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***Royston Rural Watch, July 2022***

PC 98 Jon Seppings & PCSO 6048 Hannah Moss PCSO 6522 Chris Brabrook

Sgt Jon Vine 1841

***Our Non - Emergency Number 101***

**On the Beat** –

Warning to motorists after thefts from vehicles in Baldock and Surrounding Villages

Police in Baldock, Royston and surrounding villages are urging residents to review their vehicle security after an increase in reported thefts from cars in the area.

In the past two weeks there have been nine reported thefts from vehicles in the town. In five of these cases, wallets, cards or cash were taken.

Neighbourhood Inspector James Lant said: “We are stepping up patrols in the area to identify and deter those responsible, but motorists need to take extra precautions to keep their vehicles and possessions safe.

“Never leave wallets, cards or cash in your car and make sure you have removed all your belongings when you leave your vehicle unattended. Even items such as sunglasses, coats and loose change can be enough to entice a criminal to break in.

“It seems obvious, but ensuring your car is fully locked is an essential part of your vehicle’s safety. It can be easy to get distracted when exiting your vehicle, but it is so important to make sure the last thing you do before leaving your car unattended is check it is locked.

“If you witness any suspicious activity around vehicles, or believe a crime may be in progress, always dial 999 straight away.”

Keep your home secure this summer

As many residents are likely to be taking a summer holiday in the coming weeks, Hertfordshire Constabulary is reminding people to make sure their homes are secure when they are away.

Holiday planning is hectic and most people give little thought to home security before they travel. If you are planning to leave your home empty, even for a short break, giving your home a lived-in look by using timers on lights is a great way to put criminals off. Investing in doorbell and external wifi cameras is a relatively cheap way to keep your home and valuables safe.

Sharing your holiday plans on social media can also tip off burglars that your home is going to be empty, so make sure your security settings only let family and friends see your posts.

Hot weather can also present opportunities to criminals if you leave doors or windows open when you go out or to another part of the house or into the garden. Burglars will also be on the lookout for insecurities in outbuildings and garages.

Inspector Nicki Dean, from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Crime Reduction Unit, warned: “Whilst burglaries are around the same levels as they were this time last year, we often see an increase once the summer holidays start and homes are left empty for days or weeks at a time.

“If your home is left unoccupied burglars will look for tell-tale signs, like unopened letters at the front door, bins not put away or drawn curtains during the day. Making it appear that your home is occupied can be the most effective deterrent against burglary.”

There are many ways to give your home a ‘lived-in’ look when it’s unoccupied, so that any would-be criminals aren’t tempted:

Close and lock all windows, doors and outbuildings.

Don't publish your absence on the Internet. Status updates, comments and photos can all give away the fact that your home is empty.

Use timer switches for lamps so that they turn on as it gets dark in the evenings. You could also use a timer switch for a radio

Ask your neighbour to put your rubbish or recycling bins back if they’re being collected whilst you’re away – if they’re left out after collection day it could indicate to a passing thief that your house is unoccupied. Be a good neighbour and do the same for them.

If you aren’t leaving your car at home, ask a neighbour/friend to park their car on your drive.

Don’t forget to cancel deliveries of milk, newspapers etc.

Consider moving enticing items, such as laptops and mobile devices, so that they are out of sight.

You could store valuables in your loft when you go away.

If you are away for a longer period of time in the summer months, ask your neighbour to cut your grass. This helps to show that the house may be occupied.

You could also ask someone you trust to help give your home the lived-in look by opening and drawing the curtains, taking in any free newspapers and moving your mail away from the letterbox.

All these tips can help to give your home the ‘lived-in’ look.

Update on recent ATM fraud

Hertfordshire Constabulary issued a warning to residents recently following several thefts after bank cards had been retained by ATMs.

Fourteen offences were originally identified during June, with reports that bank cards were retained by ATMs and cash had later been withdrawn from accounts after the loss of the card.

Detective Sergeant Mark Fava, from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Serious Fraud and Cyber Unit, said: “Following an investigation carried out by experts within the banking industry, it appears that in each of the reported thefts the machines retained the victim’s bank card due to a discreet device which had been placed over the card slot of the machine. Initially it was thought that the device was scanning the cards and then transmitting the details and PIN to the offender. However, in each case it appears that the offender, or accomplice, has watched the victim input the PIN and then retrieved the trapped card. The offender has then later used the stolen card and PIN at another ATM.

“The best way to avoid this happening to you is to cancel or suspend your bank card if it is retained by an ATM. If you have a banking app on your phone you may be able to freeze your card temporarily until you can establish what has happened. Alternatively, you may need to call your bank to cancel or suspend the card until it has been recovered.”

As well as all the usual precautions you take when withdrawing cash, like shielding the keypad, when typing in your PIN, you should always examine the machine before use. If anything looks out of place or it has any parts which appear to have been added, do not use it and report your suspicions to the bank. If the machine fails to return your card or any cash you have withdrawn, you should contact your bank to inform them and then the police on our non-emergency number 101.”

Please take the following precautions when using cash machines:

Always look closely at the card insertion point of a cash machine before using it. If it looks like it may have been tampered with, do not use it.

If you realise the machine has been tampered with after you have inserted your card, call your bank while still standing at the cash machine if it is safe to do so.

Always shield your hand when entering your PIN into a cash point keypad.

If the machine retains your card or fails to dispense cash you have withdrawn, without a suitable explanation message on the screen, contact your bank immediately and then police on our non-emergency number 101.

Warning after residents lose money in Whatsapp scam

Hertfordshire Constabulary is warning residents to be wary of Whatsapp messages which appear to be from relatives asking for money to be sent to them.

Parents have been receiving messages claiming that their child’s phone has broken and are in need of urgent financial assistance. Fourteen reports have been made during June with total losses of more than £13,000.

Detective Sergeant Mark Fava, from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Serious Fraud and Cyber Unit, said: “Remember that on Whatsapp (like emails and phone calls) people are not always who they claim to be. If you get a message from a number you do not recognise, claiming to be someone you know and asking for money or personal information, it is best to pause and check that they are who they claim to be. We advise asking them to call you or meet you in person before acting on their request.”

If you believe that you are a victim of fraud please contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 to report, using a different phone to that used to communicate with the fraudsters. If a fraud is in progress or someone’s life is in danger, call 999 immediately.

**G4E - Ashwell, Hinxworth, Bygrave, Newnham and Caldecote**

Theft of Motor Vehicle, Dick Smiths Walk, Ashwell – Overnight on 26th June a Red Mercedes ML320 was stolen from the location by unknown means. 41/51050/22

**G4D – Barley, Barkway, Reed, Therfield, Kelshall and**

**Nuthampstead**

No reported crime of note

**G3C - Sandon, Wallington, Rushden, Clothall and Weston**

Burglary (Non Dwelling) Gannock Green, Sandon - On 17th June at 2am a stable was broken into. The offender used an unknown implement to prize open padlocks to the stable. An untidy search took place and property was stolen. The offenders made off direction unknown. 41/48626/22

**Your local Neighbourhood Police Teams website**

<http://snt.herts.police.uk/Teams.aspx?TeamID=G01>

Useful Links

<http://www.herts.police.uk/>

<http://www.doglost.co.uk/>

<http://www.stolenhorseregister.com/>

**Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team Tel – 01438 757935**