

Ferring Neighbourhood Watch



*40 years of building community spirit,
safety in numbers
and working together
to reduce crime and the
disproportionate fear of crime*

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April 2022 Newsletter

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• **Energy Prices** With so much emphasis currently on news of rising energy prices, it's not surprising that Energy Scammers are out in force. Be on the look out for criminals who, by calling at your front door, or by telephone, or via email or social media, purport to represent an energy company or Ofgem (the UK electricity and gas regulator). They may claim to offer you non-existent deals to save on energy bills, or energy efficient gadgets. Remember:

Seems too good to be true
Contacted out of the blue
Asks for personal details
Money is requested

**REPORT
IT TO >>**

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
0300 123 2040

• **Ukraine** Sadly, Action Fraud is receiving many reports of bogus requests to raise funds for victims of the conflict in Ukraine, with scammers using a variety of methods to defraud potential donors: asking for donations; selling so-called 'charity' T-shirts; some con men have even pretended to be relatives of the brother of the mayor of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital city. If you want to donate to a charity to help victims of the war in Ukraine, you can check that it is registered with the UK Charity Commission (Tel: 0300 066 9197 or search the Charity Commission website by clicking [here](#).)

• **Summer Safety** Summer is fast approaching (!) But the last few years of complex and frequently changing pandemic-related rules/guidelines/advice, coupled with understandable current enthusiasm to take holidays, have created the perfect conditions for unscrupulous sharks and scam artists to strike. Action Fraud reports that £34.5m was stolen in the first year of the pandemic alone; and changing legislation around



Brexit is still seeing theft of travellers' personal details and money. Awareness of these latest travel scams might help you stay safe when planning your next getaway:

► **Sham refunds** prey on those who lost money on holidays not taken during the pandemic.

► **Cold-calling criminals impersonating** airlines, travel companies and banks.

► **Use of spoof telephone numbers** so that it looks like you're being contacted by a legitimate company. Others even know the details of your cancelled booking and how much you're owed to fool you into believing they are genuine. Typically, it will be claimed that your bank details are needed to process the refund. But don't be misled; a legitimate company will never contact you out of the blue and ask for personal information.

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► **Health Insurance** If you have a UK European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) it will be valid until the expiry date on the card. Once it expires, you'll need to apply for the new Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) to replace it. It's free so don't fall for sites charging for it - apply only to the NHS or to Gov.UK ([NHS GHIC](#) or [Gov.UK GHIC](#)). GHIC enables free or reduced cost state healthcare in Europe.



► **Fake vaccine passports** The safe way to check on requirements for vaccine passports is either via the NHS website here [NHS](#) or via the Gov.UK website here [Foreign Travel Advice](#)

► **Rogue travel companies** It's wise to ensure the company is a member of a trade association such as ABTA or ATOL by checking the relevant website. Also, if possible, pay by credit card so your money is protected (see [Which? Consumer Rights](#)).

• **Protect Your Home** While Arun is a relatively low-crime area (latest research shows 24.4 crimes per 1,000 people, compared with 32.3 per 100 nationally), Neighbourhood Watch reports that across the country over two thirds of people are worried about their home being broken into. The good news is that there are simple, proven measures to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of burglary and, in so doing, lessen any concern. At Neighbourhood Watch, we also believe neighbours keeping an eye out for each other is key to reducing burglary, so we recommend the acronym WIDEN:

- **W: WINDOWS:** Keep your windows locked
- **I: INTERIOR:** Put inside lights on a timer/smart bulb
- **D: DOORS:** Double or deadlock your doors
- **E: EXTERIOR:** Put outside lights on a sensor
- **N: NEIGHBOURS:** Keep an eye out for your neighbours



• **Catalytic Converter Theft (Again!)** At the beginning of last year we warned of the increasing number of vehicle catalytic converters being stolen. Unfortunately, our area has seen a recent resurgence in this type of theft, with reports in Chichester, Littlehampton, Rustington and Shoreham. The converters are targeted for the precious metals they contain and can be stolen from vehicles in as little as 30 seconds. Catalytic converter theft most frequently occurs in car parks, but can happen anywhere. Sussex Police advise "To keep your catalytic converter safe, ask your car dealer for advice on locks or guards approved by the vehicle manufacturer and tested to 'Sold Secure Gold' standard. Alternatively, try to make sure your vehicle is parked in a garage overnight, or if you have a commercial vehicle, park it in a secure compound. If this isn't possible, park in an area that's well-lit and overlooked and try to park so that the converter can't be easily reached by potential thieves. Vehicles that sit high above the road, or with 2 wheels on the pavement or verge, are particularly vulnerable."

• **Message in a Bottle** To help the Emergency Services help you in case of accidents in the home, Lions Clubs International have set up a free, simple but ingenious scheme called Message in a Bottle. It is a very easy 5 step way of providing the Emergency Services with what could be vital personal and medical details. The Message in a Bottle pack comprises: A small plastic bottle; a form on which to write your personal/medical details; and 2 stickers.



(1) Simply complete the form with your details **(2)** Put the form into the bottle **(3)** Place the bottle in the door compartment of your fridge **(4)** Stick one sticker on the outside of your fridge door **(5)** Stick the other sticker INSIDE your front door. If the Emergency Services are called to your home, they will know to look for the special Green Emergency stickers and will know to look in the fridge for what could be crucially helpful information. Some doctors' surgeries and other public places have stocks of the packs; alternatively, anyone can contact Littlehampton District Lions Club to request a pack. Just email littlehamptonlions@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/littlehamptonlions> or ring 0345 833 2748. They also offer a "Message in a Wallet" - a credit card size folded paper which can hold similar information to the bottles but is intended to be carried in a purse/wallet. A short video about the scheme is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouU8PPvjy6g>