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Neighbourhood Watch Scotland AGM

Neighbourhood Watch Scotland held its first AGM at the Albert Halls in Stirling on Wednesday September 19th 2012. A range of people attended, including Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, police officers, representatives from Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards Officers from around the country.

The meeting was chaired by Ian Fowler, who presented the annual report and gave his remarks on the year. Lisa Toon previewed the new Neighbourhood Watch website and communications system, which you can read about on page 2 of this newsletter. Jim Watson, assisted by Ellen Waters of Macfarlane Gray, presented the final accounts of the previous charity (The Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches).

Superintendent Graeme Galloway of the Police Reform team provided an input on the progress of Police Reform and gave some indication of how the new service is likely to look and work from April 2013. Graeme outlined the context for the reform; global financial climate, a necessity to review expenditure at all levels. He stated that the focus of the reform is to protect frontline policing and to remove duplication. The aim is to ensure service delivery at a local level and to create equal access to specialist services such as Major Investigation Teams. Graeme discussed local policing functions and stated that his view was that Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups had a role to play in every aspect of local policing.

Attendees contributed comments and questions to the meeting, which were responded to by the panel.

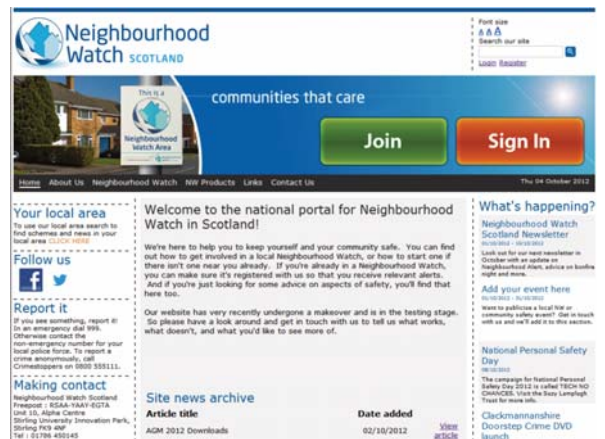
All Trustees with the exception of Bill Campbell stood for re-election and were re-elected by members. The board met briefly after the AGM to elect office-bearers - Ian Fowler continues as Chair, David Mackay as Secretary and Jim Watson as Treasurer. Mark Biggins was elected Vice Chair.

Feedback on the AGM has been very positive, with all respondents to our evaluation of the event saying that they would attend the AGM next year. The majority of respondents rated the content as 'Excellent' and all but one said that the event was beneficial for them. We received some useful feedback on what people would like to see at next year's event, and we will use this when we come to plan it.

Draft minutes and Supt Galloway's presentation are available for download from our website, or contact us to get a copy.

Neighbourhood Watch Scotland Alert!

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new Neighbourhood Alert system for Scotland. This system gives us a host of new tools and increases our capability to contact Neighbourhood Watches all over Scotland. We're already talking to partners like the Police and Fire & Rescue Services to find ways to work together to provide you with relevant, timely, local messages; which is what you told us you wanted. This system will allow us to send you messages based on where you live, as well as giving you the capability to choose the types of messages you wish to receive, and from whom.



Neighbourhood Alert - putting YOU in control.

What we wanted for the new system was to make it easier for people to get involved with Neighbourhood Watch at every level.

Coordinators

- Coordinators can manage their scheme online, including:
- Mapping out the area covered
- Making the watch visible to members of the public who may wish to join
- Inviting people to join the watch
- Sending messages to watch members
- Coordinators will continue to receive newsletters, information and alerts from us, as well as coordinator specific news

Members

- Members of a Neighbourhood Watches can now register online and join a watch
- Will receive information and alerts directly from their coordinator, Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and partner agencies like the police.

The public

- Can search for a Neighbourhood Watch near them and apply to join it, or send the coordinator a message
- Can opt to join the system as an individual and receive messages

As well as the above, everybody who registers with the system will have access to their own details to make sure that they are kept up-to-date and that they are receiving the messages they want to receive.

Please encourage other Neighbourhood Watch members to register on the system, as well as your family and friends. The more people we can reach with our safety messages, the better!

(If you're on twitter, you can follow @ScotlandAlert which will soon go live with tweets from the new system.)

