Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network

2015-2020 Strategic Plan

“Bringing neighbours together to create stronger, friendly, active communities where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen”
Neighbourhood Watch (or Home Watch as it is known across 10% of the movement) is the largest voluntary movement within the UK.

It is the only national charity where communities protect themselves and others through sharing and delivering crime prevention techniques with very little assistance by paid staff.

That said, volunteers are not ‘free’ – they need access to good practice, resources and the knowledge to link in with other agencies and partners.

Neighbourhood Watch will continue to have crime prevention as its core business, with its roots firmly embedded within our communities. However, the benefits of and outcomes from ‘neighbourliness’ and ‘community spirit’ cannot be underestimated and will continue to be a pivotal part of the movement.

Clarity on ‘minimum standards’ will enhance the overall reach and effectiveness of the movement while allowing it to remain community-focused.

We will be clear about the benefits of joining Neighbourhood Watch so that we can attract the three-quarters of the population who said they would join if they were asked.

“Volunteers are not ‘free’ - they need access to good practice, resources and the knowledge to link in with other agencies and partners.”
We need to be relevant, interesting and useful to different demographic groups and offer benefits which are attractive to a diverse range of people.

There have been significant challenges for us all since 2010; the economic downturn, reductions in public sector funding and some of the biggest police reforms the service has seen, including the election of the first Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

Shrinking police and central government resources mean that the way the Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network (NHWN) and the movement as a whole have engaged with the public sector, changed considerably and will continue to do so.

This will present some challenges and risks, but with challenges come opportunities. This new five year strategic plan presents us with an opportunity to strengthen the movement and NHWN. However, we cannot meet some of the challenges on our own and we must work with like-minded organisations, PCCs, the public and the private sector to ensure the movements’ volunteers are suitably supported and empowered to continue to make our communities safe.

Jim Maddan OBE  
Chair, Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network

“This new five year strategic plan presents us with an opportunity to strengthen the movement and NHWN.”

Our vision, mission and values
Our Vision:
Is of a caring, cohesive, resilient society that is founded upon trust & respect, where the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is understood & embedded within communities.

Our Mission:
Is to enable communities to work together with other agencies to identify and meet the needs of their communities, to ensure that they are resilient and to help provide a protective safety net for those members who are vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Our Values:
To be credible, accountable, transparent, caring, realistic, inclusive, sustainable and independent.
Prevent Crime

We plan to limit the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour to occur through increased awareness and adoption of effective crime prevention measures, timely reporting of suspicious activities and identification and protection against current, new and emerging threats.

Our Priorities

Over the next five years, we will continue to focus on the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour to seek effective and sustainable solutions aimed at managing and reducing the risk of becoming a victim, through active community involvement with national, regional and local partnerships.

Desired Outcomes

- To have reduced the opportunity for crimes to occur.
- To have encouraged the prompt reporting of crimes, suspicious acts and serious concerns. For those to be recorded and accordingly acted upon by law enforcement agencies.
- To have increased the ability for individuals and communities to be able to identify threats as well as protect themselves and others.

By 2020 we will have:

- Encouraged and supported a national coordinated approach to crime prevention.
- Encouraged effective collaboration between national and regional partners, stakeholders and policy decision makers.
- Encouraged our membership and the public to promptly and confidently identify and report crimes, suspicious acts and other relevant information.
- Collated and made available a national library of effective good practice. To have produced toolkits and support materials in line with members’ and partners’ needs.
- Devised an effective mechanism to measure impact and effectiveness across the movement.
- Identified pathways to help enable communities in high crime rate areas to protect themselves from becoming a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour.
Stronger & Safer Communities

We plan to improve active citizenship, community safety and resilience through increased community participation, social action, neighbourliness and partnership working.

Our Priorities

By providing our membership with a voice and mobilising citizens to participate in local action, communities will be empowered to take on an active role in building stronger, better connected and safer neighbourhoods.

