



# The Community

# BUZZ

February 2024



## Welcome to 2024 – a quick reflection on 2023

A warm welcome back to all our members, supporters and friends of Neighbourhood Watch Scotland (NWS). We hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable break and our **festive Communi-tree** brought some helpful tips for the season.

In the true tradition of 'out with the old and in with the new' I thought I would start with a reflection of 2023. We had great fun at all our events and getting out and about meeting some of you in person – and the smiles say it all. Events like these serve as a great platform for us to encourage new members to sign up to our Alert system and think about starting or extending Neighbourhood Watches in their area. Thanks to all of you who came out to support us and we hope that you found a home for some of our free giveaways.

A huge thanks to Dobbies Garden Centres who made us very welcome during 2023 at many of their stores throughout Scotland in an attempt to reach as many new and existing (green fingered) customers as possible.

Garden planting with home security in mind was the main topic of conversation and we hope to do more on this subject over the coming months.

At most of our events we were very fortunate to be able to work with so many of our trusted and valued partners from Police Scotland, Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC), British Transport Police Scotland, Trading Standards Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and local authority community teams, and we look forward to working with them this year too.

We appreciate their time is precious and their ongoing support for NWS is truly outstanding and reinforces the value of our mission statement for: **'Safer Neighbourhoods, Stronger Communities.'**



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NEIGHBOURLINESS



### Online Safety Webinar

As part of Cyber Scotland Week 2024 Police Scotland delivered a presentation to Neighbourhood Watch members and Alert users on online safety.



In today's digital age, it's crucial to stay safe and secure while navigating the online world. The webinar aimed to educate and empower individuals of all ages with the necessary knowledge and skills to protect themselves online. During this event, topics covered were updates & privacy settings, password management, public Wi-Fi and challenges.

The expert speakers shared practical tips and strategies to enhance your online safety. Whether you're a parent, student, or professional, this event was for everyone! Gaining invaluable insights, asking questions, and connecting with like-minded individuals who share the same concerns about online safety.

[View the webinar →](#)



Welcome to our news-in-brief. In this update page, we'll keep you informed about the latest developments and important updates from the NWS team.

### We had a great day at Rutherglen Exchange

**Shopping Centre, Glasgow** with Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators from Springhall and Cathkin Neighbourhood Watch and Manor Way Neighbourhood Watch area and local officers from Police Scotland carrying out a Community Safety Awareness Day. There was great interest from shoppers within the local community, some of whom were already part of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, which was excellent to hear.



**NWS staff attended Waverley Train Station** along with partners from Network Rail, ScotRail, British Transport Police Scotland and SFRS for a joint event to highlight White Ribbon Scotland, and raise awareness of the 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. We were able to support colleagues from White Ribbon Scotland to engage with a number of commuters within the train station, including members of the University of Edinburgh Basketball Club, who kindly stopped for a photograph after showing support for [White Ribbon Scotland](#) by signing the pledge.

### We had lots of fun at Central and Queen Street Train Stations in Glasgow and Waverley Train Station in Edinburgh

with partners from Police Scotland including the Business Crime Prevention Unit, British Transport Police Scotland, ScotRail's Travel Safe Team, Network Rail and Trading Standards Scotland, Local Authority Trading Standards and SFRS with lots of interest from commuters.

**Look out for our next joint campaign involving the rail network early 2024.**

### NWS participated in the Opportunities in Retirement (OiR) welcome event that took place in Ayr.

This was the first time we had attended such an event – and there is definitely a lot of value in being able to engage with like-minded people looking for opportunities and ideas of ways in which they can give something back to their local communities. A big thank you to the OiR team for pulling the event together and allowing us to take part. Please get in touch if you think there is an opportunity for NWS to support a local event happening in your area in 2024.

### NWS worked in collaboration with Police Scotland on a local radio campaign in Aberdeen (Original 106fm)

which sought to increase awareness and vigilance regarding scams and frauds, particularly using social media and telephone calls. Our colleague PC Mike Urquhart sat in the hot chair to record the track and did a splendid job – well done Mike (he definitely has a fine voice for radio). [Listen to the advert](#)



### NWS staff were out in Dalkeith, Midlothian in October, 2023 sharing a coffee and biscuits (courtesy of Tunnocks) with our partners Police Scotland and their team of dedicated Special Constables.

As part of their ongoing patrols, which includes tackling acquisitive crime, they will be engaging with people, providing prevention information and advice and highlighting Neighbourhood Watches in the local communities. It is great to have them on board and we wish them the very best of luck going forward.

