



The Molesey, Dittons & Hinchley Wood Neighbourhood Watch Group

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SPRING / SUMMER 2023

In this edition:

We send regular email details of burglaries and vehicle crimes, courtesy of Elmbridge police. We also have access to the underlying data for all neighbourhood crime, and so below is an update of *all* Neighbourhood crime types from Jan '20 to Mar '23, with a comparison between years and identifying trends. But first, advice about call blockers and news of a 'brushing' scam from Buckingham & Surrey Trading Standards.

Banham Security is again sponsoring Elmbridge Neighbourhood Watch. We are lucky to work with this leading Security Company. They're based in Earlsfield, with a branch in Guildford. If you're thinking of adding security to your home, call them or go online, and they'll send a representative, who can check out what you already have and make suggestions as to what would be beneficial to add. This is a free service with no obligation to buy. Their main telephone number is 0207 6225151 or Guildford 01483 301400

John Haberfield

Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards

Call blockers

Our call blockers have stopped over 48,000 scam and nuisance calls getting through to our residents in the year 22/23, saving them over £1.8million from fraudsters. The units are 99.8% effective!

Scammers are using the rising cost of energy as a hook, with the majority of calls in March 2023 being about loft insulation and solar panels. In fact 4 out of the top 5 of all nuisance call types last month relate to the cost of living.

If you or someone you know in Buckinghamshire or Surrey is vulnerable to parting with personal or bank information over the phone please call 0808 223 1133 to see if you are eligible for a free call blocker.

Dodgy Amazon sellers are sending scarves to random addresses as part of a new 'brushing' scam

We explain how scammers use your details to create fake reviews. Dodgy sellers are sending scarves to random addresses to artificially inflate sales volumes and create fake reviews on Amazon. If you've received a 'Suzhichou' branded scarf in the post, it's likely that you've been targeted by a 'brushing' scam.

Read on to find out how these scams work and how to report them.

Suzhichou brushing scam

Brushing scams involve dodgy sellers on online marketplaces such as Amazon submitting fake orders on their own items.

After submitting an order, the seller sends a cheap, low-quality product – such as one of these scarves – to a random address. This generates a tracking number on the marketplace. Once the recipient receives the item, the scammer will be able to leave a fake five-star review. These 'sales' bolster the seller's figures, helping their products rank higher in search results. Ultimately, this results in more people seeing

and buying their poor-quality products, under the impression that they're highly rated.

A variation of the scam involves you ordering an item from a marketplace but being sent a completely different item. In these instances, the fraudster sends out a cheap product with the same tracking number that was generated by your actual order.

In 2021, we reported on how more than a million households may have been targeted by brushing scams.

Does a scammer have my details?

If you receive one of these items, it means a fraudster has got hold of your name and address. While this may sound worrying, you don't need to panic.

The fraudster could have got your details from any one of a number of places.

For example, some shoppers have reported receiving these scarves after ordering a different item from a Facebook marketplace store based in China.

Alternatively, your address may have been taken from a publicly available source, been compromised as part of a data leak or been accessed as a result of entering your details into an unsecure website.

What to do if you've been targeted by a brushing scam

If you receive an unsolicited item from an Amazon marketplace seller, report the package to Amazon using its 'Report Unwanted Package' form.

You should also change your Amazon password and set up two-factor authentication, if you haven't already done so.

The unsolicited package indicates that some of your personal information has been compromised, so you should take steps to check that everything is secure.

In particular, you should check your bank account for any unusual activity and keep an eye on your credit report.

Crime map review

As before, our crime data is grouped by electoral wards. *(For anyone uncertain of the boundaries of the wards, there's a map at the end of this article).* To provide a reasonable comparison, we have reviewed data in the new format dating back to Jan 2020 and up to the latest available data.

First, to set the scene for crime rates, let's view how Elmbridge compares with the rest of Surrey.

