

Welcome

Welcome to the winter edition of 'The Croydon Eye'. Since our last issue we have hosted our first ever Crime Prevention Day in association with the Croydon Met Police. The day was a huge success; attendees were able to hear first-hand from our senior police officers about the most prevalent criminal activity in Croydon and



Borough Commander Dave Stringer and The Mayor of Croydon, Cllr Humayun Kabir

what the police and other agencies are doing to help reduce crimes where we live.

We also heard from Donna Murray Turner, the chair of Croydon's Safer Neighbourhood Board about the importance of community engagement and Croydon's cabinet member, Hamida Ali outlined the council's public health approach to tackling violence in the borough.

FREE CRIME PREVENTION TOOLS

Attendees were able to pick up advice and free crime prevention tools such as personal alarms and SmartWater kits from our marketplace with stalls from Trading Standards and Victim Support amongst others.

Similar events are being planned for different parts of the borough in 2020 so watch out for more information on those

NEWSLETTER OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CROYDON

Croydon Eye

WINTER 2019



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

next year. We have included some stats on cyber-crime, specifically for Croydon, in this issue – it is quite alarming how many cyber-crimes and scams are being committed. Please do heed the advice below and of course remember to pass it on to neighbours, friends and family – especially those more vulnerable.

We hope you find this newsletter useful. Your next Croydon Eye will be circulated in spring 2020!

#FeelSafeStaySafe

Police update

We were very grateful to have the Borough Commander for Croydon, Bromley and Sutton, Chief Superintendent Dave Stringer join us and speak at our Crime Prevention Day. Mr Stringer along with some of his team, Inspector Stephen Warnes and Acting Inspector Cathy Thomas, spoke about the key operations and areas that their teams are currently focussing on in Croydon. Please see a summary of some of the main points below (all stats as at 5 October 2019):

- **Croydon is hoping to receive some additional police officers** as part of the government's decision to recruit a further 20,000 police. The extra police officers will be placed in wards where criminal activity is higher; this means that wards with higher incidents of crime such as Fairfield and Broad Green are more likely to get extra police officers as opposed to wards in the south of the borough where the number of crimes is lower.

- **Croydon is one of the first London boroughs to see a decline in knife crime.** Knife enabled crime is down 14%. Stop and search is a tool that Croydon police have been using and feel is effective in reducing knife crime. 181

arrests for possession of a knife have been made in Croydon this year as a result of stop and search. A further 531 arrests were made for drugs offences.

- **The bulk of Croydon's crime occurs in the town centre** (15% of the total crime in Croydon). The police and their partner agencies have been working on two major operations around West Croydon and the town centre to reduce crime, especially drug dealing and violence. The police have made over 200 arrests this year in a very small area outside West Croydon station. The arrests were mainly for drugs offences, carrying weapons and violence with 15 weapons

seized. 10 of the most prolific offenders have been given a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) – which means that they are no longer allowed to come into Croydon.

- **Rental properties being used as cannabis factories is also an issue in Croydon.** The police have found 30 properties across the borough this year which were being used to grow cannabis. Tell-tale signs include curtains of the property being drawn for long periods of time; a large extractor fan on the outside of the property and of course the smell of the cannabis itself. Some but not all of the factories were directly related

to known crime gangs. Often police intel comes from neighbours and residents in the area who suspect that a property is being used to grow cannabis.

- **Croydon police are working on an operation to tackle burglary across the borough.** The police have been targeting known, prolific burglars and have made a number of arrests. October – December is a peak time for residential burglary and the police urge residents to try and make their homes as safe as possible. Please see advice later in the newsletter.

CYBERCRIME IN CROYDON

In August 2019* there were 224 reports made to Action Fraud by residents of Croydon borough. The losses described over these 224 reports total £434,640, meaning an average loss of £1,940 per report.

