

Chelmsford Group of Neighbourhood Watches

Safer & Stronger Communities Together



NEWSLETTER: Summer/Autumn 2020

Emergency? ALWAYS use 999

Neighbourhood Watch during the Covid-19 Pandemic

WELCOME to our first edition of our *Newsletter* this year! We're sorry to have been absent from print this year—but our website has been, and still is, full of information and links advising on *Covid-19* matters, and of course Neighbourhood Watch information and advice.

So we hope that this edition catches up. Read on!

Contents

THIS edition has reminders on keeping safe and secure at home and when out and about. Keep them to hand, keep them in mind! Here are the main headings:

- Life under the Covid-19 pandemic
- Keeping your home secure, including garden and shed security
- The scourge of drug dealing in our neighbourhoods
- Neighbourhood Watch is for EVERYONE
- Personal safety and security
- Keeping safe and secure—fraud alert
- Thank you to all Key Workers
- Domestic abuse
- Darker days in the Autumn and Winter
- Keep your dog safe

We'd welcome your feedback on these items, and also we'd love to hear from you with suggestions for items in future editions. Please contact us at:

newsletter@chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk



Life under the Covid-19 Pandemic

WE HAVE ALL experienced lock-down restrictions over the past six months, together with uncertainties and worries—health, well-being, financial; missing family and friends, and perhaps the stress and tragedy of illness or loss. Despite all this, communities have proven to be resilient, neighbours have watched out for one-another, and people on the whole have acted responsibly.

In some areas, local Neighbourhood Watches have been involved with helping vulnerable people in their areas. The Chelmsford NhW Group is registered with the Chelmsford Council of Voluntary Services (chelmsfordcvs.org.uk), so we can help link people up.

The Virus is still here—be responsible

Don't be lulled into complacency—the Virus is still here. Keep socially distancing, cover your face in enclosed public places, wash your hands frequently: this advice is as much about helping to stop the spread of the Virus as well as helping to protect yourself.

Wearing a mask is primarily for the benefit of others, because anyone can be a carrier without necessarily knowing it. So wear your mask with pride: even make it fun and a fashion statement! We saw this sign in High Chelmer: **be a hero, mask up in shopping malls.**

Also, make sure your pub, café, shop, are being responsible. Are they following the kinds of rules shown here.

So, our advice is:

- Make space
- Cover Face
- Wash Hands
- Help save lives



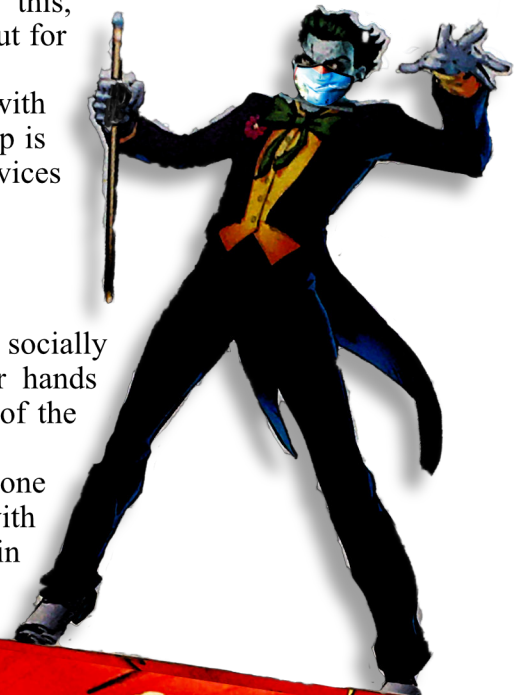
As always, there is much information available on-line; check out these websites for more advice:

www.nhs.uk
www.chelmsford.gov.uk/coronavirus
www.gov.uk/coronavirus
www.essex.gov.uk/topic/coronavirus

Keep safe.

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

Wash your hands frequently



Our Editor wears his mask with pride!



Keeping your home secure, including garden and shed security

WE REGULARLY advise on keeping our homes and possessions safe, but it's amazing how often we hear about how easy it is to be forgetful or careless about leaving back doors unlocked, windows open, bikes insecure, car keys visible, and so on. Frequent theft of 'key-less' vehicles happens too much also, as does theft of catalytic converters (often from cars parked in public places).

