



NEWSLETTER OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CROYDON

Croydon Eye

WINTER 2020



Chairman's message

2020 has certainly been a very challenging year for all of us. Many residents have had to endure particular hardships and difficulties. However, once again, our Croydon communities have pulled together to identify and support those who have needed most help.

Croydon Neighbourhood Watch has been very active in supporting our members with prompt and targeted information, spreading news and alerts, supporting individuals living on their own, highlighting particular issues and supporting and recognising both collective and individual effort in keeping our communities safe, informed and not isolated.

I regret that due to government restrictions it has not been possible to meet as a large group at either our annual lunch or our Crime Prevention Day. We are planning to hold a virtual AGM utilising our website and email. Co-ordinators, as members of the charity, will be advised accordingly.

The various problems have created difficulties in raising funds and I thank those of you who have made, or promised (gift aided) donations.

It gave me great pleasure to attend our Local Hero ceremony in Norbury Park (see page 4) and witness the real sense of community spirit amongst neighbours there. Our CALAT Adults with Learning difficulties (ALDD) Coronavirus help flyer for vulnerable adults was very well received as are our improved monthly updates which I hope you find useful.

In this fast changing world we are constantly striving to find new ways of communicating with our members, helping and advising on how to keep safe. One upside to lockdown was that many of us have been encouraged to make use of technology such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. I have been able to keep in touch with my committee as well as friends and family this way and it's great to hear that local organisations such as 'ClearCommunityWeb' are offering free help and advice on how to use such technology (see page 7).

In these uncertain times do watch out for the Porch Pirates and the latest scams.

Hopefully 2021 will be a less traumatic year and we will all be able to meet again in person. With each other's support and kindness we can meet and beat the problems.

Best wishes

• **Brian Udell**, *Hon. Chairman CBNWA*

Police update

We are aware of an increase in Catalytic Converter thefts as well as burglaries/ attempted burglaries of sheds and outbuildings in the Croydon area. Specific cars seem to be targeted and there are some prevention strategies you can put in place to make your car more secure...see more advice below.

What is catalytic converter theft? How is it done?

It is executed very quickly. Thieves often work in groups and target parked cars. They will usually park next to the victim's vehicle; jack it up from one side to get under it and then remove the catalytic converter with an angle grinder.

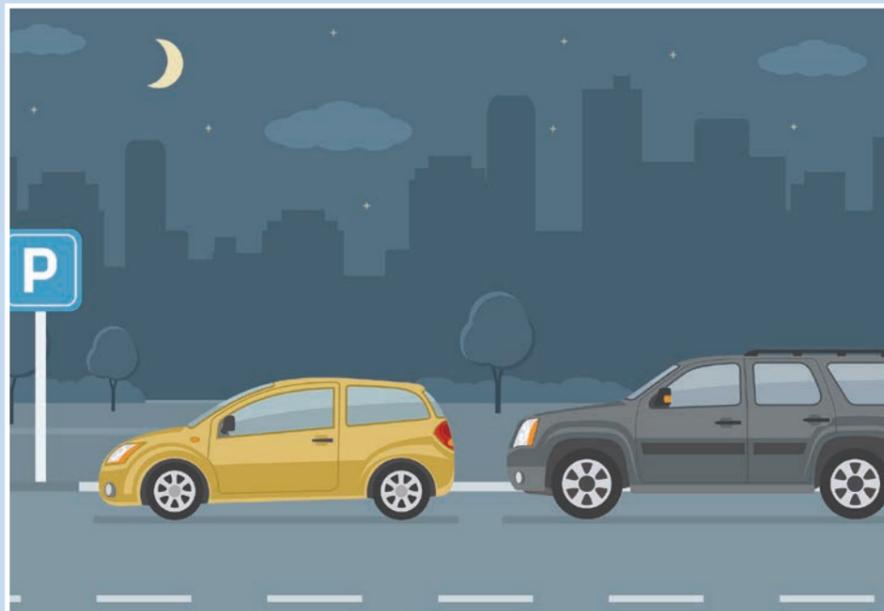
Where is this happening?

All over the country and across Croydon. Purley Way is a hotspot and there are a lot of offences recorded in Thornton Heath and Wallington. It happens in public car parks such as Ikea and Tesco's Purley as well as on the street and in people's drives. It often happens in broad daylight.

Are specific cars targeted?

Yes...Toyota Prius, Toyota Auris, Honda Jazz and Lexus RX cars are often targeted in catalytic converter thefts.

What should I do if I see this happening? Call 999.



How can I prevent this from happening to me?

