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**RELENTLESS ON...**  
METAL THEFT

## Relentless raids at scrap dealers

26 people were arrested for handling stolen goods, money laundering and theft following the launch of the force's Relentless on Metal Theft campaign in September.

The launch day of action saw over 300 officers from Avon and Somerset Police simultaneously enter and search over 40 scrap metal dealerships across the force area including several yards in the West Somerset. Four people were arrested in Somerset and approximately 40 tonnes of suspected stolen property were seized across the force area.

Further activities were also carried out in November in a regional day of action, with action across both the force area and in Gloucestershire and Gwent. 16 scrap yards were searched across Somerset and three men were arrested on this district after a copper tank containing a tracking device was stolen in Taunton.

Chief Superintendent Lawrie Lewis said: "Using tracking devices in just one of many tactics we employ to target criminals. They are relatively inexpensive, easy to use and vary in size and form so can be used in a variety of different things and provide effective and speedy results. Forensic marking fluids such as SmartWater are also particularly effective."

Metal theft affects people at all levels including national companies, places of worship, community buildings and private homes. It is estimated to cost the UK over £1 billion pounds a year and is increasing nationally due to the global rise in metal prices. Fortunately in the Avon and Somerset force area, figures indicate that numbers are considerably lower than most other areas.

Inspector Alex Cohen, from Operational Planning said: "The consequences of metal theft stretch beyond the financial implications. Following the recent theft of BT cable in Somerset the Coastguard lost emergency communications capability for 12 hours and according to ACPO figures 10 people have died in the last year as a result of metal theft.

"We hope that our actions reiterate the importance we place upon preventing and detecting the theft of metal. We're pleased with the results – it is very positive to see the majority of yards are entirely legitimate and are working with us. However, I am keen to reassure the community that our hard work does not stop here. We will continue to use an intrusive approach in dealing with the thieves and handlers who engage in the theft and sale of stolen metal at a cost to each and every tax payer who have to pick up the bill for this criminality in some form or another."

If you would like further advice regarding protecting your home or business or you have information about illegal activities in your area, please contact police on 101. Alternatively you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

Minehead, Williton  
and Exmoor

Covering the areas of: Alcombe, Aville Vale, Brompton Ralph & Haddon, Carhampton & Withycombe, Crowcombe & Stogumber, Dulverton & Brushford, Dunster, Exmoor, Minehead, Old Cleeve, Porlock & District, Quantock Vale, Quarne, Watchet, West Quantock, and Williton.

## You said, we did:

- **You said:** You were disturbed by the noise from a recent illegal rave in Timberscombe.
- **So we:** Dispersed the event and made seven arrests. There is currently an investigation underway to identify further organisers and intelligence gathering to prevent future illegal events.



## Watchet Arrests

Two local men have been arrested and charged following a series of burglaries in Watchet Marina, which are thought to have occurred between September 23 – 26 2011. Five boats were broken into and items stolen including GPS systems and other electrical equipment.

A 26-year-old from Minehead and a 40-year-old from Williton have both been charged with five counts of burglary. The 26-year-old was arrested after forensic evidence was found that linked him to the offences. He is currently in prison on remand awaiting trial. The 40-year-old handed himself in to police and is currently on bail with conditions in place that restrict him to his home address between 11pm and 6am and prevents him from entering Watchet Marina at any time.

Some of the stolen property has been recovered and returned to the owners. A pair of binoculars, a hand-held Garmin GPS system and Phillips DVD player are still outstanding and police would like to hear from anyone who may have been offered such items for sale or who has any information that might lead to their recovery.

DC James Holdsworth said: "We are pleased to have been able to recover and return some of the stolen items, however it would have been easier if the items had been security marked. I would encourage everyone to mark their property – it does dramatically increase the likelihood of getting back your items should the worst happen and can act as a deterrent to thieves.

"I would also suggest that anyone who has a boat follows some simple security advice to minimise the risk of them falling victim to opportunist thieves:

- Make sure all doors and windows are secure when you leave the boat.
- Where possible fit alarm systems.
- Inform the Harbour Master as to when you are going to be away from your vessel particularly for extended periods of time.
- Property mark and register any high-value electricals. When possible remove them and take them with you if you are leaving for an extended period, or lock them in a secure place.
- Call 101 for more information.

## 101 for Police

We have launched a new non-emergency number that is quick and even easier for you to give us a call. Avon and Somerset Police's non-emergency number has changed from 0845 456 7000 to **101**. It's part of a national programme, which will see all police non-emergency numbers change to 101 by the end of the year and mean that you can contact any police force by using one number.

Although 999 is well-recognised, a recent national survey found that only half of the public knew the number to call if they wanted to speak to their local police about non-emergency issues.

**Use 999:** In an emergency if someone is at risk of being hurt or a crime is happening there and then.

### Use 101 to:

Report a crime  
Contact local officer  
Get crime prevention advice  
Make an appointment with a police officer  
Or for any other non-emergency telephone 18001 101.

