



## Neighbourhood Watch Report- Copthorne Residents Society - January 2024

Below is a summary of some of the reported crime. Three Rivers, however, is an extremely safe place to live with low levels of crime. Over 14,500 residents are now signed up to Neighbourhood Watch in Three Rivers – the largest membership of all the districts in Hertfordshire. You can sign up to Neighbourhood Watch by visiting [www.owl.co.uk](http://www.owl.co.uk) or alternatively, contact the Watch Liaison Team [wlo@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:wlo@herts.pnn.police.uk).

Hertfordshire Neighbourhood Watch is structured to align with the county's ten policing districts. There are also several other 'themed' watches, including Dog Watch, Business Watch and Rural Watch. HertsWatch unites these watches in Hertfordshire in order to help and inform residents, businesses and organisations and to encourage them to join a watch in their area - all with a common aim - to keep it the safest county in the UK and the one with the lowest crime figures.

Crime prevention advice: <https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

### Reported Crimes and Concerns in the Local Area.

#### 1. Trade Vans

For a lot of people their van is their livelihood and the impact of being a victim can be huge with repair bills, insurance claims and replacement of tools and unable to work.  
Ways in which criminals target vans:

##### DOOR PEELING

A lot of vans have sensors in the front, so side and back doors can be peeled back without anything being detected. Criminals do not need specialist tools for this and can leave the victim with a costly repair

##### KEY-FOB HACKING

The radio signal from your keys to the locks on your van can be intercepted. Criminals can unlock vehicles using a scanner

##### EASY OPPORTUNITIES

It may be easy to think "I WILL ONLY BE A SECOND" however, it only takes a second for a criminal to take an opportunity. This can be from leaving keys in the ignition for a quick parcel drop off to leaving the van unlocked whilst unloading

Ways to keep your van safe:

##### ADDITIONAL ALARMS

Alarms/sensors are available online and vary on price depending on your budget

##### ALWAYS STORE YOUR TOOLS ELSEWHERE AT NIGHT

Take them out of the van and put them somewhere secure

##### MARK YOUR PROPERTY

Mark your van and the tools with paint, markers or UV pens to make sure you're the recognisable owner if they're found. Take photos of items/serial numbers

##### PARK SOMEWHERE WELL-LIT

Something as simple as additional lighting can be enough to deter criminals. Being seen increases the risk of being spotted

## BACK UP AGAINST A WALL

If possible, reverse your van so the side and back doors can't be accessed

## INSTALL GPS TRACKING

Good quality trackers are off-putting and can help you get a stolen van back

## FARADAY POUCH

If your van is keyless, consider a Faraday pouch to stop the key transmitting. This can prevent criminals unlocking the doors to steal items and/or stealing your van

## KEEP IT LOCKED

It only takes a second for a criminal to have an opportunity. No matter how quick you think you will be. Switch the van off, take the keys with you and lock the doors every time you leave your van.

## 2. Pet Safety – Dog Owners

Just a small update regarding the safety of your dog. There has been an increase in the number of dog thefts in the Herts area. Please note that your dog must not only be micro chipped but must also be wearing a tag.

The Control of Dogs Order 1992 states tags must hold the name and address of the owner not just the name. Micro chips are a legal requirement, and your dog must be in possession of both.

## 3. Burglary Reduction in first Quarter of 2023

We have seen a big reduction in burglaries across Three Rivers district recently - 27 reported in Jan 2023 and 15 reported in Feb and so far 8 reported in March 2023.

This is likely to be due to hard work, additional local patrols, the fact that Herts Police (in partnership with other forces) have arrested and charged 3 people with burglary/conspiracy to burgle offences.

The police also have a further 2 burglary suspects on bail awaiting a CPS charging decision.

## 4. Emergency Alerts

**The UK government's new Emergency Alerts system is now live.** The system enables people to be contacted via their mobile phone when lives are in danger. It will be used to warn you in the event of emergencies, such as severe flooding.

[On Sunday 23 April 2023 at 3pm there was a national test of the Emergency Alerts service. Announcements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The message advised it was a test and there was no need to take any action.

Emergency Alerts are sent to all compatible mobile phones within an area of risk. They don't track your location, need your phone number, or collect personal data.

Only the government and emergency services can send them. If you don't have a mobile phone, you'll still be informed through other channels.

If you get an Emergency Alert, your phone or tablet will make a loud, siren-like sound for about 10 seconds. A message on your screen will tell you about the emergency and how best to respond. You can check an alert is genuine at [About Emergency Alerts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## 5. Phone Safety

Keep your phone out of sight in public places. Register your phone for free at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

Never leave your phone unattended and avoid storing your phone in a back pocket. Phones are safest in a zipped bag or inside pocket. If you are asked for the time by a stranger, refer to a watch or public clock where possible.

## DO'S & DONT'S

Don't leave your mobile device in view, such as tables or bars.

Always be aware of pickpockets when carrying a mobile phone, especially in busy places like cafes, shopping centres or at events

Various distractions methods are used, placing paper over your phone when it is on a table, offenders trying to confuse the owner, they then remove the paper aswell as the phone underneath

Be aware of who can see you using your mobile phone when in public places

Ensure your device is password protected so if it is stolen, your personal details can be protected.

