

Neighbourhood Security Report – 2013

Those Ashby residents who put forward their names with Carol Powell, the Parish Council's former Homewatch co-ordinator, will be aware that Homewatch messages ceased in their original format some time ago. Email and online Police Alerts have replaced those messages.

During the past year the Parish Council accepted an offer from me to take over the task on its behalf. The Council wished to ensure police security messages were still notified to those residents who wanted them but also to try and improve the original service. It decided that this was an ideal moment to expand its service. As a result, it determined that Homewatch be replaced on its meeting agendas with a more general title of Neighbourhood Security. That allowed the creation of a regular agenda item to receive reports from the local Constabulary when one of its representatives could attend our Parish Council meetings, as well as deal with Homewatch issues.

But as a progressive Council it did stop there as it also provided an opportunity to bring to residents attention when our Parish website had been updated, thus encouraging them to take a quick look to see what the headline changes were. This Parish Council initiative is free to all residents and is now known as the Ashby Update Service / Homewatch (Police Alerts).

Parishioners who wish to, receive messages that focus on the Police alerts which I have identified as affecting Ashby and its immediate surrounding parishes. Where this occurs, my messages therefore report a local crime and/or an important police message. Recipients can opt out from our free service at any time. Because our service is expressly for the Ashby community, it does not cater for those who wish for police messages affecting the wider area – they are directed to the Norfolk Constabulary website to do that.

Update messages are sent so your email address remains private and unseen by other recipients. They are circulated approximately once or twice a month so it is not a case of receiving countless unwanted messages. Our messaging service is simply aimed at providing a useful tool for making known local security issues as well as awareness of changes affecting our community through the Parish Council website.

Your Council is pleased with the progress of its security and website update service as it is attracting a steadily growing number of recipients, currently just over a quarter of all the parish's households. It is therefore felt to be a worthy addition to sustaining the community spirit of the village.

If anyone present is not a recipient of our service, I or any of my colleague councillors will willingly explain its benefits in more detail. To join will take less than a minute as only your name, address and email details are needed. And for those who already receive this service, your Council requests you to please extol its virtues to your friends and neighbours in Ashby. Finally I would just add this – our service is at your service – and it's simple, useful, beneficial and best of all, free.

Chairman that concludes this inaugural Neighbourhood Security report.