



HORSHAM DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

SETTING UP A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME

NB: It is possible to set up a Neighbourhood Watch [NHW] scheme with just one person as a sole member; this may be a preliminary step before the scheme is expanded to include others. Should residents in an area express interest in joining a scheme, they will be directed to the sole member.

OVERVIEW

Any NHW Scheme is a community initiative whereby one or more residents in a street or neighbourhood form a scheme with the objectives of (i) preventing crime, (ii) reducing the fear of crime, (iii) being made aware of crime and (iv) watching out for, and helping, each other to protect their community.

National NHW aims are: Safety, Community Spirit, Trust, Caring and Respect. NHW aims to promote good citizenship and greater public awareness through NHW schemes, increase public participation in the prevention and detection of crime and anti-social behaviour, reduce the fear of crime, improve police/community liaison and increase public and community safety.

One of the scheme residents would be expected to become the NHW Street Co-ordinator ("SC").

There are over 500 such schemes in the Horsham District; these schemes can be viewed by entering a postcode in the OurWatch website, www.ourwatch.org.uk – Street Coordinators may also be contacted via this website.

FIRST STEPS

Co-ordinators and Members

Any new scheme requires someone to be Scheme Coordinator; they will need email access and preferably at least 10 interested households and a manageable number of local residents, willing to participate.¹

Some coordinators may call personally and/or distribute leaflets or letters door-to-door telling people about the proposed scheme and inviting them to join. They would explain that in addition to reducing crime in the neighbourhood members would receive, among other benefits:

- A circular window-sticker showing that they are a member of a NHW scheme
- Another window-sticker discouraging door-to-door salesmen
- Receipt of emails / messages from the Police and NHW about local crime alerts and other matters
- The potential for a discounts on their home insurance premiums

¹ It is possible to set up a NHW scheme with just one person as a sole member; this is often a preliminary step taken before a scheme is expanded. Should residents in an area express interest in joining a scheme, they will be directed to the sole member.

Members email addresses remain confidential and known only to the scheme Co-ordinator, who would receive and pass on the messages mentioned above.

Printed leaflets about NHW, suitable for dropping door to door, are available and can be obtained from the AC. See below.

Area Co-ordinator (AC)

In most villages and areas in the Horsham District, Area Co-ordinators (**ACs**) are available to help set up and support new NHW schemes locally and provide advice. Elsewhere, any member of Horsham District NHW Association (HDNHW) can fill this role.

Coordinator Vetting Procedure

Before there are appointed, all potential co-ordinators are required to complete a NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR REGISTRATION FORM. The current form can be downloaded from the '[Information for Coordinators](#)' page on the Association's website (see link at the end of this document). This form authorises Sussex Police to check that nothing adverse is recorded about a potential coordinator; the **AC** will also check the bona fides of any potential co-ordinator.

Deputy Co-ordinator

In many cases a Deputy Co-ordinator is appointed to backup / support the main Co-ordinator; having more than one Coordinator is very convenient for many reasons. The Deputy also needs to complete the above vetting form.

Alert Database ("Neighbourhood Alert")

A national communications database known as **Neighbourhood Alert** holds records of all NHW schemes, registered scheme members and Coordinators. Neighbourhood Alert is the messaging system whereby Crime Alerts and other messages from the Police and NHW are sent to all Co-ordinators and registered members who receive messages directly. See **Distributing Crime Alerts** below.

This database is shared with several organisations such as the Fire and Rescue Service, the Coast Guard and Farm Watch; members of the public are encouraged to register via the OurWatch website, www.ourwatch.org.uk, whether or not they are members of NHW.

MANAGING THE NEW NHW SCHEME

Role of the Street Co-ordinator (SC)

The **SC** must have access to a computer and email and be able to print/copy/forward messages to all scheme members (e.g. information received from the Police concerning suspicious incidents, persons, burglaries etc. in an area).

Main Duties

- * Liaise with neighbours and the Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- * Encourage full membership and active participation in a scheme amongst residents
- * Welcome new residents and introduce them to the scheme

- * Maintain contact with the local **AC** (if there is one) who is there to support and/or help with queries/problems
- * Encourage all members to contact the Police to report any suspicious incidents/persons which may require Police attention
- * Circulate any NHW newsletter as necessary
- * Foster good community spirit and communication between residents
- * Promote interest in the scheme, especially for the young, elderly and vulnerable
- * Promote good home security awareness and practices
- * Encourage scheme members to display NHW window roundels / stickers
- * If a Co-ordinator resigns from their role, they are encouraged to make reasonable attempts to find a replacement Co-ordinator, often another scheme member
- * Maintain an up-to-date list of scheme members, including email addresses [**NB.** such a list should be protected and secured according to current Data Protection legislation]. Such a list may be handed over to successive Coordinators.

All Coordinators provide an invaluable contribution to safety in their local community. As volunteers, they should not feel discouraged if they are unable always to meet the above guidelines!

DISTRIBUTING CRIME ALERTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

When a new co-ordinator is added to the above database they will begin to receive messages. Most of the messages are Crime Alerts which can include reports of burglaries and crimes as soon as the police become aware of them. There may be some occasions where the Police **cannot** share or report certain information due to certain operational reasons. There are other messages which include information of a more general nature from the Police or the NHW Association.

One of the most important duties of the co-ordinator is to forward selective messages to all members of a scheme; it is for each individual co-ordinator to judge which messages to pass to their members - perhaps one or two per week from the larger number which are sent to them.

Most scheme members today have access to a computer, the internet and email; this facilitates the efficient and timely forwarding of messages. It is vital that appropriate use is made of the **BCC (blank carbon copy)** feature which ensures individual email addresses are **NOT** shown to others. If **BCC** is **NOT** used then Coordinators are liable to receive complaints about non-compliance with Data Protection legislation.

The aforementioned '**Alert Coordinators Guide**' includes a description of a convenient way of distributing messages that does not require members' email addresses to be revealed.

Many co-ordinators print hardcopies for distribution to scheme members without access to email; some Co-ordinators arrange for those with an internet connection to print copies for their immediate neighbours, using the "Email Buddy" system, or in the case of multi-page newsletters arrange for them to be passed round a circulation list.

CONTACTS

Please refer to the '[Key Contacts](#)' page on the Association's website (see link at the end of this document) for the current list of Executive Officers of the Association. They can provide

information and advice about general NHW matters; the page also mentions the Association's **current** main Police contacts.

The general email address for the general public to contact the Association is:

horshamnhw@gmail.com

Useful websites and social media:

[Horsham District NHW website](#)

[Sussex Police](#) (includes links to report crimes, anti-social behaviour, fraud, road traffic incidents, missing persons)

[OurWatch](#)

[Horsham District NHW Facebook page](#)

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Copies of many documents may be available on request from your **AC or SC** or from one of those mentioned on the 'Key Contacts' page at the Association's website.