



Merton Neighbourhood Watch

Spring 2020

Message from Sally Benatar, South West London BCU Commander

As the South West London BCU Commander, I am so pleased to be able to participate with community issues and events, a vital part of today's policing. Neighbourhood Watch in particular is a perfect utilisation of our combined skills and understanding of the communities we live and work within.

The Metropolitan Police is the largest police service in England, with many resources, officers and technologies. Yet, without the support of the residents and community, all this would be worth far less. Despite all of our people, it is clearly impossible to be everywhere, to know everyone, to be aware of all the ins and outs.

The exceptional insight and intelligence that can be provided by keen eyes and ears of the Neighbourhood Watch has led to a wealth of deep knowledge and expanding of the police awareness of the community they serve.

People are different, communities are different, we need help to adapt appropriately and effectively and you, the Neighbourhood Watch provide this, you guide us and show us the path to take.

In response we aim to provide the best service tailored to your needs and give you the advice required to help yourselves to make the community safer and stronger.

Merton is a wonderful place to live and work and is one of the safest boroughs in London. However, this does not stop us from constantly trying to improve and find new ways of keeping the borough safe. Together we can find solutions to the problems that can occur in any area. You voluntarily give up your time to help and contribute to this excellent initiative - my colleagues and I are very grateful to all of you for your continued hard work and commitment. Thank you.



Tackling drugs - we need your help!

By Neil Thurlow, Head of Community Safety

Safer Merton, and the wider Community Safety Partnership, are working on a joint approach to tackling the many challenges posed by drug use and drugs markets in Merton. The Community Safety survey 2019 showed us that drugs and the impacts of drugs on communities is a key concern for you all and as such we will respond.

Tackling drugs is a challenge as many agencies need to be involved to ensure that treatment and care for drug users can be delivered alongside enforcement work to tackle illegal activity. Within the drugs arena there are also significant challenges around exploitation, coercion and control which means that intelligence lead approaches are essential to safeguard and protect those who are affected, alongside allowing enforcement agencies to act where needed.

We need Neighbourhood Watch members to assist us in our work and in gathering intelligence on this matter. An intelligence lead approach is key and we need your help on this matter. We are asking that if you have concerns about drug dealing in your area you report it.

This can be done to police via calling **101** (where safe to do so) or reporting online. If you wish to remain anonymous report via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** or crimestoppers-uk.org

With your help the Community Safety Partnership will be better able to direct resource to the right place at the right time.



Merton Neighbourhood Watch Get Together

Monday 27th April 2020

6.30-8.30pm, Morden Baptist Church

- *A chance to get together with new and existing coordinators and members over tea and cake*
- *Come and meet the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and get crime prevention advice on how to protect your home*
- *Meet the Merton Police Cadets*
- *FREE crime prevention goodies will be available*

The event is open to all – including residents who would just like to find out more about Neighbourhood Watch.

Please let us know if you are able to attend by emailing nhw@merton.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Watch Works!

By St Helier Neighbourhood Watch coordinator

"I noticed a white van in my close and it had parked there for about a week. Nothing untoward. Anyway it disappeared and a few days later returned but with different number plates. I was sure it was the same van and checked both sets of plates with DVLA. The original ones showed that vehicle was not taxed but the new ones showed it was. I took a few pictures and sent them to the St Helier Safer Neighbourhood Team. Over the following week I saw the same van with different plates on each occasion. One evening I saw the van parked up and went over and discovered that new plates had been stuck on over the old ones. Again reported this to Safer Neighbourhood Team and they arranged for the plates to be confiscated and for the vehicle to be removed by DVLA".

Springtime is here – remember to protect your property

The (hopefully) warmer weather offers a great opportunity to get outside in the garden. Take a moment first to think about home security and you'll reduce your risk of falling victim to opportunistic thieves:

- Always lock your shed, preferably with two 'hasp and staple' locks (one near the top and one near the bottom of the door) or use an alarmed padlock
- Secure your rear garden by locking entry gates with a padlock
- Burglars can use garden tools to break in, so make sure you securely lock away any tools after use
- Don't leave ladders accessible
- Ensure boundary fences are secure and in good condition. Spiky plants along garden boundaries are good additional deterrents
- Tools and gardening equipment should be visibly marked with your postcode and house number - this can deter thieves and help police identify the rightful owner
- Remember to lock your garage door securely. Metal 'up and over' doors can be secured with extra locks fitted either side and/or a floor-mounted locking 'T' bar with a closed shackle padlock. Wooden garage doors can be secured with two substantial 'hasps and staple' locks and closed shackle padlocks (your local DIY store can advise on the most secure options)



CCTV on private domestic property

By Adrian Rutkowski, Merton CCTV

The United Kingdom is the world leader in number of CCTV cameras, with up to 20% of the world's total CCTV camera installations. The cameras are used for public safety, detection of crime and security. They can also be used by members of the public to protect their private domestic property.

The use of CCTV cameras on private property is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Office. Any individual can setup a CCTV system on their property and the data protection laws don't apply if the cameras cover only the user's own private property, including their garden.

