Message from the Chair

Several months ago the Board of the Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network discussed the idea of putting on a national awards ceremony. All sorts of questions were raised. ‘It will require a lot of work.’ ‘Will it attract enough attention?’ ‘How much will it cost?’ ‘Will the standard of entries make it worthwhile?’

In the end we decided to go ahead. Yes, it was a lot of work, but the staff in Leicester excelled themselves. The attention it received was overwhelming. The costs were covered by a wide range of sponsors. Undoubtedly, the standard of entries was of a very high level. Judging the winners and runners-up proved to be a very difficult task.

In the end, the event at the Palace of Westminster hosted by Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE was an outstanding success. The sponsors were pleased with the outcome, the winners and runners-up were rightly acknowledged for their efforts, and our special guests were very impressed with the quality of the entries.

I would like to say congratulations to everybody involved in the event. I was very proud to be chairman of such a prestigious organisation.

James Maddan, NHWN Chair
Avocet calls on insurance industry to act on lock-snapping

Avocet Hardware, our primary sponsor for security products, used a short presentation at the Awards to call on the UK’s insurance industry to act quickly on lock-snapping – a move they said would reduce premiums for homeowners and save insurance companies millions of pounds in pay-outs every single year.

“Lock-snapping takes advantage of a weakness in the design of the standard Euro cylinder lock, which is fitted in millions of homes across the UK,” said Derrick Purvis, Avocet’s marketing manager. “The weakness that burglars are exploiting is the Euro cylinder, which is a replaceable barrel that controls the entire locking mechanism of the door. It is held in place with just one screw and can be snapped using standard DIY tools.”

Derrick’s colleague, Gemma Attiwell then demonstrated the ease of lock-snapping to an astounded audience, which included a host of leading figures in UK crime prevention circles. Derrick went on to say that the scale of the problem is now being recognised by everyone from industry regulators through to Local Authorities, including:

- The Glass & Glazing Federation and the British Standards Institute who have developed a new standard – BS TS007
- The Master Locksmiths Associations (MLA) and the UK Police’s Secured by Design initiative who have developed SS312 Sold Secure Diamond accreditation
- Leeds City Council, which has fitted over 10,000 of Avocet’s ABS snap secure locks in the east of the city, which alongside other initiatives resulted in a 36 per cent decrease in burglaries in the area in the year to October 2012.

“Lock-snapping and the means of stopping it are well known, but as yet no insurance companies have taken steps to incorporate reference to it and the associated preventative products within home insurance policies,” he added.

“And this is despite the fact it would save them money by significantly reducing the number of claims and delivering potential premium savings to their customers.”

“Even more disconcerting is that when resolving a claim most insurance companies still simply require a like-for-like replacement – meaning a snapped Euro cylinder lock is replaced with the same kind of lock with exactly the same design flaws. When you consider the 36 per cent reduction in burglary in Leeds equated to 3,200 fewer victims in just one year – and remember, this is for just one area of one city –then the potential reduction in burglaries and subsequent insurance claims if insurance companies demanded snap-proof locks in order to validate policies is truly extraordinary.”

“Millions would be saved in police time, insurance payments and, most importantly, the emotional cost inflicted on victims of burglary.”

Avocet Hardware manufactures the ABS snap secure lock, which features a patented system that ensures the central cam locks in place if it is subjected to a snapping attack.

It is one of the first locks of its type to be accredited to the new British Standard TS007 (three stars), is the only retro-fit euro cylinder that has passed the Master Locksmith Associations SS312 Sold Secure Diamond standard, and is approved by Secured by Design.
Community Advocacy Award

Community Advocacy Award - sponsored by the CSP Academy and presented by Bob Kennett of the CSP Academy

Winner: Val McPherson, Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association

Over the last 29 years Val McPherson has worked hard to promote Neighbourhood Watch both locally and nationally, at every available opportunity.