Desired Outcomes

- To enable communities to have increased sense of purpose and ownership. For this to be supported and valued by law enforcement agencies, community safety partners and other relevant agencies.
- For communities to feel able to anticipate and identify threats, take relevant action and address their issues and concerns in partnership with other agencies.
- To generate improved trust and legitimacy between the community, police and other authorities.
- For communities to have a sense of collective responsibility and efficacy.
- To help communities be safer and more resilient.

By 2020 we will have:

- Developed further strategic links and gained recognition and support for our contribution to building strong, safer, resilient communities.
- Supported a national and regional framework including government and partners, to build safer, more resilient communities.
- Devised a strategy to identify the needs and provide tailored support for vulnerable and hard to reach communities and individuals, including repeat victims.
- Worked with partners to maximise collective efficacy, effectiveness and use of resources so that everybody benefits from stronger and safer communities at optimum cost.
- Ensured that communities have sound information and background knowledge on how to participate within local community resilience forums and other community safety initiatives.
Effective use of Resources

To advocate on behalf of the movement so as to influence national policy and strategic response in line with our vision, mission and values - this will ensure that the charity has access to the support and resources which we need to deliver our ambitions over the next five years.

Our Priorities

As the largest voluntary movement across England and Wales, it is essential that we continually review our use of resources to ensure we remain efficient, credible, valued and influential in all aspects of our work.

Desired Outcomes

- To use the enormous volunteer resource capability within the movement to strengthen and assist the police and other partners and agencies to prevent and reduce crime.
- To achieve greater community participation and resilience to help generate safer and more cohesive communities.
- Strengthen and support community activists across the movement to undertake the objectives of the movement more effectively.
- For volunteers to feel valued and enabled to participate at whatever level they choose to engage, supported by a national volunteers’ framework.
- To raise awareness of the movement within the public sector so that it is valued as an innovative, dynamic and integral part of civil society.
- To work with the private sector in order to remain a leading national charity which can offer unique opportunities to members and the wider movement, and thereby benefit society as a whole.

By 2020 we will have:

- Strengthened our leadership, resources and infrastructure to ensure the movement is equipped to respond to local, force, regional and national needs.
- Reviewed and developed our infrastructure and existing membership, providing clearly defined roles and responsibilities to improve transparency, delivery and accountability at every level across the movement.
- Built and enhanced our capacity and sustainability including appropriate and sustainable financial support.
- Ensured that we have knowledge and skills to source adequate resources at all levels by the most appropriate means.
- Analysed and evaluated ‘what works’ in relation to Neighbourhood Watch through a series of bespoke projects, underpinned by research, academic opinion and in collaboration with the College of Policing.
- Reviewed and consulted members to ensure our brand is fit for purpose, and any revised brand guidelines are adopted by all to provide a professional quality and consistent approach across the movement.
Our Network

3.8 million households

[Diagram of houses]

173,000 Volunteer Coordinators

[Diagram of people]

43 Volunteer NHW* Police Force Area Representatives & 43 Police Force SPOCs**

[Diagram of people]

10 Volunteer NHW Regional Representatives

[Diagram of people]

7 Volunteer Trustees

[Diagram of people]

Supported by 5 paid staff

[Diagram of people]

*NHW - Neighbourhood & Home Watch

**SPOCs - Single Points of Contact
Our Impact

Since 2010 we have:

- Trained 250 volunteer administrators to use our free database and communications system.

- Supplied 2 million Neighbourhood Watch window stickers and 120,000 crime prevention advice booklets to schemes across England and Wales.

- Helped over 300,000 people find their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

- Through Neighbourhood Watch coordinators contributed £1 billion each year to preventing crime*.

- Enabled 7.5 million emails to be sent to Neighbourhood Watch volunteers at no cost.

- Contributed to a threefold reduction in domestic burglary**. Academic research has shown that Neighbourhood Watch can reduce crime by 26%***.

*Based on 173,000 coordinators x 10 hours per week (48 weeks of the year) @ £13.90

**Tseloni, Thompson, Grove, Tilley and Farrell (2014) The effectiveness of burglary security devices

*** Bennett, Holloway and Farrington (2008) The effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch
Burglary has reduced because a range of factors have made it harder for burglars to gain entry to properties and remain undetected. NHWN and the movement have an important continuing role to play in embedding effective crime prevention techniques and reporting suspicious activity. We need to take a partnership approach to challenging and tackling the causes of crime, and especially enhancing strategic and operational links with community safety partnerships. This is one of the ways we can effectively tackle crime, reduce demands on statutory agencies, keep people feeling safe and maintain public confidence in the police and law enforcement agencies.

