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Dear Resident

With the dark nights and mornings upon us, we expect the number of burglaries to increase during the autumn and winter seasons. Recent events show that criminals from around the south of England have been targeting properties in the Chiltern & South Bucks areas. To tackle these criminals it is important that we work together in trying to prevent and reduce crime.

You may ask "What are the local police doing about this?" and we would advise that CID officers are investigating burglaries and reviewing investigative, CCTV and forensic leads. Uniform officers are conducting tasked patrols and working with other police forces in combined Operations to tackle these criminals.

The impact of having your house burgled is immense both financially and mentally. Yet it is common for us to delay doing things until a close friend or yourself has been subjected to such an attack. Having the time or money to buy security measures can also be a reason.

If I was to inform you that there was a way, free of charge, that you could reduce the chance of being a victim by 25% which was free of charge would you be interested?

This is where I need you and your family's help to achieve this.

One of the best ways you can help is to join or establish a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in your area. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are owned and operated by their members, supported by the Police with crime information and advice. If you are interested then please contact the Chiltern & South Bucks Council Community Safety Team on 01494 586528 or email communitysafety@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk

I am proud to update that Chiltern & South Bucks will be the first area where Thames Valley Police will be using the NHW on a Police Operation. Members of NHW and people who are signed up to Thames Valley Alerts will be briefed with relevant intelligence of issues that are happening in our area with a dedicated response team to deal with your calls. To sign up to Neighbourhood Alerts go to www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk.

You know your neighbourhood better than anyone else. If something is not sitting right with you, act on this and do not be afraid to call the police. If you think it could be a burglary then call 999.

I have made some recommendations about things you can do to improve your security below. Please take a minute to go through the list and see if there is anything that you could do to protect your possessions, your neighbours and your family.

How many Top Tips do you tick with your security?

1; Make it appear that someone is at home.

- Leave a light and the radio on when the nights draw in. Use a fake TV light device.
- Use timer switches.
- Do you have an internet assistant e.g. Alexa? Some have a new security App so try it out.
- Make sure your doors and windows are properly closed and have British Standard locks.

2; Improve your security

- Camera Doorbell as most burglars will knock first. This is about the cheapest way to get CCTV.
- Install an SSAIB or NSI alarm or at least have a fake box installed.
- Get motion sensors inside your house so you can see if something is wrong whilst you are away from the address.
- Install CCTV or consider CCTV signs depending on your budget.
- Improve your locks and get window film to stop windows easily being smashed.
- Advertise your property is security marked. Use SMARTWATER /Selecta DNA window stickers.

3; Do not display your wealth

- Performance cars will often be targeted if you have a top end car lock it in the garage.
- Do not have your keys on display on the sideboard. Keys can be fished through letter boxes.
- Get a letterbox guard or cage.
- Just who are you updating with the Facebook Posts when you are on holiday.
- Asian gold will be targeted. What identifies your house as a place likely to have such gold?
- Do not keep large amounts of cash at home.
- As Christmas is approaching try to make sure that presents are not visible to anyone outside.

4; Consider the garden

- Consider a 'beware of the dog' sign or dog bowl will make the burglar think twice.
- Padlock the gate and close the front gates.
- Secure your fences. Trellis is a great obstacle for burglars due to it most likely collapsing, consider cheap spikey fence options like prickly strip (make sure you put the signs up) This is a real cheap option and can result in us getting suspects DNA.
- Plant prickly plants at tactical places around the garden boundary.
- Burglars can use large ornaments or rocks or garden tools to break in, so look to remove opportunities and make sure you securely lock away any tools after use.

5; Look out for your neighbours

- Join NHW.
- Set up a no door step selling zone. Eliminate a reason for burglars to knock on your door.
- Speak to your neighbours and tell them if workmen are coming or you are going away.
- Be a good neighbour and conduct checks if neighbours are going away.
- And finally if you see something suspicious call it in to the police. You know your area best!

To beat the burglar we need to work, with the most important partner in tackling crime, You the public. I hope that you will take the first step in helping us to help you create a safer, more resilient and friendly neighbourhood for you all to live in.

Yours sincerely

Darren Walsh

**Police Sergeant Darren Walsh
Amersham Neighbourhood Policing team**