

Neighbourhood watch Report

January 2025

Cllr Roger Dollins

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Avon and Somerset Police are warning people to be vigilant as fraudulent texts on winter fuel payments are being sent from criminals.

The texts encourage people to click on unsafe links to register for, or claim, fuel allowance.

However, clicking the link opens the door for fraudsters to steal personal and financial data. This can be used by the criminals to commit identity fraud – and take money.

“Even clicking the link and not entering any information could result in malicious software being downloaded onto your device.” said Fraud Protect Officer Claire Bounds.

“We have seen a spate of these texts being circulated in our area and it’s important for people to understand the best course of action to take. We’re asking people to share this advice with friends and family and especially elderly or vulnerable people who may be at risk.”

If you receive unsolicited content like this:

- Stop! Think Fraud and don’t click on any links
- Take your time to read any unexpected messages. There are often signs to indicate fraud, such as spelling and grammar errors or strange use of language
- Forward the SPAM message to 7726 free of charge so your mobile phone provider can investigate
- If you have become a victim and have lost money notify your bank immediately, by calling 159. Also report to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

Action Fraud publishes an A-Z of scams and shares tips to avoid fraud at <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk>

Drinking & Driving!

Hundreds of motorists across Avon and Somerset were arrested during December after being found to be over the limit for alcohol and/or drugs.

Avon and Somerset Police made 241 arrests for driving under the influence of drink and/or drugs as part of Operation Limit, a national policing operation aimed at reducing fatal and serious Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and protecting road users during December.

Please view the attached PDF for more information.

- [241-drink-and-drug-drive-arrests-made-in-december-operation.pdf](#)

A garage was broken into between 4:30pm on the 2nd and 7:20am on the 3rd in Nordrach Lane, Priddy. The offender appears to have climbed Harris fencing where upon arrival at the garage, forced entry with a crowbar, or similar implement. Nothing was stolen from within. Any information, CCTV images, please contact the Police on 101 quoting reference number: 5225001763 stating NHW. Or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Thank you for your support.

- [sheds-and-garages.pdf](#)

Incident:

We're investigating an incident in which a 46-year-old man was injured during a robbery in Wells. It happened in Union Street between 3.50pm and 4pm on Sunday 15 December.

The victim was approached by another man, who made threats and demanded money from him. The offender was carrying a knife and during an altercation he injured the victim, causing a cut behind his left ear. Thankfully, he didn't need any hospital treatment. If you saw this incident or have any footage which would help with our enquiries, please call us on 101 and give the call handler the reference number 5224402692.

Stolen items Gallery:

We've launched an online gallery in a bid to identify the rightful owners of suspected stolen items seized by officers. Detectives believe the objects may have been stolen in burglaries of homes and outbuildings across Somerset and the Blackdown Hills into Devon. Please take a look at the attached file for more information and a link to the gallery.

- [online-gallery.pdf](#)

A car was broken into whilst parked on a driveway in Pen Hill Close, Heybridge, at 2:44am on the 15th. The resident had awoken and spotted two suspects, from a window, inside their silver MG car rummaging through the glove box. They were described as both being between 20 – 30 years old, one wearing a grey jacket with hood, the other all in black. It is unclear how entry was gained, but it appears nothing was stolen from within.

Any information, CCTV images, please contact the Police on 101 quoting reference number: 5224401823 stating NHW. Or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Thank you for your support.

There have been recent reports of "Nottingham Knockers" operating in Shepton Mallet and the surrounding areas. These are cold callers who usually tell residents that they are ex-offenders trying to go straight, then try and sell poor quality and over-priced cleaning products, they may also offer services such as roof or driveway repairs and cleaning.

The police want to remind residents they are under no obligation to answer the door to anyone they don't know or aren't expecting.

If you do talk to them, they are supposed to be able to provide a valid Pedlar's Certificate and should leave your property when asked. Police always recommend using a door chain and asking to see the identification of unexpected callers. If you are suspicious of a caller ring 101 straight away or 999 in an emergency

- keep your cash in the bank, not at home
- keep windows and doors secured if you're not in the room

Remember, genuine callers:

Expect you to check their identification before opening the door • would never try to rush you by claiming there's an emergency

- will happily make an appointment to come back when you can have a relative or friend with you. Take time to consider your options and research costs from other providers, if in doubt contact your local trading standards.

