

# Neighbourhood Watch

The use of CCTV in the reduction of crime.

In Hampstead Garden Suburb we can prove that Neighbourhood Watch works. In partnership with the local police, Neighbourhood Watch has made a significant impact on the reduction of all Suburb Crime - and especially burglary - over the last 5 or 6 years. And the reason for this is that more and more residents who are members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes have been determined to make it work by taking a whole series of steps to protect their property and themselves, thereby preventing the criminals from achieving their objectives.

Regrettably there is still an irresponsible minority who fail to protect their homes and their cars, with a result that over three quarters of the burglaries and some half of the car crimes continue to take place because of a failure to take sensible and responsible action to secure property. In this respect, Neighbourhood Watch still has much to do.

But there are limits to what Neighbourhood Watch, as presently constituted, can achieve. And, as we all know, there are still far too many crimes committed which we feel powerless to prevent. This is, perhaps, especially the case with car crimes - 90% of which are committed between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. - where there are instances of car owners taking every precaution but still having their cars stolen or broken into. Experience is now showing that one of the major leaps forward in the fight against this sort of crime is the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), and some of us - both in the police and in Neighbourhood Watch - are starting to consider the feasibility of CCTV installations locally.

CCTV has been tried, tested and proven over a number of years in various industrial estates, in industrial and commercial premises and in shopping complexes. But, because its installation and operating costs are high, its use elsewhere has so far been

limited. It is, however, starting to be installed in various town centres and public areas generally with some startling results in the reduction of crime, and the time may be fast approaching for its use in a purely residential area. For instance, since the installation of CCTV in Kings Lynn, Norfolk in February 1992, car crime in the monitored areas has virtually been eliminated, and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne where a 16 camera, £300,000 system was installed in December 1992 there have been 938 fewer reported crimes than in a similar period twelve months previously.

Of course, any mention of surveillance cameras conjures up visions of 'big brother' and an intrusion of privacy. But CCTV should not be like that. If CCTV were to be installed in the Suburb, it is possible that some 15 to 30 cameras would be sited to cover key roads and public areas. Although they would not be hidden, since part of their deterrent effect would depend on their being clearly seen, they should not be environmentally intrusive. They would probably be fixed onto existing lamp posts or other street furniture and would be sited so as not to overlook gardens or private property. And, because each camera would be infra red sensitive and have a zoom facility, it would be able to read car number plates even at night enabling police to monitor and track the vehicles of known car



thieves and other criminals. Each camera would, in fact, be the equivalent of having an additional police officer on duty for 24 hours on every day of the year with a result that police could be concentrated on the ground as criminals were seen to enter the area and often before crimes were committed.

However, because of the considerable costs involved, CCTV for the Suburb must be in the nature of a pipe dream at the present time. The installation cost would probably be in the region of £250,000 to £350,000 and the annual running cost in the region of £30,000 to £40,000. Of course, spread over 5,200 homes, the installation and annual running costs would be, on average, only some £60 and £7 respectively per household and many Suburb residents would, no doubt, be perfectly happy to meet these costs for the benefits that would be entailed. But many others probably would not, and so much further thought and consideration would be needed to be given as to how these costs could be met before CCTV for the Suburb could be seriously considered.

Nevertheless, Hampstead Garden Suburb with its discrete entrances and exits and with a majority of residents already well used to co-operating with crime reduction initiatives, is perhaps an ideal entity for the progressing of CCTV from industrial or commercial complexes and town centres to residential areas. **PL**

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## Board Games

The HGS Chess & Scrabble Club has now confirmed a venue for its autumn sessions. Saturday

afternoons from 2.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Fellowship House, Willifield Green will cost just £1.50 at the door, including refreshments and anyone interested is invited along with no prior booking needed. Firm Saturday dates are 11 September, 25 September, 23 October, 27

November and 11 December. Further dates yet to be confirmed are 16 October, 20 October and 4 December.

For further details: Alan Lawson 458 3827 or Peter Phillips 455 3660.