We may want to leave our house windows open during spells of hot weather, or perhaps we're having a barbecue in the back garden but leave the front windows open for a through draft. Perhaps we're 'just next door' and leave the back door unlocked... all these are gifts for opportunist thieves.

But by taking a few simple steps, and investing in a little security, we can reduce the risk of being attacked by opportunist thieves and burglars.

For example:

- **Always secure your house at night, whether you're in or out: lock all doors and accessible windows**
- **When you go out, keep voice radio on—and at night keep a suitable light on, if necessary by a timer (but don't reveal the inside of your home!): it's not a good idea to close curtains or blinds when you're away as this will look odd during the day**
- **Keep keys and personal valuables out of sight and preferably locked away; store fobs for key-less cars in a 'Faraday' pouch; use recommended steering wheel locks on cars**
- **Secure sheds and garages with padlocks and cross-bars; store bikes inside, but if in a shed lock them to properly-secure floor anchors**

There's much more detail to talk about, but this is all given on our website, together with links to other sources of information, at:

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

and scroll down to **Home Security**.

Essex Police provide much information and advice too:

www.essex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention

Newsletter index

WE HAVE PUBLISHED our Newsletter two or three times a year for many years and all editions back to **Spring 2012** can be viewed on our website. We also have an index there.

For example:-

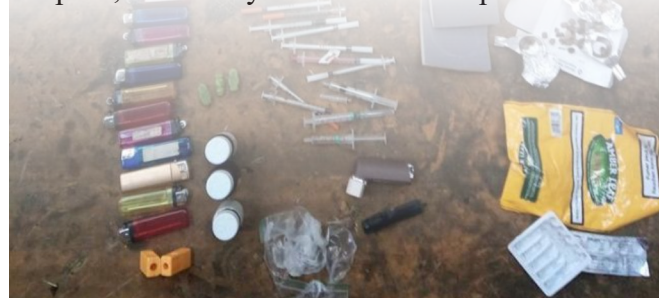
Bike theft	2019 Autumn-Winter p2, p3 2019 Spring-Summer p1, p3
Burglary	2019 Autumn-Winter p2, p3 2019 Spring-Summer p1, p2, p3
Fraud	2019 Autumn-Winter p4 2020 Summer-Autumn p5

Check it out

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

The scourge of drug dealing in our neighbourhoods

CHELMSFORD is, on the whole, a great place to live and work. Our neighbourhoods generally are quiet and peaceful. However, from time to time some localities may experience the presence of individuals dealing illegal substances. Whilst some people buying may have problems relating to housing, mental health, or alcohol or drug dependency, some may be 'just recreational' users. 'Recreational' users may think that they are doing nobody else any harm, but this visible drug dealing is only one part of networks of organised crime that have their tentacles reaching back across the globe, ensnaring the vulnerable and the poor, and led by the ruthless and pitiless.



Locally, kids, sometimes as young as eleven or twelve (or younger), are hired as 'runners' to transport illicit drugs, whilst the homes of vulnerable adults may be 'cuckooed'. Kids are enticed by being given top class mobile phones, for example, and their 'handlers' come across as fun and caring—until the crunch: follow their strict rules or face dire consequences.

If you see suspected drugs dealing, *without placing yourself at any risk*, note the time, date, location, a description of what was happening and the people involved; include any car registration and description where relevant, and if possible (again, *without risk to yourself*) take a photograph. Then report it to your local Watch coordinator (he/she will forward reports to the police); you can also dial 101, or report it on-line at

www.essex.police.uk

If your local NhW group uses *WhatsApp*™ or another form of social media for communication, report it there, too. If you're worried about a dangerous or urgent situation, **always dial 999**.

Neighbourhood Watch is for EVERYONE

WE ARE for ALL members of our society, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religious faith, sexuality, age, or ability. We state this in our *Code of Ethics*. We want everyone to be involved: the more we are inclusive, the stronger we are. Please join us.

chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk/contact.html

Report Hate Crime

If you are attacked in any way (verbally as well as physically or psychologically) and you personally feel this is targeted at your race, religious belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, then this is **hate crime**. This includes someone using offensive language towards you or harassing you because of who you are, or who *they think* you are. The same goes for someone posting abusive or offensive messages about you online.