### 6. Arrest of Two Prolific Burglars targeting Rickmansworth and Chorleywood

Two men have pleaded guilty to a Rickmansworth burglary in which jewellery was stolen. Johnny Doherty, aged 23, of London, and Patrick Hanrahan, aged 20, of Cambridgeshire, appeared at St Albans Crown Court on 20 July for a plea hearing. Doherty pleaded guilty to burglary, two counts of assaulting an emergency worker, and escape from lawful custody. He has been recalled to prison ahead of sentencing. Hanrahan pleaded guilty to burglary and assault of an emergency worker. He has been released on bail with strict conditions and is subject to electronic monitoring. Both are scheduled to be sentenced at St Albans Crown Court on Monday 18 September. The pleas relate to a burglary on Tuesday 20 June, when Doherty and Hanrahan were caught red-handed by police as they ransacked a property in The Clump. Officers from the Intervention team and Safer Neighbourhood Team responded to a call from an eagle-eyed member of the public, who reported seeing two men acting suspiciously around a property. When the teams arrived at the location, they disturbed the pair in action. They made off from police but were quickly detained, and during the arrest a PCSO and a PC were assaulted, however they required no medical treatment. Stolen jewellery was recovered and detectives are in the process of returning it to the victim.

### 7. Burglary - Windmill Drive

Between 21:00 - 22:00 on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, offender[s] committed a burglary at Windmill Drive, Croxley Green. Between these times, offender(s) are believed to have gained access through a ground floor rear door. Offender(s) have conducted a messy search and made off in an unknown direction.

### 8. Cyber Awareness

Action Fraud is sharing information to raise awareness of email and social media hacking, and how people can secure their online accounts properly.

Email and social media hacking is one of the most prevalent forms of cyber-crime reported to Action Fraud.

**There were 236 reports of hacking of social media and email reported by residents or business in Hertfordshire between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.**

**There have been 174 reports since 1st April 2023.**

The best way to keep hackers out is by enabling 2-step verification (2SV), even if they know your password. This means gaining access to your account requires verification from a mobile phone or email address specified by the account holder.

Reusing the same password for multiple account is also risky, as criminals only need to steal one of your passwords in order to get into many of your accounts. Combining 3 random words that each mean something to you is a great way to create a password that is easy to remember but hard to crack. Criminals can also use stolen personal photos and videos to extort victims into promoting scams to their social media followers.

Make sure you are using strong passwords and 2-step verification (2SV) to protect your accounts. Find out how here: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home>

If you think your email or social media account has been hacked, you should report it as a crime to Action Fraud here: [Action Fraud](#)

## 9. Burglary Copthorne Road

Sadly at the end of last year, between 27/11/23 06.00 – 05/12/23 01:30 offender[s] committed a burglary in Copthorne Road. Offender(s) have forced a 1<sup>st</sup> floor window open to gain entry and carried out an untidy search

## 10. Arrest of Prolific Burglar

A man has been charged and remanded in connection with a series of burglaries across Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere. Vasile Ganea, aged 31, of West Hendon Broadway, London, has been charged with seven counts of burglary, the first of which was reported in June this year.

- **Fern Way, Watford**, where jewellery was stolen on 24 June.
- **Fern Way, Watford**, where jewellery and foreign currency were stolen on 24 June.
- **Maple Close, Bushey**, where jewellery and cash were stolen on 26 June.
- **Old Common Road, Chorleywood**, where jewellery was stolen on 26 August.
- **Station Approach, Chorleywood**, where a property was broken into on 26 August.
- **Cassiobury Park Road, Watford**, where jewellery and foreign currency were stolen on 29 October.
- **Watford Road, Croxley Green**, where a property was broken into on 29 October.

Ganea appeared at Hatfield Remand Court on 31 October.

## 11. Keep Your On Line Bank and Other Financial Accounts Safe

Hertfordshire Constabulary is warning residents to be cautious around hacking of their online accounts. On average in Hertfordshire, between April and December 2023 **one person every day reported they had been hacked**, according to information from Action Fraud. While the hacks may not have directly led to money being lost, the hacks could be used to mount phishing scams or possible extortion attempts against the victim or their online contacts.

Ways to protect yourself from hackers:

- Use strong passwords. Make your passwords as difficult to guess as possible.
- Use Two Factor Authentication (2FA). This provides an extra security check when logging into online accounts.
- Keep your software up to date. This can prevent hackers exploiting security issues found in some applications.
- Use a firewall or anti-virus software. Firewalls protect one computer network from another by only allowing certain communications. Most computers with Windows or Mac OS come with a software firewall installed. Make sure it is turned on.
- Avoid clicking links or opening attachments in unsolicited emails or on social media messages.

You can check if your email address or password has been exposed online on the '[Have I Been Pwned](#)' website. (N.B. Spelling correct).

Visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) and [www.herts.police.uk/fraud](http://www.herts.police.uk/fraud) for advice on keeping safe online and please report any incidents to Action Fraud.

**Please remember the Watch Liaison Team cannot forward your information – you need to report it directly to [Action Fraud](#).**

## 12. Scam Affecting WhatsApp users

We are again warning residents to be wary of WhatsApp messages which appear to be from relatives asking for money to be sent to them. There were 28 reports during August 23 when local residents have lost money after having been targeted on WhatsApp by criminals pretending to be someone they know – typically their son or daughter. The criminals will usually begin the message with “Hello Mum” or “Hello Dad” and will say that they are texting from a different mobile number because their usual phone has been lost or damaged. Some say they accidentally dropped their phone down the toilet. They will then ask for money to purchase a new phone, or claim that they need money urgently to pay a bill. The criminal will then provide bank details for the payment to be made. This is a scam.

## 13. Anti-Social Behaviour Alleyway.

There have been reports of anti-social behaviour in the alleyway that leads from Copthorne Road down into the Chess Valley on the west side of the road, particularly in the summer. This includes reports of drug dealing. If you witness any anti-social behaviour please report to NHW, the Police or Crime stoppers. If you are in a locality to be able to keep a diary of any offences this would be useful.



You can register valuables and tools for free at <https://www.immobilise.com/> As a member of OWL you can get discounts for crime and safety products at <http://owlprotect.uk/>

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