



# Neighbourhood Watch

## an introductory guide

Suffolk has one of the lowest crime rates in the country - but, as in any area, it can still cause a problem. The police cannot solve this problem on their own. They need the help of the whole community. Neighbourhood Watch (NW) gives local people in residential areas the chance to play an important role in making their community safer.

This introductory guide has been prepared by Suffolk Constabulary for people who want to find out a little more about NW.

It will be of particular interest if you have recently moved to an area where NW is already operating or if you are considering setting up a new scheme where you live. The guide sets out the objectives of NW, briefly explains what membership involves, outlines the role of the Co-ordinator and tells you what to do next if you want to start a scheme in your neighbourhood.

### Aims and Objectives of Neighbourhood Watch

**Aim** Working in partnership with Suffolk Constabulary to make our neighbourhoods more secure and our communities feel safer.

#### Objectives

1. To prevent and reduce crime in our neighbourhoods.
2. To help provide reassurance to people in our communities.

#### Main Activities

1. To provide appropriate and up to date crime reduction advice.
2. To encourage members of our communities to be alert and watchful in looking after themselves and others.
3. To act as a channel of communication - passing on timely information from the police to the community and from the community to the police - to help prevent and detect crimes.

### What is Neighbourhood Watch?

NW involves residents coming together to create a safer and more caring community. It operates through a network of small schemes which have the following characteristics:

- they are set up and organised along guidelines, that include a Constitution, agreed by Suffolk Constabulary
- they are run by the members and supported by the police
- they vary considerably in size between 15 homes and a small village
- they elect a Co-ordinator and a small committee to manage the scheme, liaise with the police, local organisations and other Watch groups
- they take steps to prevent crime, improve safety and reduce fear in their area.





## Why is Neighbourhood Watch necessary?

The police have a crucial role to play in reducing crime but they cannot succeed on their own. They rely on local people to share responsibility for tackling the problem.

Most obviously, NW members can help by telling the police promptly about anything suspicious so that action can be taken to prevent a crime or detect an offender. However, residents can also do a great deal to reduce their vulnerability to crime and to reduce undue fear.

Many people, however, need advice and guidance on what to do. NW provides a way for that information to be provided. Furthermore, all these activities are more likely to be effective if communities act together.

NW gives people the opportunity to get to know and help each other better.

Finally, the police and local communities need to express their concerns and exchange information. NW makes such communication much easier.

## What does Neighbourhood Watch involve?

Scheme activities vary widely and are decided by the members. At its most basic level membership involves being aware of what

happens in your neighbourhood, taking simple precautions to prevent and reduce the risk of crime and being alert to anything that is suspicious.

More active schemes may organise events to raise the awareness of members on subjects such as home security, car security and property marking. It must be recognised that the scheme is a community initiative which is supported by the Police, not run by them, so members have a key role to play in making it a success. NW provides a way for local people to play an important part in making their communities safe.

Street signs and window stickers are displayed in a NW area. These serve both as warnings to unwelcome intruders and reminders to local residents that a scheme is in operation.





Most schemes have regular meetings and it is recommended that a regular newsletter is produced to keep members informed and involved.

Each NW scheme has a Co-ordinator, this person is responsible for the management of the scheme's activities. Dependent upon the size of the NW scheme it is recommended that a Committee support the Co-ordinator in their role.

### **What makes a scheme successful?**

Success depends on a number of factors. It is important that members are fully aware of the Aims and Objectives of NW and the part that they can play.

NW members need to be informed about local problems to enable appropriate action to be taken. Their commitment and active support are vital and that is likely to be forthcoming if the scheme tackles issues that are of real concern to them.

There needs to be regular communication with members about scheme activities and, of course, the role of the Co-ordinator in managing the scheme is crucial.

### **How to set up a scheme**

The Suffolk Constabulary has Community Watch Liaison Officers (CWLO) stationed within each Local Authority area. The CWLO is the main point of contact for persons interested in setting up a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) scheme.

The CWLO will provide information as to the means by which a scheme can be set up. Those interested in setting up a scheme should liaise with the residents in the proposed scheme area. The size of a scheme may vary from a cul-de-sac to a small village, whatever the size it is essential that there is a level of support amongst its members to maintain its efficiency and effectiveness.

At least 60% of households should be willing to participate before the formation of a NW scheme can be considered. Those persons proposing the formation of a scheme should then arrange a meeting that will be attended by a representative from the Police.

A presentation will be given which will inform those present about the local crime situation, indicate what benefits NW might bring to the area, explain what membership involves and the support that will be provided to the scheme by the Police. If there is sufficient support and enthusiasm a scheme can then be set up.

# Useful Contacts

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To contact the police in an emergency, ring **999**.

If you have something to report which does not warrant making an emergency call but still requires the attendance of a Police Officer, please call on **01473 613500**.

If you wish to discuss setting up a new scheme, or the administration of an established scheme ring your local Community Watch Liaison Officer on:

<b>AREA / DISTRICT</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b>
Mid Suffolk	(01473) 383388
Babergh	(01284) 774313
Forest Heath	(01638) 719415
St Edmundsbury / Haverhill	(01284) 774041 / 774499
Ipswich	(01473) 383142
Waveney	(01986) 835204
Suffolk Coastal	(01473) 383313