

»»» OCTOBER 2024 «««



OUR NEWS

FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES

What's in October's newsletter?

It's hard to believe that we are already at the autumn months, after such a busy summer of Neighbourhood Watch activity! In this edition of Our News, we share stories and photos from our National Crime and Community Conference, as well as celebrating the six winners of this year's Volunteer Recognition Awards. We also share guidance from SimpliSafe on protecting your home as the darker nights draw in, and encourage everyone to complete our annual Crime and Community Survey before 31st October - your feedback really does matter to us. Don't forget, the latest round of Community Grants Fund applications opens on Monday 14th October!

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Don't forget: our Community Grants Fund opens on Monday 14th October!

Protect your home against Burglary with WIDE(N)



As the darker nights draw in, we turn our focus towards home security, and how we can all take steps to protect our homes against burglary.

Want to protect your home? Think **WIDE(N)**: **Windows, Interior, Doors, Exterior, (Neighbours)** to have the best possible protection against burglary.

Research* shows that a combination of security actions provides up to 50 times more protection for your home versus no security. A combination of WIDE actions is the most effective and recommended by police throughout the country.

Additionally, at Neighbourhood Watch, we believe neighbours keeping an eye out for each other is also key to preventing burglary.

As with all types of crime, prevention is much better than cure. Taking simple measures, such as locking your windows, leaving indoor lights on a timer, double or deadlocking your doors, and having exterior lights on sensors, can significantly reduce your chances of being burgled. [Click here to download our useful burglary prevention checklist with ERA](#), to double-check you have left your home safe when you walk out your front door!

As well as advice around securing your doors and windows etc, we have added an N to the tested WIDE burglary prevention acronym. **We believe neighbours are a key part of reducing burglary.** Active Neighbourhood Watch schemes can be an effective crime prevention tool by:

- increasing surveillance
- altering offenders' perception of risk, if an area is clearly marked as a Neighbourhood Watch area
- encouraging residents to consciously consider their own home security, and
- promoting social interaction and neighbourhood cohesion among communities



[Visit our website for more guidance on securing your home!](#)

Celebrating our Crime and Community Conference 2024

On Monday 23rd September 2024, we held our annual Crime and Community Conference, this time in the welcoming city of Manchester. We were delighted to welcome attendees from across England, Wales, Scotland, and beyond, as well as expert guest speakers from several organisations across the country.

With the theme of this year's Conference being 'Ahead of the curve', our guest speakers covered topics that looked to the future, including topics such as community cohesion and collective action; policing and the use of a solutions-focused approach; and emerging trends in cybercrime and fraud. Our attendees were given time to hear from members of the Neighbourhood Watch Youth Council on meaningful inclusion, and to share ideas for how active local Neighbourhood Watch groups can do more to include young people in their work, and learn from their experiences. Attendees were also invited to hear from local Neighbourhood Watch groups, sharing successes and stories on the impact of their work in local communities.

It was so wonderful to see volunteers and supporters joining together, meeting other passionate volunteers from opposite corners of the country, and celebrating the positive impact that Neighbourhood Watch has in communities, for individuals, families, and other engaged organisations. Throughout the day, we heard stories from local groups and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to bring about positive change in their community, and have made firm friendships with fellow volunteers and neighbours – if that isn't the sign of a successful Neighbourhood Watch, we don't know what is!



As always, the most highly-anticipated section of the Conference came at the end of a hugely positive day - the **Volunteer Recognition Awards ceremony!** Hosted by SimpliSafe's Jonathan Wall, who sponsored this year's Awards, it was a pleasure to present Awards to six truly deserving winners, who have made a real impact in their community, and gone above and beyond for their neighbours.

The winners of this year's Volunteer Recognition Awards are...

Innovation and Reach: Samantha Pritchard

Crime Prevention: Meir Factor

Community Health and Wellbeing: Lyn Doll

Young Volunteer of the Year: Louis Johnson BEM

Special Recognition Award: Brian Aldred

CST Star Award: Robin Sutton

**WELL
DONE!**

We received over 300 nominations for this year's Awards, and extend our congratulations to every single nominee – your hard work is hugely appreciated, and you all deserve to be celebrated.

We would also like to say a huge thank you to our Sponsors, who made this year's Conference so special: VISAV, SimpliSafe, Patlock, and Normanton Screen Print. Additionally, a huge thank you to those who visited our Conference and provided engaging information (and some goodies!) to our attendees: ERA, Greater Manchester Police and the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit, VISAV, SimpliSafe, and NSP.



Ben, canine companion to Rebecca, one of our Youth Council panellists

The Central Support Team at Neighbourhood Watch Network would once more like to say thank you and well done! We look forward to seeing you all at next year's Crime and Community Conference.