Doors and windows were once the weak spot in homes, but the telephone socket, broadband cable and wi-fi router now pose a greater threat to security. Cyber-crime and online, doorstep or telephone fraud/crime is becoming a greater threat to many people*. We need to make sure we are suitably equipped to best protect ourselves and the most vulnerable within our communities. Serious and organised crime now has a higher public profile, with notable examples being recent well-publicised campaigns around modern slavery and child sexual exploitation. It is vital that we are clear about the important role that the movement can play in preventing and detecting such crimes.

Rural crime and heritage crime are also increasing. Rural Watch, Farm Watch, Countryside Watch and Heritage Watch schemes have been around for several years, and have been mainly supported by individual police forces. However, more could be done to coordinate a national approach to both rural crime and crime reduction in general, as criminals do not respect police force boundaries, and may be based in urban areas.

Prevention

Burglary has reduced because a range of factors have made it harder for burglars to gain entry to properties and remain undetected. NHWN and the movement have an important continuing role to play in embedding effective crime prevention techniques and reporting suspicious activity. We need to take a partnership approach to challenging and tackling the causes of crime, and especially enhancing strategic and operational links with community safety partnerships. This is one of the ways we can effectively tackle crime, reduce demands on statutory agencies, keep people feeling safe and maintain public confidence in the police and law enforcement agencies.

“Doors and windows were once the weak spot in homes, but the telephone socket, broadband cable and wi-fi router now pose a greater threat to security.”

*Tony Hogg, Police & Crime Commissioner, Devon & Cornwall Letter to Jim Maddan, 4th March 2015 in response to NHWN Business Plan Consultation
Resilience

Community resilience is increasingly important in the light of flooding, other extreme weather events or major incidents. Many of the systems and networks used by the movement in crime prevention can be brought to bear to help keep communities safe in these circumstances too.

Engagement

The way in which the police engage with the public and Neighbourhood Watch coordinators has changed and, with the introduction of the internet, our physical neighbourhoods and online communities have intermingled and blurred the lines of how we choose to interact with each other. We will evolve to meet these challenges.

Evidencing Impact

There has been an increasing emphasis by funders and commissioners on measuring impact and evaluating the work the movement undertakes. This has been challenging for some volunteers, leading to a reduction in action by the movement in some locations due to lack of resources. That said, where strong local networks and a clear vision are in place, the movement has thrived by working in partnership with statutory agencies, other agencies and community groups. In these instances, the role of Neighbourhood Watch has expanded to encompass more than just crime and we need to share how this has been achieved.
Next Steps

Membership

We will work with our members to continue to populate a national database to ensure that we have an accurate record of the whole movement. This will help us assist the movement at all levels, provide excellent customer service and facilitate more effective partnership working. By better understanding where the movement is strong and active, we will see where it is less so and where resources need to be targeted.

Branding

We enjoy a very well-recognised and highly-regarded brand, but possibly with some inherited misinformed stereotypes attached to it. People widely recognise the brand, but they may have preconceived ideas about what the movement does, how it does it and who is involved. We will review the brand to ensure that it is fit for purpose, reflects and enhances our values, and continues to attract new members.

Inclusivity

Neighbourhood Watch has tended to be most active in low crime rate and affluent areas, with membership averaging 25% of adults in those areas compared with 6% in the most deprived areas*. We aspire to offer the same high standard of security and protection to everyone.

“We need to identify how best to expand the movement to where it is most needed, so that we can continue to have a huge impact on preventing crime and enhancing public and community safety.”

**Publicity**

We plan to do much more to raise the profile of the movement to benefit our members. When asked, over 75% of the public said that they would join Neighbourhood Watch if they knew how. However, many members of the public see street signs or stickers in neighbours’ windows but do not know if the scheme is still active or who the coordinator is. In 2010 we developed a national postcode search to help address this problem, and it has been used by over 300,000 people.

