



Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches

Charity number: SC036510
Registered Office: Unit 10, Alpha Centre Stirling University Innovation Park, Stirling FK9 4NF
Tel No: 01786 450145 Fax No: 01786 447775 Website: www.aosnw.co.uk

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 4

2010 Quarter 4 - October

This newsletter can also be downloaded from our website



2010 AoSNW AGM & Awards

This year's AGM and Awards Luncheon was held on 10th September in the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh. Over 100 guests joined us to look back over the last year, and to look forward to what is coming next.

Guests included representatives of AoSNW, Neighbourhood Watch coordinators and members, partners from the Police, Fire & Rescue, Scottish Community Safety Network, Living Streets, Scottish Business Crime Centre, Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice and others.

Inside this Issue:

AGM & Awards

Award Winners

Bonfire Night advice

Seasonal Safety Message

Communication

Avoid Identity theft

AoSNW Representatives

The business of the AGM was covered in the morning, with presentations from chair Ian Fowler, treasurer Jim Watson and National Development Officer Lisa Toon. Discussions took place around the proposed new constitution, which was agreed by those present. New committee representatives were voted in – a note of the full committee can be found later in this newsletter. Jim presented the finances for the year. (A full copy of the accounts is available on request.)

Lisa demonstrated the new website and communications system, using the text message facility to contact those people sitting in the audience. It showed how quickly and easily a number of people could be contacted with an alert. Feedback on the system was very positive, with a number of attendees signing up for text alerts on the day!

For AoSNW, the day was an opportunity for our staff and our board to meet with members of Neighbourhood Watches and discuss local and national issues. For Neighbourhood Watches this was a chance to put faces to names, and meet people from around the country to share ideas and practices. Feedback from attendees has been hugely positive, and we look forward to hosting similar events in the future.

Lisa Toon

National Development Officer

Recognising hard work.



The work of volunteers often goes unnoticed. We wanted to change that. The following people were recognised for their contribution to Neighbourhood Watch in various capacities. However, Ian also paid tribute to the thousands of other people in Scotland who work to make their communities safer. We'd like to thank every member of a Neighbourhood Watch for their continued interest and commitment.

2010 Award Winners

Gordon Ball, St Andrews
Lynne Bain, Aberdeen
Robert Bryce, Dumfries & Galloway
Carol Cain, Hamilton
George Gorden, Aberdeen
Karen Kelly, Forfar
PC Colin Laird, Strathclyde Police
David MacFarlane, Grampian NW Association
Stanley MacLeod, Glasgow West NW Association
William McCamon, Dumfries & Galloway
Marion McCutcheon, Stranraer
Sylvia McPhee, Polmont
Jim Miller, North Ayrshire
Gordon Young-Ewen, Arbroath

Winners and their representatives receive their Awards from Ian Fowler



Remember, Remember the 5th of November

The nights have drawn in and it is fast approaching the time of year when fireworks begin appearing in the shops. Most people will be aware of the firework code, but when was the last time you took a look at it? If you set a good example and encourage family and friends to do the same you might go a long way to avoiding your loved ones getting hurt



How many can you remember?

- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114;
- Don't drink alcohol if setting off fireworks;
- Keep fireworks in a closed box;
- Follow the instructions on each firework;
- Light them at arm's length, using a taper;
- Stand well back;
- Never go near a firework that has been lit (Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode);
- Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them;
- Always supervise children around fireworks;
- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves;
- Never give sparklers to a child under five;
- Keep pets indoors;
- Don't let off noisy fireworks after 11pm.



There are strict laws regarding the sale and use of fireworks. Some of the restrictions are listed below:

- Fireworks should only be on sale between 15th October and 10th November;
- It is an offence for under 18s to possess adult fireworks in a public place, and illegal for them to be set off by anyone in public;
- There is a curfew on the use of fireworks between 11pm and 7pm, however this is extended to midnight on 5th November. Fireworks are also permitted to be used during the Hindu festival of Diwali. Diwali does not always occur on the same day, this year it happens to occur on the 5th November. This means that it will be legal to use fireworks until 1am on the morning of the 6th November.

Spare a thought for...

This period is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year for firefighters, due to the increase of activity due to ad-hoc bonfires being lit and then left unattended. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Avoid leaving out bins or larger items of refuse over this period. These could be taken and used as bonfire material;
- If you spot junk being accumulated which you suspect could be used for a bonfire then let your local council know, they may have a campaign to uplift this material to reduce the problem;
- Report antisocial behaviour to the local police or to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



Making Our Communities Safe - A message from the Police

As we know, the days are beginning to shorten and the dark nights are approaching. On the approach to the end of the year, there will be key events for the public, including Halloween, fireworks night and the festive period which will see a general rise in activity, increased travel and potential safety issues for us all to consider to protect our homes, families and general wellbeing.