Congratulations to our Volunteer Recognition Awards 2024 winners!

Our **Volunteer Recognition Awards** celebrate volunteers and groups who go above and beyond for their communities. Each year, we receive hundreds of nominations from communities across England and Wales, each with a brilliant story about a volunteer or group of volunteers who have been doing amazing work in their communities. This year, our Volunteer Recognition Awards were **sponsored by SimpliSafe**, one of our key partners, and we were delighted to welcome Jonathan Wall to lead the Awards ceremony during this year's Crime and Community Conference.

Innovation and Reach: Samantha Pritchard



Sam is a dedicated Coordinator from Lancashire. She works full-time and has a young son, and has transformed lives since she started living in our village of Halton (near Lancaster) a few years ago. She has set up Halton Neighbourhood Watch, which meets regularly and whose main aims are to tackle loneliness and litter.

She is quite simply an outstanding and inspirational citizen.

Crime Prevention: Meir Factor



Meir is a Coordinator for the Shomrim in the West Midlands, and coordinates the Neighbourhood Watch as part of his work in the community. He was nominated due to his extraordinary dedication and leadership in coordinating the Shomrim BPCP Neighbourhood Watch team. Residents in the local area now enjoy a greater sense of security and peace of mind, directly attributable to Meir's relentless efforts and strategic coordination. **Meir's commitment goes beyond mere duty; it reflects a profound sense of responsibility and care for his community.**

CST Star Award: Robin Sutton

Robin, Association Lead from Cambridgeshire, is a founding member of Cyberhood Watch and has been involved in the grassroots of his community for many years. This was a special additional award that the Central Support Team were keen to give in recognition of the additional work that Robin takes on in training new Cyberhood Watch Ambassadors. He also plays a huge role in providing case studies to help evidence and bring to life the important work that volunteers do for Neighbourhood Watch. **Ever-reliable, Robin is a worthy winner of this award.**



Community Health and Wellbeing: Lyn Doll



Lyn is a Coordinator in Humberside. who is there for everyone in her street and beyond. If you cross paths with her, she welcomes you into the street community. She helps those who are unwell in a practical way, with lifts to and from the hospital, and ensures they have other practical support.

No-one is lonely, due to Lyn, who arranges community meals out. She actively puts on charity events at her home for Macmillan and other charities. All of the local community have knowledge of what is happening locally and we all benefitted from the police home security items.

We are all blessed to have her, every community needs a Lyn.

Young Volunteer of the Year: Louis Johnson BEM

The judges were very impressed by **Louis**, who is 17 years old and has been volunteering in the local area for 5 years.

Louis helps the elderly neighbours with their gardening, and volunteers at his local hospital. He makes sure the street he lives in is safe, and keeps an eye out for things that are not right and reports any issues. He frequently checked in with those who were more vulnerable or isolated during the pandemic, and offered his support whenever possible. Louis stands out among other local teenagers for so many of these positive reasons.

Louis loves volunteering locally, and is a huge asset to his community!



Special Recognition Award: Brian Aldred

Brian has been a member of Neighbourhood Watch for over 28 years. For most of those years, he has been the street co-ordinator for his own scheme, Area Co-ordinator for Furnace Green, a Committee member for Crawley NW, and the Crawley Representative to the Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation. His neighbourhood has consistently been one of the lowest crime areas in Crawley. Brian is incredibly hard working, reliable, consistent and very thorough in everything he does. He is very highly respected, and goes well above and beyond the efforts input into Neighbourhood Watch.



Making the streets safer for women at night time

As we enter the autumn and winter months, the days are getting shorter and the dark evenings creeping in earlier, which can cause increased anxieties for women who may feel unsafe or vulnerable within their own neighbourhoods, particularly while having to walk to or from home in the dark. In fact, the [ONS recorded that](#) 50% of women felt 'very or fairly unsafe' both in the quiet streets near their home, as well as 48% when using public transport alone, whilst a staggering 82% felt unsafe in public parks or open spaces after dark. Alongside feeling more at risk in public places, this can lead to isolation as many women limit their normal activities such as meeting friends or exercising outside in the evenings.

Background to a new initiative

Following the abduction and murder of Sarah Everard in 2021, an initiative called 'Walk and Talk' was implemented across the Metropolitan Police, with the aim of building safer communities for women and girls, and re-building trust with our local police forces.

The initiative invites women who are over 18 to meet with a local officer and walk through their area, highlighting what might make them feel unsafe or vulnerable in their communities. Concerns might range from poor street lighting to harassment and intimidation. Since it was introduced in London, several other police forces have adopted the initiative, including Avon and Somerset, West Yorkshire, and Devon and Cornwall.