Calls to 101 from landlines and mobile phones will cost 15p per call irrespective of its duration. In an emergency the public should still call 999, such as when a crime is in progress, when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened. People who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired will be able to textphone 18001 101.

## We need you!

**Are you looking for a new challenge?**

**Do you want to develop some new skills?**

**Do you want to give something back to your community?**

**If so, we would like to hear from you.**

We have a range of volunteer opportunities across this policing sector and we are looking for some special and talented individuals to join the local team.

The opportunities on offer include CCTV operators, Neighbourhood Watch coordinators, Community SpeedWatch members and general volunteers to help our neighbourhood policing teams with community projects.

We are also looking for members of the equestrian community to help pilot a project in Exmoor. We would like to hear from keen and competent horse riders, who have their own animal or regular access to a horse they know well, to join a new scheme that will see a new Mounted Special Constabulary and mounted section of the new Rural Volunteer Team - who will function almost as a Neighbourhood Watch.

The Rural Volunteer Scheme is not just limited to those on horseback. Local officers are keen to extend the opportunity to anyone across Exmoor including regular dog walkers, farmers, game keepers and anyone already in an existing watch scheme to get involved and be our rural eyes and ears!

**For further details please contact PC Nick Wood on the new 101 number.**

**Avon and Somerset Police Authority wants to hear your views** We would like to know what you think about your local police, where resources should go and how much you are prepared to pay towards policing. We would like residents from across Avon & Somerset to be part of focus groups on the police budget. If you would like to take part call 01275 816377 or email [feedback@aspola.org.uk](mailto:feedback@aspola.org.uk).

**Remember** – changes to the way the police are held to account are planned with Police Authorities being abolished and replaced with Police and Crime Commissioners. For the latest information go to [www.aspola.org.uk](http://www.aspola.org.uk)

# Door Step Crime Prevention:

Be on your guard when anyone you're not expecting turns up at your door. Make them wait outside.

Bogus 'officials' may be smartly dressed or in a utility company uniform but always ask them for I.D. Call the company but don't use the number they give you, use Yellow Pages or call directory enquiries.

Bogus callers usually work in pairs. Beware of one distracting you while the other is up to no good – don't let them in.

Bogus 'workmen' may say that they need to come in to make urgent repairs. If you need any building work done, get several written quotes from reputable firms preferably recommended by a friend.

## ✂ Crime Prevention Cut Out and Keep! ✂

### Home Security:

- Always ensure that your doors, windows and any side or rear gates are locked. If there isn't easy access it can deter burglars. Use good quality locks.
- Install PIR motion sensor outdoor lights at the front and rear of your house.
- Plants can be an effective and attractive method of home grown security. Prickly or thorny plants can protect the perimeters of your garden, form a barrier around drainpipes, or beneath windows making a forced entry more difficult.
- Mark your property with your post code and house number or the first two letters of your house name and place the details on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).
- Install a burglar alarm where possible and fit a battery operated alarm to your outbuildings.
- Leave lights and a radio on a timer switch to make the house look occupied if you are going out.
- Report any suspicious activity!
- Join you local Neighbourhood Watch – you are four times less likely to be burgled.

### Rural Security:

- Make sure that all vehicles are immobilised or kept in a locked building. If left in fields, make sure they are not near roads. Always remove the keys.
- Keep farm boundaries in a good state of repair so that fences and gates cannot be moved easily. Use capping hinges on gates to prevent their removal.
- Brand livestock to make sure they are easily identifiable.
- If you can, install CCTV near your home and in the outlying parts of your farm.
- Use security lighting and close gates in to yards and driveways.
- Make sure that valuable items are stored in secure buildings with good quality doors and British Standard locks and windows.
- Make sure all your property is marked with your details. You can have this done for free by signing up to Rural Watch.
- Report any suspicious vehicles.

Police are reminding the public to keep a "clean car" and not leave any items on display to would-be thieves. Theft from cars has unfortunately increased in Somerset West by approximately 20% this year and local police are appealing to the public to help stop thieves from helping themselves.

Inspector Lisa Simpson said: "Having your car broken into means inconvenience and cost to the victim. Once you have gone through the disruption of having your car repaired and the insurance process, most of the time it leaves the victim out of pocket as the excess is normally more than the value of the goods stolen.

"Don't create a market in which thieves can operate. Buying a cheap sat nav' for £20.00 from someone in the pub usually means it's either broken or stolen. If you buy stolen property not only are you giving thieves a reason to steal but you could be arrested for handling stolen goods."

Across the district, local officers have increased both high-visibility and plain clothes patrols to target car thieves. Vulnerable vehicle patrols have also increased to help alert car owners that they have made their property attractive and vulnerable to thieves by either leaving items on display, a window open or a door unlocked. Police are also deploying their covert capture cars to catch thieves red-handed.

