



Chorleywood Neighbourhood Watch

Online Newsletter: Autumn 2020



Welcome to the Chorleywood NHW Autumn 2020 Newsletter. For obvious reasons, we have chosen to distribute this edition of the Newsletter electronically to all members of OWL within Chorleywood, and to make it available as well on the NHW page of the Chorleywood Parish Council website. Your NHW committee wishes all our residents the very best in these worrying and troublesome times.



Autumn comes to Chorleywood's much-loved River Chess

A message from our chairman Brian Shipway

We have a long history in the UK of people pulling together in difficult times, and this year has seen countless folk helping out within the community in so many ways, but in particular, supporting people who are worst affected by Covid-19.

Everyone involved in providing assistance can be proud of their commitment, but we particularly want to mention one Chorleywood resident who has done so much to help others. Earlier this year, Vanessa Rousseau set up, with the help of local friends, the Chorleywood Corona Support Group (CCSG). This group assists self-isolating and shielding residents by picking up their prescriptions, food shopping and the like and providing emotional comfort in these difficult times. Their website shows what help they provide, and it can be seen on: www.st-andrews.org.uk/chorleywoodcoronasupport

With something like 200 committed volunteers, an enormous amount of help has been provided over the last eight months and it is continuing. Chorleywood NHW has a bank account with money received mainly through donations and, whilst not that substantial, we were able

to help CCSG in its early days by passing over most of our funds. More recently, Vanessa's efforts have been officially recognised by NHW with the presentation of a certificate for her incredible efforts on behalf of the community in Chorleywood.

NHW District Co-ordinator for Three Rivers, Sue Thompson, confirms the citation for Vanessa's nomination: "Vanessa Rousseau should be acknowledged for her amazing work in the organisation and running of the Chorleywood Corona Support Group. She set up and administers CCSG. In that capacity, she has mobilised literally dozens of people to shop and run errands for vulnerable residents who have been self-isolating. This has required enormous amounts of admin, carrying out police checks for all volunteers, and logistics."

Adds Sue, "What is particularly remarkable, is that she was taken on by St Andrew's Church, Chorleywood, to be their Communications and Community Officer just a couple of weeks before lockdown, so this role really landed her in the deep end, while she was still finding her feet. Chorleywood owes her an enormous debt."



OWL Report by David Clark

OWL, the free Online Watch Link run by Herts Police, is an important communicator for NHW, normally advising us about local crime and security matters, endeavouring to help prevent burglary, finding missing persons, making people feel safer and even helping to catch suspects. This year it has also been used to communicate with residents regarding information and advice about Covid-19 and, as such, has proved to be a very useful way of communicating important matters to residents.

In OWL, we have a good system for checking the arrival of new Chorleywood residents enabling us to arrange a Welcome Pack to be delivered, and often a subsequent visit when residents are invited to join OWL. This year, many Welcome Packs were delivered, but we decided that due to Covid-19, it was not appropriate to knock on doors. The result is that we are behind with our sign-ups and just hope that this can be rectified next year.

At this time last year, there were just 129 houses where we had failed to contact the occupier to invite them to join OWL. That figure has increased to 236 and will increase again before we can get to visit newcomers. The current position is shown in the table below. Our PCSOs continue to deal with OWL sign-ups for flats which are excluded from the table.

Despite our not getting out to properties this year, numerous residents have signed up to OWL, either due to being spotted by our Road Co-ordinators and Spotters, or because they signed up to OWL themselves. Our sincere thanks to everyone who has helped us this year.

Our OWL membership numbers continue to be fantastically good. The three reasons for this are:

1. Our Spotters, who are residents that have offered to keep an eye out for house occupancy changes. Once spotted, the house address is passed by email to either of the Ward Co-ordinators shown on the back page, enabling a Welcome Pack and visit to be carried out. Any of you can be a Spotter either formally with your name on our Spotters list, or informally, by just emailing us when you spot, or are involved in, an occupancy change.
2. Our Road Co-ordinators, who are our NHW ambassadors and point of contact for NHW related matters. We don't have all roads covered and if you would like to help by becoming a Road Co-ordinator, please let us know. We try to keep the number of houses within each Watch to around twenty, so that the normal annual delivery of our Newsletter to nearby properties is not too onerous.
3. The assistance given to us by other residents, mentioning OWL to their friends and acquaintances who aren't on OWL and passing on the person's name, address and email to us so that we can add them to the OWL website.

