

Newsletter

The Rural Beat

South Worcestershire Police

Rural and Business Crime Team



John Champion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

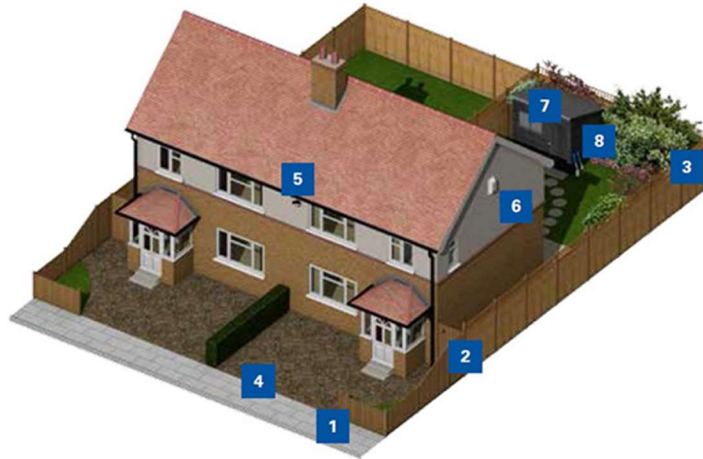
Summer 2023

The Rural Beat is a new publication from the Police in South Worcestershire for the benefit of the people who live, work and visit South Worcestershire. The aim is to provide information, advice and contact details to assist the community. We will welcome your feedback.





We are seeing a *slight* increase in Domestic Burglaries and theft from Vehicles in the Rural areas



Domestic Burglary Prevention Tips

1. Low front boundary: keep hedges and walls at the front of your house low (under one metre) so burglars have nowhere to hide.
2. Secure side gate: keep side gates locked at all times. Open gates mean burglars can easily access your home without being seen by passers-by or neighbours.
3. High side and rear boundaries with trellis and spiky defensive planting; keep hedges, walls and fences around your back garden high (over 1.8 metres). Add lightweight trellis to gates and fences and plant some prickly plants to make it harder for burglars to climb over.
4. Gravel driveway and path; gravel driveways and paths make it harder for burglars to go undetected.
5. Security lighting: install an outside security light so that intruders can't approach without being seen.
6. Intruder alarm system; install a burglar alarm system.
7. Secure your shed; always keep your shed locked and secured, and make sure it is anchored down to prevent it from being lifted in order to gain access. Often sheds contain valuables such as power tools and bicycles.
8. Never leave tools lying around as they can be used as a way of breaking into your home.

Lock all doors and windows using approved locks as below

<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/standards-explained>

Make your valuables less attractive to thieves by using a police approved forensic marking solution only visible under Ultraviolet (UV) light. This can also take the form of a special marker using ink or paint. Mark or etch your property with your postcode, house or flat number or the first three letters of your address.

All of these measures help police identify stolen goods, making it harder for thieves to sell.

Property marking isn't only for things like electrical items and bikes: you can also mark high-value belongings like antiques. We recommend that you get specialist advice before doing this.

Register your valuables using an accredited property database.

<https://www.immobilise.com/>



Preventing Theft from a Motor Vehicle

- **Lock your vehicle**
- Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open.
- Fuelling up or popping back into your house to get something are perfect examples of how easy it is to turn your back for a moment and forget your vehicle is unsecure. Try to get into the habit of locking your vehicle even if you're only going to be away from it for a moment.
- If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.
- **Take it with you or hide it**
- Your mobile phone, coins for the car park, sunglasses, packs of medication or other items that can earn quick cash are irresistible to the opportunist thief. Remember, the cost of replacing a window is often much more than that of what's stolen. And it should go without saying that wallets, handbags, purses and credit cards should never be left in an unattended vehicle.
- **Secure anything that's on the outside of your vehicle**
- Anything left on roof-racks, tailgate racks, holiday top boxes or in tool chests are easily stolen when the vehicle is parked. The use of cable locks, padlocks and self-locking tools chests, which are secured to the vehicle, makes them more secure, but still, don't leave things in them if you can avoid it.
- **Tool theft from vans**
- Vans are often targeted by thieves for the tools stored inside. If you have to leave tools in a van overnight, it's a good idea to mark them clearly with your name / company name and address using paint pens and seal with a clear lacquer spray. Alternatively, you can use a variety of other property marking systems, including Smartwater. Items that are clearly marked are less desirable and more difficult to sell on. Consider using a lockable cabinet within your van to store tools – a number of security rated products are available. Small cameras are also designed to record inside vehicles and portable battery alarms are useful
- **Park in well-lit and busier areas**
- It can take less than 30 seconds to break into a vehicle. Parking in well-lit areas and busy streets increases the chances of a thief being seen, so they'll probably steer clear.

