

Community Safety

The newsletter from
Hart District Council



Issue 31 - November 2023

This Newsletter aims to provide information around safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), raise awareness of current issues across the district and promote the good work of our partner agencies and celebrate the successes we have had.

We can be contacted online: [Report antisocial behaviour | Hart District Council](#)

by phone: **01252 774476** or by e-mail: communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

'tis the Season to be Vigilant

Our police partners have made us aware of a recent series of dwelling burglaries in Hart – particularly in the Fleet area. Whilst our intention is not to cause alarm, it is important to remain vigilant and take the opportunity to review home security. With Christmas fast approaching and possible plans to head away to visit friends and family, it is even more key to ensure that you leave your home as secure as possible.

The recent burglaries have involved criminals gaining access through side gates, then breaking in through patio doors. Whilst security provision is a personal choice and, of course, budget dependent, there are some quick, low-cost measures that can be taken to make your home less appealing and easy to access:

- additional gate locks - making them hard to reach or raising the height, if possible
- anti-climb paint for top edges of fences and gates
- security motion-activated security lighting or signs will deter - available in most DIY stores
- video doorbells can both deter intruders and alert owners of visitors - they can also be excellent evidence gathering devices in the unfortunate event of becoming a victim
- gravel paths are not favoured by criminals since any noise will alert residents and neighbours
- prickly bushes can also help, but take time to grow - consider these for the future

Ultimately, remaining vigilant to any suspicious activity or people within our communities will play a huge role in keeping communities protected – including looking out for vehicles or people '**patrolling**' streets – particularly now as many online orders are being delivered.

Always provide delivery instructions with online orders to ensure parcels are not left in sight. Police data during the last year shows a 57% increase in parcel thefts, known as '**Porch Piracy**' with 25% of these crimes committed in November and December.

For advice or help on your consumer rights around any parcels that you have not received, see the [Consumer Council website](#).



Joining or creating a local [Neighbourhood Watch](#), WhatsApp or Nextdoor group on your road will help to share information and ensure you and your neighbours support one another.

Police always prefer to receive information than not, since it may be important and provide a piece of the jigsaw that they were missing so please **report all crime or ASB, including suspicious activity** to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary (HIOW) [online](#) or through calling **101** (call times to 101 are now much improved) – or calling **999** if there is immediate threat to life or the crime is in progress. Please see here for further [crime prevention](#) advice.

Community Safety in Action

Issue

Shoplifting is an increasing issue for our retailers particularly in the run up to Christmas. With both the cost-of-living crisis and gift packs common place in many shops, this time of year sees it reach peak levels.

Response

It is understood that many retailers are not reporting issues due to lack of confidence in a response, long call waiting times on 101 and because certainly some of the larger, chain retailers have budgets which account for losses of this type. Promotion of the DISC reporting system through FleetWatch is underway which allows for retailers to report via an App which automatically generates a Police report - so no more 101!

Action

On 6 November 2023 at 1150, a retailer on Fleet Road reported an attempted theft of high value items using the DISC reporting system. A CCTV image of the perpetrator was uploaded to the secure system and circumstances of the crime were shared across all retailers signed up to the scheme.

Outcomes

All retailers linked up to the DISC system were aware immediately to be vigilant to this person in their stores. The local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) picked the crime up at 1300 when their duty started and by 1800 had identified, located and dealt with the perpetrator.

For more information on FleetWatch and sign up for the DISC system – see the [Fleet BID application form](#).

Fleet Phoenix Christmas Toy Nominations are now OPEN

Following on from the success of last year's Christmas Toy donation, Fleet Phoenix will be running this service again this year for any child or young person, 0-18, living or educated in Hart or Rushmoor that would benefit from a little something extra at Christmas.

To refer children/young people to receive a wrapped gift from their community, please just send their name, gender, age, address, details of siblings and contact number of their parent(s)/guardian(s) to:

charlotte.tickner@fleetphoenix.co.uk

Nominations are open until **Friday 1 December 2023**

Changes to Law on Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous oxide is a colourless gas, also known as 'laughing gas' used under regulation within medical and dental settings. It can be misused for its psychoactive effects – or to 'get a high' – by inhalation. It is a wider issue within communities because it often creates massive litter issues when the small silver bottles it most often comes in are discarded in large number in public places.

Prior to 8 November 2023, nitrous oxide was subject to the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, however, it had not been an offence to possess nitrous oxide (except in a custodial setting). Since 8 November 2023, anyone found in possession of Nitrous oxide is now classified as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, where its intended use is to be wrongfully inhaled 'to get high'. This also means that anyone involved in the importation, exportation, production and supply, or who knows or is reckless as to whether it is likely that another person will wrongfully inhale it, will also be committing an offence.

For more information: see the [Home Office Nitrous oxide ban guidance](#).

If you have received this monthly **Hart Community Safety Newsletter** forwarded to you and you would like to subscribe and receive it directly, please drop us a line with your request at:

communitysafety@hart.gov.uk