### Car Crime Prevention:

- Lock the doors, windows, boot and sunroof every time you leave your car - however briefly.
- Don't leave anything on display valuable or not. Remember, the cost of replacing a broken window is often far more than the value of goods stolen.
- Try and park in designated, busy and well-lit places. Avoid leaving your car in isolated dark spots particularly overnight.
- If you can, take your belongings with you. If you can't, lock everything out of sight in the boot.
- **Never leave the following anywhere in your car:**
  - Cheque, credit and debit cards, cash, wallets or handbags.
  - Driving documents and personal correspondence. They could help a thief to sell your car or provide a cover story if stopped by the police.
  - Satellite navigation systems
  - Mobile phones. 40% of car break-ins involve the theft of a mobile phone. Mark your phone and battery with your postcode and keep a note of its serial number in a safe place.
  - Radio/CD Players should always be removed where possible. Make a note of the serial number and keep it in a safe place. Register your car and its contents with [Immobilise.com](http://Immobilise.com)

**Call 999 if you see anything suspicious**



You can also visit us on Facebook, You Tube, Twitter, through you mobile or TV service or via our Police Kiosks



# New Beat Manager for Williton and Old Cleeve

PC Andy Ware became the new beat manager in October. Previously on the emergency response teams, Andy is delighted to have joined the Williton Neighbourhood Team. He says he would be keen to hear from local residents about their concerns and priorities. You can contact him on the new 101 number or come and meet him at your local Parish Council meetings



KEEPING YOU

# INTOUCH

# Neighbourhood Watch



I thought I would start by sharing a good news headline! Your local policing teams, year to date, are detecting more crime than ever before in this area!

Through close working with you, our vigilant communities, and together with our Partners (Parish and local Councils, Somerset County Council departments, Housing Associations, Schools and colleges and Fire to name but a few) we are tracing suspects and bringing offenders to justice.

Whilst my team and I do feel proud of this, we are not complacent. We are well aware that some crimes are unresolved and this will be the centre of our focus for the remaining half of the year. The appeal to our communities is to help my teams stop the would-be or opportunist criminal in your area. There is crime prevention advice on page 3 but our local policing challenges remain theft from insecure buildings, outbuildings and vehicles, and also mindless acts of damage. **You can help us.**

This newsletter features information about how you can assist in NHW, Speedwatch or becoming a volunteer or Special Constable. Whether you are a volunteer or not, you could help your community by being a good witness. A good witness is someone who can keep **ORDER**:

**Odd** - see something suspicious or odd?

**Registration** - note the vehicle registration number.

**Description** - note what the person or vehicle looked like.

**Event** - What was happening that was unusual or suspicious.

**Report** - tell us as soon as possible.

Ultimately a good witness is the eyes and ears my teams rely upon!

**Inspector Lisa Simpson**

If you need this document in another format

Telephone - **0845 456 7000**

Typetalk - **01275 816 888**

or visit

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/WebsiteResources/accessibility/](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/WebsiteResources/accessibility/)

Following a consultation, our district Newsletters will now include two columns devoted to our Neighbourhood Watch schemes. It was felt it would be more cost-effective than producing separate documents. We also felt it would raise the profile of the 1,160 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Somerset West and the 1,000 businesses, farms and other organisations that take part in other types of watch schemes, such as Farm and Rural Watch. I would like feedback in terms of whether this new approach works and how we might improve it further.

This year we have sadly seen a rise in levels of thefts from motor vehicles whilst other acquisitive crime categories are only showing a minimal reduction. I would therefore ask our Watch members to remain vigilant and follow the advice within this newsletter. The vast majority of crimes are committed by opportunist criminals who just see the opportunity and take it! We have sent over 1,000 messages out to our schemes this year about crime prevention methods, crime trends and other information. I need your help to reduce crime.

### Good Work from some of our active Neighbourhood Watch schemes:

Two separate Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators were recently both the subject of cold callers at the door. Both immediately reported this to police by calling 999 and spread the word within their areas. Some residents had been persuaded to sign contracts for work to be done which had raised alarm with their families.

Fortunately, thanks to their quick actions both incidents were resolved and no-one lost any money. However our staff would not have been in a position to deal with these matters had it not been for the co-ordinator's swift action in calling the police and spreading the word locally.

### Have you thought about encouraging friends and family to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme?

As you know there are many benefits from being involved. We send messages to co-ordinators to inform them of crime trends as well as crime reduction information and special offers on security equipment. Being in a scheme sometimes means discounts on house insurance as insurers believe you are four times less likely to become a victim of crime if you are part of an active and registered watch. We are pleased to say that in this area it is thought that this is nearer to five times less likely to become a victim of burglary.

If you would like further information contact the Neighbourhood Watch Office on 01823-363348 during office hours, or email [lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk)

Lastly I want to say a big thank you to all of our schemes, particularly the co-ordinators, for your assistance in keeping our communities safe. As a result of the calls we received from you this last month we received 17 calls that led to positive police follow-up! Please keep talking to us.

**Superintendent Trevor Margenout**



Call the charity  
**Crimestoppers** anonymously on  
**0800 555 111**

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

*We never ask for your name  
or trace your call*