In this connection, we highlight the difficulties that we often have in signing up a resident when they live in gated premises. We tend to have to converse with the resident over their gate 'phone and we rarely seem to be successful in securing the resident's agreement to join OWL, whereas, in non-gated properties, the sign-up is normally completed within a couple of minutes.

Anything you can do to help us sign up residents to OWL will be hugely appreciated. Membership is free.

Location	Houses	On email	On OWL	% On OWL	Not interested	Out-standing
Chorl N&S	2014	1886	1755	93%	38	93
Solesbridge	438	416	358	86%	4	54
Valley Rd	550	523	427	81%	7	89
Totals	3002	2825	2540	90%	49	236

Crime Statistics by Stuart Parish

The statistics in the large table compare reported crimes in the Chorleywood Parish area for year ending Aug 2019 with year ending Aug 2020. They were extracted from <https://www.police.uk> where the definition of crime categories can also be found.

Comparing the two periods, total reported crimes increased by 33 from 435 to 468 (approx. 7.6%). The increase was mainly due to Vehicle Crime and Burglary. Drug crimes, although low in number, increased almost fourfold, from 4 to 15. The top three crime categories remained unchanged from last year; they were (1) Violence and Sexual Offences, (2) Vehicle Crime, (3) Anti-social Behaviour.

The small table shows crime rates per 100,000 inhabitants in Hertfordshire's ten DCs, covering the period September 2019 to August 2020. It is worth noting that out of the ten district council areas in Hertfordshire, Three Rivers DC had one of the lowest crime rates. Analysis reveals that the average for all Hertfordshire was 5.53 crimes per 100,000 people, whereas Three Rivers DC had only 4.39, some 1.14 crimes below the county average. (Sources: Hertfordshire County Council and the Police).

Chorleywood Parish Crime Year on Year Comparison

Crime Type	2018/19	2019/20	Diff +/-
Anti-social Behaviour	83	72	-11
Bicycle Theft	5	1	-4
Burglary	31	53	+22
Criminal Damage and Arson	36	14	-22
Drugs	4	15	+11
Fraud and Forgery	0	0	0
Other Crime	48	56	+8
Other Theft	49	38	-11
Other Notifiable, e.g. going equipped	0	0	0
Possession of Weapons	0	2	+2
Public Order	10	11	+1
Robbery	3	2	-1
Shoplifting	14	14	0
Theft and Handling	0	0	0
Vehicle Crime	59	83	+24
Violence and Sexual Offences	93	106	+13
Violence against the person	0	1	+1
Totals	435	468	+33

Watford	7.25
Broxbourne	6.63
Dacorum	5.32
Hertsmere	6.18
Nth Hertfordshire	4.32
Three Rivers	4.39
Welwyn Hatfield	6.17
St Albans	4.77
East Hertfordshire	4.30
Stevenage	7.61

Crimes per 100,000 population in Herts' 10 District Councils. (Average = 5.53)

UK Finance reveals the top 10 Covid-19 scams



UK Finance has unveiled the top ten Covid-19 and lockdown scams the public should be on high alert for, and how to spot them. Criminals are preying on a worried public by tapping into their financial concerns due to coronavirus, and asking for personal and financial information. A new animation video from the “Take Five to Stop Fraud” (TFSF) campaign <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/> warns people to remember criminals are sophisticated at impersonating reputable organisations.

Fraudsters are using sophisticated methods to exploit people who are concerned about their financial situation and the state of the economy in the current coronavirus pandemic. To coincide with the launch of its new animation urging people to follow the advice of the TFSF Campaign, UK Finance has revealed the top ten Covid-19 scams which criminals are using to target people, to get them to part with their money. Some scams manipulate innocent victims, urging people to invest and take advantage of the financial downturn. Others impersonate well known subscription services, to get people to part with their cash and personal information. Criminals are even posing as representatives of the NHS Test and Trace service in an effort to trick people into giving away their personal details.

To remind people that criminals are experts at impersonating trusted organisations, UK Finance has launched a new animation video urging people to follow the advice of the TFSF campaign. Consumers are reminded always to ‘take five’, i.e. take a moment, to stop and think before parting with their money or information in case it’s a scam. The top ten Covid-19 scams to be on the lookout for fall under three main headings; financial support, health and lockdown scams.

