



WATCH NEWS

SUMMER 2009



SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE



Supt. Amanda Pearson

Superintendent Amanada Pearson is the Area Commander for the South Oxfordshire police area. Amanda grew up in South Oxfordshire and is a former pupil of Didcot girls school.

Returning to Thames Valley Police last October Amanda considers herself privileged in being given the role and states that she joined the police to make a difference and what better a place to do that, than the place your children are growing up in.

South Oxfordshire remains one of the safest areas in the Thames Valley and had a fantastic 10% reduction in crime last year. When people were asked what is important in making their community a good place to live, they consistently say 'being safe' is the top priority.

While Didcot, Wallingford, Henley and Thame are generally safe places, we know we still have problems related to crime, concerns about anti-social behaviour and hidden problems, such as domestic abuse and sadly some of our community are still being killed or injured on roads. The Community Safety Partnership aims to work together to make South Oxfordshire a safer place to live and work.

SERVING WITH PRIDE AND CONFIDENCE

In order to improve public confidence in the police, Thames Valley Police have developed a comprehensive strategy entitled 'Serving with Pride and Confidence'. This strategy will seek to provide a new approach to customer service, emphasising our organisational values whilst providing a great use of discretion.

The strategy will seek to enhance engagement with the public, improve service delivery whilst listening and responding to what the public want.

A key priority for the police in the forthcoming year is to increase public satisfaction and confidence in the service we provide to the community. An integral element in improving our service is the Policing Pledge. This pledge makes a number of promises on how your local police will work with you to help resolve your concerns. It also sets standards for the kind of service you can expect. We will deal with emergencies and non-emergencies within certain agreed times and if you have been a victim of crime we will agree with you how often and for how long you will be kept informed of progress on your case.



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You are now able to obtain the following information from the Thames Valley Police website:

- Contact details of your Neighbourhood Policing Team
- Your Neighbourhood Priorities
- Action being taken by the police and follow-up to problems raised by the community
- Local crime statistics, information and crime maps
- How to get involved and help make your community a safer place to live



www.thamesvalley.police.uk

UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUPS

The Neighbourhood Action groups across South Oxfordshire have recently been reviewed to ensure their compliance with the new Neighbourhood Action Group guidance. One of the actions resulting from the review has been the need to recruit more residents on the groups and membership drives are currently taking place in Didcot and the Henley Rural area. Good practice has also been highlighted in the following areas:

Wallingford Area NAG: Excellent communication strategy, update sent out after each meeting to their network, including all parish councils, plus use of Ringmaster messaging to keep people informed. Involving the local community in village based problem solving sessions.

Henley Rural NAG: Work on speeding problems on A4155 at Shiplake, resulting in county councillor taking on action to have Vehicle Activated Sign installed.

Thame, Chinnor & Watlington Area NAG: Consultation in Watlington area using community volunteers ensuring that it was representative of the community especially minority groups and young people.

Didcot NAG: Excellent use of post it notes in a problem solving session ensuring that a huge amount of possible responses were identified.

Wheatley & Chalgrove Area NAG: Clean up of Chalgrove bus shelter and the surrounding area.

Henley Town NAG: Mobile phone initiative, action by all members of the group to educate and inform

If you want to find out more about the Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS) please contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Teams on 08458 505 505 or your Neighbourhood Action Group Co-ordinator Alison Smith, who works part-time at SODC on 01491 823054



PCSO Using a SID to monitor speed levels

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)

What is it?

The SID is an electronic device that records the speed of the vehicles passing. It can be used for education purposes for drivers. It flashes up the speed of the vehicle and if above the speed limit then it flashes them to slow down. The vehicles details can be entered on the Speedwatch database so that further offending may result in prosecution. The owner of the car can also be sent a warning letter.

Who operates it?

It must be operated by a police officer or PCSO. Community members including Neighbourhood Watch members may accompany the officer with the SID to record car registrations or to observe, but the following safety points must be observed.

- A fluorescent jacket must be worn
- The officer must give a brief on road safety and hazards at that location
- The volunteer must sign a disclaimer

There are three SIDs across South Oxfordshire and the neighbourhood police teams use the SID regularly on roads that have been identified by the community as hot spots for speeding. If you would like help with a SID on a local road then please contact your local police team on 08458 505 505.



DO NOT BE THE VICTIM OF LETTERBOX THEFT!!

There have been a number of burglaries where entry has been gained by an offender using the letterbox to get a hand inside the door in order to operate the key left in the lock. Always ensure when locking your door not to leave keys in the locks which could be accessed via letterboxes or cat flaps. Remember to keep your keys safe at all times and do not put them on a hall table or anywhere where they may be viewed through the letterbox or are on display through a window. With the improved security on cars i.e. immobilisers and alarms, car thieves are breaking into houses to steal car keys. Many people have key racks positioned by their front door for ease: this practice aids the potential criminal intent on stealing your vehicle.