I have summarised a number of common sense messages which I hope reinforces the value the police place on safer communities and would also like to reaffirm our commitment to you, the Neighbourhood Watch, who are our eyes and ears when we cannot be there. Your vigilance, community spirit and common approach to protecting and nurturing all people within your communities, from young to old, are commendable and the police are committed to supporting and assisting you.

Home safety

The simple rule for everyone is basically "if you are not happy with any caller - don't let them in and don't open your door". Genuine business callers should have formal identification but even then, if you are not happy, call the head office and confirm that they should be in your area. Bogus callers prey on the vulnerable in our society so I would ask that you keep a watchful eye and report any suspicions to the local police.

A dark house indicates that no one is at home therefore lighting, in a cost effective way, can keep unwanted visitors away. I would also ask the communities to keep an eye on their neighbours' premises even if you are just walking a dog or passing by. Any unusual or suspicious activity should be reported.

Halloween and Fireworks Night

These are good community events when people gather to celebrate. A watchful eye on these dark nights is advantageous especially with a lot of children on our streets. A community spirit ensures that we are all focused on the common good and any illegal or suspicious activity or persons are noted and watched closely. If any suspicious activity occurs - let us know. Fireworks are to be enjoyed if used properly and not used to annoy and frighten people. Look after our elderly and young as well as pets and allow everyone to have a good firework night, free from injury or anti social behaviour. Formal firework events occur throughout the country and are safe events.

Festive period

Party nights, shopping, presents, money and travel all spring to mind immediately so be safe and enjoy this time of the year. Protect your belongings and your money when out and about. At cash machines ensure you have no one looking over your shoulder and you cover the keypad when putting your personal number in. Don't leave the machine until your cash is safely put away. This advice also goes to persons picking up pensions or allowances at post offices etc. If you have any concerns whatsoever, speak to local community officers.

Travel and "nights out" are synonymous with this time of year. We always advise people to stay together and ensure everyone gets home safely - it is the best advice. When using a taxi, always check that it is an official cab or better still call one from a company you know. The Police traditionally advise women to get transport home and not to walk, but this advice is appropriate for everyone as we want you to get home safe and well. We do have extra patrols at this time of the year but these simple steps will hopefully help you.

The Police are focused on safer communities and delivering a local accountable service. Your local community officers are identified in each force and are available to you so make sure you engage with them as you are an asset to us. As I said earlier, you are our eyes and ears when we are not there.

I am delighted to support Neighbourhood Watch and work in partnership with them. I wish all Watches success and I am sure all communities will benefit from your collective pride and support of your area and the people living there.

DEREK ROBERTSON
SUPERINTENDENT
Strathclyde Police Community Safety Department



Communicating with you.

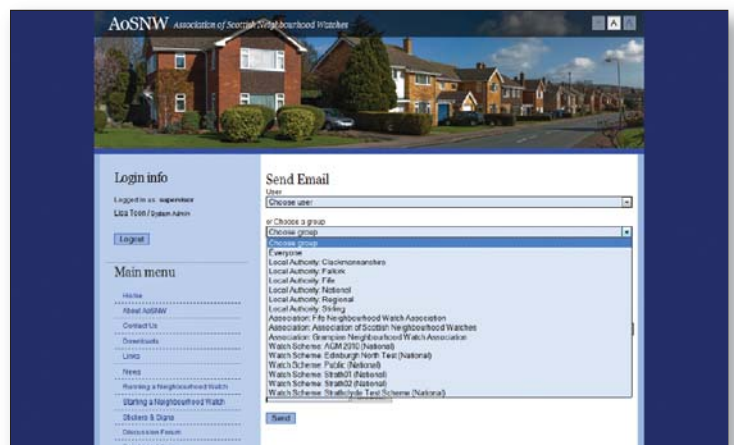
We are committed to making communication as simple and effective as we can. As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, we recently launched our new website, which incorporates a communication system which makes it far easier for us to communicate with you. At the touch of a button, we can send e-mails, text messages or voice messages to everyone who has chosen to accept them*.

The system allows us to send targeted messages. For example, we could send a message to everyone in a given local authority area, or members of a certain Neighbourhood Watch Association, or to individual watches, or to the whole of Scotland.

We will work with our partners, including the police and local authorities, to bring you community safety alerts and messages which are useful and meaningful to your watch.

The types of message we will be sending out will include crime alerts, scam alerts and information on local safety issues, along with advice. As always, we will be looking for your feedback on the types of message you want to receive. We will not be bombarding you with irrelevant messages. We plan to become the link between Neighbourhood Watches and other Community Safety agencies.

