

OUR NEWS



FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SUPPORTERS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES

How a Coronation Big Lunch can bring your community together



How do you celebrate an event that Britain hasn't seen since 1953? Connecting with your neighbours is a great place to start!

As part of a weekend of celebrations between Saturday 6th and Monday 8th May, His Majesty the King has invited communities to come together for a Coronation Big Lunch. This can range from a small gathering to a full-on street party. It is the perfect way to bring you and your neighbours together.

Whilst we recommend starting your planning three months in advance, organising a Big Lunch can be more straightforward than you think.

Getting started

- **Order a Coronation Big Lunch pack:** Free resources will be made available online by the Eden Project's Big Lunch team at CoronationBigLunch.com. There you can sign up for your free pack, which will be released in mid-February. It will include editable invitations, posters, recipes, and activity ideas.
- **Pick a date:** Sunday 7th May will be the most popular date, but you could consider [Neighbourhood Watch Week](#) which is 3rd - 9th June, during the Month of Community.
- **Talk to your neighbours:** Try to speak to all the households on your street – that way nobody feels left out!
- **Invites:** It is always a good idea to pop an invite or 'Save the Date' through each letterbox.
- **Apply for a road closure:** If you plan on closing

the road, you will have to apply early – see your council's website for more information.



Planning

- **Share the work:** One or preferably two months before your event, ask your neighbours for help sourcing tables, chairs, and decorations.
- **Food:** You could ask odd house numbers to bring something savoury and evens could bring something sweet!
- **Games:** Plan activities for all ages – these could involve a street quiz for grown-ups or a treasure hunt for children.
- **Signage:** If you plan on closing the road for your celebration, you will need to source road signage. Some councils may lend signs to you and some will tell you where you can hire them.
- **Decorations:** Plan how your street will be decorated. The Eden Project has some great ideas! Visit: edenprojectcommunities.com/make-it-happen/decorations.
- **Rain:** Of course, be prepared for rain! For ideas, visit: edenprojectcommunities.com/blog/weather-proofing-your-big-lunch.

For more tips for the week before and the day itself, read the full article [here](#).

The Big Help Out

On Monday 8th May 2023, The Big Help Out will encourage people to try volunteering. Have you considered a community litter pick for example? Not only is this a great way to make a real difference, but – by signing up with your neighbours and newfound friends – it could also be a fabulous opportunity to get to know your community even better. Visit thebighelpout.org.uk for more information.

Follow us... ourwatch.org.uk



A date from Tinder – or a date with a swindler?

Stay safe this Valentine's Day! Many of us have been there before – that familiar buzz you get when you've found your perfect match online. It's far from our job to burst your bubble, but have you ever been blinded by love? More often than not this can be harmless, yet more and more people are falling victim to a crime made famous by *The Tinder Swindler* Netflix documentary: romance fraud.

What is romance fraud?

Romance fraud is dating exclusively with the intention of persuading you to lend money or steal your identity. It often seeks to manipulate its victims through subtle tactics, outlined in Thames Valley Police's [Staying Safe from Romance Fraud](#). What follows is a summary of some of these strategies – which we will refer to as traps – and advice for how to keep you and your loved ones safe.

TRAP 1: URGENCY

Have you ever been made to feel that you – and only you – can solve a challenging problem, but that time is running out? When a sense of urgency is created, a victim of romance fraud can be panicked into acting quickly without thinking – for example, to save their partner's business or to pay for their medical treatment. It is in these vulnerable moments that romance fraudsters use guilt and a prospect of limited time to extract funds from their victims.

TRAP 2: SECRECY

Scammers like secrecy. They like to isolate their victims from their families and from anyone who can provide them with a reality check. Fraudsters exploit the privacy of romance as a smokescreen for money laundering or identity theft. They can react angrily if their requests – or in some cases the relationship itself – are made known to others, preferring to convince victims that they are the only person that truly understands them. In this way, victims can find it difficult to identify that they are in an abusive relationship and have less ways to find help.

TRAP 3: POWER IMBALANCE

Once isolated from their support network, romance fraudsters try to make their victims emotionally dependent on them, creating a power imbalance. Often, this happens without the victim realising, leading to a sense of blame.