The Special Constabulary is a part-time, volunteer body consisting of voluntary officers working in their spare time. Special Constables work alongside police officers forging strong partnerships in the community, patrolling streets, preventing crime, and interacting with all kinds of people.

This is a great way to give back, help keep your local community safe and make a real difference. If you would like to learn more or would like to apply, [click here](#).

[Click here to see more news](#) →

## A reminder about

**Help for Households**

### Rising costs and untold pressure on household budgets are a worry for most of us.

This is a reminder that the UK Government is helping households with the cost of living. Find out what support you could get.

In addition, [Scottish Government](#) also provide advice on how to cope with increasing hardship and promote information on where to make potential savings that are available in Scotland.

#### Help is available for:

- Debt and money
- Energy and household bills
- Benefits and income
- Children and families
- Urgent help with food or fuel
- Health and wellbeing
- Older or disabled people



[Find out what you could get](#) →

# Spotlight on Rural events

Our rural communities were also very much a focus of our activities and NWS staff teamed up with the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC), who we work with collaboratively to prevent, tackle and reduce rural crime, throughout Scotland.

SPARC is a multi-agency partnership involving key organisations, such as NWS who collectively work together.



We began the summer with a stall at the Royal Highland Agricultural Show. Then in September, NWS staff joined Police Scotland in the Scottish Borders to launch 'Rural Crime Week.'

NWS staff were also at the Greater Glasgow Partnership Against Rural Crime (GGPARC) Safety and Security event held in October 2023 at the Donald Malcolm Heritage Centre, Renfrewshire. During the event they teamed up with a number of

organisations, who along with security and first aid organisations carried out practical demonstrations and provided information and advice on a variety of topics including scams, security, theft, road safety, working in a safe environment, first aid trauma and casualty care. It was great to see so many families and children at the event.

Our 2024 rural events have kicked off already, with a splendid day at the

Bankfoot Community Centre, Perth. It was the first outing for our newest team member Lyndsay, in her role as Engagement Officer.

It was a great opportunity for her to meet other stakeholders from the British Horse Society Scotland, Perth & Kinross Council, NFU Scotland, Scottish Land & Estates and Forestry & Land Scotland.

For more information visit the Rural Watch Scotland website →

## AGM Update

The NWS Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place virtually during November 2023. Our Chair, Stewart Prodger was delighted to welcome attendees involving NWS staff, NWS board members, voting members and coordinators.

A huge thank you to all who took the time to participate and support the event. The meeting focussed on the specific business aspects of the charity including the financial report, annual accounts and the election of key posts. Minutes of the meeting are posted on the website if you would like access.

Warm congratulations are extended to both Stewart Prodger (Chair) and Roddy Ross (Treasurer) who were re-elected and will continue in their roles for the next 12 months. Finally, Gordy MacDonald (Police Scotland) was our guest speaker and gave a very interesting and informative presentation on cybercrime, current trends and how best to keep yourself safe online. This included advice on creating easy to remember but robust passwords. Some helpful links from Gordy as follows:

- [How secure is my password?](#)
- [Cyber Security Action Plan for business, families and individuals](#)

As you all know NWS is a small Scottish based charity. Here is the link to the [Small Charity Guide](#) for any members that need further information on what this means.

We greatly appreciate new and existing members alike taking the time to attend the event. We could not do our work without our members and your involvement keeps us focused on how best to support you and your communities.

Does your Watch need a 'spring clean' - Have you thought about a 2024 'dusting day'?



The beginning of a new year is always a good time to think about freshening ideas and revisiting priorities. As part of a notional spring clean we ask our coordinators to think about hosting a:

- **Stop and listen event** – This could be a membership survey, questionnaire or board blast meeting to explore thoughts and views on the positive aspects of the neighbourhood and explore any new challenges. This is a great way to identify your local problems and consider any potential resolutions. In addition it will allow you to understand your strengths, skills and assets and generate ideas to help you tap into local funding opportunities that might be available in your area.
- **Stop and look event:** This involves a walk through of your neighbourhood watch area to determine any issues of concern including any repairs needed and potential quick fix solutions to signage, public lighting, pavements, street furniture etc.
- **Be socially active:** Think about what you could do to help enhance your local environment. This could involve an organised litter pick, park tidy or paint and repair event. There is always something to be done, and improving our public space helps everyone. Depending on where you live, local businesses may be keen to help.