**Effectiveness**

We need to identify how best to expand the movement to where it is most needed, so that we can continue to have a huge impact on preventing crime and enhancing public and community safety. We need to be relevant and attractive to a diverse range of people from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds and residential situations. We also need to make sure that we operate as effectively as possible in the digital space.

**Volunteering**

We plan to continue developing strategic and operational links with other Citizens in Policing organisations, in order to provide clear pathways for volunteering opportunities across the movement.
Communications and Engagement

Communication is pivotal in whatever we do, and without an effective communications framework the value and outreach of the movement will not be visible or valued by the public, members, partners, funders or other beneficiaries.

Internal communication and sharing of good practice is also imperative to the future of the movement.

Through our communications strategy we will:

- Have a national set of definitions and roles to describe and strengthen the movement’s infrastructure which will help with clarity internally and externally when working with partners and the public.
- Ensure that consistent and relevant information is accessible to all who require it at a national, regional and force level.
- Ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to national, regional and force level communications.
- Communicate with our members and partners using the range of tools that they most frequently prefer to use.
- Have a range of effective, real time and inter-connected communication systems which allows members to receive specific, relevant and timely updates from their local association, police and other key agencies.
- Add value to and gain support from the government and local authorities for community participation, engagement and social action, positioning Neighbourhood Watch as an essential and valued delivery partner.

Funding & Resources

The movement has always been supported by the public sector but with recent austere times particularly affecting the public sector, reductions in resources and funding have had an impact for NHWN and the wider movement.

We have adapted well, with the private sector supporting the movement through in-kind support and sponsorship arrangements. This has enabled us to provide resources such as free window stickers, leaflets and exclusive offers to members.

However, in order to be sustainable we need to continue to diversify our funding streams and strengthen our evidence base to highlight the benefits and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch.

Through our funding strategy we will:

- Explore further income streams and funding models which will diversify income, ensuring that the infrastructure can deliver planned expectations within the terms of any funding.
- Explore how the movement and national charity can work together to the best effect to secure and distribute appropriate resources.
- Ensure that our brand is fit for purpose, current and appropriate to enhance the movement, achieve its full membership potential and challenge any misconceptions. Make sure our brand is relevant, appealing and attractive to a large number of partners, sponsors and investors.
About Us

Since its import from the USA in 1982, Neighbourhood Watch has been keeping communities safe from crime. Neighbours come together to keep a watchful eye on neighbouring properties, along with vulnerable and elderly neighbours, to ensure no harm comes to those within their community.

The movement expanded in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to it becoming one of the best known brands within the UK.*

The Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network (NHWN) was established to be a strategic voice for the movement. It is now a national charity covering England and Wales. The NHWN inaugural five year business plan (2010-2015) was developed by volunteers and supported by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office. The movement works in partnership with the police, local authorities and other relevant organisations. The role of NHWN is to encourage and support the development and promotion of Neighbourhood Watch and advocate on behalf of the movement to influence national policy and strategic response in line with the community’s needs.

This 2015-2020 strategic plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the wider movement, police force and regional Neighbourhood Watch volunteer representatives and partner organisations.

It is supported by the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the College of Policing. A full report on the consultation can be downloaded here: www.ourwatch.org.uk/resource_centre/document_library/nhwn_business_plan_consultation_2015_2020/

As a charity we work with the wider movement to offer advice, guidance, support and resources and to liaise with other national agencies for the benefit of the movement.

All Neighbourhood Watch schemes are independent of NHWN and are either community-led or, in a minority of cases, managed by the police or local authorities.

*99% of the population have heard of Neighbourhood Watch

Find Us

Address:
Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network
Beaumont Enterprise Centre
72 Boston Road
Beaumont Leys
Leicester
LE4 1HB

Telephone Number: 0116 229 3118

Website: www.ourwatch.org.uk
Email: enquiries@ourwatch.org.uk
Twitter: twitter.com/N_Watch
Facebook: facebook.com/Ourwatch

Charity Number: 1142747
Company Limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 7592594