Letterboxes can offer burglars an option to go 'fishing' for anything left in reach of the letterbox! Some thieves have been known to use a fishing rod or magnet on a stick to steal predominantly car keys through the letterbox. Keep keys out of sight and always properly lock doors and remove keys from the door lock.

Fishing!!



TIP

Consider fitting a letterbox cage, which stops thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and trying the locks from the inside

THEFT OF AND FROM VEHICLES IN THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE AREA

During the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 there have been around 130 accounts of theft of vehicles across the Vale of White Horse Local Policing Area. The most commonly stolen vehicles have been Fords, mainly Transits, followed secondly by Vauxhalls, which were Corsas, Astras, Cavaliers and Vectras as well. There third most common theft across the Vale has been the theft of Land Rover Defenders, but this has been a national problem because they hold their value and can be easily sold on. The most commonly stolen items from vehicles, again during 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 are as follows: 55 registration plates, 37 audio equipment, 21 tools, 25 sat navs, 31 accounts of fuel stolen and 21 handbags. Using the 'fishing' method there were 16 vehicles taken in the Vale of White Horse Area.

THEFT OF AND FROM VEHICLES IN THE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE AREA

During the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 there have been around 224 accounts of theft of vehicles across the South Oxfordshire Local Policing Area. The most commonly stolen vehicles have been Fords, Fiestas and Transits. There were around 17 Land Rovers stolen, but again this was part of a national series. In the South a number of Vauxhalls were stolen, predominantly Vauxhall Corsas. Using the 'fishing' method, there were 28 vehicles taken on the South Oxfordshire Policing Area. The most commonly stolen items from vehicles during 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 are as follows: 107 registration plates, 90 audio equipment, 73 tools, 60 sat navs, 36 accounts of fuel, 24 handbags.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE YOUR CAR SECURE



NEVER leave any of the following on display in your car as they are all particularly attractive to car thieves:-

Mobile Phones, Laptops, Sat Navs, Cameras, Handbags, purse/wallet, Cash, Vehicle Registration Documents, Private mail, (especially if it has your address on it)



DO NOT leave anything on display in your car. Even an old coat on the back seat is a temptation for someone to 'smash and grab'. Take all your belongings with you when you leave the car. If this is not possible, lock them in the boot. There have been recent incidents of thefts from vehicles when left parked up at local Beauty Spots.

Another thing to consider is the suction pad mark, which can be left by some Sat Navs on your windscreen, always try to ensure you remove this. The mark gives an indication to the potential thief that a Sat Nav system may be locked in the boot or glove compartment. Remove all valuables and **DO NOT** become a victim of crime.

TOOL THEFTS CRIME SERIES

There is a current crime series where tools are being stolen from vehicles used by workmen and left parked outside properties they are working on. Thousands of pounds worth of tools have been stolen, in some cases the vehicles are left with their rear/side doors open, easy pickings for offenders.

If you are having any work done on your property or know of any houses nearby that are being renovated, please inform workmen of this series and advise them to lock their vehicles.



CONTACT YOUR CRIME REDUCTION ADVISOR FOR FURTHER ADVICE:-



Julia Wheeler, Crime Reduction Advisor for Henley. Tel: 08458 505 505

Malcolm Wills, Crime Reduction Advisor for Thame, Didcot and Wallingford. Tel: 08458 505 505

DON'T LET THIEVES BREAK INTO YOUR SHED!



Never leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. Lock all tools and ladders away so that a thief cannot use them to break into the house.



Whilst many of us take great precautions to protect our homes it can be easy to neglect the security of sheds/garages and outbuildings. If you consider the amount of value contained within them, i.e. mowers, strimmers, power tools, etc. it is worth taking time to make sure they are secure. Please contact the Watch Office on 01235 556957 to obtain a copy of the crime prevention leaflet "Secure your sheds, garages and outbuildings." This leaflet contains good advice about padlocks, hasps and security marking. If you require further Crime Reduction Advice, please contact your local Crime Reduction Adviser as listed above.



'BUY WITH CONFIDENCE'
Oxfordshire's Approved Traders Scheme
www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk



The Buy With Confidence Scheme provides consumers with a list of approved local businesses from all over Oxfordshire, which have been individually checked for trustworthiness and compliance with consumer protection laws.

Helping to protect consumers against rogue traders, it was first launched in 1999 by Hampshire County Council and has now grown to include 20 other Trading Standard Services, including Oxfordshire.