You should **ALWAYS** report hate crime—whether you are a victim or if you witness it.

**IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CRIME:
ALWAYS REPORT IT**

www.essex.police.uk/ro/report

or call 101

**In an emergency
ALWAYS dial 999**

BLACK LIVES MATTER
blacklivesmatter.uk

Call anonymously to report crime



www.crimestoppers-uk.org

STOP HATE CRIME...

www.report-it.org.uk

REPORT IT!

Personal Safety and Security

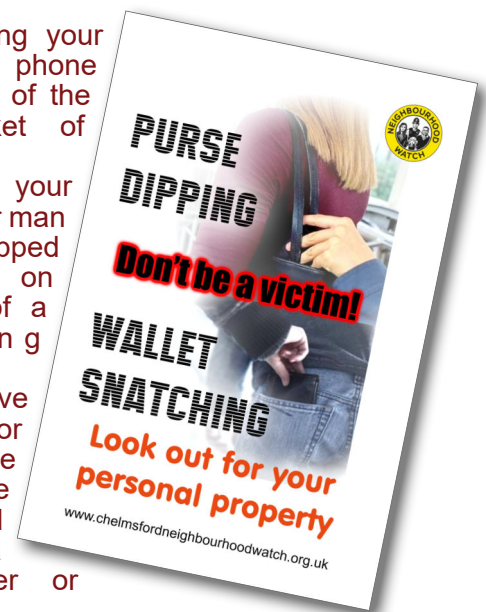
AS WE HAVE NOTED, Chelmsford is generally a very safe place to live, work, and take leisure. But we know of isolated incidents of individuals being subjected to attack: sometimes the worst—murder, rape, and other serious assault.

Whilst these unforgivable incidents are very isolated, some may perhaps be part of a sub-culture of gang-on-gang activity, this is no consolation for those affected.

Then there are incidents of robbery (sometimes affecting young people who may have their bikes or mobile phones taken); or incidents of knife-crime.

Purse-dipping or wallet theft at best can be a nuisance, at worst severely disrupting and alarming. So,

- Avoid leaving your wallet or phone sticking out of the back pocket of your jeans!
- Don't leave your handbag (or man bag) unzipped or hanging on the back of a shopping trolley!
- Don't leave your wallet or phone where it can be snatched (like on a bar counter or café table)!



Be Streetwise in a Social Setting

Here are some tips for a social setting:

- Stay alert – awareness is your best defence.
- Leave venues with friends wherever possible.
- Be part of a group (but don't forget this might be intimidating for others under certain circumstances—so please take care)
- Try to stay in well-lit areas.
- Be confident – even if you don't feel it.
- Travel as if you know where you are going.
- Take the most direct route and try to stay within areas where other people are around.
- Have your keys readily but safely available for when you reach your home or car.
- Keep money for taxis.
- Carry a personal alarm and use it when necessary.

Keeping Safe and Secure—Fraud Alert!

CYBER FRAUD is nasty, pervasive, and shocking. Often vulnerable people are targeted—but anyone can be a victim. It's a dreadful fact of life that there are some unscrupulous and evil individuals who will try to grab your cash at your most vulnerable.

With many of us feeling low and perhaps isolated during this Covid-19 period, some of us may be easier targets for these nasties. Not least, for example, receiving a call out of the blue suggesting you need a 'Covid test', and the caller attempts to take all your personal details in the process. Then, just as the free TV licensing for all over-75s is ending, a call demanding money for your licence!

Be wary of unsolicited emails. 'Phishing' is where you might receive an email that looks legitimate, and has a link to a page that seeks to get all your personal and banking details, for example. Hover your pointer over the email address and often you will see that the details are nothing like the address displayed. See more detailed advice about all this on our website:

www.chelmsfordneighbourhoodwatch.org.uk

and scroll to **FRAUD AND CYBER SECURITY**.