The longest and strongest relationship that many Neighbourhood Watches have in the community is that with the Police. Glasgow West Community Safety Panel and Neighbourhood Watch Association were recently lucky enough to be shown what it's like to be out and about with the police in Drumchapel.

Their secretary Jean Brown describes the evening below.

Police & Neighbourhood Watch: Working in partnership

Inspector McDowall and his sergeant treated our committee to tea, coffee and biscuits while he explained the area's main problems and told us the type of calls they had had that day. He wanted to show us how the incidences of youth disorder had decreased, and took us on a grand tour of the area in the Police mini bus. We were allowed to listen in to his calls (unless they were case sensitive) and having reached the canal we disembarked for a photo shoot by a reporter for the Clydebank Post who had also been invited along.

Having boarded the bus again, we were about to set off when a little boy appeared on a tricycle from along the canal bank - on his own, and after what should have been his bedtime. The Inspector asked him some details and established that he lived much further down the street. The little lad looked quite apprehensive in the face of this questioning, until the Inspector asked if he would like to race the bus. A huge grin appeared on the wee fellow's face and he set off on his trike as fast as he could. Driving very slowly and calling out encouragement as he went, Inspector McDowall carefully followed the youngster until he was safely home.

A short time later we were driving through Drumchapel when a call came over the radio. The Inspector put his foot down and we found ourselves whizzing round bends and going over speed humps at an uncanny rate. We were instructed to 'sit tight' while the Inspector and the policewoman with him set off on foot across waste ground in pursuit of the suspect. We had quite a wait while the man was apprehended after a bit of a struggle, and reinforcements were summoned to take him away.

It was very interesting to witness these two quite different aspects of policing - the safety of the small boy, and the apprehending of the suspect.

Inspector McDowall is a great supporter of Neighbourhood Watch and the Crime Prevention Panel, and we were very grateful to him for allowing us this insight into police work, albeit on what we were told was a particularly quiet evening.



Thank you to the Clydebank Post for use of their photograph.

Fire and Rescue Service message for bonfire season.

Over the bonfire period each year the Fire and Rescue Services attend a large number of emergency calls to fires involving bonfire material, rubbish bins, refuse skips and unoccupied buildings many of which spread to occupied houses and business properties.

If the Fire and Rescue Service are attending numerous nuisance fires or unsafe bonfires at this time of year there may be a delayed response to a serious fire emergency, as a direct consequence of deliberate fire setting people and property are at increased risk at this time of year.

The Fire and Rescue service are supporting improved refuse uplift and clean up arrangements throughout the bonfire and firework period and also calling for increased support from the public to ensure dangerous bonfires are reported and uplifted.

Deliberate fire setting is also a growing environmental problem with toxic smoke and carbon emissions arising from bonfires and deliberate fires significantly adding to concerns about climate change. Fire officers are also advising that person's with respiratory problems such as asthma should not be exposed to smoke or fumes from bonfires or fireworks.

The message is simple, fire causes injury, it damages property and smoke is harmful to people and the environment.

Whilst a safely organised garden or street bonfire can be fun, the public seem unaware that it is an offence to light a fire in a public place which alarms, annoys or endangers people or property. It is also illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be sold or be in possession of fireworks and an offence to let fireworks off in a public place. Responsible parents are being asked to ensure that children and young people do not have access to fireworks, cigarette lighters or matches.

Fire Officers strongly advise responsible members of the public to think carefully about the safety risks and environmental damage caused by bonfires and fireworks and encourage the public to attend a safely organised public display.

The public are asked to report any fly tipping or accumulations of rubbish and refuse direct to their Local Authority or alternatively the national 'Dumb Dumpers' Stop line operated by **SEPA Tel 0845 230 4090** and also to report retailers or traders suspected of illegally selling fireworks, to Consumer and Trading Standards Officers.

Any persons suspected of being involved in deliberate fire setting or misusing fireworks should be reported to local **Police** or **Crimestoppers Tel 0800 555 111**.

Web resources:

Dumb dumpers information:

Crimestoppers information:

Home Fire Safety Advice:

Firework advice from ROSPA:

www.dumbdumpers.org

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

www.dontgivefireahome.org

www.saferfireworks.com



**Chief
Fire
Officers
Association
Scotland**

Jennifer Henderson, home safety officer at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in Scotland, offers a reminder about Firework Safety.