TOTAL No. CRIMES IN 2022 PER 1,000 HOUSEHOLDS	Violence and sexual offences	Anti-social behaviour	Public order	Criminal damage and arson	Other theft	Vehicle crime	Burglary	Shoplifting	Drugs	Other crime	Bicycle theft	Theft from the person	Possession of weapons	Robbery	TOTAL
Spelthorne	73.7	50.5	24.6	19.8	15.9	20.1	8.7	7.8	6.8	4.3	3.1	1.5	1.9	1.3	240
Woking	75.9	49.1	22.8	16.5	18.1	10.5	7.6	8.7	4.1	2.9	4.9	1.6	1.1	1.1	225
Runnymede	69.8	42.5	22.6	18.4	19.4	16.2	7.2	6.0	10.7	3.4	2.4	1.2	1.6	1.1	223
Epsom and Ewell	63.5	48.0	18.9	16.4	15.5	16.7	12.0	6.1	5.0	2.9	4.4	2.3	1.1	1.6	214
Guildford	66.5	41.1	22.2	17.3	16.4	10.7	7.7	14.4	5.1	3.7	3.1	1.4	1.1	1.1	212
Reigate and Banstead	66.0	33.5	17.9	15.7	13.6	11.3	5.5	7.2	4.3	3.0	1.4	1.1	1.2	0.7	182
Tandridge	50.7	38.3	16.0	20.6	14.4	20.7	8.4	4.5	3.1	2.6	0.3	0.8	1.1	0.9	182
Elmbridge	54.5	29.7	17.2	13.5	14.4	12.4	9.5	5.5	4.0	2.8	3.5	1.0	1.1	0.8	170
Surrey Heath	51.4	30.2	14.2	12.6	15.4	11.4	5.6	9.8	3.4	3.8	1.6	1.3	0.9	0.6	162
Mole Valley	49.6	29.1	16.7	13.6	13.5	7.1	6.9	9.4	3.2	2.3	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.9	154
Waverley	43.0	25.0	11.4	12.2	12.2	9.5	10.2	7.2	1.8	2.2	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.4	138
SURREY	60.2	37.0	18.5	15.9	15.2	12.9	8.0	8.0	4.6	3.1	2.4	1.2	1.1	0.9	189

An analysis (above), from the national crime data for Surrey for the full year 2022, reveals that Elmbridge (*highlighted yellow*) had the 4th lowest overall crime rate out of the 11 boroughs in Surrey and the 3 boroughs with lower crime rates are more rural (Surrey Heath, Mole Valley and Waverley).

Of the 14 neighbourhood crime types (*highlighted orange*), the 4 highest rates were Violence and Sexual Offences, Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), Public Order, and Criminal Damage and Arson, collectively accounting for 70% of the total crime.

These are also closely related as often what would otherwise be an ASB offence could easily become a violence offence (if the suspect pushes someone), or a public order offence (if the activities intimidate innocent bystanders), or a criminal damage offence (if the activities result in something being damaged).

Looking at the combination of these 4 crime types provides much smoother crime trends. Within Elmbridge, Violence and Sexual Offences were rarely sexual and most violent crimes were common assault.

Next, let's compare the crime data for the 16 electoral wards within Elmbridge.

Analysis reveals that for almost all of the 14 crime types our NHW regional wards (West Molesey, East Molesey, Thames Ditton, Long Ditton and Hinchley Wood and Weston Green) were in the lower half of the table of high to low crime rates.

As an example for comparison, the average rate of all crime across Surrey was 189 crimes, in the whole year, per 1,000 households.

For Elmbridge it was 170, and for the wards mentioned above it varied from 168 (Molesey East) down to 115 (Hinchley Wood and Weston Green).

In summary, Elmbridge has a very low crime rate, and our wards within Elmbridge have even lower crime rates.

Now, we can compare crime data for January to March this year with the same period last year.

