

# Chelmsford Group of Neighbourhood Watches

[www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

*Safer & Stronger Communities Together*



## NEWSLETTER: Autumn 2016

### Keep these darker days safe

Autumn and winter days—by 5 o'clock in the afternoon (4 o'clock in deepest winter) it's already dark: you're out, at work, shopping, with the kids ... the house is unoccupied—and **looks unoccupied!** As we approach Christmas, there may be expensive presents stacking up—that's what opportunist thieves and burglars expect. So if your house looks unoccupied you could be a prime target for the opportunist to snatch takeable valuables. Portable technology gadgets, tablets, laptops, etc; disposable jewellery; anything that's readily takeable and quickly sellable.

Keep radios on—speech rather than music; use time-switches to turn on some lights (but don't expose your front room to the street through open curtains! (But don't close curtains during the day, either ...).



A gadget called *Fake TV* can be programmed to come on at dusk and shines a flickering light that looks, from outside, like the light from a television. It's available from Maplin ([maplin.co.uk](http://maplin.co.uk)), through Amazon ([amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)), or other outlets: search on line for best prices.

But most of all make sure your doors and windows are secure: five lever locks on all outside doors, proper lockable window locks. Keep small takeable valuables in a safe (making sure that the safe is securely fixed to a wall—ideally embedded in a wall.

Remember, though, that the chances are that you won't be burgled—but don't make your house inviting for the opportunist.

***LET THEM THINK YOU'RE IN.***



### Don't leave bags, shopping (especially Christmas presents) visible in your car

Leaving any apparent goodies (bags, mobile phones, tablets/laptops—even in a bag), shopping, and especially, this coming season, Christmas presents, invite a smash and grab opportunist thief.

***DON'T LEAVE BAGS AND PRESENTS VISIBLE***

Contact us: ☎ **07926 462610**  
[chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk](http://chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk)

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**Chelmsford**  
City Council

## Don't be caught out in Chelmsford's growing city centre

Yes, Chelmsford has a new shiny new shopping centre at Bond Street—and there are lots of other retail outlets moving in or having facelifts elsewhere in the city centre. Great facilities, and crowds of people enjoying themselves: so watch out for pick-pockets, purse-dippers, and bag snatchers. Don't let what should be an enjoyable season, buying presents for friends and loved-ones, turn into a bad dream: zip up handbags and back packs, and keep wallets secure (not just stuffed in a back pocket), and keep them close and secure.

### Do you have a Grab Bag ready?



A 'Grab Bag' is an emergency bag that contains important items and information which you can grab in an emergency. It will contain things like

- p r e s c r i p t i o n medicines details
- toiletries
- identity documents
- first aid kit

and so on.

This leaflet can be found on the Essex Fire and Rescue website, and we have placed it on our website. Other suggestions are available on, for example, Chelmsford City Council website.

### Distraction theft—don't be diverted before you lock your car.

Distraction theft is when someone diverts your attention—maybe by asking for directions just as you are getting out of your car—whilst an accomplice quietly grabs your bag that may be momentarily accessible. The individual may appear reasonable, 'ordinary', and friendly. So beware ...

Of course, the vast majority of people asking for help are genuine ... just be mindful before allowing yourself to be drawn away.

## Essex Police need our help!

Essex Police service, we are told, is one of the tightest funded services per head of population in England—apparently, it's all about funding formulas. So they have to prioritise how they deploy resources, and this means that non-urgent, community policing is very stretched, and relatively 'minor' criminal incidents will not receive an immediate response.

We can help the police to provide an effective service in a variety of ways:-

- Don't make unnecessary calls—you'd be surprised what some people dial 999 about: use 999 only in a real emergency; use 101 for non-emergencies.
- Take effective and sensible self-help precautions to secure your property and protect yourself—see our website.
- Develop a high-profile Neighbourhood Watch for your street/locality and encourage neighbourly self-help—street signs and window stickers *are a deterrent*. Link to our website for more information.

We are developing closer links with Essex Police in Chelmsford, and we look forward to strong relations with them in the coming months.

### ... and Neighbourhood Watch needs you!

And we need you. Read the *Essex Chronicle* and each week there seems to be a report of criminal activity—some violent. There has been a resurgence of interest in Neighbourhood Watch in areas around Chelmsford City area, such as in Great Baddow and Stock—but don't forget, Chelmsford is still one of the safest places to live and work.

Neighbourhood Watch only works when members of a local community work together to make it work: the Chelmsford Group of Neighbourhood Watches can help with advice and information (see our website), and we seek close working with the Police and City Council. But locally it's up to you.

Get in touch and together we can make a difference!

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*... and always be alert to fraud!*

In our last edition we had a big spread on fraud and scams—especially via the Internet. Visit our website to see our newsletters and to see how to avoid this major nasty attack on our privacy and security.