



Thames Valley
Neighbourhood Watch Association
AGM on 22nd May 2025 7pm
via Teams



MINUTES

(1) Welcome, introductions and apologies.

Val McPherson acted as chair for the meeting and welcomed everyone, including our speaker Cheryl Spruce and Superintendent John Batty, joining us later. (Our previous speaker Ian Bretman had to withdraw due to a family emergency and we wish him and his family well.)

There was an excellent attendance of over 40 Watch coordinators and members. A few apologies had been received following our invitations:

Valerie Boakes
Lynn Graham
Emerita Pilgrim

George Dengel
Stan Jones
Thomas Spillane

Joyce Gledhill
Dorothy Pickering

(2) Speaker: Cheryl Spruce, National's Head of Membership & Community Engagement

kindly stepped in at short notice to replace Ian. Cheryl's highlights from the last 12 months are:

- Support for coordinators and Associations: notably fund-raising and succession planning toolkits. Also strengthening the Knowledge Hub with more help and advice, which now provides a "one-stop-shop well of information" to coordinators and it is free!
- Liaison work as the voice of Neighbourhood Watch: with central government; the National Council of Police Chiefs, and Police & Crime Commissioner.
- Committee and advisory work with the Home Office on policies and direction.
- Campaigning work most especially on phishing and building our Youth Council, now in its 2nd year.
- Planning a new 5-year strategic vision for Neighbourhood Watch from 2026: involving consultation with our stakeholders, the above partners, other charities and of course associations, coordinators and members.
- Over the year further projects are the Digital Switch-on with BT with the emphasis on providing reassurance and awareness of possible scams to vulnerable people.
- Linking with EON on Smart meters in various areas.
- Launching the 40th anniversary of Neighbourhood Watch Week 1st – 7th June including our national Volunteer Recognition Awards, Community Safety Charter, and The Big Lunch. This coincides with celebrating Volunteer Week and the "Month of the Community."

Question (Nick): about the benefits to Neighbourhood Watch members and Cheryl highlighted several aspects: the range of discounted products from our partners; offering to support your scheme coordinator as a deputy; organising litter-picks and checking out the

www.ourwatch.org.uk website for the “40 actions helping your community”. Plenty of other ideas on the website: and do let us know of your own ideas or suggestions.

Question (Dorothy): her scheme is 30 years old and says the Knowledge Hub is excellent. They are doing a street-party but thought the online shop was low on stock, notably mugs. Cheryl apologised as a recent large order of mugs had sold out stock!

Question (Nick B of Banbury): is there a Get Started Guide that he as a new coordinator can use?

Cheryl mentioned a voucher for a free starter pack available to TVNWA via a special code. Paul A volunteered to check for the code and will contact Nick B direct to help him.

(3) TVNWA Annual General Meeting: Val passed over to Nick King to lead on the AGM.

Nick began by thanking the Committee over the last 12 months: Paul Adkins (Wokingham & Bracknell), Paul Christmas (Cherwell), Nick King (Milton Keynes), Maggie Lewis (Oxford), Angela Money (West Berkshire) and Val McPherson (Aylesbury Vale). Best wishes were passed to two committee members whose husbands have been very poorly, and we send our sincere best wishes for their recovery.

He also thanked our new Treasurer Harvey Dhingra.

The committee is small but has kept TVNWA going, operating on a collective/cooperative basis as currently no chair or secretary. Nick invited attendees to consider joining and helping us as new thoughts and energy would be most welcome.

(i) The draft minutes to the 2024 AGM of 24th July 2024 were duly accepted.

(ii) Committee’s Report (on our website). Nick highlighted the thanks and acknowledgement given to the support received from our Police & Crime Commissioner. His funding help is invaluable to our work to help build the professionalism and visible image of our work across the districts.

TVNWA is equipped with branded items i.e. tablecloths, polo-shirts, lanyards, etc. and coordinators can contact TVNWA to use such material for their own events, etc.

(iii) Treasurer’s Report and Financial Accounts:

Harvey spoke that he had only been Treasurer for a few months and asked for more time to get up to speed to assess and streamline the accounts. To that end he is delaying issuing the accounts ending 31st March 2025 until he can better understand the structure and properly report. He will do this task within the next two months, as well as arrange for an independent audit. The committee will report back accordingly. Nick asked the attendees if there were any questions or concerns regarding this and there were none.

(iv) Election to the Committee and officer roles:

Nick asked if any attendees wished to join the Committee in the role of chair or secretary, but none received.

He then asked the existing Committee if they wished to remain as Committee members and all 6 agreed. A further request was made for others to join and strengthen the Committee, possibly across districts such as Slough, Windsor/Ascot/Maidenhead, and areas of South Bucks as that would help. Val asked that those interested in joining the Committee to please contact her.

(4) Speaker: Superintendent John Batty, Head of Community Policing Command for Thames Valley Police.

Val announced Superintendent John Batty. John introduced his full role as Lead for Neighbourhood Policing, including Citizens in Policing (Cadets, Specials, Volunteers, etc.), Crime Prevention, Retail Crime and CCTV Partnerships. His topic this evening is “an overview of the government’s new Neighbourhood Guarantee.”

John used a short series of slides but emphasised they are not for general use or for the public-domain.

Question (Roz): quizzing the method of surveying the visibility of officers/ PCSOs and how this quantifies the assessment of public perception, as in some circumstances this will be difficult?

JB replied this would primarily be done via the government’s Crime Survey of England & Wales but also with data from Police Forces i.e. using the new TVP app.

Question (George): RE increased visibility. He sees it as better however when talking with his local Police that the sheer volume of incidents (ASB crime) is too much. How can TVP use AI and be more effective?

JB accepts that demand is always challenging. This can be helped by reducing the underlying causes (of ASB/crime) and relying on partnerships from other organisations, but they too are under pressure.

Question (Nick): RE the service level that stated of 72 hours to respond to public report. Does this involve phoning 101 and online reports?

JB cannot say for sure yet. TVP has more work to do on this. Following up 101 calls is already measured but more information is required on how this can be measured from online reporting. Analysis via the website (uses Single Online Home) is not clear yet.

Question (Nick): RE recruitment over the last 12 months, especially for PCSOs.

JB says this has improved. It is still challenging with one factor being the low salary compared to other starter roles/careers. For PCs it is good.

Comment (Paul): highlighted some recent good experience working with his local Police. He also underlined “the more we report the better.”

Question (Harvey): has had good positive contact with his local PCSO . However, a recent 101 call took 30 minutes! How can we expect someone to be patient so long to be a good citizen?

JB said the 101 target, which he thinks is less than 5 minutes, is subject very much to the timing of peaks and troughs, so delays do happen. He is aware that this does impact public confidence and getting the balance is tricky.

Question (via chat): *re analysis via the app may be disturbing to staff...*

JB underlined that the analysis is not to take an officer to task. It helps TVP assess the strengths and weaknesses against targets.

Question (Maggie): does TVP check data from Alerts?

JB accepted that knowledge of Alerts is not his strength. The TVP Comms team look at this.

Maggie added a comment, having just read a bulletin from the PCC, which states that calls to 101 take on average 1.51 minutes to answer.

Question (George): how can coordinators share best practice. George is Milton Keynes so his area representative Nick K will be direct contact on this point.

Comment (Roz): shared a difficulty reporting via 101 as took too long. When trying to report online via the website the categories are very *limiting and poor choices*. Others agreed.

For TVNWA website see: <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/thamesvalley>

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