PO

## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION 1992-93

Company members will wish first of all to have an account of the position regarding membership of the Trust Council following the events of last year's AGM. As will be recalled, those events led to the resignation of Lord McGregor as a member of the Council and its chairman. At the same time two elected members stood down. David Bogush, whose turn had come to stand for re-election, was not re-elected, and Hugh Hamilton withdrew in accordance with an internal standing order limiting the tenure of elected members to six years. Mrs Pia Duran was elected in place of David Bogush, and Ed Caplin, for many years the RA's observer on the Properties and Plans Sub-Committee, was co-opted in place of Hugh Hamilton. I myself was co-opted in place of Lord McGregor and agreed to resume the chair after an absence of two years.

There has therefore been a substantial turn-over in the elected membership of the Council. Two of the four are new arrivals, Lady Howie and Mrs Pia Duran. In accordance with the Articles of Association both Mr Caplin and myself, having been co-opted since the last AGM, must now present ourselves for election. In addition, Lady Howie, as the longest serving elected member, must now have her mandate renewed. She was originally elected in 1990.

Company members will wish to be reassured that the events of last year have in no way affected the Trust Council's ability to discharge its functions. As at present constituted the Council forms a well balanced group which gets on with the job sensibly and harmoniously.

However the Trust Council, after careful thought, has taken the view that the rule in accordance with which whoever is the longest serving elected member in any particular year must stand for re-election needs to be re-considered, as it can lead to awkward anomalies. For instance it

can mean that an elected member has to stand down or offer himself/herself for re-election after only one or two years on the Council. Accordingly, after consulting its legal advisers, the Trust Council is proposing that henceforth elected members should serve for a fixed term of three years, renewable for a further three years. No elected member should serve for more than six years consecutively. A special resolution to that effect is being placed before the AGM.

The Trust Council has also been looking into the way the Trust's accounts are presented. The existing method, which is complicated, has not been reviewed for many years, and the new situation resulting from the purchase of the long leases from Ashdale in 1989, has created an opportunity for fresh thinking. The three main categories of the past have been reduced to two with the elimination of the separate leasehold account.

The Trust's financial position remains sound. It is worth highlighting the fact that the cost of purchasing most of Ashdale's interests on the Suburb in 1989 has been entirely covered in four years thanks to the income derived from enfranchisements. The Trust originally purchased the freehold of 960 long leases from Ashdale for £80,000 in round figures. 90 of these - slightly less than 10% - have since been enfranchised.

At the time of the dispute with the Association of Freeholders in 1984, many feared that the change in the Management Scheme authorised by the High Court in 1983 enabling the Trust to vary the Management Charge

according to need amounted to giving the Trust a blank cheque. However I feel sure company members will be reassured to know that the rate of increase of the Management Charge in the nine years since then has been slightly less than the rate of increase in the RPI - reflecting the continuing tight control over expenditure which the Trust undertook to ensure at the time.

The Trust is anxious to make sure that residents are aware of its policies and concerns in regard to proposed changes in the external appearance of houses. A new version of its guidelines has been in preparation for some time and would have been published by now were it not for the fact that the London Borough of Barnet recently expressed an interest in making this a joint document. This is clearly a most welcome development, which reflects the excellent working relations between the Trust and the Barnet planners, as also with the Suburb councillors. Working relations with the RA also continue cordial and constructive. The Trust Manager has regular meetings with the RA chairman and vice-chairman, tripartite meetings between the RA, Barnet and the Trust take place twice a year to discuss common problems.

At the Trust's suggestion, English Heritage has undertaken a review of the listing of important buildings on the Suburb. The review is almost complete and will result in a substantial increase in the number of listed buildings - a very welcome development because of the added protection it will provide.

Finally it was at the Trust Manager's initiative, enthusiastically taken up by the RA and other Suburb groups, that this year's Family Holiday Association Fete was expanded into a whole week-end's events which, apart from being widely enjoyed, made an undoubted contribution to the Suburb's sense of social cohesion.

**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

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