

Neighbourhood Watch News – April 2010

SUMMERTIME and the pickings are easy.....

By the time you read this, the clocks will have gone forward one hour and we will be enjoying British Summertime. Let's hope that it's a bit more summery than the 'BBQ Summer' of 2009. Don't forget to re-set any security timers to reflect this change.

The onset of warmer weather and lighter evenings traditionally signals an increase in sneak-in thefts, when the opportunist burglar will take advantage of an open door or window. Police forces around the country are launching campaigns to encourage householders to keep doors locked and windows secured, even when the house is occupied. One innovative police authority will be using 'Bluetooth' technology to send summer campaign messages and 'alerts' to mobile phones in the vicinity. People are more relaxed about security when they are at home, but while they are in the back garden or asleep, their property is particularly vulnerable. It is essential that easy points of access like front doors remain locked, particularly whilst you are relaxing or gardening at the rear of the house. At night, all ground floor doors and windows should be locked and other vulnerable points considered.

GARDEN SECURITY

As Spring and Summer approach, we all look forward to enjoying time in our gardens, even if it does mean occasionally mowing the lawn! However, we would be very annoyed if someone stole garden tools and equipment or valuable garden furniture, ceramics, or even ornamental fish. Taking a few simple precautions can make life harder for the opportunist thief, and help keep our property safe.

- Check your boundaries. Are hedges and fences a deterrent – plant thorny shrubs such as Pyracantha, Berberis, Holly or Hawthorn. Trellis along the top of boundary fences makes them less easy to climb over, and can be attractive. Alternatively, fit 'Prikkastrip' to the top edge of any high fence – this is the 'legal' equivalent of 'broken glass'!
- Fit a good padlock to side gates and to any garden shed where you keep equipment.
- Consider fitting an alarm to your shed door – these are a good deterrent.
- Keep garden tools locked away. Not only are they valuable, but they can also be used to force an entry to your home.
- Use a durable security marking system (eg. CREMark) to identify any valuable equipment or garden furniture/ornaments. This may not stop them being stolen, but it may make it easier to get them back.
- Netting your garden pond will make it less easy for fish to be removed – it's not just herons that make them disappear!
- Finally, when you are away from home on holiday, try to make sure that your house doesn't 'look' empty, and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on things.

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For further information about any of these topics or about Neighbourhood Watch, contact:

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