

*Merchiston Community Council*  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

24 March 2005

Dear Neighbour,

Here is the second of our Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters. If you are new to the area and would like a copy of the first issue (dated August 2004), please let me know. The streets which we cover are given at the end of this letter.

*Street Co-ordinators & Police Reports*

Our main activity to date, following the launch party in June, has been to liaise with the police and appoint street co-ordinators and deliverers who are responsible for distributing the monthly Police Report. This is emailed to those who have access to the internet and hand-delivered to everyone else. If you would like to switch from one of these categories to the other, please contact your street co-ordinator (see end of this letter). It is of course much quicker and easier for our deliverers – who are all unpaid volunteers with busy lives - to send things out electronically.

*Help!*

In this connection, is there anybody out there who would be willing to help us on the clerical side? We would like to be in more frequent touch with you all and to send you on a regular basis some of the very useful anti-crime material produced by the police. A bit of help with typing, collating etc would therefore be much appreciated. Please contact me if you are interested.

We could also do with having some additional help, particularly in Ettrick Road and Polwarth Terrace, as two of the deliverers for these streets, Nicola Sidoli and Steven Balsillie, have had to give up for personal/work reasons. Many thanks to both of them for their help.

*Bogus Callers*

One of the latest police/Home Office leaflets is about Bogus Callers. Your street co-ordinator has a supply of these. In this connection, if you think a bogus caller has called at your door, you should immediately dial 999. Many people are reluctant to “bother” the emergency services but the police say that you should not hesitate in such circumstances. A resident in our area recently awoke in the middle of the night to the sound of her wheelie bin being dragged along the path. The police say this was probably being done to facilitate access to a roof or window and that a 999 call would have elicited a fast response from them. The other thing to watch out for in connection with wheelie bins is that you don’t put documentation with bank account, credit card etc details out with the rubbish. Thieves are known to sift

through the contents of bins with a view to using this information unlawfully for their own ends. Cut or tear up such documents. Shredders can be bought very cheaply from most stationers.

#### *Home Security Checks*

Some insurers will inspect your home for free, and give you appropriate advice. The police will also do this for you – telephone PC Andrew Cameron on 221 2050 or PC Jim McKenna on 221 2051.

#### *Fire Safety in the Home*

To arrange a free fire safety inspection of your home, ring Lothian & Borders Fire Brigade Community Firefighter Bruce Nisbet on 664 0952.

#### *Lamppost signs*

We have been looking into the feasibility of purchasing a number of Neighbourhood Watch signs for lampposts. The police are very keen on these, as are insurance companies who will usually offer a discount on your premium if you live in a neighbourhood watch area. The signs cost about £24 each and there are approximately 75 lampposts in our area – though we would not propose to put a sign on every one of them. As we have no funds, some means of paying for them would have to be found. We are investigating the possibility of applying through Merchiston Community Council for a Local Development Committee Community Grant, but there is no guarantee that we would be successful. Your suggestions will therefore be welcome!

#### *Lighting & City Development Neighbourhood Group*

There have unfortunately been a number of burglaries in our area recently, in stretches of street where the lighting is poor. The City Council's City Development Department has been given details and has undertaken to look into the matter. We will monitor progress on this and report back to you. Watch this space! There is a Neighbourhood Group organised by City Development that meets every three months or so in the City Chambers with community representatives and individual members of the public to look at issues relating to traffic, parking, drainage, street repairs, lighting etc. If any of you would like to come along to this, you will be most welcome at the group's next meeting which will take place at 7.00pm on Wednesday 22 June in the City Chambers.

#### *Contact Information*

Residents in Napier Road have already been asked by Mike Marwick if they would like to provide this kind of information, to be used by the police in an emergency, and there has been a good response. The form is attached for anyone else who wishes to do so to complete and return to their street co-ordinator.

#### *Social Event*

Following on the success of our last social event, we have organised another to take place on Sunday 24 April from 4.00 – 5.30pm in the Royal Ettrick Hotel. The police will be present to give advice and answer questions, and there will be a display of anti-theft devices which can easily be fitted in your home, shed or garden. A brief update on the work of the South Edinburgh Crime Prevention Panel will be provided by Cllr Marilyn MacLaren. Local Wine Merchant Great Grog will then conduct a wine-tasting and the hotel will provide tea and coffee. Mike Pringle, MSP for Edinburgh South will be present, and Merchiston Local Councillor Sue Tritton also hopes to join us. Several of you commented last time that you had enjoyed the opportunity to meet with your neighbours, often for the first time. I hope that many of you will come along on 24 April – perhaps to meet your neighbours for the second time! If you *are* planning to be at this event, would you please let your street co-ordinator know. Thank you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

*Bridget M. Stevens*

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**Chair, Merchiston Community Council**