Since setting up her first scheme in Hornsey, in 1982, Val has made quite an impression and undertaken a number of roles including Ambassador for Luton Neighbourhood Watch Association, Treasurer for Luton on the Bedfordshire County Neighbourhood Watch group, founding member of Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association, launched in 2008, and South East Regional Representative, a position which she still holds today.

Her role as a Community Advocate has enabled her to organise a number of successful events in a bid to cut crime, including a ‘Drugs Awareness Evening’, offering support for young people and adults, a ‘Gun and Knife Crime’ event to support the concerns raised by residents across her local policing area and a number of conferences supporting Thames Valley Neighbourhood and Home Watch members, the last of which was attended by the Home Secretary, Theresa May.

As a result of her hard work and continued commitment, Val has been instrumental in engaging members of the community and representing their views to senior police officers, politicians and local councillors.

In addition, Val has helped establish one of the most successful communication networks in Luton via the use of Neighbourhood Alert, ensuring that information is passed quickly between members and the police, providing specialised training where required. Her approach has been so successful, that partners such as Fire and Rescue, Crimestoppers, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local Community Safety Partnerships have utilised tools to aid communication with members.

Runner-up: James Allen, Darlington Neighbourhood Watch Association

The association has protected over 500 homes with SmartWater and set up a fully sustainable project to sell SmartWater kits to residents at a discounted rate, led by James. It has succeeded in increasing the membership of Neighbourhood Watch in the area by almost 1,300 members and coordinators in a six-month period, resulting in a drop in anti-social behaviour by 17% and a reduction in crime of 42% in one year.

James is currently working with other partners to develop a ‘Good Neighbour’ scheme and is fostering greater cohesion within local communities. In just 12 months James has revitalised the association, which has changed from being virtually dormant to being active and enthusiastic.
**Partnership Working Award**

Partnership Working Award - Presented by Tony Neate, CEO of Get Safe Online

**Winner: OSCAR Neighbourhood Watch, Derby**

OSCAR, a community-led residents association, was established in 2011, following the shelving of a large scale regeneration scheme in the area. Residents united to form the group, with the intention of creating their own agenda for change, and a program which focused not just on the physical regeneration, but also the social regeneration of the neighbourhood.

OSCAR recognised that such a wholesome approach could not be achieved without a local cohesive partnership and, as such, strategically aligned themselves to work with Derby City Council, the police, housing providers, landowners and other agencies, ensuring that residents remained central to the decision-making process at every stage.

As a result of the success and strength of the partnership, OSCAR has reduced anti-social behaviour significantly and gained the trust and respect of the local community and has gone on to become one of the largest schemes in the country, covering over 2,200 properties.

Its unique community-led approach, united by a collection of distinctive locally-designed signs, has also helped to alleviate community tensions and led to a number of diversionary activities for young people, including football and boxing, in a bid to tackle youth anti-social behaviour.

Other successful partnership projects include a metal theft marketing campaign to tackle copper theft using community intelligence, and the introduction of a number of ‘no cold calling’ zones in partnership with Trading Standards to combat doorstep selling. Such initiatives have vastly improved the relationship between residents and the local police.

**Runner-up: Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch Association**

Working with Community Safety Partnerships to make the county a safer place to live and work, including rural communities, the Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch Association has been involved in a variety of initiatives with partners. Residents value the improved communication, signs, products and events which have been provided as a result.

With a high number of Farm Watch members in the area, signage provided by the association and the police in partnership has been shown to reduce the risk of crime in more isolated areas.

The association also played a key role in linking with Police & Crime Commissioner candidates in the run-up to the elections in November 2012.
Community Engagement Award

Community Engagement Award - Presented by Simon Byrne, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police

Winner: Hazel Durn, Bristol Neighbourhood Watch Network

Working with the neighbourhood’s multicultural community to reduce kerb crawling and improve the local environment, Hazel Durn and her Caraway Gardens scheme has transformed the area since its launch in 2002.