It has been highly successful and led to more forces bringing it on board.



If you'd like to feel safer, you might want to ask your Safer Neighbourhood Team if they are running a 'Walk and Talk' scheme or prompting them to do so. There are also a range of personal safety smart phone apps on the market – click on the links below to visit the websites of a small selection of apps available:

- **[Auggie Personal Safety](#)** (designed for those with low levels of vision)
- **[Hollie Guard](#)** (developed by the Hollie Gazzard Trust)
- **[WalkSafe+](#)**
- **[Life 360](#)**: Family Tracking App
- **[Family Locator](#)** - track family members wherever they are
- **[Railway Guardian](#)** (British Transport Police)
- **[bSafe](#)**

Written by Alys Davies, CST Project Coordinator

Have your say with our Crime and Community Survey 2024

It's that time of year, where we launch our annual Crime and Community Survey, and ask our members, volunteers, and supporters, to give their honest views on safety and crime prevention topics. Running from **Monday 7th - Thursday 31st October**, this year's Survey will include additional questions on home security and feelings of safety in relation to health behaviours such as diet, smoking, and exercise. The answers we receive help build a comprehensive picture of how safe people across England and Wales feel; what their primary crime prevention concerns are; and how we can better provide support and guidance.

[Click here to take our survey and have your voice heard!](#)

As always, we really do appreciate your feedback - it is invaluable to us, and provides a steer for the crime prevention themes and topics that we spotlight throughout each year. In 2023, we received over 26,000 responses - let's see if we can exceed that this year!



Why Relying on a Search Engine to Find a Locksmith Could Cost You

Finding a reliable locksmith should be straightforward, but many property owners are being misled by search engine advertisements inadvertently hiring unqualified or un reputable individuals. This can result in poor workmanship that compromises your home's security, leaving you vulnerable.

Additionally, attractive low prices advertised, typically ranging from £39 to £59, can lead to unexpected overcharges, with many property owners reporting fees of thousands of pounds.

For peace of mind, trust the **Master Locksmiths Association (MLA)**. Use our '[Find a Locksmith](#)' tool to connect with local MLA Approved Companies — trusted professionals meeting the highest quality and security standards. Save their contact details for future use!

Visit: www.locksmiths.co.uk to find your local MLA Approved Company.




Seasonal Safety: Protecting Your Home and Community as the Year Winds Down

As we approach the end of the year (how did it go by so fast?), it's crucial to prioritise the safety of our homes and communities. The changing seasons bring unique challenges and potential hazards, but with a little preparation and awareness, it can help provide extra peace of mind.

OCTOBER



Clocks changing

As the nights get darker earlier, it's a good time to review and enhance your home security measures. Consider installing a comprehensive security system with sensors, cameras, and alarms. When not at home, share your whereabouts with trusted friends or family, especially if you're out alone when it's dark. You could also carry a personal alarm for added peace of mind.



Bump in the night

With trick-or-treaters coming and going, take precautions to keep your property safe and secure. Use motion-activated lights to illuminate your home's exterior and deter unwanted visitors. A video doorbell can also help you monitor activity at your doorstep and identify anyone approaching your home. Additionally, remind children of basic safety rules for trick-or-treating, such as staying in well-lit areas and never entering a stranger's home.

NOVEMBER



Preparing for the colder weather

As the weather turns colder, it's essential to prepare your home and car for the winter months. Clean out gutters, seal any drafts to keep your home warm and energy-efficient, and consider installing a water sensor in vulnerable areas to detect potential leaks early on. Prepare your car for winter driving by checking tire pressure, fluid levels, and battery health. Keep an emergency kit in your car with essentials like an ice scraper, de-icer spray, flashlight, blankets, snacks, and a first-aid kit.



Cyber safety

Black Friday (29 November) is one of the busiest shopping days of the year, but remember to be extra vigilant about online security. Use secure websites for shopping, avoid clicking on suspicious links in emails or social media messages, and be cautious about sharing personal or financial information online.

DECEMBER



Christmas decorations

Be mindful of where you place decorations over the festive period. You'll likely have it nailed down, but if you've moved to a new home be conscious of what you place near heat sources and if you're placing anything high, make sure you have ladders and some help. Check holiday lights for frayed wires or loose connections before using them, and always turn them off before going to bed or leaving the house.



Winter travel

If you're travelling during the winter months, stay informed about weather conditions and plan your route accordingly. Pack your car with essentials like blankets, warm clothes, snacks (any excuse to dig into Christmas snacks earlier), water, a first-aid kit, and a flashlight in case of unexpected delays or emergencies. Let someone know your travel plans and expected arrival time.