

NUMBER PLATE THEFT

Legislation requires personal proof of I.D. and that the V5 registration document is produced before replacement number plates are made

This has made it difficult for people wishing to disguise the identity of a vehicle and has led to an increase in the number of plates being stolen from vehicles.

Stolen plates are fitted to avoid detection in a number of crimes including drive-offs from petrol stations and paying the London congestion charge.

To prevent your plates being stolen some of the following actions could be taken.

Remove the existing screws, apply some loctite 454 Gel around the underside of the screw head (taking care not to get any on the thread) and replace. The screw becomes permanently attached to the number plate, making it very difficult to remove without damaging the plate.

Not all vehicles have number plates screwed on, some are stuck on. Owners can have holes drilled through the plates and body, but it is advisable to check with the manufacturer beforehand to avoid damage or invalidating the warranty.

Alternatively, replace your existing plates with anti-tamper plates – visit www.secureplate.com to arrange a visit to your home or workplace. Kwick Fit are now offering this service at their MOT centres at the time of writing for £39.99

Many of these plates are stolen at night for the obvious reason of the 'cover of darkness' and less people about to notice and report anything. It is therefore, as with much car crime, a good idea to put the vehicle in a garage at night if you have that facility.

HOTSPOTS:- GET THAT SHED SECURE !

CRIME OF THE SEASON

For those of you who have run your scheme for a number of years you will be aware that certain types of criminal activity increases at different times of the year. With spring time and early summer, sheds and out buildings often become a target.

However no matter how many times the warning is given there are always some that fail to heed it and take the necessary action to ensure they do not become a victim.

The security of these buildings is often not in keeping with the value of items kept in them. Bicycles, lawn mowers, power tools, fishing gear etc. are prime targets for the thief. They can all give good rewards to the taker while leaving the owner with expense, inconvenience and worry.

Some ideas to start thinking about maybe the general condition of the building. Fit decent locks to doors, padlocks used externally should be not less than 6mm wide and made of hardened steel. A 'closed shackle' type is best and any hasp should have concealed screws. Consider fitting an internal grill to the windows fixed to steel plates.

Mark all equipment with your postcode and put a sign in the window to say so and last but not least fit a shed alarm.

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.

OPERATION SCORPION

The old Scorpion website has now been incorporated into the Bedfordshire police website. It provides a current snapshot of crime and policing activities and offers YOU the opportunity to play a vital role in the fight against crime.



www.bedfordshire.police.uk

WHATS GOING ON?

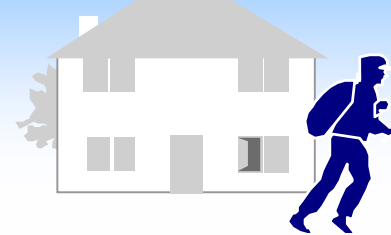
All scheme co-ordinators will be aware that we have recently asked for re registration forms to be completed. It is necessary to do this as many people change their email address, phone number or just move away without notifying us. So far we are still awaiting the return of over two hundred of these forms. Every attempt will be made to contact these 'lost' schemes but if you are one of those that has not returned your details it would be helpful if you could do so as quickly as possible.

The ringmaster messaging service continues to increase it's membership daily. Most of the feed back is complimentary to the system and it is proving a quick and positive way for the police to contact the public on crime issues and initiatives in their area.

Please remember this service is available to anyone in Bedfordshire so please sign up to it and encourage your friends and neighbours to do the same.

Please contact Brendan Murray or June Adamson at Dunstable police station for more information

BURGLARY



Many people are still leaving open invitations to burglars by leaving doors and windows unlocked.

Houses and flats have been targeted during the day and night and taken property such as handbags, computers, cameras, mobile phones and cash.

As the warmer weather approaches it is vital to still remember to keep doors and windows closed and locked when leaving the property.

It is vital to double lock UPVC doors by lifting the handle and turning the key and if you are going to leave a downstairs fanlight ajar for ventilation, ensure you fit a device which limits how far it can be opened.

If you spend an afternoon in the garden, lock the door behind you and keep windows that are out of your vision shut

Keep car keys out of view otherwise your car may go missing from the drive.

While the police make every effort to catch offenders, prevention is always easier than the cure.

Police are urging the elderly to be on their guard against rogue traders offering to do odd jobs this Spring and Summer.

Strangers offering to do gardening, hedge pruning and tree cutting sometimes make it the opportunity to steal. Others simply intimidate elderly people into having jobs done and later insist on inflated payments for work that is shoddy, incomplete or has not been done at all.

If you need work doing only use reputable traders who preferably have been recommended by friends or neighbours and try to get at least three written quotes before having work done.

Residents can help by keeping an eye on the elderly and remind them of the need to keep front and rear doors locked and side gates bolted. Anyone spending time in the garden should lock the door behind them.

Remember that although we live in a No Cold Calling Zone rogue traders will still try it on.

For further information please ring Trading Standards on 08454 04 05 06

All Homewatch teams

Dear All

I am pleased to inform you that Mrs June Adamson has taken the role of the police neighbourhood watch co-ordinator for the Mid-Beds area. June will be working along side me at Dunstable and for the time being her address and phone number will be the same as mine. Her email address is:- june.adamson@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

This will free me up to concentrate on growing N/Watch in the South of the county so I hope to get more involved with you than was previously possible in the past. June and myself will be working close together on issues so please feel free to contact either of us on any points regarding your scheme.

Best regards to you all.
Brendan Murray
Home Watch co-ordinator

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WHATS HAPPENING IN OUR GROUP.....