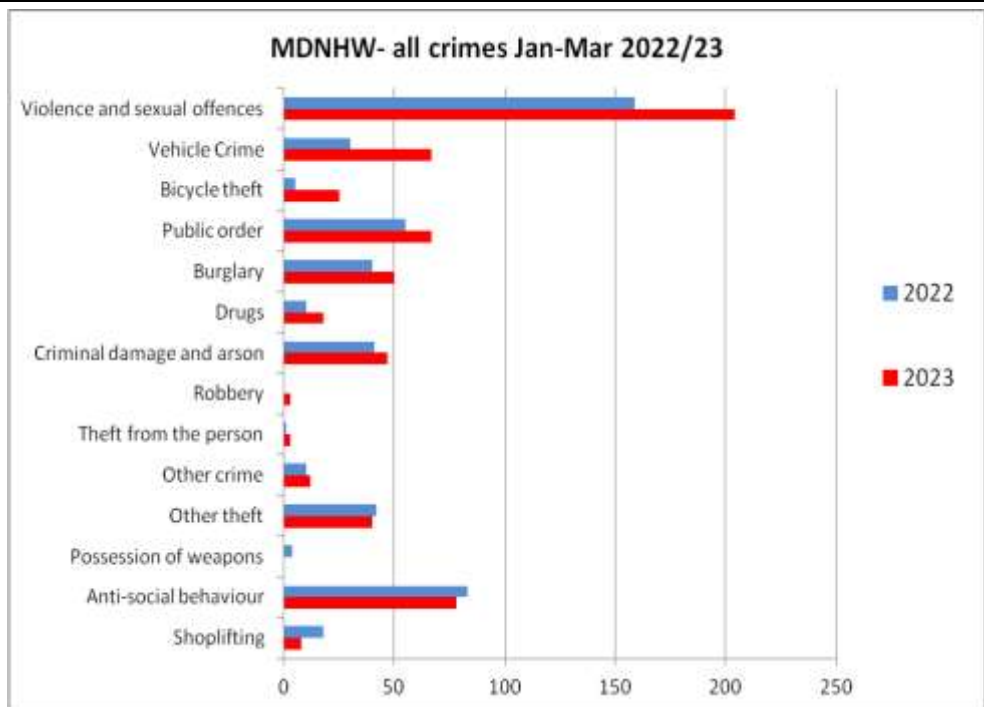
The table below shows, by ward, the variation in numbers of crimes between Jan-Mar 2022 and 2023, with crime types sorted from highest to lowest (top to bottom) numbers of crimes, for the MDNHW region as a whole.

The next column shows, for comparison, the same figures for the whole of Elmbridge. The final 2 columns show the actual number of each crime in 2023, and the % of each compared to the total. Our region had a 25% increase in overall crime so far in 2023 compared to Elmbridge with an increase of only 1%.

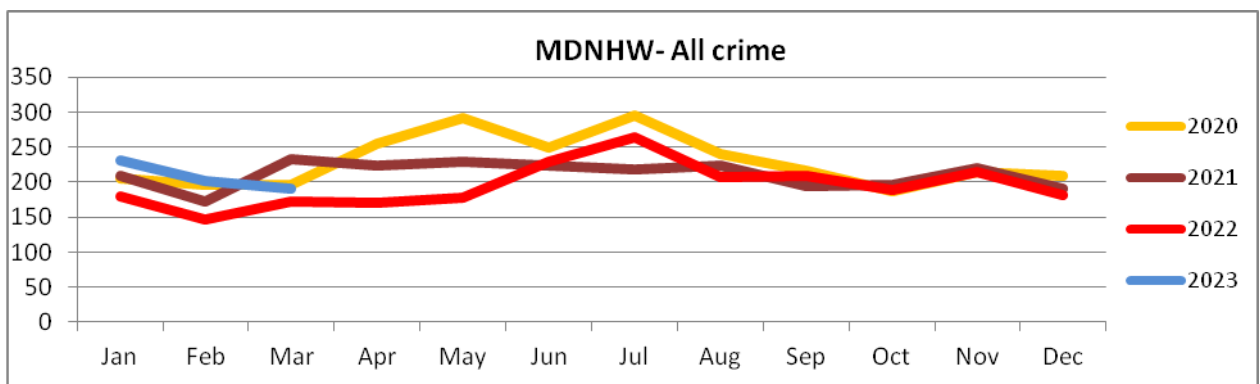
Molesey, Dittons & Hinchley Wood (MDNHW Region) Variance in crimes Jan-Mar 2022/23	Molesey West	Molesey East	Thames Ditton	Long Ditton	Hinchley Wood & Weston Green	MDNHW Region	Elmbridge	MDNHW Total Crimes 2023	MDNHW % of Total Crimes 2023
Violence and sexual offences	36	-9	-2	6	14	45	-40	204	32.8%
Anti-social behaviour	-1	-10	2	10	-6	-5	-82	78	12.5%
Public order	6	1	3	2	0	12	-10	67	10.8%
Vehicle Crime	16	7	-2	8	8	37	106	67	10.8%
Burglary	-6	9	-3	8	2	10	50	50	8.0%
Criminal damage and arson	4	2	1	-4	3	6	4	47	7.6%
Other theft	-1	5	-4	-7	5	-2	-13	40	6.4%
Bicycle theft	2	3	11	3	1	20	3	25	4.0%
Drugs	7	4	0	-4	1	8	19	18	2.9%
Other crime	-3	2	1	1	1	2	7	12	1.9%
Shoplifting	-1	-10	0	0	1	-10	-13	8	1.3%
Robbery	1	1	1	0	0	3	2	3	0.5%
Theft from the person	-1	1	0	1	1	2	1	3	0.5%
Possession of weapons	-2	-1	0	0	-1	-4	-11	0	0.0%
TOTAL	57	5	8	24	30	124	23	622	

Some wards have fared better than others with the main increases being in Molesey West, Long Ditton and Hinchley Wood & Weston Green, predominantly in violence and vehicle crime, although burglaries have also increased in Molesey East and Long Ditton.

