



## **Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association**

### **Chair's Report – 2023-24**

Dear members,

The past year has been a time of growth in both our membership numbers and in working with partner organisations to play our part in crime prevention and making our communities safer.

#### **Thames Valley Police**

Our most important partner is Thames Valley Police (TVP). Here are some examples of our collaborative working;

We hold regular liaison meetings with TVP across Thames Valley and organise local briefings on crime.

We train new PCSO's on the value of Neighbourhood Watch and working with our coordinators.

One partnership within TVP is Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse, where we attend conferences and briefings.

The TVP Cyber Security officer runs training sessions for our members.

In Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Police and Neighbourhood Watch work together to recruit coordinators.

We attend the annual Neighbourhood Policing conference where strategy, successes and best practice are shared.

#### **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

Another key partner is the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), who kindly awards us funding on a regular basis. This helps us to raise our profile with the public and gain more coordinators.



## Local Reports

These local reports from some of our areas highlight our work and success stories in more detail:

### West Berkshire Neighbourhood Watch (Angela Money)

Since January I have had stands at our local Volunteering event in Newbury Corn Exchange which was very well attended and as a result six residents have set up schemes, helped our local Police at a Greenham event (4 new schemes), at a Crime and Safety event in Hungerford (1 new scheme) and Speen Fete (2 new schemes).

Currently I have 565 schemes in West Berkshire with 23 new schemes since January. My next Newbury/West Berkshire Neighbourhood Watch meeting is being held on Thursday 4 July at 7.15 pm in the Waterside Centre, off Northbrook Street in Newbury. My Newbury SW Community Forum meetings are held every three months at which West Berkshire and Newbury Town Councillors, plus our local Police attend to discuss various issues in the area and receive feedback from our PCSO.

I also attend various Council meetings (mainly online). My local Police and West Berkshire Council and Newbury Town Council are very supportive of all my local Neighbourhood Watch commitments and for sending out Alerts on Scams and general information such as how to report them and incidents in the area.

### Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch (Nick King)

Over the last year our focus was building the visibility of Neighbourhood Watch across our area. We needed much stronger links with the Police and other organisations especially after Covid and several years of low profile. We are grateful for funding from the PCC, facilitated by the TVNWA Projects Team, to support our *Operation Target* which significantly helped us rebrand ourselves: strengthening our image and visibility at exhibitions, pop-up shops, Town/Parish meetings, etc. Now we are getting noticed!

Further to this, was to give high prominence to registrations to Police *Alerts*, which of course is also the joint database with Neighbourhood Watch. Very recently it is heartening to see a new priority and intent from TV Police to encourage more sign-ups and more *Alerts* being issued by more Police staff. This must be a good start.



## Oxford Neighbourhood Watch (Maggie Lewis)

This has been an extremely busy year running alongside a 9-month training programme for Experienced Social Leaders (CLORE) which finished recently This looked at my roles and also increasing self-awareness and self-confidence.

There were several aims for Oxford Neighbourhood Watch this year:

- bike theft prevention and events to increase membership
- scam awareness
- networking and visibility
- training and workshops

All these dovetail to help with crime prevention and make our communities safer.

### **Bike theft prevention and increased membership.**

My colleagues, as Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Coordinators and members, are a pool of volunteers that help to reduce and prevent bike theft in Oxford. I was the project manager researching into bike theft with a collaborative team, including Oxford University researchers, that resulted in a bike theft prevention leaflet that is on the national Neighbourhood Watch website. With a substantial donation we can mark and register bikes free of charge. At every event we have a NW stall and discuss local issues, distribute crime prevention and community safety literature. These events have produced a substantial increase in membership and start-up of 11 schemes in the last year - an amazing result for Oxford. We have enjoyed our events and meeting new people. Events have been held at Brookes University (with security staff), outside shops and community centre (with local policing team), Eid festival, various fetes, community centres, community day events and Westgate Shopping Centre. We already have future diary dates. As with all crime prevention we are trying to prevent residents becoming victims of crime The biggest thank you goes to our volunteers.

