



Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches

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NEWSLETTER ISSUE 6

2011 Quarter 2 - Spring

This newsletter can also be downloaded from our website



Our survey said...

First of all, a huge thank you to everyone who responded to our audit and our survey. We asked for some additional information this year, which will help us to provide a better service to existing and future Neighbourhood Watches.

We are now more informed about the streets covered by Neighbourhood Watches in Scotland and whether or not these streets are in No Cold Calling Zones.

Inside this Issue:

Survey results

AGM date

Generations being comfortable together

DIY safety

Keeping in touch

Doorstep safety

And more...

The responses to our survey provided us with very useful information about how we're doing and what we can improve on. Some of the findings are detailed over the page. We've listened to what you've said and we're putting in place changes in response to your comments.

For example, a number of comments on our newsletters and general communication stated that people wanted more advice that they could share with other members. Sometimes our newsletter has a lot of information for coordinators, but not as much for watch members. To remedy this, we have made the last two pages of this newsletter all about general safety advice without fancy pictures or graphics. This should mean that it is easier to circulate around members – either by cutting it off the paper copy, or by just printing the final two pages of the electronic copy. We have also made the information on those pages available as separate downloads on our website.

We want to circulate more information on local safety issues so we are going to be approaching local authorities, police and other agencies to remind them that we are able to get messages to Neighbourhood Watches to keep them informed and aware of safety issues.

You don't have to wait until our next survey to tell us how you think we're doing or if there's something you'd like from us. Please feel free to contact us or interact with us via post, telephone, e-mail, twitter, facebook, the forum on our website... there's no excuse for not getting in touch!

More of what you told us



Some Statistics

- Most respondents (69.7%) haven't dealt directly with AoSNW in the past year, but of those who have, 96.5% rated their experience 'good' or 'excellent' with over half choosing 'excellent'!
- Only a third of respondents use our website at the moment, with 63% saying they didn't use it.
- 94.4% of you rate our communication as 'good' or 'excellent' but we know we've got a bit of work to do here because 70.2% rated it 'good' but only 24.2% rated it 'excellent'. We'll get that figure up for next year!
- Biggest community safety concerns for respondents were Dog Fouling and Doorstep Safety
- Maintaining member interest and Getting members to play an active role were the two biggest challenges faced by respondents.
- Newsletter was by far the most popular way of AoSNW delivering information to you with 56% of respondents choosing it as their preferred form of communication. (Seminars and Training courses were not popular, being most people's least preferred method of receiving information.)
- 83% of respondents rated their relationship with the police as 'good' or 'excellent' with 13% rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. The remainder chose 'not applicable'.

Themes from the comments

As is always the case when dealing with a large number of individuals, the comments we received were very varied. Sometimes what one person wanted, another person definitely did not! We've tried to take a broad view and use the information to make improvements where we can. But please do let us know how we're doing!

Website -

"Over previous years we had no need to make contact and got out of the habit of making contact with AoSNW. With greater information being made available now, it may be the time to get in touch on a regular basis."

People who use the website do so for information and resources. Those who don't generally don't have a computer or don't feel they have the skills to access the internet. We are going to build up the information resources on the website.

Communication -

"Because I am not online, I often feel like I am not being kept up-to-date."

Some coordinators who do not have e-mail commented that they only receive limited contact from us. We do realise that this is the case, but unfortunately we cannot afford the time or money it takes to send every piece of communication by post and we would continue to encourage watches to ask members if one of them would be willing to be the e-mail contact.

Police –

Comments about relationships with the police were wide and varied, ranging from very positive to very negative. What is common is that people are keen to have a close working relationship with the police.

Running a Neighbourhood Watch –

"I cannot persuade any residents to assist me." It's positive to note that the vast majority of people are not unduly concerned about crime in their area (a number of people mentioned how 'quiet' their area is). However, for the second year running it has been noted that interest from members of watches is lacking.

General –

The final comments left by people were largely positive, but with room for improvement. Over the coming year we hope to address these areas of improvement. For now, we think that this comment sums us up quite well:

"We are pleased to know that help is available should we need it."

