

Avon & Somerset Police Burglary Briefing & Crime Prevention Advice *December 2023*

Dark nights, are a key time for burglaries. The police have asked parish councils to help publicise the risks. The following pages provide some guidance on crime prevention and how to reduce the risks of being a victim of crime. Police also have plans in place to keep pressure on the criminals in the hot spot areas and to offer support to residents who need it. Officers are utilising forensic opportunities, with house to house enquiries, utilising Automatic Number Plate Recognition and viewing CCTV and Video doorbell footage. There will be additional night patrols from 1am to 5am.

General Crime Prevention Advice

The most important thing to prevent burglary is to make the home look as if it's occupied. The use of lights on timer switches is recommended; also, tune the radio to a talk station that will make it sound as though someone is in and having a conversation. Fake TV lights, which gives the impression that someone is watching television, can work well, especially in an upstairs bedroom.

Ensure that all doors and windows are closed and properly locked – use a key, don't just lift the door handle. Take the keys out of the door when it's locked and put them somewhere out of sight and reach, but make sure all the residents know where they are kept in case of emergency.

Sheds, garages, and outbuildings are popular targets for burglars: increase the security to these when possible. Check that the contents of these places are included on your home and contents insurance.

Register your belongings on the Immobilise property register. If anything lost or stolen is handed to the police you have a good chance of getting your property returned.

Restrict access to the rear of your property – lock side gates leading to the rear – as the back or patio doors are the most popular site of forced entry. Grow some thorny bushes along the garden fencing.

Lock away ladders or tools that could help a burglar and secure any garden furniture or wheelie bins that can be moved to help gain access to an extension or first floor window.

If you're away with your car, ask a neighbour to use your driveway, to make the home look occupied.

Cut the lawn and keep the garden tidy. Long grass suggests an empty house, or an infirm occupant.

Install a burglar alarm – they are a real deterrent. Get an approved model, as cheap ones aren't that reliable and if they keep going off neighbours will soon lose interest and may ignore a real activation.

Cancel milk or newspaper deliveries and postpone ordering things that may arrive while you're away.

Secure Patio Doors

Patio doors are a common point of entry for burglars, as 95% of the glass fitted to the doors is toughened rather than laminated which is far more secure. Take step to help secure your patio doors. Fitting stronger, reinforced door handles prevents them being broken off to access the lock cylinder. Fitting a "Patlock" or similar device between both handles on the inside of French doors can help to strengthen the locking mechanism.

For a visual deterrent, fitting a glass shock alarm (about £5 each) to the glass makes burglars think that an alarm will sound when the glass is smashed, or the door lock/handle is attacked forcefully.

Simply fitting a length of 3"x2" wood that lies on the floor can prevent the attacked door from sliding open in some circumstances (if it's the inner door that slides across and not the outer one)

Personal Safety

With all the distractions accompanying a non-routine event it's easy to forget about your own safety.

Protect your personal possessions

- Keep your bags/purses/wallets/iPods/cameras out of sight – don't advertise your stuff.
- Don't leave your phones or wallet/purses on a table. They could be snatched by a passer-by.
- Register your property on the Immobilise website.
- Visit the police Protect Your Property from Thieves page.

In pubs and clubs

- Look after your friends. Don't let them go off on their own if they're worse for wear.
- Plan your journey. Pre-book a taxi or arrange a lift with a designated driver. Let someone know about your plans – and tell them if they change. Never accept a lift from a stranger or a taxi that pulls up without a plate showing their taxi licence number and licensing area.
- Never leave your drink unattended. Be wary if it looks or tastes different. Tell someone if you suddenly feel unwell.
- If you see any trouble or suspect that it might be about to start, keep clear. Alert the police.

On foot

- Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Look and act confidently.
- Avoid walking alone if possible.
- Cover up jewellery, mobile phones and iPods and keep your bag close to your body.
- Never hitchhike.
- Stick to well-lit busy streets and be vigilant. Plan your route ahead.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic so a car cannot pull up behind you.
- If you regularly go walking or jogging, vary your route and avoid wearing headphones.
- When going to your car or home, have your keys ready at hand.
- If you're being followed, go to the busiest place you can find or knock on a door. Then call the police.
- If you are attacked, shout for help as loudly as you can or shout for someone to contact the police. Use your personal attack alarm. Try to get to a safe place and call the police.
- If someone attempts to take something from you, let them have it rather than risk being hurt.

If you have information about individuals involved in criminality, or concerns about someone who is vulnerable in the community, contact the Nailsea & Villages NPT by email at: SomNorthNPTNailsea@avonandsomerset.police.uk, by ringing 101 or via the police online reporting system at: <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report>

Visit your local Neighbourhood Policing Team Webpage, which includes information about officers who cover their area, see what policing priorities have been set, get crime stats, see any events the team are attending and there is a form to make contact with them at: <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area>

The police Facebook page, or dedicated crime prevention website at: www.aspolicestaysafe.co.uk has lots of information about how to keep yourself and your property safe.