Keep safe on 5th November

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) wants children to enjoy fireworks but they need to know that they can be dangerous if they are not used properly. Each year, over half of all firework injuries are suffered by children. Did you know that sparklers get five times hotter than cooking oil? Sparklers are not toys and should never be given to a child under five.

If you're putting on a home display, you should follow some simple steps to make sure that everyone has a good time without getting hurt. Only adults should deal with firework displays and the lighting of fireworks.

1. **Plan your firework display to make it safe and enjoyable.**
2. **Keep fireworks in a closed box and use them one at a time.**
3. **Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch if necessary.**
4. **Light the firework at arm's length with a taper and stand well back.**
5. **Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.**
6. **Never return to a firework once it has been lit.**
7. **Don't put fireworks in pockets and never throw them.**
8. **Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators.**
9. **Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.**
10. **Make sure that the fire is out and surroundings are made safe before leaving.**



Fireworks are safe if you use them properly and should always be purchased from a reputable shop to make sure that they conform to British Standards. This means that they should have BS 7114 written on the box.

Alternatively, attend an organised display where all you have to do is stand back and enjoy the display.

Request a free Home Fire Safety Visit today

A short visit from your local Fire and Rescue Service will help make sure your home is as safe from fire as it can be. They can even install a smoke alarm, free, if you need one. Yes, free. It only takes about 20 minutes, and their advice and help could save your life.

To request a free Home Fire Safety Visit, just text 'CHECK' to 61611 or visit dontgivefireahome.org/home-fire-safety-visit

Already had a Home Fire Safety Visit? Why not recommend to a friend or family member so they can benefit too? Do you know someone who may be at risk? An elderly relative or a neighbour with mobility issues? Contact your local Fire & Rescue service for advice.

The severe winters of recent years reminded us all how weather can affect us. By taking a few simple steps, we can all save a lot of trouble later. Here's some advice from www.readyscotland.org to help you think about what steps you can take at home and in your community.

Ready for Winter?

In the home

Getting prepared for severe weather is easy. Just make a household plan and collect together the items that will be essential to you and your family in an emergency

- Be prepared for severe weather by making your home more energy efficient, keeping dry (protecting pipes and knowing how to turn off the water supply if you need to) and staying connected (keep a battery operated radio and a list of emergency contact numbers to hand)
- Get prepared at home by creating an emergency kit that contains what you need. Here are some things to include in your emergency kit:
 - Your household plan, including emergency contact numbers
 - A battery operated torch and spare batteries (or a wind up torch)
 - A battery operated radio and spare batteries (or a wind up radio)
 - Any essential medication, some toiletries and a first aid kit
 - Three days' supply of bottled water and ready to eat food (that won't go off)
 - Copies of important documents like insurance policies and birth certificates, in case you need to locate these quickly or prove your identity
 - Pencil, paper, a penknife and a whistle
 - Spare keys to your home and car
 - Spare glasses or contact lenses
- Think about what else is important for you and your family to get by during an emergency e.g.
 - Pet supplies
 - Food supplies
 - Formula/baby food

In the community

In previous years severe weather left some people vulnerable - being prepared for severe weather is something we all need to do, it only takes a few simple steps

- Identify family or neighbours who may need an extra helping hand if severe weather strikes
- Have their phone numbers to hand
- Offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks
- Clear ice or snow from your pathway
- Remember, ice can make things just as difficult as deep snow for some people to move about
- Your community can get prepared for severe weather by agreeing what you, your neighbours and your colleagues can do on your own and collectively to minimise the effects of severe weather where you live and work.
- Help and support is available if you want to do play a part in making your community more prepared.
- You can volunteer to help others by contacting www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

You can find more information and advice at www.readyscotland.org.

Scams

We often give out information and advice on dealing with scams. Just to show that anyone can be targeted by scammers, we've included a couple of real examples which happened to members of the Neighbourhood Watch Scotland board recently.