There are many types of doorstep crime, including:

- Bogus callers exploit vulnerable people within their own homes to steal cash/valuables or carry out fraudulent schemes.
- Rogue traders cold call at homes and overcharge for unnecessary work, damage property deliberately and use intimidating behaviour to extort money.
- Distraction burglary is when a person tries to gain access to your home by trying to trick you into believing they need help or are officials in the area. Very often they will operate in pairs, so one attempts the distraction whilst the other one takes the opportunity to steal things in your home.

If you feel pressured by any cold caller, have the confidence to be firm and say no.

If you know someone who may have been a victim of doorstep crime and you don't want to talk to the police, contact Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111 or the below link:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>

We've had a few incidents recently of cold callers at people's properties, offering to do driveways/work on their house for cash in hand. Once the work is completed, the price may fluctuate, and they will then offer to drive the homeowner to the bank to withdraw the funds. If the homeowner refuses, the callers will become aggressive with them. If possible, and only if safe to do so, we ask that residents obtain descriptions of those involved and any vehicle registrations that they are using and report via 101 - call 999 if they are persistent, aggressive or targeting the vulnerable.

- [doorstep-crime.pdf](#)

A co-ordinated policing operation on 11–15 November saw Avon and Somerset Police’s roads policing officers combine efforts with neighbourhood policing teams to crack down on dangerous road users and illegal driving.

Find out more from the attached PDF document.

- [nowhere-to-hide.pdf](#)

Social Media:

If a friend reaches out on social media, our natural reaction is to help.

But is it a friend? Or a criminal, who has compromised your friend’s account and now wants to access your social media or email account - and your valuable data?

If you agree to help, you’ll likely be sent a link to help the friend ‘recover’ their account. This will take you to a cloned social media page controlled by the criminal – so when you log in, you’re giving your login details to them.

Once they have your login, they can hack into your account using your credentials – giving them access to your personal photos and messages, contact details of your friends and family and private information.

This can be used to extort money, send malicious links to your contacts or trick your family and friends into sending them money.

Action Fraud, the National Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Centre, has good advice on how to keep hackers out of your email and social media accounts, how to act fast if your account is hacked and how to report: <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/secureyouraccounts>

Remember: always be wary of social media messages that ask for your login details or authentication codes - even if the message appears to be from someone you know.

- [social-media-scam.pdf](#)

Officers investigating more than 20 burglaries across Somerset and into Devon over the past four months have arrested and charged three men and seized hundreds of suspected stolen items.

On Friday 15 November detectives arrested the trio and searched four properties, seizing items including antique silverware, paintings, furniture and weapons as well as power tools, garden machinery and electrical items.

All three men appeared before Taunton magistrates on Monday 18 November charged with:

conspiring to commit multiple burglaries of dwellings across Somerset and Devon, with intent to steal, between August and November

conspiring to commit multiple burglaries of buildings other than dwellings, in the same areas and period.

Joshua Charles Heal, 25, of Bridgwater; Ethan Sharman, 21, of Somerton, and Andrew Sharman, 44, of Street, were all remanded in custody by magistrates.

They are all due to appear at Taunton Crown Court on Friday 20 December.

Detective Sergeant Charlie Pulling said: "This is a complex ongoing investigation by a dedicated team of officers drawing together expertise from across Avon and Somerset Police. Our enquiries continue and we're working to identify the rightful owners of the property we've seized."

If you believe some of your property may be among that seized, please email us at operationsayonara@avonandsomerset.police.uk with your crime reference number, description or photograph of the item, and contact details. You will need to provide proof of ownership.

If you have any other information which you believe could help our investigation, please call 101 and give the reference 5224296898.

Roger:

A lot going on in and around our area but don't be too alarmed we are very fortunate to live in a reasonably safe Parish, just be aware and if you experience or see something you feel is not right report it the police.

Unfortunately, A family member has just had his Van stolen from Outside his house in Glastonbury. One thing that might have helped or made the thieves think twice would have been a steering wheel bar lock, certainly worth purchasing and can be a good deterrent.