

# **TEIGNBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

*(Registered Charity No. 1074233)*

**Teignbridge Neighbourhood Watch**

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## **ABOUT NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Neighbourhood Watch started in the UK in 1982 and since then has evolved into a coordinated national network. This idea was and still is not to create central control but to allow easy sharing of advice, information and resources between groups and associations across England and Wales.

This national body is known as the Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network and is based in Leicester.

Neighbourhood Watch is about local people working together to create safe, attractive and friendly places in which to live, places where crime is less likely to happen and people are less likely to turn to anti-social behaviour. It is about looking out for your neighbours and for them to look out for you. There are no barriers regarding age, race, class and religion - it is about making sure that no-one feels alone, frightened or vulnerable in the place where they live.

There is no set Neighbourhood Watch programme because each group is owned and run by its community. Communities have different needs and nobody knows these needs better than the individual communities themselves.

A Neighbourhood Watch scheme can vary in size from a single isolated farm, for example, to a few houses in a road or to a large housing estate.

Each scheme is generally headed by a volunteer coordinator from the local area and sometimes assisted by a deputy. The coordinator, amongst other things, acts as a link between the individual scheme members and others, such as adjoining schemes, the police and others, as necessary.

The police do not run Neighbourhood Watch schemes but are pleased to receive relevant information from them and to give advice and assistance where necessary.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IN DEVON & CORNWALL**

Devon and Cornwall is one of the safest areas in which to live in the UK because it has a relatively low crime rate. The Devon & Cornwall Community Watch Association (DaCCWA) provides the structure and partnerships necessary to enable Neighbourhood Watch to make a real difference in terms of reduced crime, reduced fear of crime and improving quality of life for all and liaises closely with the Devon & Cornwall Police Force in these areas.

DaCCWA also provides an important link with Neighbourhood Watch and Home Watch and attends national meetings on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Devon and Cornwall.

## **SETTING UP AND RUNNING A NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME**

There are no hard and fast rules that cover setting up and running Neighbourhood Watch schemes and a coordinator and/or deputy can devote as much or as little time as necessary to run an individual scheme.

The first move would be to contact the neighbours to publicise the possibility of setting up a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme and to judge the popularity of such a suggestion. If necessary, it may be useful to call a local meeting as a first step.

A successful scheme depends upon having a good coordinator and wherever possible, a deputy. They should realise that the work of the scheme should be shared so that all members feel that they have a role to play, no matter how small. Ideas of the coordinator/deputy role may include:

- being the first point of contact for the police
- being the focal point for the membership
- being a conduit for information
- signing up new scheme members
- ensuring that Neighbourhood Watch signs are displayed and that members have appropriate stickers and literature

An active member/householder should:

- know what to do when a crime or other emergency occurs
- know their neighbours and be willing to help them
- observe any unusual events and be willing to report them if necessary
- takes sensible precautions for their own home, property and personal security

### **TEIGNBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (TNHW)**

Teignbridge Neighbourhood Watch operates under the National Neighbourhood and Home Watch organisation and the regional Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association. It is run entirely by volunteers (scheme coordinators, deputies and members ("The Forum")) and covers the whole geographical area of Teignbridge District, which includes Newton Abbot, Teignmouth, Dawlish, Exminster, Bovey Tracey, Chudleigh, the Teign Valley, Buckfastleigh, Buckfast, Ashburton and Moretonhampstead.

A small team manages TNHW and may co-opt other individuals, as necessary, from, for example, the Police, Teignbridge District Council and others.

Currently there are more than 250 schemes, of all sizes, operating in Teignbridge District, covering more than 9,000 individual residential properties and farms.

We are fortunate in that the Police provide us with an office at Teignmouth Police Office, the contact details of which are given on the front cover of this publication. The office is staffed from 09.00 to 14.00 hours by a team of vetted Neighbourhood Watch Police Volunteers who maintain the TNHW database which is held on a secure Police IT system. The aim of TNHW is to continue to increase the number of schemes in the area as an ongoing objective.

TNHW follows National and Regional guidelines by being a community initiative, (supported by but not run by the Police), creating safer communities and encouraging community spirit and reducing crime. It is not about being a nosey neighbour, or a curtain twitcher, or patrolling the area. Our members are encouraged to get to know their neighbours and the area in which they live well enough to know when something unusual is taking place.

Members are also encouraged to recognise suspicious vehicles and people in the area and to feel confident about reporting an incident. Interestingly almost every crime has a witness but sometimes people do not know what they have seen!

We encourage the erection of Neighbourhood Watch street signs as these send a message to would be criminals that our members are working together as a team in the community against crime.

A potential advantage of being a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is that some insurance companies recognise the value of Neighbourhood Watch schemes and may offer a discount on household buildings and contents insurance premiums for members of registered schemes.

Teignbridge Neighbourhood Watch is governed by a Constitution that has been rewritten and adopted unopposed by The Forum.

Finally, you can get a wealth of general information and downloads from the police website [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk) or from the approved NHW website at [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q. What costs are involved?**

**A.** The only cost is for street signs, if a scheme believes that they are necessary. These cost £10 each and the money is usually raised from scheme members making a small donation. Window stickers and all literature is supplied free of charge by TNHW.

### **Q. How do I become a coordinator?**

**A.** By contacting the office in the first instance. Coordinators complete a simple application form which is signed off by a police officer. Coordinators and deputy coordinators details are held on the TNHW database in a secure police I.T. system. Scheme members' details are not required but should be held by the coordinator for the scheme. The number of properties in a scheme is required by the Home Office for audit requirements.

### **Q. Am I required to attend meetings?**

**A.** Three meetings are held each year, including an Annual General Meeting. There is no obligation to attend but helpful tips can be gained from these meetings as well as exchanging information with other coordinators within Teignbridge District.