- **Park your car in a locked garage** where possible, but if this isn't an option, then
- **Park close to fences**, walls or a kerb with the exhaust being closest to the fence,

park it in a well-lit and well-populated area

What is Croydon doing to help prevent this crime?

Earlier this year, Inspector Stephen Warnes put together a team to focus on catalytic converter offences under the operation name Op Basswood. The team review all offences for possible lines of enquiry, usually CCTV, and this has led to a number of arrests. They have also had arrests by coming across suspects directly and several have been charged who are in the court process. Inspector Warnes and his team have run different types of operations, some covert and overt and they are working with other boroughs and forces to share intelligence. They have a good

relationship with Toyota who are working on designing out the issue, and are currently in the process of assisting them with crime prevention/ property marking. They have visited and compliance checked all the scrap dealers on Croydon and neighbouring boroughs. They believe the stolen catalytic converters are being shipped across to the continent. They also monitor online sales via Facebook. The Op Basswood team can be contacted on **operationbasswood@met.police.uk**

Reference: [Nextdoor.co.uk](https://www.nextdoor.co.uk) accessed Nov 2020

wall or kerb to make the theft more difficult

- **Avoid parking your vehicle half on** the pavement and half on the road, as this may make it easier for thieves to access the catalytic converter
- **If parking in a public car park**, consider parking alongside other cars and facing your bonnet towards the wall if possible. With the catalytic converter positioned at the front of your vehicle, this will make it harder for thieves to get close enough to steal it
- **If your catalytic converter is bolted on**, you can ask for your local garage to weld the bolts to make it more difficult to remove.
- Alternatively, you can also **etch a serial number** on the converter
- **You can purchase a 'cage clamp'** which is a cage device that locks in around the converter to make it more difficult to remove
- **Speak to your dealership about** the possibility of adding a tilt sensor that will activate the alarm should any thief try to jack the vehicle up to steal the converter

Source: <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/advice/vehicle-crime/vehicle-crime/catalytic-converter-theft-prevention-advice> accessed Nov 2020

Shed and garage burglary

Croydon police have warned that as more people are staying at home, outbuildings may become more of a target. Sheds and garages are often vulnerable as they are not very secure and contain tools which the burglar can use to assist them to gain entry into a home.

Police Advice

In general, most people do not secure their shed or garage in the same way as they do their homes. People often end up using a flimsy lock or padlock to protect the contents – whether it's a car, bike or lawnmower. The fact is, a burglar will usually try a shed or garage first because they can find the tools they need to get into the house.

Think like a thief. Take a look at your shed and consider how you would break in.

- It's worth having a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws.
- Pay attention to hinges, as these are sometimes easily removable.
- If you have windows then these could be vulnerable unless they're secured with wire mesh or grills.
- Keep it locked at all times. Secure sheds with a hasp and staple fitted with a closed shackle padlock.
- For added security, consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key but they respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren.
- Garage doors can be made more secure by installing additional security such as padlocks to provide multiple locking points or using floor mounted locking T bars.
- If items can be seen from outside, they will be vulnerable so cover them up and tidy away tools.
- Use a ground anchor to secure motorcycles, pedal cycles and other high value items to stop them being easily removed.
- Ladders and tools left outside and insecure can often be used to break into or access your home so ensure these are locked to a ground anchor or put away after use



Source: [Old Coulsdon SNT post nextdoor.co.uk](https://www.nextdoor.co.uk) accessed Nov 2020

Local Hero Ceremony: Norbury Park

This summer, we asked our volunteer co-ordinators for nominations of local heroes that had gone above and beyond for their community during lockdown and the weeks that followed.

Vicky Bruce, a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator in St Oswalds Road, Norbury Park and many of her neighbours nominated local shop owners Mr Appu and Mrs Karthika Dhamodaran, who run Sara's Stores in Brickfield Road. Throughout the lock down, Appu and Karthika went the extra mile to help their customers and the local community.

As well as running their shop, they delivered orders to residents who were housebound and self-isolating, fetched and delivered medicines for isolating residents, made extra trips to the wholesale warehouse to keep stocks up of food items most in demand and regularly donated items to the Local Food Bank. All this made a huge difference to so many people.

As Vicky Bruce said: "They did all of this with cheerful smiles and a kind word for everyone, even though at times, we know they must



have been exhausted. Appu and Karthika really are good neighbours and care about their community. To us, they are true Local Heroes".

In recognition of the outstanding community spirit and compassion they showed towards local residents, Croydon Neighbourhood Watch were delighted to be able to present our Local Hero Certificate signed by our Chairman Brian Udell and endorsed by the Mayor of Croydon Cllr. Maddie Henson.

