



Neighbourhood Watch Report- Copthorne Residents Society - January 2023

Below is a summary of some of the reported crime. Three Rivers, however, is an extremely safe place to live with low levels of crime. Over 14,500 residents are now signed up to Neighbourhood Watch in Three Rivers – the largest membership of all the districts in Hertfordshire. You can sign up to Neighbourhood Watch by visiting www.owl.co.uk or alternatively, contact the Watch Liaison Team wlo@herts.pnn.police.uk.

Hertfordshire Neighbourhood Watch is structured to align with the county's ten policing districts. There are also several other 'themed' watches, including Dog Watch, Business Watch and Rural Watch. HertsWatch unites these watches in Hertfordshire in order to help and inform residents, businesses and organisations and to encourage them to join a watch in their area - all with a common aim - to keep it the safest county in the UK and the one with the lowest crime figures.

Crime prevention advice: <https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

Reported Crimes and Concerns in the Local Area.

1. Targeted Loft Insulation Scams

Hertfordshire County Council Trading Standards is warning of fraudulent cold calls being made to residents about loft insulation. Fraudsters may tell you that old style loft insulation is causing issues with damp. They try to frighten you by telling you that your rafters and roof are in danger of collapse unless you deal with the issue as soon as possible. They then arrange an appointment to carry out a no obligation survey to check if there is a damp problem at your property. Unsurprisingly, once at your home, they tell you that there is a problem and then sell you new insulation and a dehumidifier for your loft for a great deal of money. None of their claims are true. What is true however, is that customer lists have fallen into the hands of scammers who are making these targeted sales calls. This and any other cold calls about loft insulation, solar panels, new boilers and cavity wall insulation is a scam.

2. Scam Text Messages COVID

Many Herts residents have reported receiving text messages claiming they have been in contact with someone who has the Omicron COVID variant. Some people have clicked a link in the text to apply for a test kit and have been duped into giving personal information including their bank details. Some recipients were later called by fraudsters claiming to be from the their bank. The caller claimed there had been a fraudulent transaction on the victim's account and asked them to take actions, which caused the victims to unknowingly transfer monies to the fraudster. The fraudsters were able to "spoof" the bank's genuine phone number so that it appeared in the caller display, making the call appear legitimate. NHS Test and Trace contact tracers **will never** ask you to make any form of payment or ask for any details about your bank account.

3. Avoiding Scams and Keeping you Safe

Your bank or the police would never phone to ask you to verify your PIN, nor would they ever ask you to withdraw or transfer your cash. If you get an unexpected call from your bank, be sceptical. You can check it by using a different phone to call your bank (the number on the back of your card) or visiting your bank. Fraudsters are very quick to adapt their tactics to take advantage of circumstances, like the pandemic. If you receive any unexpected messages or calls, you should always be sceptical. Scams can come in many forms and can be incredibly convincing, so it is difficult to

distinguish genuine messages from the fake. If you think you, or someone you know has been a victim of a fraud like this:

