

MERCHISTON & POLWARTH

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

MEETING/SOCIAL EVENT

Sunday 9 December 2007

2.00pm

Polwarth Parish Church Hall

KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE FROM CRIME AND FIRE!

by

*P.C. Steven McGill, Lothian & Borders Police Crime Prevention
Officer and David Martin, Lothian & Borders Fire Safety Officer*

plus

*Local Community Police Officer P.C. Alan Hopper will
present a detailed crime report covering the streets in our area*

Refreshments All welcome
Admission free

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

*Merchiston Community Council
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH*

12 November 2007

Dear Neighbour,

Welcome to our sixth Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter! I hope you find it useful and interesting.

EXTENSION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA

We have been approached by residents in the following streets asking if they too can be included in our NW scheme. We are of course delighted to have them join us. In so doing, we are apparently absorbing the former Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch - which its one-time co-ordinators have told us they would now to like to see wound up. So this is not a hostile takeover!

East Castle Road

Ettrick Grove

Polwarth Grove

East end of Polwarth Terrace

*(from junction with Napier Road to
junction with Merchiston Avenue)*

It would be good to have a catchy name for our new, enlarged Neighbourhood Watch – one that reflected all the streets within it. And perhaps a logo ? Anyone got any suggestions?

A full list of streets and co-ordinators is given at the end of this Newsletter.

REVIEW

Our last meeting, in February, was a great success. Author Hamish Coghill gave a fascinating talk on *The Faces of Edinburgh*, and PC Alan Hopper spoke to his report of crimes in our area.

NEXT MEETING

This will be on Sunday 9 December at 2.00pm in Polwarth Church Hall. See details on front page. Again, we are grateful to the Minister, Linda Dunbar, for allowing us to use the hall.

EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS

Street Co-ordinators continue to supply and collect *Emergency Contact Forms*. These are a means, entirely voluntary and confidential of course, of providing details of any relatives/lawyer/other contact whom you would like to be informed in the event of emergency. Completed forms can be shared with the police to assist in case of emergencies – the information is not shared with any other organisations. Many people have commented that this is an excellent idea. Ask your Street Co-ordinator if you'd like an Emergency Contact Form.

POLICE REPORTS

These continue to be received on a monthly basis. Ask your Street Co-ordinator if you'd like to see them – or to have one emailed to you direct by the Police.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Quite separately from the Police Reports, we encourage people in our area to let us know of any crime-related incidents in which they have been involved or which they have heard about. These may or may not have been reported to the Police, but neighbours can often learn from them. One such incident we have been told about, which was unfortunately not reported to the Police, concerned the vandalism of plants in someone's garden. Even though this might seem relatively trivial, it was still an example of anti-social behaviour and, if reported to the Police, might have contributed to a pattern or trend of similar incidents in other areas which police analysts can often use to identify the perpetrator(s).

Inspector Tom Galbraith writes "You can assist the Police greatly by contacting us with any information or if you are out walking and notice persons acting suspiciously contacting us and letting us know. This was done effectively recently when a member of the public contacted us and told us of his suspicions regarding three males. These males were traced and found to have just committed a housebreaking; this excellent piece of work would not have been possible if it had not been for you the public."

PC Alan Hopper's role in the arrest of the three males (he and colleagues had been patrolling the area in plain clothes to tackle this very issue) must also be acknowledged.

If you see anything at all that you think is suspicious, DO PLEASE REPORT IT TO THE POLICE. The telephone number for St Leonard's Police Station, which covers our area, is 662 5000.

Our Community Beat Officer, PC Alan Hopper, is always very helpful & can be contacted at St LEONARDS'S Police Station (0131 662 5022) or by e-mail alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk

If you live in Polwarth Grove, your Community Beat Officer is PC John Goodall, who can be contacted on 221 2008 or by email john.goodall@lbp.pnn.police.uk

As always, the important thing is to be vigilant at all times, and to report anything suspicious you see, not just in your own home or back yard but in your neighbour's as well. Looking out for one another is what Neighbourhood Watch is all about.

Summary of relevant Police telephone numbers for Merchiston area:

St Leonard's Police Station: 662 5000 (St Leonard's Incident Centre)

Police – for all serious emergencies: 999

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

This is the number to ring if you want to talk confidentially about your suspicions of a particular crime or a particular individual.

Merchiston Community Beat Officer PC Alan Hopper: 662 5022
or by email at alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Polwarth Grove Community Beat Officer PC John Goodall: 221 2008
or by email john.goodall@lbp.pnn.police.uk

BOGUS CALLERS

This continues to be a problem. Some of you will have received an email from Police HQ at Fettes about this.

Police have been hunting a pair of bogus callers who struck five times in the month of October at homes in Edinburgh and East Lothian. The two men gained entry to homes by claiming to be CID officers offering free safety deposit boxes. Once inside, they would ask the homeowner to show them any valuable items, such as jewellery, that they might have kept in the house.

A spokesman for Lothian and Borders Police said: "We would urge homeowners to be on their guard against these two men, and others like them, who are pretending to be from the police in order to gain entry to people's homes. We are keen to track them down before they strike again, and we would appeal to anyone with information to contact us."

In the meantime, anyone who receives a visit from these two men should not let them into their home, but call the police immediately. Anyone with information should contact Lothian and Borders Police on 0131 311 3131, or Crimestoppers in confidence and complete anonymity on 0800 555 111.”