TOP 3 TYPES OF FRAUD BY VOLUME (NO. OF REPORTS) WERE:

Online Shopping Fraud	38 reports	£25,512 lost
Advance Fee Fraud	20 reports	£4,718 lost
Consumer Fraud	19 reports	£25,478 lost

TOP 3 BY AMOUNT LOST WERE:

Investment Fraud	£208,539 lost	8 reports
Banking Fraud	£70,282 lost	19 Reports
Romance Fraud	£29,737 lost	5 reports

More information on the different types of fraud listed above and information on how to protect yourself from fraud can be found at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia

*Data from Met Cyber Crime Unit/latest data available

November is courier fraud month

In most cases of courier fraud a fraudster phones their victim and claims to be from their bank, the police or other law enforcement authority. They then con the victim into revealing their PIN and credit or debit card details. Sadly, the most common victims of courier fraud are the elderly.

Examples of courier fraud include:

A scammer calls you, claiming to be from your bank or a police officer. They tell you either that:

- a fraudulent payment has been spotted on your card that needs sorting out
- someone has been arrested using your details and cards
- your bank account has been taken over and you need to transfer all the funds into a 'safe account'

You may be asked to call your bank using the phone number on the back of your card.

This convinces you that the call is genuine. But the scammer has kept the line open at their end, so when you make the call, you're unknowingly connected straight back to them or their friends.

They'll either ask you for your PIN or ask you to key it into your phone. No bank or other legitimate service will ever ask you for your PIN.



Brian Udell (centre), Badsha Quadir (left), Chris Garrard (right)

BURGLARY: BECOME A CREATURE OF HABIT

Whenever you go out, it's important to leave your home secure. Getting into an 'exit routine' can help ensure that you don't forget obvious yet important things, like not leaving valuables near windows, or not leaving lights on if it will be dark before you get home.

Try to get into the habit of following your own course of action when you lock up your home. This will ensure that you don't forget anything.

Here's what the Met recommend you do before you go out:

- close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you're only going out for a few minutes
- double-lock any door
- make sure that any valuables are out of sight

- keep handbags away from the letterbox or cat flap and hide all keys including car keys, as a thief could hook keys or valuables through even a small opening

- never leave car documents or ID in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways

- in the evening, shut the curtains and leave lights on

- if you're out all day, then it's advisable to use a timer device to automatically turn lights and a radio on at night

- set your burglar alarm

- make sure your side gate is locked

- lock your shed or garage

- lock your bike inside a secure shed or garage. 🔒

The scammer then sends a courier or taxi to pick up the card from your home. Even the driver may not know they're being used as part of the scam.

Once the scammer has both your card and PIN they can spend your money.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Behind the clever tricks, there are a few basic recurring elements that are common across many frauds, including courier fraud.

Here's what you need to remember:

Your bank or the police will **never...**

- call and ask you for your full PIN or full banking password

- Ask you to withdraw money to hand over to them.

- Ask you to transfer money out of your account.

It pays to stop and think anytime you receive a request for personal or financial information.

Remember, if you feel uncomfortable or unsure about what you're being asked to do, never hesitate to contact your bank or financial service provider directly, using a number you trust, such as the one listed on your bank statements or on the back of your card.

HOW TO REPORT IT

Report via Action Fraud, either online www.actionfraud.police.uk or call **0300 123 2040**.

If you've given your bank details over the phone or handed your card to a courier, call your bank straight away to cancel the card.

Courier fraud affects some of the most vulnerable members of our communities and we would really appreciate your support with helping the campaign reach as wide an audience as possible. 👁

CBNWA curry lunch: Thank you!

We had a great time at our annual fundraising curry lunch at the Royal Tandoori restaurant in July. Special thanks to the restaurant proprietor Badsha Quadir and local Barclays Bank Manager Chris Garrard who arranged matched funding from the bank. We raised a total of £1,600 which goes towards the costs of running the charity. Thank you to Brian Udell, our Chairman for arranging the raffle and of course to those of you who supported the event. 👁

Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator's details:

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