

»» FEBRUARY 2024 ««



OUR NEWS

FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES



The Onslow Womblers on their litter picking rounds, thanks to the Community Grants fund!

What's in February's Our News?

This month, we're celebrating the release of issue 6 of The Lookout, our student magazine, and welcome our new Youth Community Lead Worker! The Home Office share case studies from their new 'on the spot ASB policing' pilot programme, and the UK Government shares energy saving tips for your household. There's expert guidance on how to avoid being heartbroken by romance scams, and SimpliSafe's advice for keeping your home and family secure.

Last year, the Onslow Womblers (part of West Meads Neighbourhood Watch), were awarded a Neighbourhood Watch Community Grant to buy more litter picking equipment.

Since then, they've carried out 26 community litter picks and recruited 6 new members to the group, as well as giving a talk to the local primary school.

The local litter picks have generated a lot of community spirit and got people talking to each other more!

[Read more about our Community Grants Fund on our website.](#)

The Lookout 6 is here!

We are delighted to share that the latest issue of our student magazine, **The Lookout**, is here! Each issue of the magazine brings fresh perspectives and insights from students across the country, exploring topics from safety on nights out, to the power and benefits of community action for young people.

We're pleased to say that this issue of The Lookout is funded by the City Bridge Foundation, and has enabled us to distribute 25,000 printed copies directly to student halls across England and Wales.

Read The Lookout now, with the link below!

READ THE LOOKOUT HERE

We would love for you to share The Lookout with your network - whether that's a youth group you work with, a local school or college, or simply your family and neighbours. If you'd like to support our work with young people, please email us at: youngpeople@ourwatch.org.uk.



Welcome to our new Youth Community Lead Worker for London, Miriam King!

Miriam has joined the Central Support Team with a focus on delivering youth-led projects and task groups with young people in the boroughs of Croydon, Hackney and Wandsworth. She also oversees our Youth Council and supports the production of The Lookout.



Miriam's passionate about supporting communities to shape the future they want to see and believes in the power of young people to drive social change.

You can email Miriam at: miriam.king@ourwatch.org.uk.



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Avoid romance scams and heartbreak this February

Romance fraud is when scammers trick their victims into giving them money or information which helps them steal money from them. Scammers slowly gain the victim's trust to eventually ask them for money or obtain enough personal details to steal their identity. If the scammer successfully persuades their victim to lend or give them money, they will usually come back with more and more reasons for needing more. Sometimes victims are asked to pass money from another country through their account – this could be money laundering.

People who have fallen victim to romance scams tend to report the same pattern. If you or someone you know is using online dating or friendship sites and sees any of the signs below, it may indicate you or they are being scammed...



The scammer asks you a lot of questions about yourself. The more information they know about you, the easier you will be to manipulate. Eventually, you might start speaking over the phone.

The discussion is friendly at first but turns romantic very quickly. They shower you with compliments and claim to be falling in love with you.

Their story, or parts of it, change over time. If some part of their story doesn't sound quite right or match what they said last month, that could indicate they are lying.

They refuse to video call you, or meet in person.

Eventually, the scammer asks you to lend them money. They use any number of reasons, such as needing help to pay for a flight to meet you, or they're in some sort of trouble.

But, just because there are dishonest people out there, doesn't mean you have to stop using dating sites altogether. You just have to be aware that scammers do exist, and follow some simple rules to protect yourself online...

If you're using social media sites like Facebook, **don't accept friend requests from people you don't know.**

Don't give away too many personal details about yourself online. Revealing your full name, date of birth and home address could lead to your identity being stolen.

NEVER send or receive money or give away your bank details to someone you've only met online. If anyone asks for your financial details, stop communicating with them immediately and report them to the dating site.

Use reputable dating sites so that there is evidence on the dating site if they try to deny their scam.