Benefits to Consumers

The scheme provides consumers with a list of approved local businesses covering a wide range of home improvement trades. Before being accepted into the scheme, traders are subjected to full and careful checks by Trading Standards staff to ensure their trustworthiness and compliance with the Trading Standards law. Currently there are over forty Oxfordshire traders who have gained membership, with others going through the process.

It is not possible to ensure that there will never be a problem using a member business, but the scheme does expect the trader to be reliable, offer value for money and to deal fairly with complaints. There is also an arbitration scheme, if things go wrong. Membership can be suspended or cancelled if traders do not comply with the rules.

Benefits for Business

There are obvious benefits for businesses through being on a recommended list and also gaining valuable publicity through promotion of the scheme. The Buy With Confidence logo can be used on correspondence and vehicles.

Oxfordshire are only offering membership to traders in the 'Home Improvement' sector and are looking for more businesses to join. The 'Buy With Confidence' website provides information on the scheme for both consumers and businesses. Consumers can enter a post code and then search in trade categories within ten or twenty five miles of their home or wider.

If you are looking for work to be carried out at your property, then look for the 'Buy With Confidence' logo when choosing a good trader.

For more information about becoming a member or to request a list of the current approved Oxfordshire Traders, please phone 0845 051 0845.



Doorstep sellers & workmen may look friendly, but be careful, you may find yourself paying too much and not getting the service you had hoped for...

**TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE
 ROGUE TRADER UNIT
 TELEPHONE 0845 051 0845**

OXFORDSHIRE TRADING STANDARDS ROGUE TRADER UNIT

During the period April 2008 to April 2009, Oxfordshire Trading Standards dealt with 266 doorstep crime incidents. They intervened in 64 incidents, 29 arrests were made by police officers, 8 resulted in prosecutions and 4 received prison sentences, 9 cases are still pending court action.

Money paid out to Rogue Traders in this period was £923,224 and money saved for consumers was £90,900

The highest numbers of incidents reported were for roofing scams, followed in second place by gardening scams. There were 29 complaints (12%) received from the Vale of White Horse area and 40 complaints (17%) received from the South Oxfordshire area.

Oxfordshire County Council has secured funding for a dedicated police officer to work with the Rogue Trader Team.

NATIONAL BURGLARY CAMPAIGN...



KEEP IT SAFE. KEEP IT HIDDEN. KEEP IT LOCKED.

This booklet shows easy ways to secure your home. What you can do to avoid street robbery, how to stop your mobile being stolen and securing your car, motorbike or bicycles. It also contains useful contacts and more information on crime reduction, security and support.

As part of a National Burglary Campaign, the Home Office Secretary Jacqui Smith has announced a crack down on repeat burglars and free burglary prevention advice as part of a new package of support to help the public to protect themselves from burglary and help keep crime down.

The package is part of a wider government action to help increase people's personal security, particularly those who are the most vulnerable to burglary, and ensure that criminals face the consequences of their crimes.

On April 7th, Thames Valley Police engaged in a national day of action to tackle burglary. Safety roadshows were held in Henley, Didcot, Thame, Abingdon and Wantage and were advertised by the press and on the Ringmaster Community Messaging System. During the day crime prevention literature was given out with free UV marker pens. Appointments were offered and made for home security surveys, which were carried out by Thames Valley Police Crime Reduction Advisors.

The Home Office has introduced a new self-assessment tool to help people check their home security. It is an online questionnaire 'How Safe Is Your Home' and takes approximately three minutes to complete.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome

This is a useful tool and can help you to identify areas where you can make improvements to your home security. Some NHW Schemes have already completed this questionnaire, the feedback received was very positive, it is a way NHW schemes can be more proactive and help reduce the risk of their homes being burgled. The Home Office is planning to produce the questionnaire in hard copy format, as soon as it is available we will let you know.

FREE ADVICE PACK

A free advice pack is available from the Home Office for people concerned about becoming victims of burglary that provides simple and practical advice on what they can do to prevent it. The pack contains leaflets on burglary, discount vouchers for home security products from DIY stores, including B&Q & Focus, a home security self assessment checklist and a copy of the policing pledge.

PLEASE PHONE FREE ON 0800 456 1213 for a free pack

Most burglaries are carried out by the opportunist, someone looking for an easy target, an open door or window, or easy access to the rear of a property, somewhere they can gain entry without being seen. We can all reduce our risk of being burgled by identifying and securing vulnerable areas on our properties. Please contact your Crime Reduction Advisor at Thames Valley Police if you require FREE crime reduction advice.

Please contact the NHW Office if you require any leaflets or door/window stickers.



