

**MERCHISTON & POLWARTH**

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**PUBLIC MEETING / SOCIAL EVENT**

**Sunday 11 May 2008**

**2.00 for 2.30pm**

**Polwarth Parish Church Hall**

**2.00pm**

**Exhibition of locks and free advice from Mike Harper of  
The Bruntsfield Lockshop**

**2.30pm**

***“PROPERTY IN MERCHISTON-  
PRESENT AND FUTURE”  
(security, maintenance, buying & selling)***

**a talk by**

**Willie Hunter of local estate agents Hunters Residential**

**Followed by the Grand Launch of our new website:**

**[www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk](http://www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk)**

**with appropriate refreshments generously provided by  
Scotmid!**

***There will be a representative of the Police present and a written report  
from Local Community Police Officer P.C. Alan Hopper***

***All local residents welcome!***



***MERCHISTON & POWARTH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH  
NEWSLETTER***

Website  
[www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk](http://www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk)

10 April 2008

Dear Neighbour,

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

***OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA***

We now have TWO logos, one of our own and one attesting to our membership of the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches - but are still waiting for someone to come up with a catchy nickname. Perhaps an acronym incorporating the first letter of the streets in our area? Prize offered for best suggestion received by our next meeting!

**A full list of streets is given at the end of this Newsletter.**

***REVIEW***

Our last meeting, in December, was extremely well attended – around 80 local residents came along to hear representatives of the Police and the Fire Service give advice on keeping our homes safe from crime and fire. This was followed by a wide-ranging Q&A session and discussion of local issues. A summary of this is available from Tricia Barclay: telephone 229 1634 email: [tricia@neighbourwatch.org.uk](mailto:tricia@neighbourwatch.org.uk)

## ***NEXT MEETING***

This will be on Sunday 11 May at 2.00 for 2.30pm 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.

## ***WEBSITE LAUNCH***

This is one of the most exciting things to happen in the short life of the Merchiston and Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch! Huge thanks are due to local resident Nevil Hopley who has designed and set this up for us. The website will be officially 'launched' and explained at our meeting on 11th May, but you can visit it already at [www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk](http://www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk) Appropriate refreshments to celebrate the launch have been generously supplied by Scotmid of Polwarth.



## ***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. They can also be used to record information about people who hold keys to your property. Completed forms are passed on to 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 are produced on a monthly basis and are available directly from the website ([www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk](http://www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk)). You can subscribe for free to the RSS news feed from the website, so that you know when each one is posted. (If this last sentence means very little to you - and you want to know more - then look out for the square, orange symbol on the website!) Alternatively, you can ask your Street Co-ordinator to let you see a paper copy.

## ***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 concerned a car parked in one of the residential streets in our area which was "keyed" (ie the paintwork scraped with a sharp object) one night in February. There was also "a bit of a rumpus" around 1.15am when people were coming out of a licensed hotel nearby. There may or may not be a connection but, if only the incident had been reported to the Police, the perpetrator might have been tracked down using details of previous, similar incidents. The Police have a unit at Fettes HQ which stores and analyses such information. The number of arrests made using this data is apparently most impressive.

Even though this incident might seem relatively trivial, it was still an example of anti-social behaviour and really should have been reported to the Police.

### ***Thank You!***

A local resident has written to say that the follow-up to a break-in at their house, which was spotted by neighbours and immediately reported to the Police, was indeed "an excellent example of the benefits of having vigilant neighbours". The thieves were caught by the police as they left the property and a guilty plea was entered later at the Sheriff Court.

This is the whole point of Neighbourhood Watch!

### ***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 0131 662 5000.*

*Our Community Beat Officer, PC Alan Hopper, is always very helpful & can be contacted at St Leonard's Police Station (0131 662 5022) or by e-mail [alan.hopper@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto: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 0131 221 2008 or by email [john.goodall@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto: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.

## ***NEW POLICE INSPECTOR***

Inspector Tom Galbraith has moved on to the Diversity Unit at Police HQ at Fettes. We wish him well. His successor, Richard Horan, has sent the following message:

*“As of Monday 17th March, I took over as your new Inspector for the Meadows, Morningside, Southside and Newington.*

*Although I look forward to meeting many of you in the future, I thought it not only polite, but necessary that I give you a little background.*

*I have been an Inspector for two years now, spending a year as the Force Community Planning and Anti-Social Behaviour Inspector, based at HQ, and latterly a Team Inspector working from Craigmillar covering the 24/7 response role in the South and East of Edinburgh.*

*I was not only part of the process that aligned and developed our current structure of co-operative working within the City of Edinburgh, but am a passionate believer in partnership working and community-based policing.*

*I am fortunate to be taking over from Tom Galbraith, whom I've been privileged to know and call a friend for the last 10 years or so. I personally believe he's set the bar high, and I'm determined to build on the good relationships he's forged.*

*What I can do is give a commitment to all of you, and the residents and visitors to our area, that I will work tirelessly to provide a transparent, trustworthy, respectful and responsive service to the people of this City.”*

Inspector Horan is based at St Leonard's Police Station (tel. 0131 662 5000), and his email address is [Richard.horan@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Richard.horan@lbp.pnn.police.uk) Inspector Horan says that he hopes to come along to our autumn/winter meeting and meet local residents

## ***BOGUS CALLERS***

These continue to be a problem. One particularly callous scam was perpetrated last month in Merchiston on an 86-year old widow and her neighbour. A man purporting to be a window cleaner presented himself at this lady's front door. He washed a few windows, then claimed to have to go back to his van to collect something, asked for payment of £45 and disappeared.