SimpliSafe



Protect the ones you love

There's nothing more important than keeping your family and home safe. To add extra peace of mind, here are SimpliSafe and Neighbourhood Watch's top 5 tips:

Teach your children about home safety



Once your children reach a certain age, you may want to talk to them about the importance of home safety. From how to use the security system and the importance of locking the doors to what to do in the event of a fire.

Declutter and start your spring clean early



It might sound simple, but by thoroughly inspecting your home for any security risks, alongside your decluttering tasks, you can ensure safety in the place you call home.

Detect leaks & floods



Worried about water damage with the sporadic British weather? One way to combat this is by adding a water sensor to areas that you feel could be impacted, and receive alerts before any potential damage could happen.

Make your property more private



Every home is different, and although this wouldn't be a one-size-fits-all approach, you can add steps to make your property more private without compromising your aesthetics. From adding a fence, creative landscaping or a driveway gate, to outdoor security cameras.

Advanced home security



Ensure your entire home is protected with a home alarm system to help deter intruders. Do some research and decide what will be the best fit for your home and family; consider either a DIY or hardwired system, as well as either self-monitored or professionally monitored.

[Neighbourhood Watch members can access their 50% discount here!](#)

NHS Talking Therapies

The NHS is encouraging anyone struggling with feelings of depression or anxiety, such as excessive worry, panic attacks, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or obsessions and compulsions, to seek help through NHS Talking Therapies services. These are effective, confidential and free treatments delivered by trained clinicians, online, on the phone, or in person.

If you're struggling with feelings of depression or anxiety, seeking help through an NHS Talking Therapies service can be one of the best steps you can take to overcome mental health issues and get back on track.

NHS Talking Therapies can help provide support and treatment for common mental health problems, such as:

- feeling anxious
- feeling low and hopeless
- having panic attacks
- finding it hard to cope with work, life or relationships
- struggling with flashbacks or nightmares about upsetting events from your past
- feeling stressed
- worrying a lot
- obsessive thoughts or behaviours
- fear of social situations
- being afraid of things, such as spiders, flying or heights (phobias)



NHS Talking Therapies can help

Mental health matters
Help us help you

You do not need to have a diagnosed mental health problem to refer yourself to an NHS Talking Therapies service. Getting support as soon as you start having difficulties can help to reduce their impact.

For those whose first language is not English, talking therapies can be delivered through multi-lingual therapists or through confidential interpreters, and in British Sign Language (BSL) through [SignHealth's NHS Therapies for Deaf People service](#).

Your GP can refer you for NHS Talking Therapies, or you can refer yourself online at nhs.uk/talk.

Energy saving tips from the Government

We're collaborating with the UK Government to bring you some practical tips from their 'It All Adds Up' campaign, to help reduce your energy costs and make your home more energy efficient.

In a new film, consumer champion Dom Littlewood visits residents on the aptly named Energy Street, to suggest ways that they could make small energy-saving changes to their homes. [Watch the video here!](#)

Tips for low and no-cost ways to save money on your energy bills include:

1. Reduce your combi boiler flow temperature to save up to £70 a year
2. Insulate your hot water cylinder to save up to £50 a year
3. Turn down radiators in rooms you aren't using to save up to £50 a year
4. Install an energy efficient shower head to save £40 a year
5. Take shorter showers and save up to £70 a year
6. Wash clothes at a lower temperature to save up to £20 a year

For more tips on making simple changes and to see how it all adds up, visit [GOV.UK/SaveEnergy](https://www.gov.uk/saveenergy).



Government action to tackle antisocial behaviour – ‘Hotspot response pilots’

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and live without the fear of antisocial behaviour (ASB). The [Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan](#), launched last year, galvanizes the Government’s commitment to take concerted action to drive down ASB.

The plan is backed by £160m of funding, part of which supports an increase in police and other uniformed presence to crack down on ASB in hotspot locations. These ‘hotspot response pilots’ are running across 10 police force areas, and you can read more about the pilots in Lancashire and Staffordshire in this edition of Our News.

