

Parish and Partners Briefing

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RURAL CRIME ADVISORS' UPDATE

Security in the Summer

The incidence of burglaries can increase in the summer months, so protecting your home is especially important at this time - although this advice is just as relevant at all times of the year.

Home Security

Getting into a good routine when you leave your home is a great start:

- Make sure valuables are left out of sight and not easily viewed from a window. Take some time to walk around your home and look through windows and doors to see what a burglar might see.
- Lock all doors and windows, even if you might be just 'popping out', this also applies even if you are in the back garden or upstairs.
- Don't leave important documents in a place where they may be easily found e.g., out on a table or surface.
- Make your home looks occupied when you are not in. Consider using a timer device to ensure lights come on and off at random times, don't just be tempted to put the timer on the hall light.
- Use of items such as TV simulators and /or radios can also create a sense that someone might be at home.
- Lock your shed – consider an alarm and signage, make sure that valuable items cannot be easily seen through shed windows – use window coverings e.g., cardboard, to hide items from view.
- Lock your back gate – securing a gate in a few places can make access more challenging – don't make it easy.
- Lock your garage – ground anchors can offer additional security as can an alarm
- Secure your bike inside your garage or shed, consider also using a ground anchor, where possible.
- Consider installing a house alarm and ensure this is set every time you leave.
- Consider use of CCTV – particularly a system that send images to a mobile phone, so you have an awareness of what is happening at home, when you are not there. CCTV can also act as a deterrent as it increases the risk of being caught.
- Defensive planting – consider planting prickly bushes, plants, or shrubs around access points such as fence borders, downstairs windows – be mindful of plants that might be toxic if swallowed or touched particularly if you have children / children visiting or pets.
- Be aware of distraction techniques where someone will try to trick you into thinking they need help or are someone official - cold callers can ask you to invite them inside, then create a distraction and steal your valuables.
- Summertime DIY can mean that ladders and other items that might be used to climb on, get left out. Thieves can use ladders to break windows, ram doors, without risking so much harm to themselves, as well as gaining access to higher floors. Keep ladders, climbing aids or other tools, locked away or anchored to walls / floors.
- Wheeie bins are surprisingly strong, these too can be used to access flat rooves to gain access to windows. It is worth considering using a padlock and chain and secure these to a wall and / or together, to make using them more challenging.
- Be aware that wooden or PVC doors can swell or shrink in the high temperatures and may not close properly.



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Crime prevention advice for home security



Home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled. A lot of burglaries are spur of the moment, as a burglar may see an open window or other easy point of entry and take their chance.

Tips to consider:

- If you are installing new doors and windows get ones that are certified to British Standard BS 7950 (windows) or PAS 24-1 (doors).
- Window locks especially on older windows will help stop people getting in.
- Securely lock all doors and windows before leaving the house. It's easy to forget when you're in a hurry, but it's the simplest way for a burglar to enter your home.
- Never leave keys anywhere near the front door, including your letterbox; burglars know where to look.
- A home that looks empty is far more likely to be targeted by a burglar, so it's worth making sure your home looks occupied.
- Use automatic timer switches to turn on a light and perhaps a radio when it goes dark, even if you are just out for a couple of hours.
- If you're away for longer periods of time, cancel any newspaper or milk deliveries.
- Why not ask a neighbour or relative for help could they clear the pool away from the door mat and open and close the curtains.
- Visibly and permanently marking your belongings helps you and the police identify them if they are stolen. It can also make it difficult for the thief to dispose of the property (see property marking factsheet).
- Prevent easy access to the back and sides of your home by installing locked gates, 2 metre minimum fencing or walls. Trellis topping also makes climbing difficult.
- Security lighting can be used to make offenders feel vulnerable and observed. It is suggested that you use dusk to dawn lighting.
- Visible burglar alarms are a deterrent that you use dusk to dawn lighting.
- Fit padlocks and hardware to shed and garage doors.
- Make sure that passers-by can see the front of your home. Remove and secure items that may be used to break in or climb up such as ladders and garden tools.
- Beware of bogus callers; use your spy hole and a door chain until you have seen their ID and are satisfied you want to let them in.
- Never discuss your security requirements or existing arrangements with a doorstep caller or salesperson.
- Work with your neighbours to keep an eye on each other's security. Neighbourhood Watch groups are good for this.



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www.facebook.com/StratfordDC



<https://x.com/StratfordDC>



www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council

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Other useful tips

Security mark your property and take photographs of items that are of particular value, noting any unique markings. [Microsoft Word - Property Marking Advice Sheet.doc \(warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk\)](#)

Crime prevention advice for property marking

Marking your property is a positive way to fight crime. It can act as a deterrent, it allows you to prove ownership and helps you to identify your property easily if it is stolen for sale. Marking your property also provides a means for the Police to identify stolen goods and return them to their owners.

