



### ELECTRICITY SUB-STATIONS

Neighbourhood Watch and Bedfordshire police have now launched the initiative to protect our counties Sub-Stations from vandalism and metal theft. Working with EDF Energy, who are responsible for our local stations, the plan is for Neighbourhood Watch groups to be aware of potential problems and report issues to EDF. Even if you actually buy your electricity from another utilities supplier it will all come through the same power cables. It is therefore in the interest of all members of the public to ensure no harm is done to the supply system.

While incidences of vandalism and metal theft from stations in our region have not been as bad as some counties the potential is certainly as great.

The initial problem to your home of loss of power is bad enough. Not only do you miss that favourite t.v. programme, many people rely on electricity for medical equipment that can be life threatening if not working. Loss of street and security lighting also has the knock on effect of giving the potential for other crimes to occur. Another even more serious effect can be stations that are vandalised without loss of power occurring. These can go unnoticed for some time and often give access to children. While this is usually out of curiosity and there is no criminal intent, these are very dangerous areas to access. Voltages can be very high and every year a number of people are killed or seriously injured across the country.

Press releases have gone out and a leaflet from EDF giving the number to call to report issues is being put out in numerous public places to help spread the message.

**Please take the opportunity to use this initiative to get your group working together. You can also spread the word to friends in other streets that if they don't already have a scheme in place this would be a good reason to start one.**

Anyone wishing to start a new scheme should contact their local Neighbourhood Watch Police co-ordinators, who have the locations of all sub stations across the county should you wish to know locations close to you.

Police Neighbourhood watch co-ordinators.

South Beds            Brendan Murray Ph. 01582 473158  
e.mail [brendan.murray@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brendan.murray@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Mid-Beds              June Adamson Ph. 01582 473158  
e.mail [june.adamson@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:june.adamson@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

North Beds            Lynne Arch Ph. 01234 275165  
e.mail [lynne.arch@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lynne.arch@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)

**EDF contact number for Sub Station problems 0800 587 3243**

### HOTSPOTS: - THEFT FROM VEHICLES

#### VEHICLE CRIME

##### Remove the Temptation, Reduce the Crime

It only takes a few minutes to break into a car but it takes even less to make a car less attractive to thieves. Over half the incidents of car crime are “opportunistic”. Vehicles with property on show are more likely to be broken into because thieves will risk setting off an alarm if there is an obvious pay-off. Even a carrier bag or a coat on the back seat is attractive to a thief as it may contain items of value. By the time the thief has realised there is nothing of value, your vehicle has already sustained damage which may be expensive, inconvenient and time consuming to repair. Items with your personal details – such as letters, bank statements, etc – also leave you at risk of identity fraud.

Just taking a few simple steps can help prevent your vehicle being targeted by an offender:

Never leave the keys in the ignition and store them out of sight when at home.

Engage the steering lock and activate the alarm. Close the windows/sunroof and lock the doors and boot.

With remote control central locking, ALWAYS double-check you car is secure by testing the door handle. Only take what you need on your journey – whenever possible, leave personal and valuable items at home.

If you must take valuable items with you, keep them out of view and take them with you when you leave the vehicle – even if you think you will only be a minute. It only takes a few seconds to break into a car.

Satnavs are currently being targeted – keep them out of sight (think about property marking them), remove the cradle and wipe away the sucker mark on the windscreen.

Remember to remove your stereo fascia – this is the best way to make your stereo unattractive to thieves.

Even small items like loose change and a packet of cigarettes are an incentive to the opportunist thief.

Park in busy and well-lit areas, or use a car park that has a “Park Mark” or “Secure By Design” award.

It's better to store items in the boot at your point of departure, not the point of arrival – you don't know who may be watching.

#### **A GUIDE ON MAKING CALLS TO THE POLICE**

1. Any person wishing to make a report to the police whether it be as a victim of crime or to pass on suspicions should in the first instance contact the Call Handling Unit on Mid Beds 01234 841212 or South Beds 01582 401212. In the event of threat to life, or property, (as in a crime is in progress) - then calls should be made by dialling 999
2. The Call Handling Unit is staffed 24hrs a day 7 days a week and the operators are trained in grading all calls and directing suitable responses. They are also able to forward messages to Police Staff with particular responsibilities i.e. Neighbourhood Police Officers etc.
3. A Street co-ordinator should not normally be asked by his or her watch group to make telephone calls on behalf of others, unless of course the injured party is unable to do so. If calling on behalf of someone else please make sure you have as much information as possible.