However, The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled in 2014 that in the instances in which the camera on a private property is capable of capturing images beyond the boundaries of that property, it is no longer exempt from the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA 1998). The ruling does not stop the individuals from using the system that can see beyond the boundary of their property, but it forces them to respect the rights of people whose images they capture, and failing to do so may result in a fine. Owners of such systems must:

- Notify members of the public that they own a CCTV system with clearly visible and legible signs that identify the owner of the recorded data
- Be able, upon request, to provide the copy of video footage to any individual whose image is identifiable
- Delete, upon request, any personal data of any individual whose image is identifiable
- Upon request, stop capturing any future video of a member of public making such request. This may be very difficult to accomplish.

In summary, CCTV systems can provide security and protection of private properties, but they need to be used with care, and respect for others' privacy. Extending of the coverage beyond the property boundaries is not recommended, unless there is a valid reason and the implications of the Data Protection Laws have been considered.

For additional information please visit the Information Commissioner's CCTV code of practice. <https://ico.org.uk/media/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>



Merton Hate Crime 3rd Party Reporting Scheme launch

All forms of hate are unacceptable and whatever the motivation should be taken seriously.

Victims can experience a range of barriers to reporting incidents and accessing services. In Merton, different agencies are working together as partners, combining their resources to achieve the best outcome for victims.

The launch of a 3rd Party Reporting Scheme enables victims and witnesses of hate crime incidents to make reports at independent community locations, where they feel safe and comfortable.

The scheme will aim to support victims and encourage increased reporting of hate crime so we can build a better understanding of the needs of different communities and target resources effectively.

It sends a clear message across all communities that hate crime is unacceptable, that victims will be supported and protected and perpetrators will be held to account. Merton is no place for hate.

Please see merton.gov.uk/hatecrime for a list of organisations in Merton taking part in the 3rd Party Reporting Scheme.

Merton is also proud to celebrate the one year anniversary of the launch of its Hate Crime Advice Surgery. The surgeries take place on the **second Tuesday of each month, 12pm-1pm at Merton Civic Centre**. Residents can drop in for advice around hate crime, no appointment necessary.

Right – Members of Merton’s Hate Crime Strategy Group at the launch of the 3rd Party Reporting Scheme.



EU Settlement Scheme assistance

If you are an EU national and concerned about your residency status after the UK leaves the European Union, or have any questions about the process of applying for settled status, the Polish Family Association are able to offer you support.

As a reminder, if you are an EU national then you will need to apply for settled status before the deadline of **30 June 2021**. However, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal, then the deadline for applying will be **31 December 2020**.

The cost of the service is FREE. Appointments will take place between 9am to 6pm, Monday to Sunday.

To book an appointment, please call us on 07917401064, or email info@polishfamily.org.uk



Interview with a NHW coordinator

Tina King is a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator for Ravensbury ward.

Why did you volunteer to be a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator?

After being a victim of crime I was visited by my local PCSO who asked me if I would be interested in becoming Neighbourhood Watch coordinator for my road. He put me in touch with my local one who invited me to their quarterly meetings.

How long have you been a coordinator?

I have been a coordinator for nearly 9 years now.

What's your background?

I have been a Chef Manager for BBC and Fountain TV. Also Estate Manager for a Sheltered Housing Association. More recently a Support Homecarer to help clients stay in their homes with necessary planned care. Now I volunteer at St Raphael's Hospice Charity Shop and for Age UK as a befriender in the community. I am also a member of Merton Neighbourhood Watch Committee and Chairperson of my Ravensbury Ward Coordinators Meetings.

What does being a coordinator involve?

Being the eyes and ears of my community. Someone who my neighbours can come to with concerns they may see happen locally so I can pass on to the police and council as appropriate.

How much of your time does it take up?

It does not take up too much of my time and enables me to share knowledge of events in my area.

What do you think are the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area?

There is a sense of safety knowing our road is in the scheme and being up to date via crime reports and engaging with the Met Police.



Any tops tips for coordinators?

Mainly to make it personal to the needs of your area and get to know your neighbours.

Junior Neighbourhood Watch update

By Steve Ratcliffe, Junior Neighbourhood Watch Lead

We are taking Junior Neighbourhood Watch to The Sherwood School, in Mitcham. This is a new school for us to run the programme in. We will be trying out a new session with the police called Community Roadwatch. This will include road safety, travelling on buses, travelling alone and the demonstration of a CCTV van. This will bring the number of sessions delivered up to six.

Following this we will be returning to William Morris Primary in Mitcham. We are looking forward to meeting the pupils and working with the Pollards Hill police team to deliver these sessions. We will be looking for other schools to take part in the scheme from autumn 2020.

Editor's note

Merton Neighbourhood Watch is looking to expand our remit this year to include social media. If you have an interest in social media and are a keen twitter user who can led us your skills then please get in touch: nhw@merton.gov.uk

Remember on Sunday 29th March clocks go forward one hour for summertime.