Postal Scams



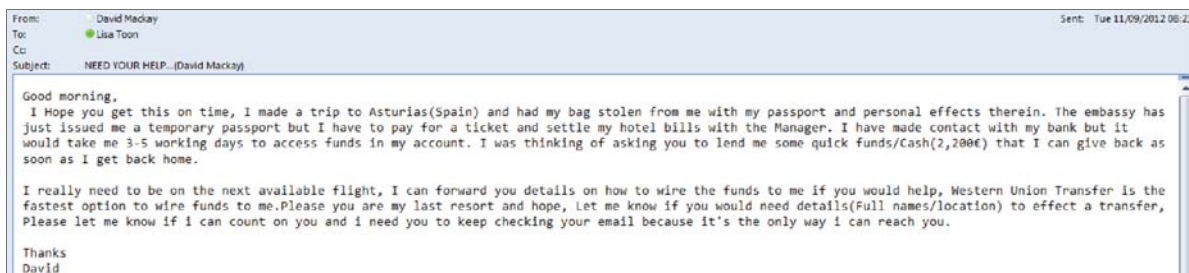
We received a letter, to our office, which is based in the Scottish Business Crime Centre, telling our chair that he had come into money of a relative who had died while hiking in China with no next of kin. The sum of money being discussed is considerable - \$17.5million - and the writer says that he is writing to Ian 'because you are namesakes and share the same family name'. So, on this logic, we can assume he has written to every Fowler in the UK! The writer is offering to split the money 50/50 with Ian.

Some of the telltale signs of a scam letter.

- Ian is asked to keep the contents of the mail confidential
- The letter has been photocopied from an original
- The letter is full of spelling mistakes
- The scammer attempts to evoke sympathy 'I am a family man with a wife and children. I send you this mail not without a measure of fear'.
- The letter came with a pre-paid Royal Mail postage and a 'Post by' instruction. The writer explains this by saying that he gave the letter to a friend who is travelling to post for him.

If you receive a letter like this, dispose of it. Do not respond to it in any way. If you are worried that a neighbour or relative may be responding to scam letters, visit www.thinkjessica.com for advice on how to deal with this.

E-mail Scams



This e-mail popped into several Neighbourhood Watch inboxes in September. It appears to come from our Secretary, David Mackay, stating that he was stuck in Spain and needed financial help to get home. Funnily enough, David was on holiday in early September, so the whole thing could have appeared plausible to the people who received it. This is a scam. David's webmail had been hacked and someone else had written to his address book with this story.

To protect yourself, take the following steps:

- Be wary of any email that you receive that asks you to wire money, even if the message appears to come from a friend.
- If you have a webmail address, make sure that your account details are as secure as possible, and be wary of possible phishing scams designed to steal their webmail account details
- Check all of your webmail accounts regularly to ensure that they have not been compromised.
- For further advice, visit www.getsafeonline.org

Final bits and bobs

Neighbourhood Watch Products

Just a little reminder that products bearing the new logo are now available to purchase from us. Signs, stickers and plaques can be used to let people know that there is a Neighbourhood Watch in the area and that the people who live there are aware of how to keep themselves safe.

You can order online, or telephone us.

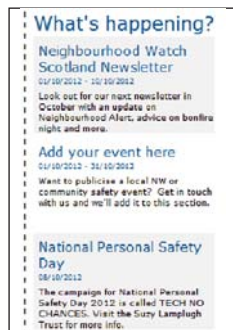
http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/pages/1359/1/NW_Products.html



Going local

We're going to be getting out and about in Scotland. We have a series of local events lined up over the coming months, starting with Dumfries on 31st October. We will be inviting Neighbourhood Watches and interested members of the public to hear presentations on community safety from ourselves and our partner organisations.

We'll let you know about events that are coming up near you.



What's happening with you?

If you have an event or campaign happening in your area that you want to publicise, let us know and we can make sure that it shows up in our 'What's Happening' section on the homepage of our website.

Just drop us a line at info@neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk to let us know what's happening, when it's happening, and who people should contact about it. We also welcome contributions to our newsletter to this address.

If your Neighbourhood Watch or other community safety group has a website that you'd like us to publicise, get in touch and we can add it to our links pages.

Get involved.

We currently have vacancies on our Board of Trustees. We have six Trustees at the moment and are looking to recruit more people. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in helping to take Neighbourhood Watch Scotland forward, please get in touch.