Just imagine – you communicate concern about your relationship to your family and you are accused of being disloyal for doing so. You are made to apologise. Fuelled by guilt, you agree to help your partner financially, with a feeling that you are still in charge when (blinded by promises of a better future) you are anything but.

TRAP 4: CREATING A STORY

Have you ever come across something that feels too good to be true? Romance fraudsters often create a fictitious story, first by planting a seed, then referring back to that story when they need money. Imagine: your new partner's online dating profile mentions that it is their dream to start a business. As the relationship progresses, your partner drip-feeds information about the company they are building.

They make you believe that they just need one more loan from you to kick-start their project – criticising you for lacking support if you waver – when in reality their company does not exist. In this way, it can be difficult for victims of romance fraud to realise that they are being exploited. They are often flattered by the advances of their abuser, and struggle to come to terms with anything that might shatter their image of romance.

What to do about it

Be extremely careful if you are encouraged to keep your relationship secret from your family and friends. Regardless of how long you have been getting to know someone online, or how much you may trust them, they might not have your best interests at heart. Take a moment to think. The Take Five campaign outlines three principles to prevent yourself from being a victim of fraud.

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

If you have been a victim of fraud, please contact Action Fraud, Victims First or Victim Support.

If you have any information about those behind romance fraud, you can prevent further scams by contacting Crimestoppers UK. This can be done anonymously at crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/pre-form.

New free app launches to tackle LGBTQ+ hate crime

Vodafone Foundation, the company's charitable arm, has unveiled Zoteria, a new app to help the LGBTQ+ community and the wider public come together and tackle the issue of LGBTQ+ hate crime.

Zoteria enables people to report hate crime incidents, either against themselves or on behalf of someone else, and access support from LGBTQ+ charities. It also aims to improve the reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crime and build a more accurate picture of the issue across the UK.

The launch of Zoteria follows record rises in LGBTQ+ hate crime reports in England and Wales, with recent government statistics showing a 41% increase in homophobic and biphobic hate incidents – and a 56% increase in transphobic hate incidents – compared to last year.

The app, developed by Vodafone Foundation with LGBTQ+ rights charities Galop and Stonewall, comes as new research from Vodafone found that over two-thirds (68%) of LGBTQ+ respondents had been victims of hate crime in the last year, and more than a quarter (27%) had been physically injured by an attack.

But three quarters (75%) said they hadn't reported the incident because they felt it was too minor (53%)

or didn't trust the authorities to take it seriously or do anything about it (42%). An overwhelming 87% of LGBTQ+ respondents said they would welcome a simple method, like an app, to access help and advice and report such incidents.

Zoteria enables anyone to report hate incidents directly to LGBTQ+ support charities in a confidential way, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

The app also provides access to other vital support services, including LGBTQ+ advice, mental health and sexual health services, and to information on local LGBTQ+ events to help people stay connected with their communities.

Zoteria is available to download in the UK, for free, on Apple App store and Google Play Store. Zoteria is not linked to the police nor is it an emergency app. If someone feels in immediate danger, they should call 999.



It's NOT ok to shout abuse

Sexual harassment can start at a young age. Let's put a stop to it.



For more information on tackling violence against women and girls visit:
[crimestoppers-uk.org/VAWG-Report-Launch](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/VAWG-Report-Launch)

CrimeStoppers.

New film warns of risks of not using a qualified plumber



Employing a plumber – who is not qualified or insured to work safely with tap water – not only poses risks to water quality but could also lead to extra expense to put right shoddy work.

This is the warning from WaterSafe, the UK's register of approved plumbers, which is backed by all water companies and the drinking water regulators.

A new [film](#), sharing results from a recent WaterSafe survey*, reveals how the average cost to put right shoddy plumbing work is £285. In some cases, much more.

The survey questioned 2,000 UK householders, and found that more than a quarter of people have employed a plumber who did not carry out the task properly. Most people then had to employ another plumber to fix the poor work.

WaterSafe was set up to promote competent installers and help keep the UK's drinking water safe in homes and businesses. It has an online database where people can find a qualified, approved, and insured plumber near to them.

