

Community Safety series – article 4

Play your part to keep safe on darker nights

Falling crime figures show Suffolk is getting even safer, but the darker evenings can make us feel more vulnerable, especially those who live alone. During the busy festive season we need to be extra careful to keep ourselves, our households and our neighbours safe and secure so that we can all enjoy the celebrations.

Suffolk County Council is working with the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), district, borough and parish councils, Neighbourhood Watch and local groups to improve community safety across the county, but to succeed we all need to play our part.

Here are some seasonal safety tips and useful contacts:

Your home

Don't leave your home in darkness – leave a light on using a timer switch and draw the curtains at night.

Fit a visible burglar alarm and outside lighting. Keep shrubs and hedges cut back.

Lock all doors and windows and secure fences, gates and sheds

Dispose of present boxes carefully – don't advertise what's new in your house

Check smoke alarms, electric blankets and festive lighting are working properly.

Personal Safety

Never open your door to unexpected callers, without checking they are genuine. Ring a neighbour or the police first if you are unsure.

Keep your mobile phone battery topped up and put in a taxi contact number. Consider buying an audible attack alarm.

Make sure you are visible to drivers – wear reflective clothing, use cycle lights or carry a torch

Limit how much money and valuables you carry. Avoid using cash machines late at night. Have your keys ready when you are approaching your car or home.

Park in busy, well-lit car parks near CCTV cameras. Keep valuables out of sight. www.saferparking.com lists police approved car parks

Where possible, don't walk alone after dark. Plan your route. Avoid isolated stops and sit near the driver or other passengers. Never accept lifts from strangers.

Contacts

To contact your area Safer Neighbourhood Team visit www.safersuffolk.org.uk or call Suffolk Constabulary on 01473 613500. Neighbourhood Watch news and crime prevention advice is available at www.suffolk.police.uk

For safety advice about bogus callers, electric blankets, festive lighting, smoke alarms contact Suffolk County Council Trading Standards on 01473 264859, or visit the county council website at www.suffolk.gov.uk

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