Her scheme, made up of 41 residents, encompasses members from Jamaica, Turkey, Somalia, Ghana, Uganda, Pakistan and Poland, as well as Britain, welcoming all to feel safe in their community.

Hazel’s drive, enthusiasm, and community spirit is reflected in her everyday way of life, whether it be supporting elderly residents with household chores and gardening, updating the community noticeboard, or clearing rubbish and planting bulbs to help improve the appearance of the surrounding area. She has become a familiar face within her community and will go above and beyond her volunteer role to ensure that the quality of life is improved for all residents.

Since Hazel’s involvement and the scheme’s inception, prostitution has reduced significantly, the visual appearance of the area has improved vastly, and residents have rallied together for the installation of double yellow lines in a bid to increase road safety. Children are now able to play outside in a clean environment, new residents are welcomed with open arms, and older people are able to feel more safe and secure and enjoy the area in which they live.

Runner-up: Jean Planitzer, The Maltings Neighbourhood Watch, Leeds

A housing estate in Leeds transformed from grot spot to woodland walk, The Maltings has a very low crime rate and a real commitment to making a safe environment for all residents.

Launched in 2001, the group has embraced the concept of taking pride in the local environment and has undertaken a number of projects to improve the design and appearance of the area.

Members have addressed issues of dog fouling and community safety and have worked with other groups such as the police, Fire Service, railway staff, primary schools and other Neighbourhood Watch schemes to achieve their goals. Residents appreciate the caring community spirit on the estate.
National Database Award (Neighbourhood Alert)

National Database Award (Neighbourhood Alert) – sponsored by VISAV Ltd and presented by Mike Douglas of VISAV Ltd

Winner: Pat Farish & Pauline Finlayson, Carlisle

Dealing with communication issues on the Cumbria Community Messaging (CCM) system and keeping all of the 5,600 users’ details up-to-date, Pat and Pauline spend at least four hours every week managing members’ information and making sure it is kept up-to-date and accurate.

With over 37 years of Neighbourhood Watch experience between them, both Pat and Pauline have been instrumental in the growth and development of the movement, whereby their recent efforts have helped to bring Cumbria to the forefront of communication, in line with technological advances.

Both have been on hand to sort out communication issues and liaise with members, to ensure that the full potential of the system is utilised and each end user is supported, depending on their need. Activities include bulk uploading of data, mapping of schemes, verification of new and existing members, and ensuring that all information is compliant with data protection, an ongoing role for both.

As a result, Pat and Pauline have helped free up valuable police time, so that staff are able to concentrate on being visible on the streets and solving crime. Their influence is such that Cumbria Police have re-evaluated volunteer roles and created a new post based on the way they work.

At the time of writing only 0.36% of users on the Cumbria messaging system have specified inaccurate information registered compared with 80% on the previous system. The difference that both Pat and Pauline have made to the success of the system would not have been possible without their drive and determination.

Runner-up: Gill Riley, Ilkeston & District Neighbourhood Watch Support Group, Derbyshire

Spending a lot of time and effort ensuring that the transfer from the previous police communication system to Derbyshire Alert went smoothly, Gill has worked diligently preparing data and communicating with members in her Division.

Gill has updated a mass of information on the database and contacted members individually to make sure data was current. She has championed the use of the database throughout Derbyshire and shared her skills by training volunteer administrators in other Divisions. Her work has helped the police to communicate with over 21,000 message recipients throughout the county.
Innovation Award

Innovation Award – sponsored by Yale and presented by David Herbert and Nigel Fisher of Yale

Winner: Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Search Teams

The Neighbourhood Watch Search Team concept is unique to Sussex and has gone beyond the remit of traditional Neighbourhood Watch duties for over 12 years, following its formation in the aftermath of the Sarah Payne tragedy in 2000.

The Teams, now consisting of 380 trained volunteer searchers, specialise in the thorough searching for missing vulnerable persons and property which may be crucial to a police enquiry. In addition, the Teams will respond to emergency situations, such as mass casualty events, flood situations and evidential searches connected to search warrants.