Safe and Secure, Open When Sure.

One commenter in the survey mentioned that they had enjoyed being consulted on the tagline for the Clackmannanshire Doorstep Safety Partnership, but that we hadn't told you which tagline had been picked! We're very sorry about that so, belatedly, we can announce that you voted overwhelmingly for:

'Safe and Secure, Open When Sure'

This tagline is now incorporated into Clackmannanshire's literature and stickers.

AoSNEW recently attended the successful launch of the partnership in Alva and we were given booklets and stickers to send to our Clackmannanshire coordinators.

In the pipeline

One of the suggestions from the survey was for us to let you know what we're working on. So here are some of the things we're looking at just now.

- Running small, local training sessions on the topics highlighted by the survey
- Maintaining interest in Neighbourhood Watch
- Doorstep safety
- General safety advice
- Providing full welcome packs for new coordinators
- Moving into areas of Scotland where Neighbourhood Watch has not historically had a large presence and working with new groups of people
- Increasing the number of downloadable resources on our website
- Improving our communication with you
- Increasing the number and type of organisations who send messages through us.

Knightswood Neighbourhood Watch Website

For those living in the Knightswood area of Glasgow there is an exciting new website at <http://www.sknw.co.uk> where local Neighbourhood Watch members, and those interested in becoming involved, can log in and chat with one another and get the latest news on any criminal activity in their area.

The website is the brainchild of a resident who became one of several victims of a spate of thefts towards the end of last year. The purpose is three fold – to make local people more aware of what is happening around them by way of criminal activity, to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Watch, and perhaps most of all to generate a spirit of community.

The website is in its infancy and continuing to evolve. Although mainly to do with preventing crime and promoting Neighbourhood Watch, this website goes further. There is a picture gallery showing photographs of old Knightswood, comments from a number of Glasgow City Councillors and even a local weather forecast!

The website is up and running. It is now up to local residents to use it in order to keep it going.

A date for your diary

AoSNEW AGM
Friday 9th September

Thistle Hotel,
Glasgow

Final details of the day and booking instructions will be in our next newsletter in July and on our website.

Generations being comfortable together



In recent years there has been increasing discussion around Community Safety and in particular the anxiety that many older people report about groups of young people. The Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice has been working with partners across the country to challenge this and what we have discovered is the need to bring people together in planned and considered ways to build trust and understanding that can build reassurance between the Generations. Below are just two examples to illustrate this:

The Aberdeen Street Mediation Service aims to help communities find solutions to intergenerational conflict. Sometimes a young person can feel unfairly treated or misunderstood, and sometimes an adult feels intimidated by groups of young people hanging about. In cases like these the Street Mediation Service can often help. Following a referral, trained mediators will make contact with all parties to hear their views, listen to each person and discuss a suitable way forward. The mediators will sometimes look for a venue where everyone can meet and discuss, and importantly, look for practical and workable solutions.

Aims include:

- To engage positively with young people meeting in public spaces
- To identify issues and emerging service needs in local communities
- To provide information, advice and appropriate support to individuals or groups
- To improve relationships between young people and adults
- To enable communities to work together to find solutions
- To improve opportunities for young people and communities, enabling them to be involved in influencing service planning.

The Senior V.I.P. (Violence is Preventable) project is a personal safety and abuse prevention project aimed at senior citizens. It is on-going and was developed in partnership with older adults, the police, fire and rescue services, sheltered housing complexes and 'Eighteen and Under'. Young people who are service users and who volunteer with Eighteen and Under are encouraged to become involved with its delivery as they have experience of the successful children's prevention programme. Participants have been aged between 10 and 101.

The programme is delivered by young people in sheltered housing complexes once a week over an 8 – 12 week period for one hour. It consists of songs, games, quizzes, scenes from a DVD, and activities designed to encourage the discussion of important issues, to raise awareness, and to be fun. Also a resource book has been created using songs, games, activities, quizzes and safety worksheets to provide information and encourage discussion in a way that is memorable and such good fun that people clamour to receive the programme. The main feature of success is the willingness to try something new without funding using volunteers. Evaluations of the programme show a marked reduction in fear of crime; increased confidence; and increased awareness of health and safety.