Anyone else who receives a visit from this man should call the police immediately by dialling 999. Anyone with information about him 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 still 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. Former Cllr Sue Tritton had presented the results of an official survey on this to the relevant Council departments, but still nothing has been done about the problem.

At our instigation, local councillors Paul Godzik, Alison Johnstone, Marilynne Maclaren and Mark McInnes are planning to put forward - jointly - a full motion asking for immediate action on this.

## ***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 spoke at our December 2007 public meeting), 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. The Panel obtains, for selling on at cost, small items relating to personal and home security, such as Personal Attack Alarms (£4), Shed Alarms (£10) etc. Ask us if you'd like to buy one of these. Neighbourhood Watch window stickers are available free of charge. Also, the Panel is keen to recruit new members. If you are interested, please phone PC McGill on 658 5245.

*NB Current advice from South Edinburgh Crime Prevention (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.*

## ***MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL***

*Speaking up for the People of Merchiston!* This is the motto of Merchiston Community Council (MCC), under whose auspices Merchiston & Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch was established. We are a group of around 15 local residents, all volunteers, whose statutory responsibility is to ascertain and reflect the views of the people living in our area, on a wide range of topics – planning, licensing, anti-social behaviour, parks maintenance, re-cycling, pavement repairs, parking, to name but a few - and to do what we can to get any problems resolved by the relevant authorities. All of our meetings are open to the public. The next meeting of Merchiston Community Council will be our AGM on Tuesday 20 May at 7.00pm in the Eric Liddell Centre, Holy Corner. We will be reviewing issues discussed over the past year, including any that have still to be resolved, and launching our revamped website. All local residents are welcome. Watch this space – the revamped MCC website will be available shortly at the same address: [www.merchistoncc.org.uk](http://www.merchistoncc.org.uk)

MCC has a seat on the Board of the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership (SCNP) which will shortly be producing a Local Plan for the area. The next meeting of SCNP is on Monday 12 May, at 7.00pm in The Methodist Central Hall, 2 West Tollcross. From 6 -7pm there will be an open surgery at which members of the public can talk direct to City of Edinburgh Council officials.

***AND FINALLY.....PLEASE CAN YOU REGISTER VIA OUR WEBSITE FOR ELECTRONIC COPIES OF THIS NEWSLETTER?***

**Merchiston and Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch**

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**Contact**

We would like to hear from all of our Neighbours that we are helping to watch!

If you have any **comments** or **suggestions**, then please click [here](#).  
If you wish to contact a **specific street coordinator**, then please click [here](#).

We currently circulate our newsletter on paper, by hand.  
In the interests of the environment we would like to move to distribution via this website and therefore we need to have contact email addresses for as many people as possible.

We anticipate sending out general emails at a rate of about 2 or 3 per year ... we don't like spam either! In addition, we are often informed of criminal activity 'in real time' (such as scams and con-men operating in the neighbourhood, etc). Passing on this information to you by email, as well as posting on the website, can help stop them.

Title:  \* denotes required field

Firstname:\*

Lastname:\*

House Number:\*

Street:\*

Postcode:\*

No email addresses will be passed to any other organisations at any time.

Email:\*

Given above is part of a screen-shot of the **Contact** page on our website ([www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk](http://www.NeighbourWatch.org.uk)) where you can provide us with the information that we think will make a big difference to how we operate – for your benefit and for ours.

We currently circulate our newsletter on paper, by hand. In the interests of the environment we would like to move to distribution via email and our website and therefore we need to have contact email addresses for as many people as possible.

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can be assured that no email addresses will be passed to any other organisations at any time.

If, for any reason, you would prefer to continue with paper copies of the newsletter, please know that this will not be a problem. Linda Alston (contact details below) has kindly offered to co-ordinate the delivery of paper copies. We are most grateful to her.

All those residents who register their details via the website before the next Public Meeting will be entered into a **FREE PRIZE DRAW**, the winner of which will be announced at that meeting.

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 NHW receives no public or other funding and we do have 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 11 May.

Yours sincerely,

*Bridget M. Stevens*

Chair, Merchiston Community Council  
Email [bridget@neighbourwatch.org.uk](mailto:bridget@neighbourwatch.org.uk)

### ***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](mailto: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](mailto:john.goodall@lbp.pnn.police.uk)