can benefit from a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme I advise them to get involved via their Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

### Is there any security advice you can give to the public that you have learnt since becoming a Police Officer?

I would advise them to double lock their UPVC doors and windows. It appears that some residents believe that once you lift the handle up it locks - but it doesn't. Once the handle is up they need to use the key to lock it and ensure security. And mobile phones, I would advise all smart phone users to download an application where you can track where your phone is if it gets lost or stolen, it can be very useful to the police to locate the device.

## Thank-you

Safer Merton would like to thank all those who participated in the Strategic Assessment consultation, which has provided the partnership with valuable information on your crime and anti social behaviour concerns across the borough.

We are currently analysing the responses and will feed back the outcomes from the consultation in the New Year.

If you would like any further information about the work of the Safer Merton Partnership, please contact the team on **020 8545 4146** or by email: [safer.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:safer.merton@merton.gov.uk)



### BURGLAR

BUSY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR  
USES ANY MEANS TO GET IN  
TAKES PRESENTS  
DISAPPEARS IN VAN  
UNPOPULAR WITH EVERYONE

## THE WINNING COMBINATION



**YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS WHEN YOU MOVE WITH**

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"A DREAM TO SOME, A NIGHTMARE TO OTHERS"

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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 4901</b>
Crimestoppers	<b>0800 555 111</b>	Fly-Tipping / Fly-Posting	<b>020 8274 4902</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 4901</b>
Police - Non Emergency	<b>101</b>	Safer Merton	<b>020 8545 4146</b>	Graffiti Helpline	<b>020 8545 4902</b>

### Disclaimer

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*This publication of the Merton Watch is supported by the Metropolitan Police and sponsored by the above local businesses*