Director of WaterSafe, Julie Spinks, said: "I'm concerned that with the cost of living crisis, people will be tempted to cut corners when it comes to

hiring a plumber. We've made this film to reinforce the message that work on your home's plumbing system should always be carried out by someone who is competent and qualified. If they're not, there's the chance your drinking water could become unsafe, putting you and your family at risk.

"Using a WaterSafe-approved plumber protects you from poor work that could contaminate your drinking water, as all members are trained to meet the strict regulations for installing pipes and fittings which supply drinking water.

"For added reassurance, they will also issue a Certificate of Compliance, stating that their plumbing work complies with the regulations – giving customers a legal defence if something is later found to be wrong," Julie added.

All WaterSafe members carry minimum levels of Public Liability Insurance and belong to an Approved Contractors' Scheme.

For more information, visit [watersafe.org.uk](https://www.watersafe.org.uk) or call 0333 207 9030 and say you heard about us from Neighbourhood Watch.



*Based on 2,000 people living in the UK, September 2022

LockLatch™ – The window restrictor you can trust

It's hard to imagine now, but hotter days are coming, and a good way to ventilate your home safely is to install window or door restrictors.

With a multitude of products available on the market, it can be hard to know which one is right for you. LockLatch, with its unparalleled versatility, is the perfect solution in most cases, regardless of the type of door or window you wish to secure.

Installation is so simple that it can be completed in minutes with minimal DIY knowledge and a few tools. The three devices in the range feature the same design, but the size variations make them uniquely suited to different purposes.

There are many features that make the LockLatch range superior to competitors. Its patented design, and C304 stainless steel construction make it one of the toughest and most durable security solutions on the market.

By design, LockLatch is intended to secure your doors and windows in the open position and this feature really sets it apart.



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LOCKLATCH®



LIFETIME Guarantee 100%

LEAVE ANY DOOR OR WINDOW OPEN, BUT LOCKED

Safe ventilation, pet access, window safety and wind damage

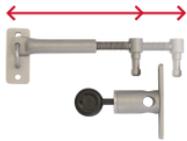
Made from C304 stainless steel with a satin finish, LockLatch®, PetLatch® and MiniLatch® will fit any door or window, whichever way it opens and whatever it is made of. All locks are DIY and quick and easy to install yourself.

The U bolt allows for easy positioning on the frame with an adjustable width. The locking pin drops into the barrel in any of the 4 holes which is lockable with a removable key.

www.locklatch.co.uk

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MiniLatch®
Let fresh air in, keep opportunistic intruders out.
Adjusts between 4.5 to 8 cms



LockLatch®
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Three major cybersecurity predictions for 2023



While these predictions might seem scary, there are easy ways to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your business.

Avast has three major predictions for 2023:

1. Ransomware will become an increasingly serious problem
2. Scams will continue to be a favourite method for cyber criminals
3. Cybercrime as a business will become even more sophisticated

Ransomware gets worse

Ransomware continued to be a profitable crime in 2022, as cybercriminals used phishing attacks and other social engineering techniques to gain access to the systems of both public and private organisations. From hospitals to big corporations to individuals, it seemed no one was safe.

"This year, we saw cybergangs threatening to publicly publish their targets' data if a ransom isn't paid, and we expect this trend to only grow in 2023," says Michal Salat, Threat Intelligence Director at Avast. *"This puts people's personal memories at risk and poses a double risk for businesses."*

For 2023, Salat and his team expect to see a continued rise in this type of attack.

Scamdemic 2022 becomes Scamdemic 2023

The 2022 "Scamdemic" saw everything from romance fraud to Covid-19 cons to tech support scams and more proliferating as cybercriminals went after individuals worldwide. This may be due, at least in part, to software solutions that thwart cybercrimes becoming more sophisticated, making people easier targets than devices.

"We've been living in a scamdemic for some time now, and there are no signs of a slow-down," says Salat. *"Cybergroups go to many lengths to tap into people's worst fears, to deceive them into sending money or giving up personal data, because it is easier to make people vulnerable than hacking their devices."*

In addition to the plethora of scams seen in 2022, Salat expects to see some relative newcomers to the field in 2023.

Cybercriminals get more professional

We've said it before and we'll say it again: cybercrime is, first and foremost, a business. And, similar to non-criminal industries, it evolves and changes. In 2022 we saw increased professionalisation in the form of conglomerates forming and even a ransomware group offering a bug bounty program. But perhaps even more worrying is the intrusion of cybercriminal recruiting into spaces where young people hang out.