For many more examples of how intergenerational approaches may be able to help you and to find out more of our work on 'Generations Working Together' visit our website at www.scotcip.org.uk

DIY and digging dangers



Now that the winter is behind us and spring has sprung many people will be wanting to spruce up their homes and gardens for the year ahead. Easter is the first long weekend for thousands of families since the Christmas holiday, and is traditionally the time that repair jobs, decorating and tidying up the garden begins. Unfortunately your home is the place where accidents are most likely to happen and every year in the UK almost 4000 people die in accidents in the home and 2.7 million turn up at Accident and Emergency seeking treatment.

Over-ambition and lack of knowledge are two of the biggest factors in DIY accidents causing injury and even death. The key to safe DIY and bigger gardening jobs is careful planning – making sure you have the necessary skills to do the work, the time to carry it out without rushing and the right tools and materials for the task. If you are not up to the job, leave it to the professionals – things are not always as easy as they may appear on TV makeover programmes!

Your home and garden are places for the whole family to enjoy but remember that small children may not be as aware of the dangers that surround them. Children are very inquisitive so here are a few tips to keep them, and you, safe in your home and garden as you get underway with your projects for the year ahead:

- Prevent accidental poisoning or injuries to yourself or others by carefully following manufacturer's instructions when using weed killers. Never transfer chemicals to alternative containers that could confuse and lead to poisonings
- Avoid poisoning and chemical burns by storing chemicals for use in the garage or garden safely out of sight and out of reach of children, preferably in a secure cabinet.
- Avoid injury from sharp garden tools to users or children by keeping them in good repair and safely tidied away after use
- Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes when mowing the lawn and keep your feet and hands well away from the mower blades. Use other personal protective equipment necessary for the task you are undertaking for example goggles or gloves
- Avoid injury from falls by always checking a ladders condition before use and using at a safe angle (1 in 4)
- A competent, qualified person should always carry out gas and electrical renewal or repair work.
- Keep children safely away whenever using lawnmowers, doing DIY projects or household repairs

Gardening and DIY jobs need not be dangerous so long as they are undertaken safely through careful planning. For more useful hints and tips and to look at information on a wide range of other topics such as road and leisure safety please have a look at the [website www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)



Communication is of vital importance to Neighbourhood Watches. Nisbet Gallacher of Merchiston and Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch has submitted a little article detailing how his 800 member households are kept informed.

Keeping in touch.

Merchiston and Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch was established in 2004. Initially, it covered only half a dozen streets but over the years it has grown. It now embraces about 800 mainly owner-occupied homes in a compact area in south-west Edinburgh just over a mile from the city centre. It has probably reached an optimum size. Contacts are maintained through a network of 'street coordinators' who together form a 'coordinating group' for the watch.

Inevitably, NWs have different priorities depending on the nature of the area they cover and the interests of the people there, but we do all have in common the need to maintain good communication – among neighbours and with other services such as the police and the local council.

We try to do this in a number of ways. In addition to everyday casual, and sometimes planned, contacts we try to keep in touch -

- Through our newsletters. These are issued once or twice a year. Hand delivered to all the homes in our area, these give feedback from past meetings and highlight ones to come; feature news alerts, breaking news and incident reports; and give details of important local contacts, telephone numbers etc. Publication of our newsletter is sponsored by a local law firm.
- At public meetings. These are held once or twice a year. The meetings have covered a variety of topics over the years. They are publicised in the newsletter, which is issued a month or so in advance, and through posters placed in shops, church etc. One recent meeting, for example, was on 'Crime, Crime Prevention and Court Action' when we had excellent contributions from the police and from a senior sheriff, followed by a very interesting question and answer session. Generally 40-50 come along.
- By e-mail to the 150 or so whose e-addresses we have. This is an important low-cost, virtually zero-cost, and rapid way of communicating. It allows quick dissemination of local information, breaking news and police and other incident reports. For reasons of economy and speed we are constantly striving to increase our list of e-addresses.
- Through our website. This is another important resource. It is accessible to all and incorporates copies of our newsletters, the AoSNW newsletters, police and incident reports, and items of local interest; and provides easy links to a number of other websites relevant to the interests of neighbours. Website is here: <http://www.neighbourwatch.org.uk/>

It can be a bit of work, but it really is important to keep in touch!



