

# Newsletter

## The Rural Beat

South Worcestershire Police

Rural and Business Crime Team

Autumn/Winter 2022



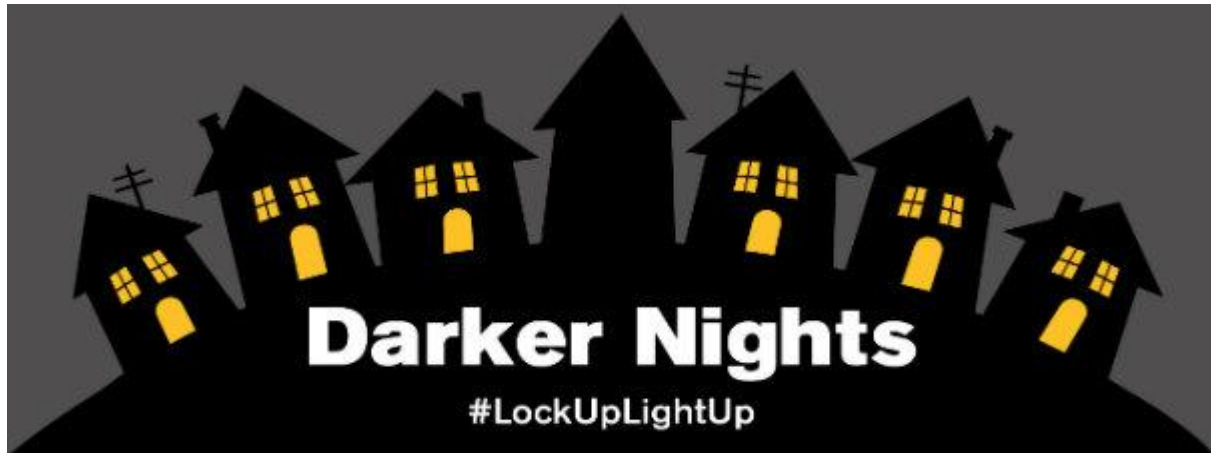
*The Rural Beat* is a new publication from the Police in South Worcestershire for the benefit of the people who live, work and visit South Worcestershire. The aim is to provide information, advice and contact details to assist the community. We will welcome your feedback.





## We are seeing an increase in burglaries and theft from Vehicles

### Burglary and the Darker Nights



- Dark evenings can provide perfect cover for burglars who can easily spot an open window in an unoccupied room, see your valuables through open curtains or blinds, or try their luck with an unlocked door while you're distracted. Try to make your house look as occupied as possible when you are not there. Use timer switches to control lighting or radios
- Don't leave your house and vehicle keys in the lock or on a side table in view of a window making it easy for a thief to fish them through your letterbox
- Always lock your front door from inside - in particular UPVC front doors that have handles, as they are often left unlocked when people are in their house.
- Check your UPVC or Euro cylinder door lock to see if it is snap resistant. It should be stamped with a three star Kite Mark. If it is not, you get the lock changed to either a SS312 Diamond Approved Cylinder, TS007 3 Star Kite marked Cylinder, or a 1 Star Cylinder with 2 Star handle for maximum protection. For more information contact the [Master Locksmiths Association](#).
- Keep front and back doors locked at all times and keep keys and valuables out of sight and reach from cat flaps, letterboxes and downstairs doors and windows
- Close, and ideally lock, all windows when you're not in the room – approximately one in four burglaries in the county still happen because doors have been left unlocked or windows left open
- Make sure your door is well lit and fully visible from the street – dusk-to-dawn lamp adaptors are available from DIY stores
- Check existing lighting is in good working order and replace any faulty equipment – remember to check batteries in torches and smoke alarms
- Keep shrubbery and hedges at the front of the house pruned to below one metre – remove any cover for a burglar to work unseen and give your neighbours every chance to spot something suspicious
- Keep curtains closed at night – if you are away, ask a trusted neighbour to close them for you, and open them again in the morning
- Secure sheds and outbuildings with good padlocks and consider fitting alarms. Lock all tools and ladders away securely
- Consider using 24hrs timer switches to control lighting/radios

- **Preventing Theft from a Motor Vehicle**

- **Lock your vehicle**

- Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open.
- Fuelling up or popping back into your house to get something are perfect examples of how easy it is to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecure. Try to get into the habit of locking your vehicle even if you're only going to be away from it for a moment.
- If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

- **Take it with you or hide it**

- Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. Remember, the cost of replacing a window is often much more than that of what's stolen. And it should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle.

- **Secure anything that's on the outside of your vehicle**

- Anything left on roof-racks, tailgate racks, holiday top boxes or in tool chests are easily stolen when the vehicle is parked. The use of cable locks, padlocks and self-locking tools chests, which are secured to the vehicle, makes them more secure, but still, don't leave things in them if you can avoid it.

- **Tool theft from vans**

- Vans are often targeted by thieves for the tools stored inside. If you have to leave tools in a van overnight, it's a good idea to mark them clearly with your name / company name and address using paint pens and seal with a clear lacquer spray. Alternatively, you can use a variety of other property marking systems, including Smartwater. Items that are clearly marked are less desirable and more difficult to sell on. Consider using a lockable cabinet within your van to store tools – a number of security rated products are available. Small cameras are also designed to record inside vehicles and portable battery alarms are useful

- **Park in well-lit and busier areas**

- It can take less than 30 seconds to break into a vehicle. Parking in well-lit areas and busy streets increases the chances of a thief being seen, so they'll probably steer clear.