- Let your bank know what's happened immediately.
- Report the offence to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via their website www.actionfraud.police.uk.
- Scammers are targeting people who are selling valuable electrical and other items via online selling platforms like Marketplace. They pose as buyers.
- The vendors have been contacted about their items and when the scammer arrived, they paid for item using a convincing banking app. The app mimicked apps from a number of banks and appeared to show the funds being transferred to the victim's bank account.
- This scam is catching a lot of people out as the app is very convincing. The scammer asks the victim to enter their bank details into the app and then it appears to show the amount being debited from the buyer's account.
- We would urge anyone selling an item to be sceptical about accepting payment via a banking app. Payment by cash, credit card or using PayPal for Business is a more secure way of making a sale.
- Please help us to raise awareness by alerting your friends and family.
- If you believe that you are a victim of this scam please report online to www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.
- In the last two weeks, there has been an increase in the number Courier Frauds taking place across the county, in one instance a resident lost over £5000. A Courier Fraud is where the fraudster calls a victim purporting to be someone in a position of authority, such as pretending to be a bank's fraud team or a police officer. They then state to the victim that their money needs to be seized for evidence in an investigation by taking it out of a bank and handing it over. Sometimes they may also ask for bank cards, or request the victim purchase high-value items such as jewellery or gold. They then 'arrange' for a courier to collect the items or money under the guise of saving you having to go to your local police station or bank.
- Your bank or the police will never call you to ask you to verify your personal details or PIN by phone or offer to pick up your card or money by courier. Hang up if you get a call like this.
- If you need to call your bank back to check, wait five minutes; fraudsters may stay on the line after you hang up. Alternatively, use a different line altogether to call your bank. To verify a police officer's details, dial 101, ask for the force in question and provide the Name and Shoulder number or warrant number which the caller provided.
- Your debit or credit card is yours – don't let a stranger take it off you. You should only ever have to hand it over at your bank. If it's cancelled, you should destroy it yourself. Cut through the chip and the signature strip on the back.
- If you believe you or a loved one are being targeted by a Courier Fraudster, call 999 and give as much information as you can. Do not arrange to meet with a courier under any circumstances.

4. Residential Burglary Copthorne Road 41/34509/22

Between Sunday 1st May - Monday 2nd May 2022 offender(s) have broken into a house on Copthorne Road. Offender(s) have gained access to the rear of the property and have used an unchained ladder to gain access to a 1st floor bedroom window. Offender(s) have caused no damage and at this time have not taken any items. Mr Bingham at number 18c has given his consent for us warn about being vigilant as criminals target the area. Luckily Mr Bingham was out at the time.

5. Burglary and attempted burglary - Windmill Drive, Croxley Green

Between the hours of 1700 on the 18th June and 0800 hours 19th June 2022 offender[s] committed a residential burglary in Windmill Drive, Croxley Green. Offenders made entry through the back door and carried out a messy search of the property. Within the above timeframe, there was also a report of an attempted burglary on the same road. Due to being disturbed by the neighbour, the offenders threw an object before leaving the scene. No damage was caused.

6. Attempted Theft From Person Loudwater Lane 41/48438/22

At approx. 16:00 hours on Saturday 18th June 2022 the victim has been approached by a female offender after arriving from the supermarket on the driveway of their property. The female offender has hugged the victim and has undone the victim's necklace that has luckily fallen into the victim's clothing. The offender has then produced a donation form for a deaf charity and tried to distract the victim further with this. The female offender has then tried to hug the victim again at this point the victim has given over a small amount of cash and asked the offender to leave. The female offender was described as having an Eastern European accent. If you have any information or CCTV of this crime or have been the victim of a similar approach, please call Crime-stoppers on 0800 555111, 101 or contact us through the Herts Police web chat.

7. Burglary - Windmill Drive

A burglary occurred at an address on Windmill Drive, Croxley Green between 23:30 hours on Monday 27th June 2022 and 07:00 hours on Tuesday 28th June 2022.

The offender/s gained entry by using an unknown implement to jimmy open the front door and have taken a set of car keys and have made off with the car. The vehicle was a 2017 registered silver VW Golf.

8. Theft of Vehicle Number Plates

We are currently seeing an increase in the theft of number plates from vehicles parked on driveways and roadside in the Three Rivers area. We ask that if you believe your number plates have been stolen or snapped in an attempt at them being stolen to report this as promptly as possible. Your number plates could be used to commit crime on a cloned or similar vehicle. We also recommend tamper proof number plate screws in order to deter would be thieves. Please report any suspicious activity of persons or vehicles via 101 or online through Herts Police live chat, or if a crime is in progress please call via 999.

9. Increase of Thefts from Cars across Hertfordshire

There has been an Increase of thefts from cars across Hertfordshire. Cars are being left open, with windows down. Please follow the advice being given in the attached File.

