

## **Police Advice**

*(extract from Parish News)*

### **Are you going on a long-awaited holiday ?**

From a crime prevention point of view, it is best that you tell only family, close friends, and good neighbours. Do not announce your news in a crowded shop. Or to anybody else who does not need to know.

The first secret of coming back to an intact home is to ensure that holiday dates are not common knowledge. Ask a neighbour to remove papers and circulars sticking out of the letter box, or parcels left by the door. Consider contacting the Royal Mail Keepsafe service which will deliver when you return, rather than having a tell-tale pile of unopened letters on the hall floor. Above all, try to give the impression that your home is occupied. Ideally, you need someone to open and close curtains and maybe cut the grass and sweep up the leaves. Automatic timer switches can be used to turn lights off and on. Somebody's car parked on the driveway is another bonus. If you have a burglar alarm, set it, and leave instructions with a neighbour.

All this, of course, is in addition to year-round advice about deadlocking or bolting outside doors, locking accessible windows, and securing sheds and garages.

But one crime is on the increase. Thieves are cashing in on the soaring price of metals. Lead is a prime target in this area - from churches, schools, community halls, building sites and even lead flashing from private homes and garages. Quantities of copper and aluminium have also gone and there are reports of stolen bronze statues, iron gates and street signs.

So, this is an appeal to local residents. If you spot strangers or vehicles in suspicious circumstances, day or night, please call the police. The non-emergency number for sightings is 0845 8505 5055 - but if you suspect that crime is taking place or imminent, ring 999

### **Doorstep Crime - WE NEED YOU TO BE VIGILANT**

The full scale of this type of crime remains largely unreported but Trading Standards put a conservative estimate on the direct cost to Bucks consumers as over £4.8 million last year alone.

This eye-watering figure however fails to convey the immense emotional and physical damage these incidents can have on the victims and their families. In a number of instances, the psychological and severe financial straits victims have been left in has placed additional burdens on support services such as Adult Social Care.

Therefore to improve the chances of an early intervention to avoid these human and financial costs Trading Standards are urging you to help them identify potential rogue traders; unsolicited callers offering services such as gardening, roofing and driveways, and bring the matter to their attention. This involves keeping an eye out for your neighbours and relations, especially those who are elderly or you might think vulnerable, and of course be wary yourselves.

To assist with identifying a rogue trader Trading Standards has produced a few tips:

- Be wary of traders who are touting or cruising for work. Genuine traders rarely need to door knock!
- Wherever possible look for traders from the Approved BUY WITH CONFIDENCE scheme.
- Make your own checks on the trader's validity e.g. do they actually trade from the where they say they do? Ask yourself why is a trader from out of the locality offering to do work? Is it really so specialised that there is no local tradesman?
- Always get a written quote and REMEMBER - you must be given a written notice of your 7 day cancellation period by law. Don't feel pressurised to have the work done immediately - an honest trader will give you time to think about it and make your enquiries.
- If a price is too good to be true then think twice. BUY CHEAP = BUY TWICE!

If you have any suspicions whatsoever regarding any traders, you can always call or e-mail Trading Standards - all notifications will be treated in confidence.

To find a trader you can trust visit [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk) or call 08454 040506.