



Southport Homewatch Association

Minutes of Autumn general meeting
5th October 2023

Committee members present:

Jacqueline Webb – Chair
James Sharkey – Vice Chair
Dave Stanley – Treasurer
Stuart Dunwoodie – Secretary (minutes)
Ted Ranson – Committee member

Guest speakers:

PCSO Michelle Newman
PC in training John Rigby
PC Gres Fontenell
Michele Mcwha – HSBC bank

Jacqueline Webb gave her opening address which covered the following points -

- Welcomed everyone to the meeting
- Talked about the importance of our HW volunteers and thanked them for their help and assistance
- Asked if any of the audience would like to become volunteers either to the Committee or to assist in delivery of newsletters/audit of street signage
- Explained Southport Homewatch's links to Neighbourhood Watch
- Explained about the current issues with street signage i.e. how current old signage needs to be reinforced and how this has been resolved
- That in future street signage will be achieved via a more robust sign
- Talked about sponsorship opportunities and that we have approached local companies with a view to them sponsoring street signage
- Police Crime Commissioner grant opportunities were covered
- Asked if anyone would be willing to volunteer to audit street signage
- The hope of starting Ward level meeting so that Scheme Leaders can get to know their local Police Officers
- Jacqueline also discussed the need to keep Scheme Leaders data up to date and that a future audit may be necessary

Jacqueline finished by thanking everyone for their continued support of Southport Homewatch and asked if anyone had any questions.

The following questions were asked -

Q. How is Homewatch linked to Neighbourhood Watch and how would NW benefit me?

A. Homewatch is more local whereas NW has grown into a national charity based in London and is therefore not locally run as Homewatch is

- Homewatch is part of the wider NW family
- Homewatch is independent and does not receive any funding from NW
- NW is all on-line whereas Homewatch recognises the need to keep supplying paper versions to those who ask for it
- Ourwatch is a very useful tool and can be accessed by everyone.

A guide to the benefits of joining Neighbourhood Watch can be found on our website

Jacqueline introduced the guest speakers. NB. The electronic slide presentation used by the guest speakers can be found on our website.

Jacqueline asked if there were any questions from the floor following the presentation, they are as follows -

Q. Were the Police Officers aware that a black triangle with an exclamation mark on a web search signifies the information sent between your computer and the site is sent unencrypted across the internet meaning the site is not secure?

A. The Police were aware of this and reinforced the need to only search a site that has a padlock on it. This signifies the site is secure.

Q. Is a site with a padlock fully secure?

A. As a rule of thumb any site with a padlock is secure but still be aware fraudsters can mimic the padlock. Generally however the secure padlock sign means the connection between your web browser and the website is encrypted. This prevents others from eavesdropping or intercepting your communication between your browser and the website's server.

Q. Is AI coming, can we believe the voice at the other end of the phone?

A. AI is coming and we have to challenge all our cold call telephone conversations, some could be genuine but others can most certainly be from fraudsters.

Q. I have noticed an increase in texts and emails stating my parcel could not be delivered and stating who much extra postage needs paying. Clearly this is a fraudster trying to obtain my bank details, can anything be done to stop this?

A. This is a common fraud and we all need to be aware of it. It is very rare that these fraudsters can be tracked down and prosecuted. There are just so many of them.

Q. How can we keep our passwords safe? I use a password protected spreadsheet to store mine, is that safe?

A. **Yes** A password app is also a good idea. Remember to keep changing your password. At this point Dave Stanley informed the meeting that he uses the <https://haveibeenpwned.com> website. This allows you to search across multiple data breaches to see if your email address, passwords or phone number has been compromised.

Q. I used 'Just giving' recently to donate to charity and this was through Facebook. I assumed my credit card details would be deleted but on searching again I found the cc details were still visible.

A. It is very important to delete cc details once submitted.

Q. I know of someone's son who ordered items through 'Alexa' and because the credit card details are held by Amazon he ordered items without his parents' knowledge.

A. It is important to put parental controls on things like Alexa or on games as purchases can sometimes be made without the parents' knowledge.

Q. Are scammers traced and prosecuted?

A. Not very often, once money has been sent to a scammer it is very hard to get back.

Jacqueline brought the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for their participation and continued support. The meeting closed at 20.27.