

Doddinghurst Neighbourhood Watch Annual Report 2012-13

Doddinghurst Neighbourhood Watch continues to thrive. Fortunately local crime levels continue to be low compared to other areas (although still extremely distressing to the few victims) and we hope that low level may in part be due to our activities. The report is split into three main sections: One about the people who support us; one about our regular weekly or monthly activities; and one about the one-off or annual events which we run or in which we take part.

People:

This year has seen Doddinghurst Neighbourhood Watch continuing to be active and even growing in membership a little despite the sad loss of our Chairman, Bill Reid, who passed away in September. Bill worked so hard for the people of Doddinghurst and he is greatly missed. Peter Fisk is standing in for Bill in chairing the meetings until our next AGM, but in the meantime, Peter Salmon does most of the hard work, assisted by several other active members.

Sadly we have also lost the invaluable services of Emma Clark, our local Crime Prevention Officer who has been relocated to Rayleigh as police cut-backs bite. We will still have help from Tony Ellis (Crime Reduction Tactical Adviser) in Ongar who now covers 'our patch' as well as other areas. Emma will be missed, particularly for her tremendous efforts with Junior NhW, but we wish her well in her new post.

Regular Activities:

Our regular activities continue to include our meetings on the first Tuesday of every month to liaise with the police, consider the latest crime warnings and statistics, and plan any forthcoming activities. The warnings are incorporated into the monthly 'Scary be Wary' notices which Ingrid Van der Pol and others distribute widely around the village for all to see. Warnings, requests for information and other news items are also circulated by email to all members and put up on our web pages at www.doddinghurst.org.uk. This year we have been particularly busy circulating information about rogue traders and the many scams that arrive by post, telephone, personal caller and the internet. Community Speedwatch sessions have continued from time to time throughout the year, but less frequently than in other years as the poor weather would often have rendered them unsafe.

Events:

Our year started with us and Brentwood Police each having a table at the Mayfair in the Village Hall. Thanks to the generosity of members and residents £100.60 was raised at our Tombola which helped towards providing items for our Junior section and the purchase of a "Bill Reid Junior Citizens Cup". This was gifted to the Junior School and Mrs Cooper and her team will add the names of two children who have excelled in their community spirit to the cup each year. This year this celebration of community spirit is on Maundy Thursday.

In June we all enjoyed the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and like many other Village organisations were able to support by way of a display the Flower Festival in All Saints Church. The Church looked fabulous and our thanks goes to Amanda Wright for producing our lovely flower arrangement. Later that month we used our gazebo for the first time to appear outside Budgens during National NhW week and on National Road Safety Day. We managed to arrange for the Fire Service to bring along their multi purpose vehicle and some of the Children from the Junior School were able to receive some safety lessons there. We gave each child a reflective safety badge and a "Junior Highway Code" booklet. In addition we arranged for First Responders to be present and they too gave an insight to the Children, and residents, of the voluntary work they do. In attendance also was a Police Driver with his Fast Response Car and he also gave out useful information and guidance.

Later in the year, as part of the Suzy Lamplugh Personal Safety Awareness campaign we again appeared outside Budgens and handed out relevant booklets and information.

December saw us appearing at the Junior School Christmas Fayre and also taking part, with some of the children, in Brentwood Polices' Driver Awareness Campaign that month. With the support of a Traffic Officer from Chigwell, a PCSO and Crime Reduction Officer from Brentwood, and ourselves, the children took part in a "Speedwatch". Despite the presence of uniformed Police some motorists were still driving at nearly 40 m.p.h. outside the School and were duly stopped and talked to by the Traffic Officer. They were then given the opportunity of either the Police taking the matter further or speaking with the children. All chose the latter but were lost for words, and realised the seriousness of their speeding when the last question asked by the children was "What would you say to my Mum and Dad if you had killed me". This really hit home! The children enjoyed the activity and we hope they will influence their parents' driving!

Spring has seen us start our four afternoon sessions with year five at the Junior School. We contribute to the PHSE unit of the curriculum, interacting with the children on matters such as Personal safety, Looking After Your Property, Reducing Burglary etc. Our sincere thanks goes to Mrs Cooper and her team for all their continued support in our work.

Mrs Cooper has for some time been extremely concerned about speeding and parking problems outside and in the vicinity of the Schools. We are now working with the Schools on a way of alleviating or at least reducing this problem. We have bought some traffic cones for use in reducing antisocial parking and are planning signs to ask all motorists to keep to 20mph during school times.

We have also taken on the mantle of promoting, and to a degree running, Neighbourhood Watch throughout the whole Borough of Brentwood. We now have regular contact with co-ordinators/members in South Weald, Kelvedon Hatch; Stondon Massey; Shenfield; Hutton Poplars; Ongar Road/above A12 and West Horndon. We are now working on Pilgrims Hatch and Ingatestone. We hold and administer a small budget which was allocated for use by the whole borough separately from our own local funds. We also represent Brentwood on the Essex NhW County Executive and maintain a small presence on the national Ourwatch website.

Thanks to :-

Councillor Ann Naylor for allocating her Ward Budget to a project covering speeding outside the school. We are extremely grateful for this.

The Parish Council for their support and allowing us to use the Parish Rooms for our meetings.

David Frankton and Zaza for allowing us to use The Link to pass on information to all households in the Village.

Rob Avery at Budgens for his continued support of our events outside the shop.

Bits and Bytes for sponsorship of the printing inks for some of the Scary be Wary posters.

Emma Clark, Crime Reduction Officer and Colin Freeman, Essex Watch co-ordinator for attending our meetings and offering valuable help and guidance.

Plus, of course, the other police officers who have supported our activities when their limited availability permitted.

Report by Peter Salmon (Treasurer) and Peter Fisk (Acting Chairman)