

Ferring



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Quarterly Edition

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Items this month are concerned with the risk of falling victim to fraud, through bogus phone calls or emails, or online, and reporting of crimes and suspicious behaviour.



Increase in calls claiming to be from the police or your bank

Sussex residents have made a growing number of reports to Police and Action Fraud concerning courier fraud. That's when fraudsters contact victims by phone and claim to be a police officer or bank official. To make this plausible, the caller might be able to confirm some easily obtainable basic details about the victim such as their full name and address. They may also offer a phone number for the victim to call to check that they are genuine; this number is not genuine and simply redirects to the fraudster, pretending to be a different person. After some trust has been established, the fraudster might suggest that:

- Some money has been removed from a victim's bank account, and staff at their local bank branch are responsible.
- Suspects have already been arrested, but the "police" need money for evidence.
- A business such as a jewellers or currency exchange is operating fraudulently and they require assistance to help secure evidence.

Victims are then asked to cooperate in an investigation by going to their bank and withdrawing money, which can be foreign currency from an exchange, or purchasing an expensive item to hand over to a courier for examination, who will also be a fraudster. Again, to reassure the victim, a safe word might be communicated to the victim so the courier appears genuine. At the time of handover, unsuspecting victims are promised the money they've handed over or spent will be reimbursed but in reality there is no further contact and the money is never seen again.

Your bank and the police will never ...

- Phone and ask you for your PIN or full banking password.
- Ask you to withdraw money to hand over to them for safe-keeping, or send someone to your home to collect cash, PIN, cards or cheque books.

Don't assume an email or phone call is authentic Just because someone knows your basic details (such as your name and address or even your mother's maiden name), it doesn't mean they are genuine. Be mindful of who you trust – criminals may try and trick you into their confidence by telling you that you've been a victim of fraud.

SYMO  DS
— AND READING —

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The Rustington Chamber of Commerce is calling on all local businesses to report any crime they encounter. It's been reported that there has been a recent increase in the area, but without data it is hard to gain a view of the true picture. They understand that time taken to do this may be a barrier to notifying incidents, but they wish to encourage you that it is not time wasted. The more data there is on actual events, the more that can be done.

Here is an easy step by step guide to reporting crime online; it doesn't take long.

- Go to <https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact-us/report-online/>,
- Click on *Report*; a crime, incident or something suspicious,
- Enter the postcode for the observation in the box provided and click on *Start*,
- Click on the relevant type of incident and click *Continue*,
- Complete the information as required - each time you complete a page, click on *Continue* and this will take you to the next page,
- The last page will give you an opportunity to check your report and make any changes,
- Once you are satisfied, click on *Submit*.

If you prefer to call then ring 101. If you prefer to report a crime anonymously, you may do so through Crime Stoppers - www.crimestoppers-uk.org or 0800 555 111.



Your identity proves you that really are you, until it's been stolen.

Your identity is one of your most precious possessions. Apart from defining you as an individual, it also proves that you really are you.

As well as needing it for everyday tasks like making purchases online, banking and social networking, it is also essential for signing up for phone contracts, loans, mortgages and other finance ... and without it, you can't obtain driver's licences, passports or other official documents.

When a criminal steals your identity, they can claim that they really are you too – and do all of these things in your name, while remaining hidden. They can also sell on your identity to other criminals to be exploited for other purposes, and commit criminal acts in your name.

That's why it's vital to protect your identity against theft. Identity thieves most commonly work online, often taking advantage of information you share on social media, or a weak email account password. They can also use printed documents that haven't been shredded or securely filed.

To safeguard your identity, start by following Get Safe Online's expert Top Tips:

- **Never share account information** with friends, family or other people.
- **Be careful** about the information you share on social media, such as date of birth and family/pets' names you also use in your passwords. Never post images of your passport, driver's licence, NI number or other confidential items.
- **Never divulge private information data** in response to an email, text, letter, phone call or web form unless you're certain that the request is authentic. Call to check on the number you know to be correct.
- **Keep security software/apps up-to-date**, that are running on your computer and mobile devices. Update software and apps when prompted, including Windows updates.
- **Choose strong passwords and keep them safe.** Don't use one password for more than one account. Password management software from reputable software companies can help you to manage different passwords securely, without having to remember them all.
- **Take care when using public Wi-Fi hotspots**; your information may not be secure.
- **Always beware** - of people looking over your shoulder when you're entering private information on a computer, mobile device, or cash machine.
- **Arrange** for paperless bills and statements instead of printed ones.
- **File sensitive documents securely**, and shred those you no longer need – preferably with a cross-cut shredder.
- **Get regular credit reports** to check if anybody has taken out finance in your name. Noddle.co.uk, a credit report service, can offer free reports about your credit references.

For more information on protecting your identity, visit www.getsafeonline.org, and click on 'Protecting Yourself' and then select 'Preventing Identity Theft'.