In 2012 alone, the Search Teams collectively carried out around 436 person-days’ worth of searching. They succeeded in finding a number of missing persons both alive and deceased, enabling speedy assistance for casualties, early closure for families and the avoidance of distressing and traumatic discoveries by members of the public.

The Teams, available at short notice, can reliably, quickly and efficiently cover a widespread ground area, including difficult terrain, freeing up police resources to pursue other enquiries while still resulting in a fast resolution at the lowest possible cost. Many of the searchers are also trained in First Aid and possess a number of other specialist skills.

The concept of this innovative partnership has gained much interest over the years, and has saved several lives.

Runner-up: Harborough Be Safe, Harborough District NHW Association

The scheme has secured the homes of 2,500 people and, over a ten-year period, reduced the incidence of distraction burglaries in Market Harborough from 22 per year to just one per year on average. Harborough Local Policing Unit is also the only area in Leicestershire to have no repeat victims of distraction burglaries within the past six years.

The scheme provides free personal and property safety advice and home security improvements including the services of a locksmith who responds promptly to the most vulnerable people. The work of the volunteers also has a very important impact on the well-being of victims as they spend time with each one, many of whom live on their own.
Inspiring Youth Award

Inspiring Youth Award - Presented by DCC Rob Beckley, Police Service Lead for Citizens in Policing

Winner: Kate Vaughan-Newton, Arnold Association of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Nottingham

In 2009 the Arnold Association of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, primarily driven by Kate, set up a ‘Neighbourhood Watch Best Buddy Award’ scheme, following a similar project initiated some years earlier, for year 5 (ten-year-old) pupils in local primary schools.

Kate has worked tirelessly to secure funding from a range of sources to support the project, negotiate with senior staff to ensure that the scheme is in line with the respective school ethos as well as playing a key role in organising and promoting the Awards.

As a result, young people have learned about Neighbourhood Watch and community safety and gone one step further to facilitate projects to address neighbourhood issues in and around their local school. An increased sense of awareness and ownership has been evidenced, whereby a number of schools are now in their successive year of the scheme. In addition, each of the schools involved has adopted a democratic voting system to support the project, for which many of the original applicants have remained involved, acting as both advisors and mentors.

Kate’s support and encouragement has also helped the school to showcase the achievements of its pupils in the local press and Neighbourhood Watch newsletter, recognising community advocacy in its infancy.

Runner-up: Crawley Neighbourhood Watch Association, West Sussex

The association has sponsored and set up a Junior Neighbourhood Watch programme which has helped to extend Neighbourhood Watch into ‘hard to reach’ communities and provided a test bed for similar projects throughout Sussex.

The programme was started in 2010 and has branched out into 11 primary schools. It has helped to facilitate partnership working with police, schools and local authorities as well as preventing children from becoming victims or causes of crime.

It has also created an opportunity for a similar programme for older adults, thus replicating the benefits elsewhere.
Outstanding Achievement Award - Scheme

Outstanding Achievement Award (Scheme) – sponsored by Avocet Hardware and presented by Derrick Purvis and Gemma Attiwell of Avocet Hardware

Winner: Ushaw Moor Action Group, Durham

Over the last few years the Ushaw Moor Action Group has worked with key partners to provide a range of innovative projects and activities for children and young people, resulting in a positive and influential impact on the community.

The group have worked in conjunction with the local residents, and consulted the community every step of the way, which consequently led to the development of its very own ‘Village Watch’. Moving away from the scheme’s traditional troubleshooting approach, the group have developed an intergenerational community-led action group, open to all.

As a result of its hard work the group has successfully opened a vibrant ‘Community Garden’ and exciting new ‘Community Hub’, known locally as ‘The Hive’. This quality open space made from derelict land for the whole community to enjoy is host to a youth drop-in service and regular kids club, run by parent volunteers. In addition, the space is used by police to hold local PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings, and is host to a number of other activities by like-minded community groups. The ‘Community Garden’ is also home to the ‘Haggrid project’, a positive youth diversion scheme offering participants a qualification in its horticulture programme.