- **Hide electrical items and leave no clues**
 - Leaving Sat Nav mounts, suction cup marks on windows or cables on view gives it away that you have left a Sat Nav, smartphone or other device in your car. Even if they can't see the Sat Nav or iPad they might still break in to see if it's stored in the car, out of sight.
 - **Take your documents with you**
 - Having a vehicle's registration and insurance documents could let a thief pretend to be the owner. Which means they could sell it on quite easily. So, never leave any documents in the vehicle.
-

A little bit of information goes a long way

Report suspicious activity, people or vehicles. No matter how insignificant you might think it is, if it is suspicious to you, it probably is.

Also, REPORT CRIME! We know not all crime is reported to us, and we know the many reasons for that including frustration.

You can help West Mercia Police by providing us with any information or intelligence about crime or anti-social behaviour

If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101, or <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>.

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.

In the event of **Immediate** threat of harm to life or property please dial

999



We Don't Buy Crime is West Mercia Police's response to acquisitive crime – crimes such as burglary and theft – and the associated harm it causes. These crimes can have a long lasting impact on victims, it can often leave someone feeling unsafe in their own home, and where possessions that have emotional attachment are stolen it can be heart-breaking.

We Don't Buy Crime has five key strands along with our **towns and villages**, we work with **second hand stores** and **fuel stations**, **deploy covert tactics**, and more recently look at ways our local communities can help tackle associated harm including **criminal exploitation and vulnerability**.

We currently have over 20 Towns & Villages signed up to the We Don't Buy crime Smart Water scheme in South Worcestershire and we are currently looking to sign up more!

Please encourage your local Town or Parish Council to contact us to arrange a meeting (Covid 19 Secure) so we can explain how the process could work

Calling All Farmers



Please contact us if you want to receive a FREE Farm security survey together with Smartwater marking solution and signage

Meet the Rural & Business Crime Team

Pc Nigel Bolton, and Rural & Business Crime Officer (RABO) Mick Simpson work across South Worcestershire, as part of a larger dedicated problem solving team and are supported by Special Constables, police volunteers and members of the public.

If you would like to help with reducing crime in your area, contact a member of the team on

southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk or call 07773050803



So, what are we up to?



Mick Simpson at Evesham Light Railway advising on security and the use of Smartwater following theft of tools

Pc's Nige Bolton and Ben Trowman checking recovered property for Smartwater markings





Mick Simpson visiting Strensham Service Station discussing issues with Cargo theft with HGV drivers

Nige Bolton with Age UK providing Catalytic Converter marking kits to help protect their van fleet from theft and ensuring the vehicles stay on the road



Some of the team's other recent activities

10 farms across South Worcestershire having been subject to crime were visited and crime prevention advice given

35 rural businesses across South Worcestershire subject to crime were visited and provide with crime prevention advice

2 Joint operation with local officers to patrol rural areas for wildlife crime and metal theft

26 Catalytic Converter marking kits provided to victims of those types of theft

5 Crime Prevention Awareness Talks/Events to Parish/Village groups

3 Crime Prevention Awareness talks to Women's Institute groups

Working with Local Policing Teams to Smartwater tools in trade vans

STOP PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sign up for our brand new community messaging service.

www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk



**Neighbourhood Matters is the new West Mercia Police community messaging service
Sign-up NOW**

[Home Page - Neighbourhood Matters](#)

Contact the Rural & Business Team for more information

southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk

**Each edition will feature a crime that occurs in our community with
Crime Prevention advice**

Theft of Catalytic Converters

If you can, park your vehicle in a locked garage when it is unattended.

If it's not possible to garage your vehicle, park it in a busy well-lit area as close to your property as possible.

Consider installing a Thatcham approved alarm to your vehicle. Ones that activate if your vehicle is lifted or tilted are particularly effective. <https://www.thatcham.org/what-we-do/security-certification/>

Use a catalytic converter protection device or marking system ideally approved by Sold Secure <https://www.soldsecure.com/>



Blocking access to the underside of fleet vehicles, If you operate a small fleet, consider obstructing access to vehicles with high ground clearance by parking lower vehicles close by. Also, keep an eye out for anyone who seems to be working underneath cars nearby, they could very well be scouting out their next target vehicle.

In order to steal the parts, thieves need to slide under the vehicle and use cutting tools to detach the box from the pipes around it. This means parking your car close to fences, walls or kerbs will make theft much more difficult.

Catalytic converters control and convert exhaust emissions from your vehicle into less toxic substances. If yours is stolen, you will know because your vehicle's engine will sound different.

If you suspect your catalytic converter has been stolen, report it to us immediately by calling 101

Online Criminality

At last! There is now one email address you can report suspicious emails too

If you receive an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email: report@phishing.gov.uk

Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) report@phishing.gov.uk

Please be aware and remain vigilant of phishing emails. One of the many scam emails currently in circulation purports to be from the TV Licensing advising to cancel direct debits. These messages may look like the real thing but are malicious. Once clicked, you are sent to a website which could download viruses onto your computer, or steal your passwords. The criminal's goal is to convince you to click on the links within their scam email or text message, or to give away sensitive information (such as bank details).

For further information and advice please go to:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions>

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-ncsc/what-is-cyber-security>

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/>

Stay Safe. Stay Connected. Stay Cyber Aware

If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101,
or <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>

in an emergency please dial 999.

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.