"Cybercrime has been a growing business for years, but we have started to see open-source malware become more readily available and distributed on platforms like Discord," Salat says. *"People, including young people with less technical knowledge, can now get their hands on malware and may be more inclined to join the dark side given current economic hardships."*

Cybercriminal groups have also started paying members of the public to participate in their crimes, a trend that Salat expects to see continuing in 2023.

But, while these trends might seem scary, there are easy ways to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your businesses. Here are our top tips to avoid being scammed or becoming a ransomware victim.

How to protect yourself against scams

1. **Research companies and websites before buying.** No matter how urgent the offer may seem, or how badly you want the item or service, do your research first.
2. **Pay with a credit card or trusted payment processor.** Compared to debit cards and bank transfers, credit cards are far more secure.
3. **Avoid unknown links and downloads.** Scammers can use attachments and websites to infect your computer with malware.
4. **Keep personal information to yourself.** Many websites ask you to answer a series of security questions in case you need to recover your password. Remember which information you've set as security measures, and don't share it.
5. **Secure yourself online.** If a website offers two-factor authentication, use it. It's not bulletproof, but it's better than nothing. Use strong, unique passwords on the websites you frequent, and store them more securely with a dependable password manager.

For the full article, including top tips on how to protect yourself against ransomware, click [here](#).



Make a Difference Awards 2023

Local BBC Radio is set to recognise and celebrate everyday acts of kindness, with the Make A Difference Awards 2023.

This year, every local BBC radio station across England needs your help to find remarkable individuals. They want to hear about the amazing people who have positively impacted their communities over the past year.

'Make A Difference' was established days after the first lockdown was announced in 2020. It is a virtual noticeboard where members of the public can offer help to, or seek support from, people in their local area. To date, nearly 11 million people have interacted across all 39 local BBC radio stations.

The awards celebrate the heart warming stories that we hear day-after-day, of people going above and beyond to make a difference where they live. There are eight award categories that cover the unsung heroes of every community, including a new one this year – Bravery.



The winners will be announced at their Make a Difference Awards Ceremony hosted by BBC CWR in September. Please share this amongst your neighbours. For a full list of categories – and details of how to nominate someone – go to bbc.co.uk/makeadifference. Nominations close on the 5th of March at 11pm.

Do you feel like either you or your group should be nominated? Unfortunately you cannot nominate yourself, but you can ask your friends, family, colleagues or even local MP to nominate you or your group.

[Click here to nominate](#)

SUPPORT US TO WIN A YEAR OF HELLO FRESH

Like the idea of saving money on your weekly shop, eating fresh and healthy, or getting your family together around the dinner table?

You will love our newest lottery prize: a whole YEAR of HelloFresh! These fantastic boxes deliver fresh, high-quality ingredients directly to your door – with everything you need to create delicious dinners from scratch!

Tickets cost just £1 per week. Each week you could also win our weekly prize draw amount or the jackpot prize of £25,000!

If you already take part in our lottery, you will be automatically entered into this special draw. Of course, you could buy extra tickets: the more tickets you have, the more chances you have to WIN!

[Interested?
Buy tickets here](#)

A graphic for the Hello Fresh lottery promotion. It features the text 'WIN A YEAR OF HELLO FRESH' in large, bold, black letters. The background is a light blue with a subtle pattern of white dots. There are images of fresh ingredients: a green lemon, a bunch of green asparagus, a bowl of mushrooms, a bunch of green basil, and a plate of food with rice, vegetables, and meat. The Hello Fresh logo is also visible.

**WIN A
YEAR OF
HELLO
FRESH**

- Tickets cost just £1 a week
- Win a whole YEAR of HelloFresh!
- Please help give our fundraising a boost
- Save money and eat fresh in 2023

PLAY NOW:

Go to

www.onelottery.co.uk

Search for: Neighbourhood Watch





HM Government



Fancy a coffee?

Know someone who needs lifting out of loneliness? There are some simple things you could do that could really help. Like inviting them for a coffee or sending them a text. To find out more search "Every Mind Matters".

Lift Someone Out Of Loneliness

Better Health every mind matters