Local action will help make your area great again, add value that everyone can benefit from and boost community spirit and wellbeing along the way. If you need any assistance or support please get in touch. Your community stands to benefit from all that you do.

# Adverse weather

January 2024 has already seen some very challenging weather conditions for us across Scotland and spring is still some time away. But looking ahead there are things that we can all do to help reduce the impact on our home and on our personal safety when out and about.

## Some safety tips from Ready Scotland include:

- Being proactive – by securing loose outdoor objects around your property (e.g. trampolines, guttering, pipes, roof tiles, bins and fences).
- Remember to check on the safety of vulnerable friends or neighbours – they may need assistance or support to take precautionary measures.
- If you have to travel in adverse driving conditions, give yourself extra time and take a winter car kit (a warm jacket, boots and a blanket, snacks). Plan the route ahead – conditions can change unexpectedly.
- Recreational walkers should also plan ahead, be prepared for the weather conditions and ensure they tell someone of their planned route and expected timings. If walking by the coast be careful of large waves and spray.
- Think about where you park (e.g. if windy, park away from trees and walls).
- Maintain home supplies of essential food, bottled water and any medication needed for your family and pets.

Please take time to visit the Ready Scotland advice pages at How to deal with Scotland's weather ([ready.scot](https://www.ready.scot)). Other helpful media platforms to keep you up to date with current news include:

- Weather: [@metoffice](https://twitter.com/metoffice)
  - Travel advice: [@PoliceScotland](https://twitter.com/PoliceScotland)
  - Traffic: [@trafficscotland](https://twitter.com/trafficscotland)
  - Preparing for severe weather: [@readyscotland](https://twitter.com/readyscotland)
  - Flooding: [@SEPAflood](https://twitter.com/SEPAflood)
- 'Keep safe by being prepared and informed'

## Sign Up For SP Energy Networks **FREE** Priority Services Register



We are partnering with SP Energy Networks to encourage you to sign up to the free Priority Services Register (PSR) which offers additional support in the unlikely event of a power cut

The free service provides extra support to customers across Central and Southern Scotland who feel they need its help during power cuts. This can include people who are over the age of 60, have children under the age of 5, have a chronic illness or mobility issues.

Being on the PSR doesn't mean SP Energy Networks can restore your power any quicker, but it does mean they will let you know what's happening if they know of a problem in your area and can help you get through it. You can benefit from proactive and ongoing contact during known power interruptions and access to a dedicated welfare line during storms. When registered, you will also have access to additional support services, including dementia support, help for carers and home fire safety visits. For an extra layer of security, you can set up a password with SP Energy Networks to safeguard against bogus callers.

Information on the PSR can be requested in various formats, including braille and large print and text relay services are available in partnership with SignLive, ensuring accessibility for those who are hard of hearing or have speech impairments.

**Kendal Morris, Customer Service Director at SP Energy Networks said:** "Our customers are at the heart of everything we do and we know how important it is to support those who might need a bit more help in the unlikely event of a power cut. "While our engineering teams work around the clock to restore electricity as quickly as possible when there are any issues, they are supported by an unseen army of customer service colleagues who make sure our customers know they are our priority. "Whether it's people with medical dependencies on electrical equipment or households with young children, we're there to offer a helping hand when it's needed most".

For more information, please visit [spenergynetworks.co.uk/psr](https://spenergynetworks.co.uk/psr)



## Looking ahead: dates for the diary



It may only be February, but we are already looking ahead and have a few key dates to highlight for you along with some advice on topical subjects for the start of the year!

Once again from us is a plea for ideas or suggestions – please get in touch if you have any events that you think NWS could bring value.

- **Neighbourhood Watch Week / coinciding with Volunteers Week** will be taking place from the 1st - 7th June, and we would love to hear what you have planned for this. This is a celebratory week, and we would love to recognise the hard work undertaken by you – our coordinators and members across the country.
- **Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week** will be taking place a month later, from 1st - 7th July. We hope to run a series of webinars during this week on the topic.

## Spread the word

The local team working at Dunblane Police Station have kindly put our literature on display at their public counter. It shows our current range of leaflets well.

If there is a public hub near you: such as police station, bus/rail station, church or community hall, library or supermarket (not exhaustive), that could do something similar please get in touch with the NWS office. Being as visible as possible is such an important aspect in our drive to attract new members to the NWS family.



## Getting in touch

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[NWS Website](#) →



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