Alresford and District Neighbourhood Watch Association

PLAY YOUR PART

Without wishing to play down the impact of crime on those against whom it is perpetrated, we are most fortunate to live in an area, in Alresford and its surrounding district, which is relatively free of crime. Perhaps it is this very reason that undermines arguments for the retention of larger numbers of police in our area as our local force seeks to save further amounts of cash, and spread itself ever more thinly, especially in rural areas. So now is not a time to be complacent.

Statistics for the more serious crimes affecting us (mostly theft from outlying or commercial properties, or outbuildings) suggest that these are perpetrated in large part by outsiders to the local community. Your Neighbourhood Watch seeks to support the police and the community in deterring crime by its very presence, making it obvious through signage, to advertise our presence, showing outwardly that this is an area where easy pickings are not available. In particular, it is important that we take steps to prevent opportunities for crime from appearing by showing an interest in our surroundings as well as taking physical precautions. Do you notice unusual activity around you? Have you seen that van before? When an anonymous looking van is seen in an area, perhaps a note of its number and the time of day, or better still, a photo on your phone might prove useful. The same might apply to suspicious individuals, especially in the more remote communities. Without a police presence, it is difficult to build a picture, but if the local population already have the picture (even literally), then we have a lead or potential leads for further investigation. Engage with your community and help keep it a safe and secure place. Know how to contact police or Neighbourhood Watch in case of suspicion.

CYBERCRIME

In the ever expanding realm of the internet, Cybercrime is an area that has the potential to disrupt our lives and cause irritation and damage. By its nature, it also knows no geographic boundaries. Without wishing to sow undue alarm amongst readers, its prevalence is increasing and scams are designed to catch out the unwary or naive. The most effective response, however, is simple and straight forward, requiring common sense and a little knowledge.

Take note of the following tips to avoid Cybercrime:

- ✓ Treat all unsolicited emails with caution. If you don't know the sender, you should never click on links in these emails to visit an unknown web site - this could contain a link to code that could affect your computer. Even if you do know the sender, be careful if the e-mail is not in the sender's usual style, seems to be strangely worded, or asks for help. They may have been hacked and any link may also lead to code that could affect your computer.
- ✓ Never open attachments in unexpected emails. They could contain a virus or code that would allow someone to control your computer.
- ✓ If an e-mail asks you to make contact with a service provider, look up their contact details independently before getting in touch.
- ✓ Always install anti-virus software, keep it up to date and run regular security scans.
- ✓ Install and allow the latest security updates for your computer software. For example, Microsoft updates will help fix problems and security gaps. These fixes are known as patches. And for those with Apple products, including iPads, it is a myth that these are not susceptible to attack: they are as vulnerable as any other computer and require protection.
- ✓ Install a firewall and learn how to use it.
- ✓ Be careful not to share personal information such as address information, bank details, telephone numbers, date of birth etc. on social networking sites. Also be careful of entering such details on other websites that don't use encryption to secure the information you pass.
- ✓ Don't use the same password on different websites. Although this makes it more difficult to manage your online accounts it's worth the effort. You can use password management software and encryption to make this easier.
- ✓ Never save or store bank or credit card details on a website (such as Amazon). It may take time to type them in each time you make a purchase, but it is safer.

Finally, guard against the possibility of identity theft. Shred or make illegible any paperwork that contains personal details before you throw it away or recycle it. Criminals can go through your bins to get receipts, letters from banks and other sensitive information that they can use online.

CRIME IN PROGRESS — RING 999

NON URGENT – RING 101