Staying safe on your doorstep

One of the subjects respondents to our survey wanted more information about was doorstep safety. When we talk about staying safe on your doorstep, we're really covering a range of different scenarios from bogus callers to pressurised sales techniques and others in between. What follows is a brief outline of some of the scenarios, and some advice to ensure that you remain safe and in control.

Bogus Callers

These are people who come to the door claiming to be someone they are not. Generally this will be so that they can gain entry to a house to steal from the householder. They can claim to be from the local authority, the electricity or gas company, the water board or any number of other organisations. Once inside, they may distract the householder or ask to go to parts of the house alone (e.g. the bathroom) and steal money or possessions.

If you are concerned by any caller at your door, you should not let them into your home. You do not even have to open the door if you do not feel comfortable. It is your home and you are in charge of who comes in and who doesn't.

- If you are not expecting a visit from a company that has turned up at your door, you can ask them to leave and arrange an appointment (or better still, you can contact the organisation and see why they need to visit you).
- Check their identity. This does not mean look at their ID badge as these can easily be faked. Contact the company they are from by telephoning a number that you have looked up yourself and check that the visit is legitimate. Don't telephone a number that they give to you.
- Many organisations that need to call at your home have password schemes. You can get in touch with them to set up a password which any caller to your house will be able to give you.

Doorstep Sellers

You should never buy goods or services on the doorstep. More often than not, you will not be getting the best deal and are not given enough time to make a considered decision. Work carried out by people who turn up by chance may not be up to standard or may not actually be carried out at all.

If someone turns up at your door and offers you something, you should take the following into consideration.

- Does the work actually need to be carried out? Some people will say you need work done when you don't.
- If you decide that you do want to obtain the goods or services offered, approach three reputable companies and ask them to quote a price. This way you can make an informed decision and get a better deal. You have no way of knowing whether a price quoted to you on your doorstep is reasonable.
- If you have purchased goods or services on your doorstep and you are unsure of your rights, contact your local Trading Standards department for advice.

The vast majority of callers at your home will be genuine, but for the tiny minority that might not be, it's worth developing some good doorstep habits to keep yourself and others safe.

Good doorstep habits

- When you are in your house, lock the doors. That way you are in control of who enters and who doesn't.
- When answering the door, think about whether you're expecting someone or not. If you can, look through a peephole or window before you open the door.
- If the caller is unexpected or unknown, use a doorchain or a doorbar if you have one which will restrict how much your door can open.
- Treat strangers with caution, especially if they want to come into your home, or encourage you to leave it.
- Ask for identification and check its validity by calling the organisation the person claims to be from – use a number you have looked up yourself, not one that is on the identification.
- If you are at all in doubt, ask the caller to write to you to arrange a more convenient time for a visit. A genuine caller will not mind doing this.
- If the caller will not leave and you are concerned, call the police.

No Cold Calling Zones

No Cold Calling Zones are areas where the majority of the residents have stated that they do not want to be visited by unsolicited doorstep callers. Usually they have signs denoting the boundary of the scheme and individual households have stickers or signs stating that they do not welcome doorstep callers. This can be effective in deterring callers, and can also give people confidence to say 'no' if someone does call.

If you are interested in finding out if it is possible to set up a No Cold Calling Zone in your area, contact your local authority's trading standards department.

Local Initiatives

In some areas of Scotland, there is local information and advice available. This can include things like booklets, leaflets, door stickers and alert systems. To check if there is local information for your area, again, trading standards in your local authority is a good place to check.

Useful Links and Contacts.

AGE UK – www.ageuk.org.uk

AoSNEW – www.aosnw.co.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland - <http://www.cas.org.uk/> & <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/scotland>

Consumer Direct - www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

SCOTTS – <http://www.scotss.org.uk/> (includes contact details for all Trading Standards depts.)

Contact details

Freepost: RSAA-YAAY-EGTA

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