- **Hide electrical items and leave no clues**

- Leaving Sat Nav mounts, suction cup marks on windows or cables on view gives it away that you have left a Sat Nav, smartphone or other device in your car. Even if they can't see the Sat Nav or iPad they might still break in to see if it's stored in the car, out of sight.

- **Take your documents with you**

- Having a vehicle's registration and insurance documents could let a thief pretend to be the owner. Which means they could sell it on quite easily. So, never leave any documents in the vehicle.

**[If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101, or https://www.westmercia.police.uk/.](https://www.westmercia.police.uk/)**

**You can also contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously. in an emergency please dial**



**We Don't Buy Crime** is West Mercia Police's response to acquisitive crime – crimes such as burglary and theft – and the associated harm it causes. These crimes can have a long lasting impact on victims, it can often leave someone feeling unsafe in their own home, and where possessions that have emotional attachment are stolen it can be heart-breaking.

**We Don't Buy Crime** has five key strands along with our **towns and villages**, we work with **second hand stores** and **fuel stations**, **deploy covert tactics**, and more recently look at ways our local communities can help tackle associated harm including **criminal exploitation and vulnerability**.

**We currently have over 20 Towns & Villages signed up to the We Don't Buy crime Smart Water scheme in South Worcestershire and we are currently looking to sign up more!**

**Please encourage your local Town or Parish Council to contact us to arrange a meeting (Covid 19 Secure) so we can explain how the process could work**



**Please contact us if you want to receive a FREE Farm security survey together with Smartwater marking solution and signage**

## Meet the Rural & Business Crime Team

Pc Nigel Bolton, Pc Pete Meredith and Rural & Business Crime Officer (RABO) Mick Simpson work across South Worcestershire, as part of a larger dedicated problem solving team and are supported by Special Constables, police volunteers and members of the public.

If you would like to help with reducing crime in your area, contact a member of the team on

[southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk) or call 07773050803



## So, what are we up to?

Visiting Great Whitley Court as part of the Force approach to Heritage crime



Mick Simpson and Pete Meredith attending the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce EXPO to talk to Business about crime during the National Business week of Action

Rural & Business Crime Officers attending a crime prevention day at Peopleton Village Hall



## Some of the team's other recent activities

12 farms across South Worcestershire having been subject to crime were visited and crime prevention advice given

48 rural businesses across South Worcestershire subject to crime were visited and provide with crime prevention advice

3 Joint operation with local officers to patrol rural areas for wildlife crime and metal theft

23 Posting out Catalytic Converter marking kits to victims of those types of theft

24 bikes were marked with Smartwater

30 Tyre Garages visited and presented with Smartwater Tyre Tag to mark their recycled tyres

Working with Local Policing Teams to Smartwater tools in trade vans

## STOP PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sign up for our brand new community messaging service.

www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk



**Neighbourhood Matters is the new West Mercia Police community messaging service  
Sign-up NOW**

[Home Page - Neighbourhood Matters](#)

Contact the Rural & Business Team for more information

[southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk)

**Each edition will feature a crime that occurs in our Community with  
Crime Prevention advice**

## **Theft of Catalytic Converters**

If you can, park your vehicle in a locked garage when it is unattended.

If it's not possible to garage your vehicle, park it in a busy well-lit area as close to your property as possible.

Consider installing a Thatcham approved alarm to your vehicle. Ones that activate if your vehicle is lifted or tilted are particularly effective. <https://www.thatcham.org/what-we-do/security-certification/>

Use a catalytic converter protection device or marking system ideally approved by Sold Secure <https://www.soldsecure.com/>



Blocking access to the underside of fleet vehicles, If you operate a small fleet, consider obstructing access to vehicles with high ground clearance by parking lower vehicles close by. Also, keep an eye out for anyone who seems to be working underneath cars nearby, they could very well be scouting out their next target vehicle.

In order to steal the parts, thieves need to slide under the vehicle and use cutting tools to detach the box from the pipes around it. This means parking your car close to fences, walls or kerbs will make theft much more difficult.

Catalytic converters control and convert exhaust emissions from your vehicle into less toxic substances. If yours is stolen, you will know because your vehicle's engine will sound different.

If you suspect your catalytic converter has been stolen, report it to us immediately by calling 101

## **Online Criminality**

At last! There is now one email address you can report suspicious emails too

If you receive an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email: [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

**Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)**

Please be aware and remain vigilant of phishing emails. One of the many scam emails currently in circulation purports to be from the TV Licensing advising to cancel direct debits. These messages may look like the real thing but are malicious. Once clicked, you are sent to a website which could download viruses onto your computer, or steal your passwords. The criminal's goal is to convince you to click on the links within their scam email or text message, or to give away sensitive information (such as bank details).



For further information and advice please go to:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions>

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-ncsc/what-is-cyber-security>

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/>

**Stay Safe. Stay Connected. Stay Cyber Aware**

## ***A little bit of information goes a long way***

Report suspicious activity, people or vehicles. No matter how insignificant you might think it is, if it is suspicious to you, it probably is.

Also, REPORT CRIME! We know not all crime is reported to us, and we know the many reasons for that including frustration.

**If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101,**  
or <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>

**in an emergency please dial 999.**

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.



**PLEASE STAY SAFE DURING THIS HOLIDAY PERIOD**