*In our last newsletter, we asked for your communication preferences. You can change these at any time by contacting us.



Identity theft is one of the fastest growing consumer crimes in the country. Identity thieves don't just steal your money; they steal your name and reputation and use them for their own financial gain. It can jeopardise your financial future and take years to resolve. The Scottish Business Crime Centre and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency have put together some guidance to help you avoid becoming a victim.

What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone else uses your personal identification information without your knowledge or permission to obtain credit cards, get phone products and services, obtain loans and mortgages, get a job, and commit other types of fraudulent or even criminal acts, in your name, leaving you responsible for the consequences.

You may be surprised to learn how many of your daily activities expose you to this crime:

- Do you use your personal computer for online banking transactions?
- Do you use your personal computer to buy merchandise or purchase tickets for travel, concerts or other services?
- Do you receive credit card offers in the mail?
- Do you discard these documents instead of shredding them?
- Do you store personal information in your computer?
- Do you use a mobile phone?
- Do you use your National Insurance number for identification?

You probably answered yes to at least one of these questions. Each of these routine actions places you at risk of being a victim of identity theft because each of them requires you to share personal information such as your bank and credit card account numbers, your National Insurance number, or your name, address, and phone number. This is the same personal information that identity thieves use to commit fraud.

What is phishing?

Phishing is when criminals use fake e-mails or links to obtain other people's sensitive details, for example passwords, usernames or bank account details.

Things to look for:

- The e-mail is not sent to your own name but uses generic terms like 'Dear account holder'
- The email states that urgent action is required with a threat for example, 'if you do not act now we will close your account'
- The email contains a link that you do not recognise
- Misspelling contained within the email
- The email address is not the same as the trusted company's website address
- Unexpected e-mails from a company you have no business with.
- When asked to enter personal details there is no padlock sign on screen and the browser window does not show https:// at the beginning of the web address.



Protecting yourself

- It is recommended that you ensure your browser is up to date
- Avoid risky sites, including supposed investment sites
- NEVER click on an embedded link in an e-mail from an unknown or un-trusted source.
- If your e mail system has it, use spam filters.
- Do not give out your personal details your bank etc will never ask for passwords or security codes online via email. Phone the bank to make sure first.
- Do not leave personal documents for example a bank statement lying around that can be accessed by any one else
- Do not throw statements etc out in the bin, wait for a year for business reasons then shred the documents using a cross cut shredder.

I've heard of the term Money Mule, what is it?

A money mule is anyone who is recruited by criminals to use their bank account to transfer money from one country to another, usually from where the criminal lives. Normally there is a cash incentive for the mule to offer the use of their bank account. It is against the law to do this and you could be charged with a criminal offence and have your bank account suspended.

Mule recruitment:

Unsolicited e-mails asking for assistance

Contact via social networking sites

Fraudulent vacancies on websites posing as legitimate businesses

Classified adverts in the press and online which look legitimate and can often look quite professional.

How to avoid becoming a victim:

- The old saying 'if it looks too good to be true' is entirely relevant here as offers of large amounts of cash for very little work or no prior experience could indicate a fraudulent scheme.
- Always be cautious of overseas offers as it can be difficult to verify identity.
- You should always research any company that offers you a job checking things like address phone numbers etc.
- NEVER give your bank details to anyone unless you know and trust them and even then be cautious!

Don't let it happen to you !

Protecting your information over the phone

We have received reports of a company calling people, claiming to be carrying out crime research, and asking a series of questions about their home security arrangements such as: Are you a member of a Neighbourhood Watch? Do you own your home? What kind of house do you live in? Do you have security devices?

You do not have to provide this type of information and you shouldn't share details of your home security arrangements with anyone. If you are ever concerned about the information you are asked to share over the phone, ask the organisation to write to you instead.



Your Local AoSNW Representatives

Name	Area
David MacFarlane	Aberdeen
David Mackay	Aberdeenshire
Wendy Irvine	City of Edinburgh
Hugh McCreadie	Dumfries & Galloway
Brian Smith	Dumfries & Galloway
Angus Arthur	Dundee
Ian Fowler	Edinburgh City
John Beagley	Falkirk
Jim Watson	Fife
William Campbell	Fife
Stanley McLeod	Glasgow
Mark Biggins	Glasgow
Victoria Paterson	Highland
John Main	Midlothian
Andrew MacDonald	North Lanarkshire

Contact details

Freepost: RSAA-YAAY-EGTA
Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches
Unit 10, Alpha Centre
Stirling University Innovation Park
Stirling, FK9 4NF

Telephone: 01786 450145
Fax : 01786 447775
Website: www.aosnw.co.uk
E-mail: info@aosnw.co.uk
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/nwatchscotland>