**NHW Office:
01235 556957**



**Burglars Beware:
OUR PROPERTY IS
POSTCODED
window /door sticker.**



The stop chain check door sticker has been updated to include lock, a reminder for older people to keep doors locked at all times even when they are at home.

CCTV CAMERAS



CCTV is part of an integrated, multi-agency approach to reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime. In addition, the cameras play a role in the prevention of incidents and proactive policing.

CCTV is an additional tool that has a significant impact in crime reduction. This includes deterring crime, the detection of crime and a reduction in the fear of crime. There are currently 93 operational CCTV cameras, 31 in the Vale and 62 in South Oxfordshire. The CCTV Control Room is located at Abingdon Police Station, where operators are employed to monitor them 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

GOOD NEWS STORIES / RESULTS:

DIDCOT—A fight broke out within a group, during the early hours of a morning. This was monitored by CCTV, the police were notified and made five arrests.

THAME—A CCTV operator reported a possible drugs related incident whilst on duty. Consequently, the police made two arrests for possession of drugs.

WALLINGFORD—A CCTV operator reported a suspected lead theft when a man was seen scaling a town centre roof during the early hours of a morning. The police attended and made three arrests.



Other cases that CCTV operators have been involved in are:

- Identifying a burglary in progress
- Observing a male who has persistently caused low level anti-social behaviour and minor damage
- Being totally instrumental in identifying an offender responsible for a snatch theft

ANCHOR STAYING PUT

Anchor Staying Put is a none profit home improvement agency run by Anchor Trust.

This service is available for older and disabled residents in the Oxfordshire area and works in partnership with the District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council, Primary Care Trusts, local Police and Fire service.

The service makes a small charge for carrying out works plus the cost of any materials purchased. Work can include minor plumbing, joinery, security, handrails, key safes, glazing, fencing etc.

Advice and quotations are free.

Between April 2008 and March 2009 approximately **345** door chains/mirrors/padlock/bar/ deadlock/hinge bolts/brass bolts etc were installed. Approximately **160** various security measures including, security lights/smoke alarms/shock alarms/ door entry system/ fireproof letter box etc were also fitted.

Telephone: (01491) 823888

Email: hannah.cox@anchor.org.uk



WATCH OFFICE UPDATE



The Neighbourhood Watch Office is now fully staffed again. Your Administrators Carol, Kathy & Clare all work part-time, 22hrs a week, Monday to Friday.

Carol covers Thame, Didcot & Wallingford areas

Kathy covers Abingdon & Wantage areas &

Clare covers Henley & Faringdon areas

Carol Rudd
South Oxfordshire
Tel: 01235 556937

Kathy Gubbins
Vale of White Horse
Tel: 01235 556938

Clare Stroud
South & Vale
Tel: 01235 556957

Ringmaster/Community Messaging

The Thames Valley Police Ringmaster/Community Messaging System now has approximately 28,000 people registered throughout the whole of the Thames Valley. There are 4,024 people registered in the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse areas, messaging over 40,000 people.

Some of you may have noticed that we are starting to send you more information about what's happening in your area, including Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) Updates, Crime Reduction Events, Police Surgeries, Neighbourhood Updates, etc. We will always try to report on burglaries and crime series in your area, as this has always been our priority.

We are working closely with your Neighbourhood Teams so we can send you more messages local to your neighbourhood. Our aim is to help improve communication with communities, listen to what you want and do our best to deliver.

(Please note: The NAG and Neighbourhood Updates are only sent out on Ringmaster to email recipients as they are too long for telephone broadcast. Please contact your Neighbourhood Policing Teams on 08458 505 505 if you would like information on where to obtain a hard copy).

The Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association covers the three counties of Berkshire/Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire. It was launched at the Thames Valley Police Headquarters on 20th June 2008. Val Mcpherson, pictured opposite (2nd from right), is a chair of the Association and can be contacted on 07815144691 or by email: valthewillows@aol.com
Neighbourhood & Homewatch Website: www.mynhw.co.uk



Launch of the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association at Thames Valley Police Headquarters.

Public Liability Insurance for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

The Neighbourhood Watch Public Liability Insurance Policy has been renewed for another year with Ansvar Insurance Company Ltd.

If you require a copy of the policy, please contact the watch office on 01235 556957.

We would like to remind all NHW Co-ordinators that they DO NOT need to take out any separate Public Liability Insurance for their NHW schemes.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH STREET SIGNS

For new or replacement street signs, please contact:

PSP Limited
Hampden House
Monument Business Park
Chalgrove
Oxford
Tel: 01865 893220



Neighbourhood Watch Office
Abingdon Police Station
Colwell Drive
Abingdon
OX14 1AU
Telephone: 01235 556957