These are the figures and we are told that Oxford Neighbourhood Watch has registered more than any other organisation in Oxford.

| postcode | registered bikes |
|----------|------------------|
| OX1      | 175              |
| OX2      | 457              |
| OX3      | 349              |
| OX4      | 530              |

### **Scam awareness**

Hosting scam awareness event with Mark Godsland Cyber Prepare and Protect Advisor TVP  
Many virtual scam awareness meetings

Individual help as a Cyberhood Watch Adviser and Scam Champion for Friends Against Scams

### **Networking**

We set up an inaugural Chatty Cafe for lonely and isolated people with a table display of literature. We hosted a Friends of Reducing the Risk (domestic abuse) in the same cafe. Training, meetings and presentations all had networking opportunities to promote Oxford Neighbourhood Watch and a main source is social media and Alert weekly newsletter.



### **Social media and newsletter**

The pandemic was difficult for most but the challenge was an opportunity to embrace my scepticism of social media and the Community newsletter and Community Facebook Group were introduced with no idea of how popular they would be. The weekly newsletter is full of information to stay safe and has a reach of 30,000 though far less will read. However, there have been positive comments in its effectiveness and lots of engagement with NW members and residents. There is an emphasis on crime prevention and scam awareness that began during the pandemic to connect with members and it has evolved. The community group has also grown and has 5.4k members and growing daily. A popular way of sharing information about local criminal behaviour can be messaged to me and the police alerted with some success

### **Environment**

Litter picking in order to reduce crime. Oxford NW has been given a grant for fully funded litter pick equipment to be kept locally and used by residents in the most socially deprived area of Oxford.

### **Aylesbury Vale and Princes Risborough and District( Rural) (Val McPherson)**

Aylesbury Vale.

I did a Community Event with different departments of Bucks Council across Aylesbury Vale to spread the word about NW. Another planned later in the year. I have set up over 20 new schemes and many new schemes are covering the larger estates.

Princes Risborough & District (Rural). Since taking over as chair of Princes Risborough & District I have extended our committee of Coordinators and a new young lady has joined. We held our AGM and Community Safety Event last week which went very well. Our main speaker was Chief Supt Emma Burroughs who heads up the new Buckinghamshire Local Command Unit along with Group Commander Stuart Grosse of Bucks Fire & Rescue. We had a number of coordinators and residents attend to look at the various stands around the room who work in partnership with our NW. A few new schemes have come forward from this meeting too.

We have over last year attended a Party in the Park Event doing a stand to promote NW, plus having stands outside Tesco's and M& S. We have joined with our colleagues in Wycombe District to have online meetings with our Inspectors across the South Buckinghamshire LPA informing us of what crime is occurring and speaking about concerns within our own areas. We also had face to face meetings with our Sgt's within our own Princes Risborough & Rural areas. We have a very good relationship with our local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and across the whole of South Bucks Area now known as Buckinghamshire Local Command Unit .



## **Bracknell and Wokingham Neighbourhood Watch (Paul Adkins)**

Our focus has been twofold, firstly on strengthening the existing partnership with Thames Valley Police (TVP) through meetings.

Secondly on building partnerships with other organisations involved in Crime prevention and safeguarding.

We have established working relationships with the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board, Children's Social Care and Public health teams.

We also attend meetings of the two Independent Advisory Groups in our area plus the Neighbourhood Action Groups. These meet regularly with TVP and our role is to act as an independent critical friend of the police.

I deliver training sessions to all PCSO recruits at the TVP Training Centre, Sulhamstead on "The value of Neighbourhood Watch" about how we can work together to reduce

The next twelve months will be a time of change in Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch. As well as building on our successes the committee has identified that we need to review and update the way that we work in order to continue to improve the services we deliver to our members.

It promises to be an exciting time.

Best wishes,

Paul

Paul Adkins

Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association

