



Visit our website at: www.villagewatch.co.uk and join our Group on *Facebook*

The Future of the Watch

The Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 forced us to suspend some of our activities at very short notice. These included the distribution of the Newsletter, the monthly Advice Shop, the regular Committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting each April. All of these would have broken the lockdown regulations and, more importantly, put our Volunteers at risk of infection. At the time, we thought that these were temporary measures and that we would return to normal in a relatively short time.

Now, almost two years later, most of the issues remain and we have to seriously reconsider the situation. The structure and systems that were set up as the result of a lot of hard work by

individuals over a number of years, required constant management that has not been possible in recent months. We have now reached a point where it will need a major effort to re-establish them as they were.

We are, therefore, looking at how we could more easily operate in the future and want to consult as widely as possible to see what our Coordinators, Members and Neighbours would want from their Neighbourhood Watch.

We are putting together some ideas to circulate in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, we would welcome any thoughts or ideas that you might have, the more original the better. Please write to us at:

watch@villagewatch.co.uk

Cold Caller

An elderly Member answered the door to a woman who claimed to be acting on behalf of a local charity, despite there being a *No Cold Callers* sign on the door. The woman persuaded our Member to donate to the charity and took details of her bank card.

When telling a relative about the incident, she was uncertain whether she had made a one-off donation or signed up to make regular, automatic payments.

There was also the concern that the whole thing might have been a criminal scam.

Our advice is as always. NEVER give cold callers any personal or bank details.

Any genuine organisation will supply the necessary information for you to make any donations in your own time, after you have considered the matter.

If you have given out your details and then have doubts or second thoughts, contact your bank immediately for their advice.

Keep Cash Safe

Some of us are old enough to remember when bank accounts were not that common. Most people were paid in cash and did their shopping with it but things have changed a lot since then.

Direct debits, credit and debit cards are now very common but many older people still prefer the traditional method and keep significant sums of cash in their homes.

Unfortunately, this makes them vulnerable to distraction burglars and rogue traders who demand payment in cash for shoddy or non-existent work.

If you are in the habit of keeping a lot of cash at home, do not keep it all together but split it into smaller amounts and store them in different places. A thief will probably leave quickly once they have found the first amount and not go on searching for more.

Please keep a check on your vulnerable relatives or neighbours who are often alone in the house. Many people are proud and like to keep their affairs private. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to discuss the general issue with them.

If possible, make a plan so that they do not pay out large sums of cash without first referring it to somebody else who can protect their interests.

Fake Reviews Continue

In our December edition we warned about unscrupulous online sellers who pay for fake five star reviews of their otherwise unremarkable, inferior or even dangerous products. This is against the rules of all the major online companies but is, nevertheless, still happening.

Which? has been investigating and reports that *Twitter* and *Facebook* accounts are being used on an industrial scale to fake five star reviews posted on the Amazon website. This greatly reduces any value they may have to us as consumers.

You can read the reports in detail at:

[www.which.co.uk/news/2022/01/
how-facebook-fuels-amazons-fake-reviews](http://www.which.co.uk/news/2022/01/how-facebook-fuels-amazons-fake-reviews)

[www.which.co.uk/news/2022/01/
thousands-of-amazon-sellers-using-twitter-to-gain-
fake-or-incentivised-reviews](http://www.which.co.uk/news/2022/01/thousands-of-amazon-sellers-using-twitter-to-gain-fake-or-incentivised-reviews)

Do not be misled by a long list of five-star reviews.

**If you receive a text message similar to this
DO NOT click on the link. It is a scam.**

NHS: You have been in contact with someone who has the Omicron Variant. You must order a free PCR testing kit here: <https://mypcr-test.com>
SMS 06:19

A Member who did so became suspicious as soon as they were asked for money to cover postage costs. The NHS will NEVER ask for any payment for its services.

Police News

Our Beat Team produces a monthly Newsletter with news of crime and other local policing matters.

You can read it in full each month on our website:

www.villagewatch.co.uk/police