There are a number of different ways to mark your property:

Visible Markers
Permanent marker pens
Waterproof paint
Stencils
Engraving
Specialised overt marking kits available on the market such as Cremark (being used for Rural Crime property marking events)

Invisible marker
UV Pens
Specialised forensic kits such as SmartWater, SelectaDNA, Red Web etc. (SmartWater kits are available through Warwickshire Horse Watch and Neighbourhood Watch at discounted prices)

What to Mark Your Property With:

You can put any kind of mark on your property to distinguish it from other similar items. Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire Rural Watch, Warwickshire Horse Watch and Neighbourhood Watch recommend using your postcode prefixed with the number of your address, i.e. 23 878 1XX. A post code is unique to your property, which most organisations recognise and allows the goods to be identified and returned to you. Just putting a name or symbol on the property makes it identifiable, but does not provide details to the Police of who owns the property and where it came from.

It is strongly recommended that you take a photo of all your valuables and make a note of any distinguishing marks, including where and how you have property marked it. You can then print the photographs off and keep in a safe place, load onto your computer or keep on a memory stick. By having these records if your property is stolen you will have as much information as possible to give to the Police and also pass to retailers and other organisations to help locate your property.

On the websites www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk and www.warwickshire-horsecwatch.co.uk there is a downloadable form you can use. Alternatively 'SmartWater' is a database system where you can

Warwickshire Rural Watch
Warwickshire Police
Warwickshire Horse Watch

Be aware of the Occupiers Liability Act. With any intervention taken, please be mindful of the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 [Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). This Act deals with liability that might arise from accidents caused by dangerous or defective condition of the premises.

[Occupiers Liability Act 1984 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) this was an addition made in 1984 and imposes a duty on occupiers in relation to persons 'other than the occupier's visitors' e.g., trespassers, burglars and vandals. An example of when this Act might be breached is by using broken glass on a wall or razor wire as a fence topper.

If you are reviewing your security equipment / services, consider the following websites to help inform your decision:

- [Secured By Design](#) – the official police security initiative and works to improve the immediate security of buildings and their surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit. SBDs product-based accreditation scheme 'the Police preferred specification' provides a recognised standard for all security products that can deter and reduce crime.
- [Sold Secure - Security Product Testing & Approval](#)

If you are going away:

- Whilst the excitement of going, or being on holiday can take over, take care not to advertise it publicly on social media that your away from your home – thieves actively look for this.
- Cancel newspapers and milk deliveries.
- Cut the grass before you leave on holiday and make the garden and surrounding area look tidy – the property will look looked after and more likely to be occupied.
- Don't be tempted to store keys under pots.
- Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your property whilst you are away, ideally opening and closing curtains to help make the house look occupied.
- Avoid letting your mail pile up, as this is a clear indicator that no one is at home. Consider asking a trusted friend or neighbour to collect it for you or use a service such as Royal Mail Keep safe to look after your mail in their secure premises while you are away (there is a fee for this service). [Keepsafe | Royal Mail Group Ltd](#)
- Consider joining a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

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Other useful tips

When you are out and about, be aware of:

Vehicle security

- Lock your car, don't be tempted to unlock your car from a distance, unlock it when you are at your vehicle.
- If you have keyless entry, store your keys in a faraday pouch, this will minimise the risk of thieves gaining the signal, that is constantly emitted from the key, storing it and being able to unlock your car (without having the key).
- Don't leave valuables on show in your car.
- Be aware of who is around you when you are at your vehicle.
- Try to park in places that are well lit with good, all round, visibility of the vehicle.

Caravans

- Caravans are prime targets for thieves. It is not just new caravans that are targeted, those 2 or 3 years old are stolen and older. Most thefts occur from storage compounds/ locations, especially if they are in a rural area, or occasionally from driveways, pitches at sites or dealer's premises.
- Consider use of wheel clamps, trackers, wheel locks, hitch locks and data chip systems – for further information please refer to:

[Caravan-Advice-New.pdf \(warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk\)](http://warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk)

Picnic / Eating out

- At picnic areas – be aware of where your valuables are, don't leave valuables in bags on a table or on a blanket, unattended.
- If you carry a bag – try to carry the bag in front of you, where possible e.g., cross body bags, if this is not possible consider using small 'purse bells' on a zip, this could act as a deterrent and increases the likelihood the attempt will be identified, a small travel padlock can also be helpful.

Out and About

- Avoid use of headphones when walking, particularly when you are walking alone or around an area you may be less familiar with. Removing the ability to hear the world around you might increase the potential to make you a target.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm with you, many alarms will fit on a keyring. Creating a loud, piercing, noise can assist in raising awareness that you need help

Keyless is carless

Thieves are using more and more innovative ways to steal keyless cars.

Check Hide Lock

Don't give them an easy ride and use our advice to protect yourself today.

The poster features a white car with a key fob nearby, set against an orange background with a white house outline and a dotted pattern.