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

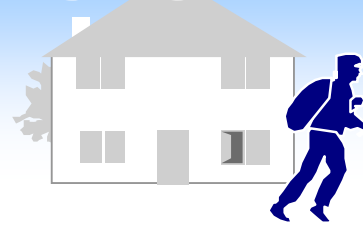
Numberplate theft is a rapidly growing crime and is expected to increase further with higher fuel prices. Those 'Drive Off's' from petrol stations are often with false plates!. To combat this, police around the county are still conducting events under the heading operation CAPS. This is the initiative to secure vehicle number plates using a specially developed adhesive or special screws. These events are usually advertised in the local press but can be found on the calendar section of the community safety web site [www.safer-beds.org](http://www.safer-beds.org) Alternatively, contact a member of your local Neighbourhood policing team.

Congratulations on the efforts by Ruth Redmond and the Marston Mortaine Neighbourhood watch team to introduce the property-marking device 'Smartwater' across the village.

The company that market Smartwater are offering a considerably discount to organised Neighbourhood watch groups and Marston have taken advantage of this by organising a village meeting to launch a campaign to get as many homes involved as possible. This follows the great work already done by Leighton Buzzard to introduce the product across Leighton-Linslade. If you would like to organise something similar then please contact your Police Neighbourhood watch co-ordinator for advice on how to get started.

Kay Fariss the secretary of the county Neighbourhood watch group has taken up with trading standards, the need to address some of the cold calling issues around the county. As an example the agency being used by the highly respected organisation, St.Johns Ambulance, have proved to be very pushy when door knocking to get people to make regular donations. Kay's efforts should lead to a better approach from the company's representatives in future.

## BURGLARY



Despite regular warnings by the police on home security the number of burglaries occurring due to poor basic security is still a problem.

A number of burglaries have occurred through doors and or windows that were left open or unlocked. Often these are just fanlights.

The other outcome of burglaries recently has been the theft of car keys, which then enable the thief to not only steal your property but then drive off in your car. These are not just thefts to get high value vehicles. Vehicles with a value of just a thousand pounds have been taken.

The police do catch people for these offences and many are jailed, but burglary has been around since time began and is not likely to go away. It is therefore important we all take suitable care to protect our belongings. Please remember: -

Take a minute to walk round at night to make sure everything is shut and locked securely.

Leave the curtains drawn so as not to advertise your homes contents.

Hide car keys, handbags, phones etc. away or take them upstairs.

If you can, garage your car at night and lock the garage.

If you are going out in the evening leave a light on and maybe a radio as well.

And don't forget -

**IF YOUR DOOR IS PVC,  
LIFT THE HANDLE AND TURN  
THE KEY !**

### **AS THE NIGHTS DRAW IN**

With the dark evenings approaching it is now a good time to review all your security around the home. Thieves like this time of year for the cover it gives them and the fact that not so many people are about the streets and gardens.

If you have security lights and alarms, then check they are working ok. If you don't why not get an early Christmas present for the home and have them fitted.

Make sure side gates that allow access to the rear of the building are secure and have a good locking system.

Check boundary fences are in good order.

Ensure out buildings are secure and if you have to store items of value in them then fit a good alarm

If you go out in the evening then leave the curtains drawn and a light and a radio on

### **All Neighbourhood Watch teams**

Dear All

Having written these pages for the last four years it is sometimes concerning that the types of crime do not change very much and so the advice may seem repetitive. If you would like to see an article on any particular subject then let me know and I will try to oblige.

Please do try to keep your groups actively involved to prevent crime. It really does work when people get together to discuss and address issues relevant to them and the area they live in.

Regular readers will notice the Operation Scorpion name and logo has been dropped but the beds police web site remains the same-

[www.bedfordshire.police.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.police.uk)

The community safety site [www.safer-beds.org](http://www.safer-beds.org) is now up and running well. I would encourage you to use it. If there is action your group is taking, or anything you would like to see on the site, then please let us know and it can be added to the calendar. We would also welcome your comments as it allows us to improve the site and our service, in line with what you want.

Best regards to you all.

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