The Government is committed to this enforcement approach to tackle ASB, and from April it’s rolling out across England and Wales, meaning thousands of additional patrols taking place in areas blighted by antisocial behaviour and serious violence.

Read on to hear from two of the pilot police force areas, Staffordshire and Lancashire...

Tackling antisocial behaviour in Staffordshire

As part of the pilot, Staffordshire Police are providing additional patrols in ‘hotspot’ areas in Burton Urban, Fenton West and Mount Pleasant, Hanley and Etruria, Stafford Town, Newcastle Town and Cannock South and West.

They are already starting to see positive results from these hotspot patrols. For example, in one 10-hour shift, hotspot patrol officers dealt with:

- 3 arrests
- 1 stolen vehicle seizure
- 1 knife recovered
- 6 stop and searches
- 1 interview and charge file

By maximising the strong local contacts the policing team has with security at the Potteries Shopping Centre, the hotspot patrol officers also responded to reports of a stolen car which had been involved in a firearms deployment and pursuit the night before. The vehicle was seized by Firearms officers and the team arrested a suspect on a Failure to Appear warrant and took them into custody.



In December, the team, while on hotspot patrol in Hanley and Etruria:

- responded to concerns from a number of businesses, attending the McDonalds and Boots stores to address ASB incidents around their premises
- worked with local officers to carry out six stop and searches, including in an area identified as a hotspot for drug dealing, resulting in the arrest of a man for possession of a bladed article (they were able to complete all the paperwork as part of their shift, interviewing, charging and bailing the offender to court, with conditions to stay out of the town and report to Longton police station every week)
- identified an attempted shoplifter in the B&M store, carrying out a stop and search which revealed stolen goods.

The hotspot patrol pilot is just one element of Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, Ben Adams' ongoing commitment to tackling ASB across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.



Mr Adams said: *“Antisocial behaviour can have a devastating impact on victims and communities and while it has reduced in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in recent years, there is still more to be done by police and partners.”*

“This pilot, bringing additional patrols to hotspot areas, is an opportunity to boost that activity even further to tackle the ASB that can damage our towns and cities, which is what our communities want and expect.”

“We’re seeing positive results from the pilot, and I look forward to seeing it continue to develop over the coming months, with more people able to enjoy their neighbourhoods and public spaces with less nuisance, vandalism and threat as a result of our interventions.”

Tackling antisocial behaviour in Lancashire

Op Centurion is Lancashire Constabulary's dedicated operation to tackle antisocial behaviour across the county. Delivered by the Constabulary's Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Op Centurion delivers targeted foot patrols in areas identified as ASB hotspots.

These extra patrols, funded by £2m secured by Police and Crime Commissioner, Andrew Snowden, deliver additional visible policing hours across the county to deal with ASB, tackle offending and deter further incidents.

Since its launch in July 2023, Op Centurion has made a huge impact in ASB hotspots across Lancashire. Blackpool's Brunswick Ward saw an impressive 36.5% reduction in reported incidents of antisocial behaviour in the first 3 months of Op Centurion being launched.

PC McGoldrick, who covers the Brunswick Ward area of Blackpool, has shared his insights from patrolling the area and how Op Centurion has made a difference...

Stolen bikes

Officers received community intelligence about three people riding around the area on a stolen bike. A CCTV survey was completed, witness statements were taken, and the suspects were identified. As a result, all three suspects were arrested within days and the bike was recovered and returned to its rightful owner.

Community meetings

A PACT (Police and Communities Together) meeting was set up in Brunswick to allow residents and community members and local councillors to positively engage with their local officers and relay any concerns that they have. The meeting was well-attended and received positive feedback which means it now takes place on a monthly basis.