The certificate was presented by local Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury and Brian Udell in the presence of many of their fellow neighbours and customers, gathered outside their shop to show their thanks and gratitude. Vicky

Bruce also presented Appu and Karthika with a card with well wishes and messages of thanks, signed by neighbours from all the surrounding streets.

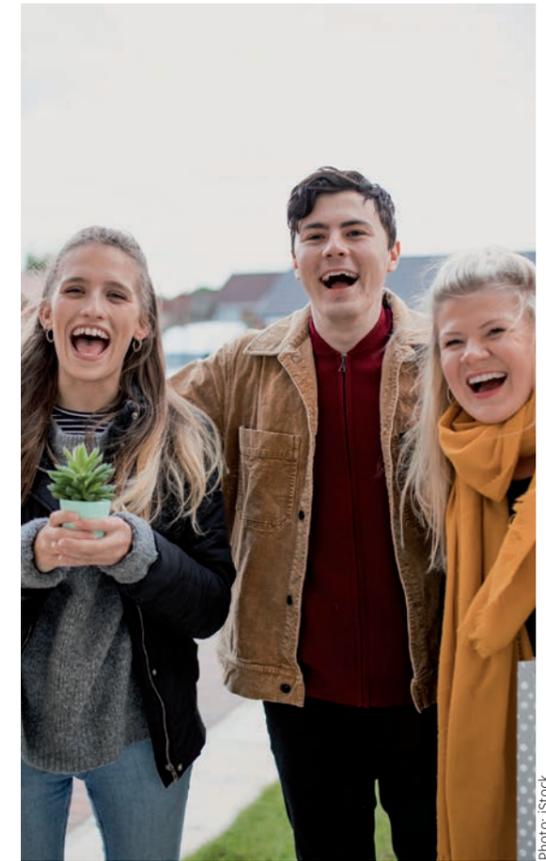
Appu commented "This is a community we want to live in, this is a community we want to work with. We are so proud of being in a community like this...and our promise here in front of you, is that we will work hard to bring everything, as much as we can, to this community".

The community spirit demonstrated by Appu and Karthika in Norbury Park, is an uplifting example of how Croydon residents have felt supported and looked after even in these most difficult of times.

Neighbours looking after neighbours

It is going to look and feel like a very different Christmas for many of us. In these next few weeks and months, let's remember to keep an eye on our neighbours, especially those more vulnerable. As the winter nights draw in, some people may feel less inclined to go to the shops or 'pop out' for basics or even to go for a walk. It may be harder to get those food delivery slots as people will be buying more for the festive season.

Some people may still not feel comfortable ordering online and may need a little help. Neighbourhood Watch like many other organisations and local people, has been really active in the community during the pandemic, supporting neighbours and vulnerable people and making communities stronger, more resilient and connected. Let's continue to do this where possible.



Cyber Crime and Fraud in Croydon

In September 2020* there were 388 offences reported to Action Fraud by residents of Croydon borough. The losses amounted to a total of £540,047, that's an average of £1,392 per victim.

Top 5 types of fraud by volume (no. of offences) were:

Fraud Type	Amount of Offences	Amount Lost
Misc. (False Representation)	76	£0
Online Shopping and Auctions	74	£27,714
Other Advance Fee Frauds	54	£19,925
Cheque, Plastic Card and Online Bank Accounts (not PSP)	31	£43,108
Other Consumer Non Investment Fraud	24	£48,492

Top 5 types of fraud by amount lost were:

Fraud Type	Amount of Offences	Amount Lost
Other Financial Investment	11	£157,674
Push Payment	23	£76,806
Other Consumer Non Investment Fraud	24	£48,492
Door to Door Sales and Bogus Tradesmen	6	£46,956
Cheque, Plastic Card and Online Bank Accounts (not PSP)	31	£43,108

*Data from Met Cyber Crime Unit/latest data available

Impersonation Scams: Be aware!

There were almost 15,000 impersonation scam cases reported in the first half of 2020, up 84 per cent compared to the same period last year. A total of £58 million was lost to impersonation scams in January to June 2020.

UK Finance is urging people to be aware of criminals exploiting Covid-19 to target their victims, after figures revealed a sharp rise in impersonation scams in the first half of this year.

What are they?

Impersonation scams occur when the victim is convinced to make a payment to a criminal claiming to be from a trusted organisation. This could include the police, a bank, a utility company, or a government department.

How do they happen?

