

LOOK-OUT

Currie East Neighbourhood Watch

www.cenw.org.uk

Chairman's Corner

Bob Kerr

By the time you read this Summer Time will be here. The Clocks will have gone forward, and we might even have Daffodils on show.

With the return of the better weather, now might be a good time to look at the security of your sheds and garages. Who can say what the prolonged cold spell has done to locks and hinges that have not been exercised for a number of months? Have the cycles and other valuable items obtained at Christmas been identified with your postcode and house number using an ultra-violet pen?

In the previous Look-out we asked for your views on the possibility of setting up a No Cold Caller Zone in our area. As a result of feedback from our members, it was decided not to go ahead with an official No Cold Caller Zone in our area.

We are currently organising a visit to Currie Primary, by two members of the Committee, to explain Neighbourhood Watch and how it could affect them. A visit was made last year to Nether Currie Primary, which was received very well by both children and staff.

As a result of the response to our request for additional Lookout distributors, we organised a meeting for all distributors to bring them up to date on the Committee's activities, covering topics such as the new Lookout distribution network, the website, funding, street signs and information packs.

Subscriptions

Iain Proudfoot

As with all organisations we do require funding to allow us to operate. Our Lookout newsletter is the main communication channel with our Members. Communication with members is also available via our website. We have also provided wheelie-bin stickers, window stickers and information packs. Your house insurance premiums may include a discount for you being a member of a Neighbourhood Watch Area.

It is our intention to have new and replacement lamp-post signs erected within the Watch area, which will provide a further visible presence of the Neighbourhood Watch Area.

All we ask in return is your continued support and the sum of £1 each year as a subscription for membership to the Currie East Neighbourhood Watch.

Your Distributor will call on you, either with this issue of Lookout or shortly thereafter, to collect your subscription. If you do not receive a call, please do not hesitate to contact your Distributor and give them your sub. The name of your Distributor will be within the Information Pack which you recently received from us.

It is our intention to provide further leaflets for the Information Pack and these will be delivered in April 2011.

CENW Website

Although we've had many visits to the CENW website, only a few residents have registered to receive updates via email. This facility allows us to pass on any alerts we may receive from the Police (e.g. warning about suspicious activity in the area) usually the same day. Registering is free, and the only information we require is an email address. If you have not already done so we would urge you to register as this provides a valuable communication channel to keep you informed in a timely manner.

The website address is: www.cenw.org.uk

We understand than some residents do not have internet access, so Lookout will continue to be the main communication channel for this reason.

Free security system scam

CENW would like to warn residents that Currie is currently being targeted by a company offering "free" security systems in a decidedly dodgy cold-calling marketing campaign. Calls may originate from security companies, or under the guise of market research asking about home security.

Although the security system itself is technically "free", the customer is conned into signing up for a ridiculously expensive long-term maintenance contract. Victims have discovered they actually signed up to a 5-year maintenance contract costing well over £100 per month, and have had great difficulty getting out of it. You may be advised that the system will be installed over the next day or two and so asked for credit card details, whereby payment is swiftly deducted against the card with no guarantee that the work will be completed to your satisfaction

As a result of a number of calls received from our Members we have advised Trading Standards who are aware of these companies and are liaising with other offices across the UK gathering evidence about their activities.

If you receive a phone call or visit from someone offering anything like this, please be on your guard and do not give out any personal details. If they persist or get aggressive then just hang up/close the door and call the police.

Cold Calling - Update

Neil Dickson

One of the initiatives that your committee has been actively discussing over the last few months is the possibility of establishing a No Cold Calling Zone for our area. As a result of feedback from members, local businesses and charitable organisations in response to the article in the previous Look-Out, the committee has decided not to proceed with establishing a NCCZ.

The committee are now looking at alternative options, one of which is to supply a window sticker to all our members, advising cold callers they are not welcome. Members could then choose to display this sticker if they wish. The committee would welcome any feedback and suggestions that our members might have which could help in addressing the problem of unwanted cold callers.

Use of Your Personal Information

Neil Dickson/David Eatock

It's virtually impossible for you to stamp out companies trading in your personal information. However, many people make themselves easy targets for nuisance calls by not reading the paperwork when they sign contracts, whether it be for credit, insurance or any other service.

There should be a clause in the small print where you will be asked if you are happy for the organisation to pass your details on to third parties. Read the clause carefully and tick the boxes - or not - as appropriate. Note that there are often two boxes to tick – one allowing the organisation itself to contact you and another to allow them to pass your details on to third parties.

A spokesman for consumer group Which? says: “Companies can be quite sneaky about how they phrase their opt-in/opt-out options so read the small print carefully before ticking/unticking boxes. Don't leave your personal information on your answer-phone message or give it out over the phone to cold-callers.” Source: Moneysupermarket.com

So whether you are signing a piece of paper or filling in an online form, always look for the opt-in/out boxes and read carefully to establish whether you need to tick them or leave them unticked.

Look-out

Look-Out is produced by a group of volunteers from the CENW Committee.

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter are welcomed. Please send contributions via email to ***lookout@cenw.org.uk*** or contact the chairman (details below).

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The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views held by the Editors or the Currie East Neighbourhood Watch scheme.