Financial support scams

1. Criminals send fake emails mimicking Government departments, offering grants of up to £7,500. The emails contain links to sites which steal personal and financial information from victims.
2. Fraudsters send scam emails which offer access to Covid-19 relief funds encouraging victims to fill in a form with their personal information.
3. Criminals send people official-looking emails offering council tax reductions. The emails use Government branding and contain links which lead to a fake Government website, which are used to access personal and financial information.
4. Fraudsters prey on benefits recipients, e.g. offering to help apply for Universal Credit, while taking some of the payment as an advance for their “services”.

Health scams

5. One of the most shocking scams that has appeared during the pandemic involves using the NHS Test and Trace service. Criminals prey on an anxious public by sending phishing emails and links claiming that the recipient has been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. Again, these lead to fake websites that are used to steal personal and financial information or infect devices with malware.
6. Victims are also being targeted by fake adverts for Covid-related products, such as hand sanitisers and face masks, which do not exist.

Lockdown scams

7. Criminals are sending fake emails and texts claiming to represent Government TV Licencing, telling people they are eligible for a six-month free TV licence because of the coronavirus pandemic. Victims are told there has been a problem with their direct debit and are asked to click on a link that takes them to a fake website used to steal personal and financial information.
8. Amid a rise in the use of online TV subscription services during the lockdown, customers have been targeted by criminals sending convincing emails asking them to update their payment details by clicking on a link which is then used to steal credit card information.
9. Fraudsters are also exploiting those using online dating websites by creating fake profiles on social media sites used to manipulate victims into handing over their money. Often criminals will use the identities of real people to strike up relationships with their targets.
10. Criminals are using social media websites to advertise fake investment opportunities, encouraging victims to take advantage of the financial downturn. Bitcoin platforms are using emails and adverts on social media platforms to encourage unsuspecting victims to put money into fake investment companies using fake websites.

The banking and finance sector is working with the Government and law enforcement to help identify scams and prevent people becoming victims of fraud. The industry is also encouraging everyone to remain vigilant and to follow the advice of the TFSF campaign, and to Stop, Challenge and Protect when they receive any messages out of the blue.

- **Stop** - take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information; it could keep you safe.
- **Challenge** - could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect** - contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud, www.actionfraud.police.uk.

In order to spot a Covid-19 scam, people should be on high alert if:

- a website address is inconsistent with that of the legitimate organisation (you can check by "hovering" over it);
- a phone call, text or email asks for financial information such as a PIN or password;
- you receive a call or email out of the blue with an urgent request for your personal or financial information, or to make an immediate payment;
- you're offered a heavily discounted or considerably cheaper product compared to the original price;
- there are spelling and grammar mistakes, or inconsistencies in the story you're given.

Katy Worobec - Managing Director, Economic Crime at UK Finance says:

"During this pandemic we have seen criminals using sophisticated methods to callously exploit people's financial concerns, impersonating trusted organisations like the NHS or HMRC, to trick them into giving away their money or information. The banking and finance industry is tackling fraud on every front, investing millions in advance technology to protect customers and working closely with the government and law enforcement to stop the criminal gangs responsible and neutralise the threat. We would always urge people to follow the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign to keep their money and personal information safe from fraudsters." (Source: UK Finance <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk>)

Looking after your car keys



Car keys should be kept in a safe and secure location, out of sight of, and away from windows and letterboxes. Vehicles are sometimes stolen after thieves have removed keys left next to letterboxes or insecure doors or windows. Getting hold of a vehicle key means thieves don't need to break into a car to steal it, they can just drive it away.

If your vehicle has a smart key or uses PKE (Passive Keyless Entry), please be aware that thieves have devices which can trigger your fob and send a signal to your car, even though the fob may be situated inside your home. Such devices amplify the signals, allowing your vehicle's doors to be opened and the engine started remotely. PKE works using radio waves. For safety, keep your fob in a "Faraday" signal-blocking pouch or wallet that prevents the transmission of radio waves. While waiting to purchase a "Faraday" wallet, physicists have found that wrapping your key in a couple of layers of crinkled kitchen foil may also block radio waves. Please test any new Faraday pouch, as we understand some products on the market don't work. If you own a Tesla, ensure that you activate PIN to Drive.



Don't leave keys insecurely in public places, e.g. on tables or in bags. Don't leave them in pockets in cloakrooms or changing rooms. Once keys are snatched, your vehicle can be easily identified and stolen. The thieves simply operate the buttons outside in the street or car park, and watch to see which vehicle's lights flash on and off.

Don't hand vehicle keys over to a third party or leave your vehicle unattended when valet parking, at a carwash or a similar place. Criminals can clone the electronic code or even re-code the fob, to gain subsequent access to your vehicle.