Always keep your devices up to date: regularly check for updates and don't delay—this is where software providers endeavour to keep their software secure and tamper-proof. This applies as much to apps on smart-phones as to software (and firmware) on tablets, laptops, and desktop computers.

We have provided much advice in past editions of this Newsletter, see the short index on page 3. There is a larger index on our website too.

You can find more specialist advice and details on various websites, including:

TV licensing:

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Get Safe On-line (free expert advice):

www.getsafeonline.org

The National Cyber Security Centre:

www.ncsc.gov.uk

Take Five to Stop Fraud:

www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

Action Fraud (for reporting fraud):

www.actionfraud.police.uk

For older people:

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.independentage.org

EssexPolice provide much information and advice:

www.essex.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention

Your bank will also have lots of advice on keeping secure, too.

Check these and the linked websites out. Share with you neighbours, friends, and family.



Thank you to all Key Workers

OVER THE past six months we all have suffered to a greater or lesser extent anxieties over the lock-down. Many people in particular have been extremely worried because of needing to isolate. But who keeps things going?

We all owe a debt of gratitude

and thanks to all key workers

who have kept services

running, have cared for

us when necessary, and

have put their own

lives at risk in the most

extremes of cases.

Health-care workers

(nurses, doctors, porters,

cleaners, and all who work

in hospitals and care settings); workers who care for

the elderly in care homes and at home; postal and

delivery workers; utility service workers (gas,

electricity, water, telecommunications); transport

workers; emergency service workers (police, fire,

ambulance, and more); council workers (like refuse

collectors doing a great weekly run for each of our

households), and not least all those shop workers—

in supermarkets and corner shops. And of course

workers in voluntary organisations, and the many

volunteers. We should recognise and thank anyone

and everyone who has helped keep services going

and who have helped us in these difficult times!



Recent pavement art in
Upper Bridge Road



Thank You!

Domestic Abuse

DOMESTIC ABUSE can happen in any home setting—perhaps in the most unexpected of places. It is a pattern of behaviour on the part of the abuser designed to control his (or her) partner. It can happen at any point in a relationship, including after a couple has split up. Lock-down under Covid-19 has exacerbated many problematic circumstances.

Essex Police put domestic abuse as a high priority. **If you have any reason to think someone is in immediate danger, or your life may be at risk,**

ALWAYS call 999.

If you're hard of hearing or can't communicate verbally you can register with the **emergency SMS service**: text **REGISTER** to 999.

If you're experiencing domestic abuse or are concerned for someone who is, and it's not an emergency, call 101. You can also use the police textphone service on 18001 101.

You can get help and advice from **Compass**, a partnership of domestic abuse services providing a response in Essex:

www.essexcompass.org.uk

or from **Refuge**, which provides the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** on

0808 2000 247 (24/7)

People are there to help.

women's aid

until women & children are safe

www.womensaid.org.uk

VS VICTIM SUPPORT

Get support

08 08 16 89 111

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Refuge

For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

nationaldahelpline.org.uk

These may seem a long way off, but in the Autumn and Winter ...

IT MAY seem a long way off, but in a few weeks the nights will be longer than the days and the evenings will visibly draw in; the clocks go back one hour at the end of October.

Crimes of burglary tend to increase during the darker months, and events such as Halloween and firework nights are potential times for the opportunist thief to break in when householders may be distracted.

Also, Christmas shopping starts early in the Autumn—so take care not to leave presents on sight in the back of cars or through house windows: secure your purchases so that your presents for your friends and loved-ones aren't lost and you don't lose money.

So take care, be mindful, and let's hope we can enjoy ourselves these coming seasons.

(See also page three—*Keeping your home secure ...*)



Keep your dog safe

DOG THEFT has been reported to have risen sharply in parts of the country (*The Independent*, 3rd August, 2020). Apparently gangs are targeting mostly pedigree and working dogs, partly in response to an increased demand for pets over the lock-down period. In the past two months, 40 dogs have been taken in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, including several cocker spaniels.

Be aware: don't leave a dog tied unattended outside a shop, for example, or by itself outside in the garden for long. Note also that there is no specific crime of dog theft (unlike bicycles!).