The development by the scheme of various projects has brought well over £100,000 worth of funding into their community, and has been instrumental in providing a platform for the police to actively engage with young people, and the local community to promote positive activities from a central base within the village.

The group continues to grow at a rapid pace, and is currently involved in extending its activity programme to include a boxing club, and secure further community spaces for future projects.

Runner-up: Flintshire & Wrexham Watch Association, North Wales

The association has set up 37 different types of Watch scheme and implemented a communication system to keep residents informed and encourage intelligence about crimes. Since the communication system was set up, 95% of members state that they are more informed about crime in their community, and public confidence in the police has significantly increased.

The association has also been recognised as a model of excellence by the police and County Council and contributes regularly to county-level strategies. A recent crime mapping exercise showed that 97% of burglaries occurred in areas where Watch schemes were not in place.
Safer Neighbourhoods Award

Safer Neighbourhoods Award - Presented by Steffan George of the Master Locksmiths Association

Winner: New Moston Home Watch Association, Manchester

New Moston Home Watch Association was the first Home Watch group to be set up in North Manchester in 1989. Since its inception, the group has continued to facilitate district wide meetings, ten times per year, consisting of 55 schemes.

The association closely borders one of the most deprived areas of the city, and as a result has faced particular difficulties with crime, anti-social behaviour and community engagement. However, the frequent nature of the group’s meetings and largely social element adopted by the association has resulted in continued good attendance, a reduced fear of crime, a greater understanding between residents and the police, and a real sense of community as many members have become firm friends.

In addition, the group has been responsible for a number of crime reduction initiatives in response to local need, including the provision of security items such as door chains, window alarms, personal attack alarms, purse bells and mini safes for vulnerable people, the introduction of numerous ‘nominate a neighbour’ schemes, property marking initiatives, as well as targeting doorstep sellers. One of the most successful projects undertaken by the group in partnership with the police and local council was a bike crushing event held in a local school yard, whereby 35 seized bikes and 2 cars were subsequently crushed, resulting in a significant reduction of illegal off-road bikers.

The association continues to send a clear and consistent message to perpetrators, that they run a high risk of being arrested, as residents will report their actions to police and support one another to ensure that their community remains a safe place to live.

Runner-up: Alan Thornton, Torbay Neighbourhood Watch Feel Safe Scheme, Devon

Launched earlier this year, the Feel Safe Scheme, coordinated by Alan, carries out practical work such as using anti-climb paint, repairing fences, planting prickly shrubs and other environmental and security improvements to make people’s property safer.

Alan works in partnership with the police, Fire Service, Victim Support and housing providers to identify those needing help and provide it. The Fire Service also provides smoke alarms for those who need them. This scheme helps to keep vulnerable people safe in their homes.
**Environmental Improvement Award**

Environmental Improvement Award - Presented by NHWN Patron, Alec Shelbrooke MP

**Winner: Liz Kew, Bristol Neighbourhood Watch Network**

Liz has transformed the appearance of Gloucester Road and, together with volunteers from the Good Shepherd Neighbourhood Watch and other local schemes, has been responsible for keeping the area virtually free of fly-tipping and other environmental damage, a role that she has upheld since 1987.

Throughout her role, Liz has maintained a close working relationship with her local police, council officials, Neighbourhood Partnership Team and several other voluntary organisations, and has been on hand to support and mentor new volunteers.

Her enthusiastic approach has led to the renovation of a number of run-down empty shop fronts, the removal of accumulated tagged graffiti, and the elimination of fly posters stuck to rubbish bins and utility boxes across the city. Furthermore, her pragmatic nature has resulted in the coordination of a number of Street Champions who are trained to detect and deal with a range of street scene issues. As a consequence of her actions, the appearance of the neighbourhood has been vastly improved, and it is the envy of surrounding areas.