Download Associated Documents

Documents accompanying this message are linked below. Click to download and open a file which use the popular PDF format. [Vehicle Crime Prevention advice leaflet](#) (624 KB)

10. Increasing reports of rogue traders for roof guttering and chimney work.

Trading Standards is seeing an increase in doorstep rogue trading complaints, especially roof, guttering and chimney work. Rogue traders contact you in many ways: They cold-call or post a leaflet through the door or they respond to a job posted on a trader matching website. It even happens if you use a 'trusted trader' website where full checks haven't been done to spot the rogues; we are seeing more complaints about this last scenario. Problems start when a small job turns into a bigger one e.g. a quote for replacing loose tiles becomes a whole roofing job. Don't feel obliged to use the same trader, even if it seems to make sense while they are up on the roof. Get another trader to confirm if the work is actually needed and a reasonable price for it. Alarm bells should ring if an expensive quote is quickly reduced on condition the work is carried out straightaway. Beware if a trader claims a job is urgent and pressures you to agree. Another warning sign is a lack of paperwork before work starts— look for full information (trader name, address, contact details, company status, full description of work and materials to be used, cost including whether VAT is included, how long the job will take, and proper cancellation rights given at the right time).

Our advice is: Never buy goods or services at the door. Use personal recommendations from friends or family to find a good trader - ensure they are from people you know, not just a local neighbourhood group.

Advice about buying and selling gold, jewellery and other valuables.

Trading Standards regularly hears of fliers put through doors offering to buy valuables in your home or in local halls. It can seem like a very convenient way to raise some cash, without the bother of going to an auction or pay associated fees.

However, our recommendation is to always get a second opinion to ensure you are getting the best price possible for your goods. If you have something that you want to sell, just take it along to your local jewellers and ask them for their advice and a general idea as to price. If items are bulky, take a photo if you can, or ask a local, established antiques dealer if they would make a home visit. Once you have that information, you can go to the local hall and see what they offer you. Any quotes that they give you, are completely without obligation, you make the decision whether to take up the offer or not.

With respect to the buyers who offer to come to your home, our best advice is not to deal with those traders. From a home security point of view, we shouldn't invite complete strangers to look at our valuables, as it may lead to future problems. Again, contact a couple of local dealers or jewellers if you're looking to sell any items that may be valuable, to ensure that you're getting a fair price.

Please look out for any friends, family or neighbours who may be interested in these types of offer and pass on this advice if they don't receive these messages.

11. Scam affecting WhatsApp users

We are again warning residents to be wary of WhatsApp messages which appear to be from relatives asking for money to be sent to them. There were 28 reports during August when local residents have lost money after having been targeted on WhatsApp by criminals pretending to be someone they know – typically their son or daughter. The criminals will usually begin the message with "Hello Mum" or "Hello Dad" and will say that they are texting from a different mobile number because their usual phone has been lost or damaged. Some say they accidentally dropped their phone down the toilet. They will then ask for money to purchase a new phone, or claim that they need money urgently to pay a bill. The criminal will then provide bank details for the payment to be made. This is a scam.

12. Anti-Social Behaviour Alleyway.

There have been reports of anti-social behaviour in the alleyway that leads from Copthorne Road down into the Chess Valley on the west side of the road. This includes reporting of drug dealing. If you witness any anti-social behaviour please report to NHW, the Police or Crime stoppers. If you are in a locality to be able to keep a diary of any offences this would be useful.



You can register valuables and tools for free at <https://www.immobilise.com/> As a member of OWL you can get discounts for crime and safety products at <http://owlprotect.uk/>

PCSO Steve Jacobs has left the Croxley Area. After 17 years of policing the parishes of Croxley Green & Sarratt he has moved on to a secondment in the Constabulary for a year. Over the years he built up good relations and networks around the areas and we thank him for his hard work. His replacement is Shane Watts.

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