INADEQUATE STREET LIGHTING

This is an ongoing issue. P.C. Hopper, who confirms that poor street lighting can be a gift to criminals, is pressing the City Council for action on the lighting in Polwarth Terrace and Napier Road, which has been found to fall way below the recommended levels. Ex-Cllr Sue Tritton had presented the results of an official survey on this to the relevant Council departments, but nothing has been done about the problem. We must now put pressure on our new councillors.

RECKLESS CYCLISTS

We acknowledge that the vast majority of cyclists are considerate and responsible, but unfortunately there seems to be a reckless minority who regularly ride on pavements, fail to use lights at night, ride the wrong way down one-way streets and crash through red lights and green man crossings – causing considerable alarm and danger to other road users and pedestrians. Many pedestrians in our area are elderly and some residents also have poor hearing and poor anticipation of cyclists coming up behind them without warning, or towards them. Like all other road users, cyclists are, of course, bound by the Highway Code to obey the laws governing road (and pavement) – for example, the Police have advised that cycling on pavements is against the law. It is difficult, given the anonymity of cyclists, to deal with these problems, so a major new campaign by Spokes, the cycle lobby group, to champion responsible cycling, is most welcome.

BIKE POLITE is designed to promote considerate cycling and covers four key problem areas: shared footpaths, canal towpaths, red traffic lights and riding after dark. 10,000 FREE reflective trouser bands overprinted with four "Bike Polite" slogans are being distributed through Edinburgh cycle shops. Spokes is holding a public meeting at 7.00pm on Friday 21 November, in St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge. Cllr Phil Wheeler, the City's Transport Leader, will be the main speaker. Also, the subject of cycling will also be discussed at Merchiston Community Council's monthly public meeting which will take place at 7.00pm on Tuesday 20 November in Polwarth Parish Church Hall. See www.merchistoncc.org.uk

DANGER ON BRUNTSFIELD LINKS

A number of assaults have taken place recently on Bruntsfield Links and the Meadows. This is something that concerns not only individual members of the public but also The Friends of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links. To find out more about this campaigning organisation, contact Secretary Hamish McKenzie at 229 6055 or email Hamish@bruntsfield7.freeserve.co.uk

PARKING

Local NW Co-ordinators Ian Doig and Nisbet Gallacher have sent in the following:

As a result of representations by local residents, coordinated by Merchiston Community Council and our Neighbourhood Watch, expressing serious concerns about safe access to driveways, road congestion and road safety in the Gillsland area, arising from the initial S3 zone proposals, Edinburgh City Council agreed in March to extend the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) to include 'the Gillsland Triangle'.

59 residents had taken the trouble to write to the Council to support the case for extending the S3 zone in order to resolve the 'parking blight' problems generated in the triangle by the introduction of the CPZ in adjoining streets. The City Council listened to the constructive views of residents, agreed that the original CPZ boundaries had been flawed and accepted that they had inadvertently generated a real problem. Resolution of these problems has been warmly welcomed by residents. The CPZ extension has returned the area to its residents, resolved the road safety dangers and reinstated the distinctive 'leafy suburbs' environment to our area, through the removal of 'foreign' parked vehicles.

This has been a remarkable example of the power of residents when they work together to improve neighbourhood and safety issues – which is, of course, the purpose of Neighbourhood Watch.

SOUTH EDINBURGH CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

This is a forum, organised by PC Steve McGill of the Crime Prevention Unit of Lothian and Borders Police (who will be one of our speakers on 9 December), on which Neighbourhood Watches from all over South Edinburgh are represented. I try to attend its meetings and to pass on concerns that we have in this area. If anyone has anything in particular that they'd like me to raise, please let me know. Also, the Panel is keen to recruit new members. If you are interested, please phone PC McGill on 658 5245.

NB Current advice from SECPP is that the best way of securing sash windows, especially at ground floor level, is by sash bolts. P.C. McGill can advise. Over-60's may be able to have the bolts fitted free of charge.

HELP!! Typing Support Needed

As will be painfully obvious, my typing skills are very basic. If there is someone out there who would be willing to assist with production of our Newsletter (normally twice a year – text provided) in order to give it a more professional-looking layout, I'd be very pleased to hear from you.

AND FINALLY.....PLEASE MAY WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

At present, most of our newsletters are printed and hand delivered. This is expensive and time-consuming. There is a much better way. The use of Email brings savings in paper, time and effort. In addition to circulating newsletters electronically, email contact would allow all communications, including the very informative official police up-dates, to be forwarded promptly to everyone in the Neighbourhood Watch area. We hope you will be happy to agree to email, rather than printed communications. See form below. Nevertheless, if, for any reason, you would prefer to continue with paper copies of the newsletter, please be assured that this will not be a problem.

If you are able to accept email communications from Neighbourhood Watch, please complete the following form and return to your local street co-ordinator. Alternatively, you may contact the street co-ordinator directly by email with the requested information. Please see the full list of streets and co-ordinators, given at the end of this Newsletter, for the details and email address of the relevant street co-ordinator.

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
email:

Again, we are extremely grateful to local Estate Agents Hunters Residential (part of Gillespie Macandrew LLP Solicitors) for photocopying our Newsletter free of charge. But NW receives no public or other funding and we do have other costs that need to be met throughout the year. Contributions towards these are always gratefully received.

Thanks to you all for your feedback and support. We look forward to seeing you at our meeting on 9 December.

Yours sincerely,

Bridget M. Stevens

Chair, Merchiston Community Council

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