Scams involving the criminal impersonating a bank or the police often begin with a phone call or text message claiming there has been fraud on the victim's account. The customer is then convinced that to protect their money they must transfer it to a 'safe account' which actually belongs to the fraudster. Other common scams involve text messages or emails claiming a victim must settle a fine, pay overdue tax or return a refund that was given by mistake.

Intelligence reported to UK Finance suggests that the rise in impersonation scams is



Photo: iStock/winy008

being partly driven by criminals exploiting Covid-19. These scams include fraudsters sending emails or text messages pretending to be from government departments and offering grants related to Covid-19.

Criminals may also get in touch claiming to be from an airline or travel agency, offering refunds for flights or holidays that have been cancelled due to the pandemic. Additionally, criminals are exploiting the growing numbers of people working remotely, by posing as IT departments or software providers and claiming that payments are needed to fix problems with people's internet connection or broadband or asking for remote access to the victim's computer.

Top signs that you are being targeted by an impersonation scam include:

- You receive a call, text, email or social media message out of the blue with an urgent request to make a payment

or for your personal or financial information.

- You're asked to act immediately, sometimes with the claim that 'your money is at risk' or 'your account will be blocked' if you don't.
- The caller asks you to transfer money to another account for 'safe-keeping'
- The sender's email address is different to that of the genuine sender

What advice is there?

- **Stop:** Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud. 

Customers can report suspected scam texts to their mobile network provider by forwarding them to 7726, and forward any suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk, the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) suspicious email reporting service.

Source: <https://ukfinance-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/impersonation-scams-almost-double-in-first-half-of-2020-as-criminals-exploit-covid-19-to-target-victims> accessed Nov 2020

ClearCommunityWeb: Local help with getting more out of modern technology

ClearCommunityWeb is a local organization based in Crystal Palace. They provide borough-wide digital skills training, advice and support services to community groups, older people, vulnerable adults and carers across Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark.

ClearCommunity says 'We understand, for many people, technology can be overwhelming. Making information as simple as possible can go a long way in giving people the confidence to overcome their fears and anxieties. Our services walk through the steps to resolve computer issues and difficulties people are having in staying connected. We have become a place where people feel comfortable contacting and asking, no question is too basic, and we work together to overcome the challenges we face.'

They run a free weekly virtual class, aimed at older people and carers who may be unsure about technology or smartphones and want to know more or need some practical help. They also have a little fun! They cover a range of important subjects including online shopping, safety, accessing services and jargon busting! 

COMMUNITY TECH SUPPORT

ClearCommunityWeb provides free tech assistance for older people, adults living with disability or difficulty and carers.

We can help remotely, and in some cases, make a home or doorstep visit.

Things we help with include: running updates, checking for viruses, installing apps, accessing email, recovering accounts, re-setting passwords, transferring files, filling in forms & helping with accessibility settings.

*Your safety & privacy is very important to us.

All home visits adhere to strict safety guidelines.

All of our volunteers are fully DBS checked.

Web: www.communitytechsupport.co.uk
Email: Info@communitytechsupport.co.uk
Phone, Text, WhatsApp: 07523 646 277


clearcommunityweb

Classes take place over Zoom and are FREE.

Every Tuesday at 11.

Contact Caspar on caspar@clearcommunityweb.co.uk if you have any questions or want to pop along.



Never miss an email from Croydon Neighbourhood Watch

You are now able to sign up to our email alerts directly by signing up on our website www.cbnwa.com

Just click subscribe me now.

If you are a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and already receive emails from us directly, you do not need to do anything, you will continue to receive our emails as usual. 

Malcolm Saunders

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Malcolm Saunders in November. Malcolm was a dear friend and supporter of Croydon Neighbourhood Watch. He was one of our longest serving co-ordinators and looked after his two watches in Sanderstead for over 30 years, consistently passing on information about

attempted scams and other crimes in order to warn and protect others. Malcolm was also a member of the Neighbourhood Watch Committee and Secretary for the charity for a number of years. Malcolm was deeply passionate about looking after his neighbours and community and he will be sorely missed.

Do you have a few minutes to spare for your community?



Look out

CROYDON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



Croydon Neighbourhood Watch are looking for new volunteers to help keep a look out for their neighbours. Interested?

Get in touch with us at nhw@cbnwa.com for more info.

www.cbnwa.com [@CBNWA](https://twitter.com/CBNWA) [#FeetSafeStaySafe](https://www.facebook.com/CBNWA)

Registered Charity number 1087760

Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator's details:

CBNWA, Croydon Fire Station, 90 Old Town CR0 1AR