Busy shifts

In the space of a few hours, officers arrested a male for two burglary offences, located and seized two bikes believed to be stolen, searched a van under the Section 23 Misuse of Drugs Act thanks to community intelligence, and, whilst detaining a male, found a quantity of drugs and drug paraphernalia on him and dealt with him accordingly. Once the relevant paperwork was completed, officers were straight back onto the beat, speaking to residents, local business owners and tackling antisocial behaviour.

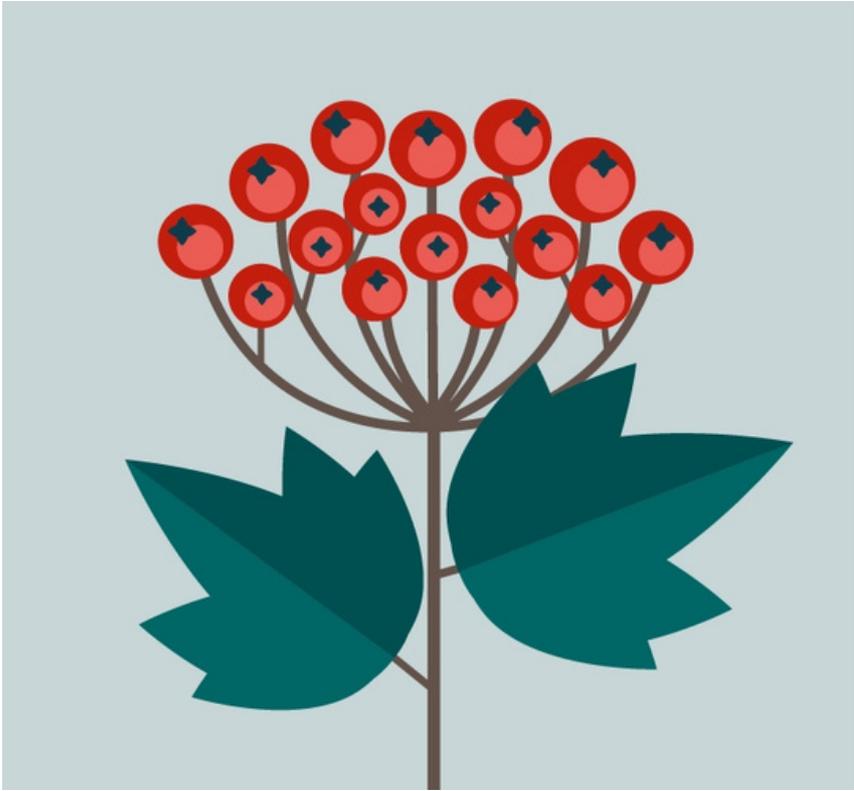
Funding bids

Neighbourhood Policing officers and colleagues from the Constabulary's newly established ASB, Prevention and Problem-Solving Command worked together to submit a funding application to Police and Crime Commissioner, Andrew Snowden's, Safer Lancashire Neighbourhoods Fund. They successfully secured £15k to be used by the police and partner agencies to provide diversionary activities for some of the area's most prolific offenders with the aim of preventing further incidents of ASB and building positive relationships with Lancashire Constabulary, partners, and communities.

Impressively, after six months of hotspot policing in Brunswick, reported ASB has decreased by 42% and public confidence in the police tackling ASB has increased by 7.9%.



The 2024 Movement for Good nominations are open!



Please support us
with a nomination
for £1,000!



This year, you can nominate Neighbourhood Watch Network to receive one of the Benefact Group's Movement for Good £1,000 charity awards, which would be added to our Community Grant Fund, for Neighbourhood Watch groups to apply to for funding local work.

The Benefact Group are an international family of specialist financial services companies that give all available profits to charity and good causes.

The Movement for Good Awards is their annual programme of giving. This year they'll be giving over £1 million to charities and good causes – with your help! **Click the images above and below to go to the nomination form.**

We could receive **£1,000** with your help

Nominate us today



EIO is the promoter. Terms & conditions apply. Closing date 19.12.2024