(Sources: PCSO Steve Jacob, Stuart Parish and editor.)

Chorleywood Residents' Association Newsletter



Do you receive the Chorleywood Residents' Association (CRA) monthly email Newsletter? It keeps residents informed on important matters in Chorleywood. For example, a recent CRA Newsletter published a survey on the Chesham Sewage Works, which has been making repeated discharges into the River Chess. The survey received strong support for urgent action. CRA passed the results on to our MP Gagan Mahindra, who joined the new Chalk Streams All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). He is now pressing Chesham Sewage Works to invest more, increase its capacity and stop harmful discharges, in order to protect our wildlife, plants, people, pets and local businesses. CRA also lobbied Post Office Ltd about the absence of a Chorleywood branch, eventually resulting in a temporary PO kiosk in Lords. The kiosk is proving extremely useful for local residents and stimulates local shopping in supporting our vital local shops. To keep up to date with the latest retail and other news in Chorleywood, you can subscribe by clicking the green button on CRA website <http://www.chorleywoodresidents.co.uk>. (Source: Jane Tozer CRA)



Using WhatsApp to support OWL



Some people may be familiar with a mobile phone application called "WhatsApp". It's a messaging application that can be downloaded for free onto your mobile via your app provider. It allows people to send secure messages to each other via their smartphone telephone numbers. WhatsApp also has the facility to allow people to organise themselves into WhatsApp "groups". That is where people agree to join a particular "named group" by giving permission to an organiser to link in their mobile number to that group. It allows group members to receive all group messages sent by all other group members, and they only need to send a message once to the group and it's received by everyone else. WhatsApp promises full message security via its end-to-end encryption.

It appears that a number of WhatsApp groups were formed by organisers to serve particular streets at the beginning of lockdown, perhaps in order to participate in the organisation of VE celebrations back in May. These WhatsApp groups have helped enormously in bringing people together, and making general communication in local areas and roads very useful and at times highly amusing! We strongly recommend that local organisers are found to create additional WhatsApp groups in streets where they do not exist yet.

This gives rise to an interesting possibility in respect of OWL, the free Online Watch Link run by Hertfordshire Police, which provides residents

with a wealth of Police advice about crime prevention in Chorleywood. It could be an excellent way for NHW's OWL recruitment representative to communicate directly with WhatsApp group members, to encourage those who are not yet subscribing to OWL to do so, rather than having to go round knocking on doors to sign up new recruits.

For further information and advice about downloading WhatsApp or setting up WhatsApp groups, visit site <https://www.whatsapp.com>. Also, please use the email address below to contact our OWL representative for any information about signing up to OWL: penncottage@talktalk.net. (Sources: Chris Daines and editor).

Useful contacts for scams, frauds, advice, info

Chorleywood NHW Chairman	brian.shipway1@sky.com
OWL Sign-up	penncottage@talktalk.net
Chorleywood NHW web page	https://www.chorleywood-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-watch-newsletter/
Chorleywood Parish Council	https://www.chorleywood-pc.gov.uk
Chorleywood PCSO 1	dean.redhead@herts.pnn.police.uk
Chorleywood PCSO 2	katie.welch@herts.pnn.police.uk
Hertfordshire Police	https://www.herts.police.uk
District Watch Liaison Officer (WLO)	wlo@herts.pnn.police.uk or philip.waine@herts.pnn.police.uk
Hertfordshire NHW (Hertswatch)	www.hertswatch.co.uk
Home crime prevention	www.herts.police.uk/protectyourhome
Telephone Preference Service	www.tpsonline.org.uk
National Cyber Security Centre	www.ncsc.gov.uk
Action Fraud	https://www.actionfraud.police.uk
Action Fraud Alert	https://www.actionfraudalert.co.uk
Action Fraud scam list	https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud-category
Take Five To Stop Fraud	https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/
Chorleywood Corona Support Group	https://www.st-andrews.org.uk/chorleywoodcoronasupport
Vanessa Rousseau	vanessa.rousseau@st-andrews.org.uk Tel: 07872 903486
Chorleywood Residents Association	http://www.chorleywoodresidents.co.uk
UK Finance	https://www.ukfinance.org.uk
WhatsApp	https://www.whatsapp.com
Police (Emergency)	Tel: 999
Police (Non-emergency)	Tel: 101
British Transport Police	Tel: 0800 40 50 40
National Police Air Service	Tel: 01924 292 252
CrimeStoppers	Tel: 0800 555 111
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