

Beware the damp-meter scam

Photo: iStock / Difydave



A WARNING FROM TRADING STANDARDS

Don't be caught out! We're receiving reports of some – often elderly, living alone – who have been victims of the damp meter scam. This fraud has been around for years and resurfaces every few months, bringing with it a wave of misery and loss. This is how it works:

Someone dressed either as a 'workman' (fluorescent jacket/overalls/work boots) or as a 'supervisor' (smart suit, shirt and tie), calls at your door. He tells you that your neighbour's property is experiencing damp issues and they suspect that the problem is emanating from your home. The situation is urgent and to assess the scale of the problem, they must install a damp meter in your home. This meter is a very expensive piece of equipment and you will need to contribute to the cost – but don't worry because your household insurance will pay for it".

No cash available...? No problem – this outfit is prepared to offer to accompany you to your bank and to give you a lift home afterwards. Alternatively they might tell you that you can transfer the money to their account – or pay by cheque.

Do not think for a moment that this seemingly legitimate payment process makes this an authentic 'company'. The bank account is likely to be that of a third person far removed from the day to day crime taking place. The cost varies hugely. We've had reports of people paying hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

Of course, in reality, there is no evidence of damp at all. Your neighbour has never reported any problems in their property – but if you only see them occasionally how do you know what you are being told is true? The meter is probably worthless tat – the machine – if one is installed at all may have no inner workings or just made to look like an electronic reader.

This may seem a ridiculous con to fall for. But you'd be shocked at how much some people have lost over the years through this type of crime. The offenders are plausible, convincing, well-practised in the art of persuasion. They choose their victims with care. Victims who often have no-one to discuss their concerns with, who are out of touch with today's prices and are physically unable to maintain their property for themselves.

Please – look out for your neighbours. Report any suspicions that you have about doorstep crime to Trading Standards or your local police. If you would like a quarterly bulletin from trading standards giving you an update on latest scams and rogue trading issues, call us on 03454 04 05 06 or by email on tradingstandards@croydon.gov.uk

NEWSLETTER OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CROYDON

Croydon Eye

SUMMER 2016



Croydon is safer now


FROM **ANDY TARRANT**
CROYDON BOROUGH
COMMANDER – MET POLICE



April saw the end of our 4 year challenge to reduce crime in Croydon by at least 20% – and we exceeded the target! Thanks to Neighbourhood Watch and others, there are over 4000 less victims of crime in Croydon than there were 4 years ago. We challenged people to guess, on average, how many crimes we get a day. You would be surprised at the results! For house breaking, I had answers as high as 25 when actually we only get 2. Muggings – the perception is that we suffer 10 or more crimes a day – in fact we only have 0.8! Croydon is far safer than some believe!

There are things that you can do to avoid becoming a victim. For example, join Neighbourhood Watch. Not only will you get to know your neighbours but membership can bring you other benefits, like paying less for crime prevention tools. Make your home or vehicle less of a target – leave lights or the radio on when you go out; don't leave valuable visible in your car/van and buy strong locks to secure your moped/motorcycle.


We have more Police officers in Croydon than ever and we are committed to delivering a neighbourhood-based approach, where each local area has a dedicated officer and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). Their details are available 'on line' and you can meet them at monthly ward panel meetings, the dates are on the Met Police website. These meetings are where you should raise any local issues in order that the team can address them.



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Thank you for your help!

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

As a result of the income generated by individuals, co-ordinators, or groups (especially Sanderstead Residents' Association) we are now in a better financial position. I would like to thank those of you who have made, or promised to make, donations to help ensure the future of the charity. I am pleased to confirm that Katie Moore has re-joined us after maternity leave as our part time Manager for at least one year. She is available ONLY ON EMAIL nhw@cbnwa.com to run the office and assist in our projects.

Your committee has also been active in raising funds at the *Junction Road Big Lunch* and *Sanderstead Festival*, as pictured, and a lunch, the profits from which were matched pound for pound by Barclays Bank.

A 36 page application has been submitted to Croydon Council for funding under its Community Programme.

This is indeed a busy and challenging time!! We have been without office

AN APPEAL TO RESIDENTS IN WATCH AREAS

If you value Neighbourhood Watch, would you be prepared to make an annual contribution to the charity? Just £3 per year from each household in a Watch area would enable us to remain active. If you can help in this way please let your Co-ordinator know so they can advise us of likely contributions and if this is a feasible option.



Junction Road Big Lunch

support for the last four months and we are grateful to Malcolm, the charity's Honorary Secretary who has gallantly assisted during that period.

We have received funding from MOPAC to assist in recruitment in the North of the Borough. If you have friends or relations in Broad Green, West Thornton or Thornton Heath who do not receive this newsletter, please let us know if they are willing to help.

You may have noticed changes in the format of this edition. That is due to Chris Thacker, our Treasurer, taking on the role of Editor. We are grateful to Chris for taking this on. To help Chris we have used a company, 'Chris Gander Design Associates', to refresh not only *Croydon Eye* but also our recruitment flyer and we are extremely pleased with the new look.

I would also like to thank Chris Adams, our



Sanderstead Festival

previous volunteer Editor, who produced many excellent editions.

If any of our readers are able to assist by joining our small committee, or helping in any other way, please get in touch.

A big thank you to those Co-ordinators who have delivered this edition in hard copy or by email. In particular I would like to thank the Co-ordinators who help with the batching of the hard copies and those who collect them after the batching session. This saves us postage costs.

Thanks go to our contributors, advertisers, and you our readers. We hope you will continue to support us.

Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator's details:

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