Liz has also been involved in the rejuvenation of local schemes which were in danger of closing down, by providing practical help, support, and equipping volunteers with the confidence and skills needed to make a real difference to their community. In between her local volunteer role, Liz has also found time to contribute to the formation and development of the Bristol Neighbourhood Watch Network and has been instrumental in its success.

**Runner-up: Dennis Cowen, Park Street Neighbourhood Watch, Hertfordshire**

Dennis has organised over 25 community litter picks, dramatically improving the local environment and, together with the Park Street Pickers group which he helped to set up, collected over 350 bags of rubbish from the roads. He writes articles to educate people about litter and its relationship to crime and has forged strong links with the District Council Waste Management team.

Dennis has also launched a road safety initiative aimed at driver awareness and reducing speed in key locations, as well as researching Speed Watch schemes with a view to setting one up.

His group is also responsible for driving a domestic burglary campaign which saw rates fall by 31% in 2011-12.
Outstanding Achievement Award - Coordinator

Outstanding Achievement Award (Coordinator) - Presented by Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Winner: Maureen Brewer, West Yorkshire

Maureen set up her scheme in 1985 and has since played an integral role in the Wetherby Crime Prevention Panel, consistently championing Neighbourhood Watch, both locally and nationally.

Her commitment and dedication has been widely recognised throughout her police force as she has continually strived to create safer and stronger communities, improve quality of life and prevent crime. In 2012, her efforts were recognised by the wider community as she was successfully nominated to carry the Olympic Torch through her local village, Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.

Amongst a number of successful projects, Maureen has organised numerous Neighbourhood Watch events in Wetherby and spearheaded a number of target hardening initiatives, including a purse theft prevention project, a wide scale euro-cylinder lock replacement scheme and successfully campaigned for the installation of security lighting for both elderly and vulnerable residents.

In addition, Maureen regularly delivers pertinent crime prevention advice across all sectors of the community, working in partnership with the police, local council and other likeminded organisations to reassure residents and help reduce the fear of crime.

Maureen’s volunteer role also extends to representing West Yorkshire Neighbourhood Watch as County Representative, and supporting the Yorkshire and Humberside national Regional Representative, as Deputy, ensuring that the views and concerns of the wider membership are expressed. Her drive, determination and commitment to initiating solutions to local concerns cannot be underestimated.

Runner-up: Lizzie Clarke, Warwickshire

Lizzie has been involved with Neighbourhood Watch for over 20 years and has led a number of successful projects including establishing an office at a local supermarket. She has played a key role in reducing gold thefts within the Asian community, holding talks and events at mosques and temples and promoting crime prevention to ‘hard to reach’ groups of people.

Due to her efforts over £5,000 worth of crime prevention products have been sold to people in the local community and she has recruited over 700 people onto the police messaging system. Lizzie has made a considerable and lasting difference to the communities within South Warwickshire and continues to represent the West Midlands region, as Regional Representative.
Photography Award

Winner: Brian Aldred, Sussex Neighbourhood Watch

As our lead photographer during the inaugural Neighbourhood and Home Watch Awards 2013, Brian exclusively supported the awards ceremony and networking event, following his successful submission as part of our national photography competition, launched earlier in the year.

Brian’s experience spans over 55 years as an amateur photographer, starting his career with Kodak making photographic film and paper. However it is only within the last 10 years that his interest has expanded into digital photography. To further enhance his self-taught skills and feed his interest, Brian has recently attended three ‘professional’ photography courses.

As a member and area coordinator for Sussex Neighbourhood Watch, Brian has supported a number of voluntary events, including the Sussex Annual General Meeting, capturing each and every moment.

Take a look at Brian’s work during our recent awards ceremony, available via ‘Flickr’:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/97836933@N06/

If you wish to use any of the award photographs for publicity purposes please ensure that photos are credited to ‘Brian Aldred – Sussex NHW’.

All photographs used in this newsletter were also courtesy of Brian.