The following table gives a better picture of how the various crime types have changed between Jan-Mar 2022 and 2023. They are shown in order of largest increase to largest decrease.

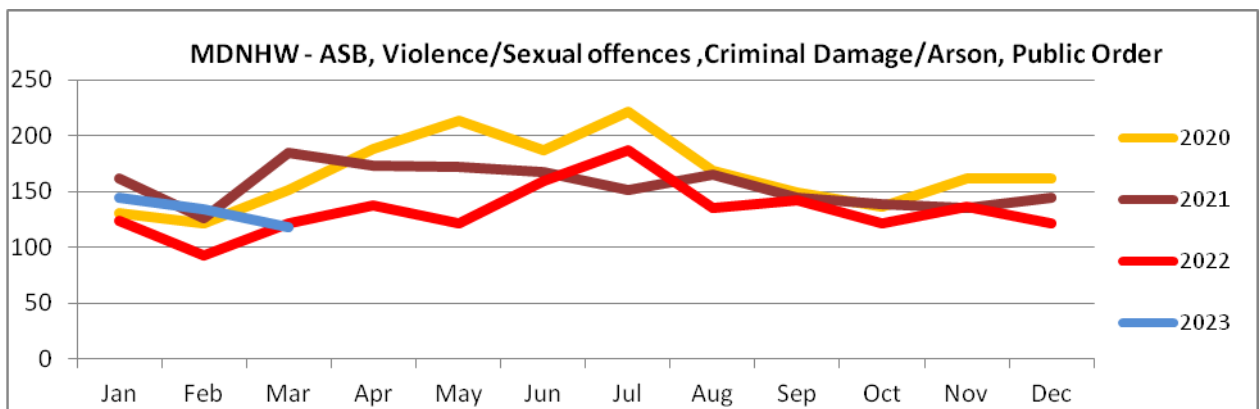


Of course, this only reflects 3 months of the current year. For a better idea of annual trends we need to look in comparison to previous years' crime rates. First, we see that although the overall crime rate started higher this year, it is trending downwards, closer to 2022 levels.

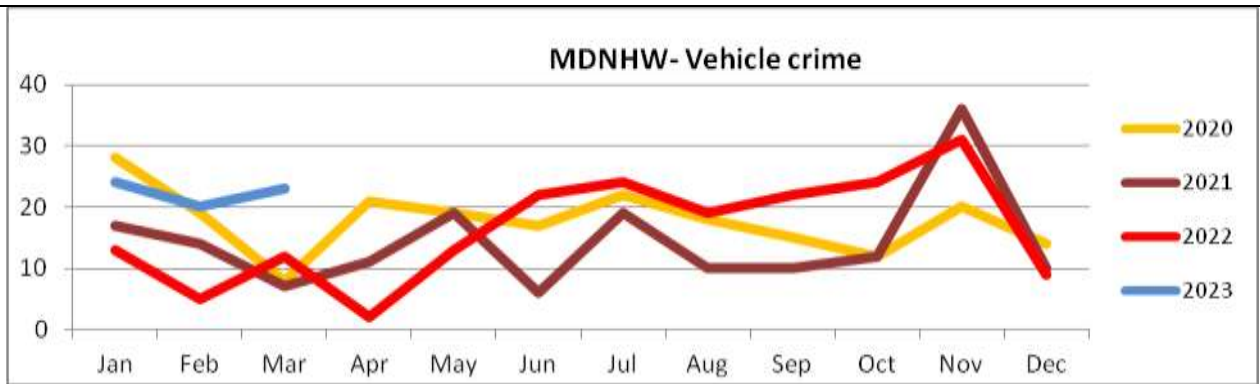


We saw (above) that in the whole of 2022 across Elmbridge, of the 14 neighbourhood crime types, the 4 highest rates were Violence and Sexual Offences, Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), Public Order, and Criminal Damage and Arson, collectively accounting for 68% (two thirds) of the total crime.

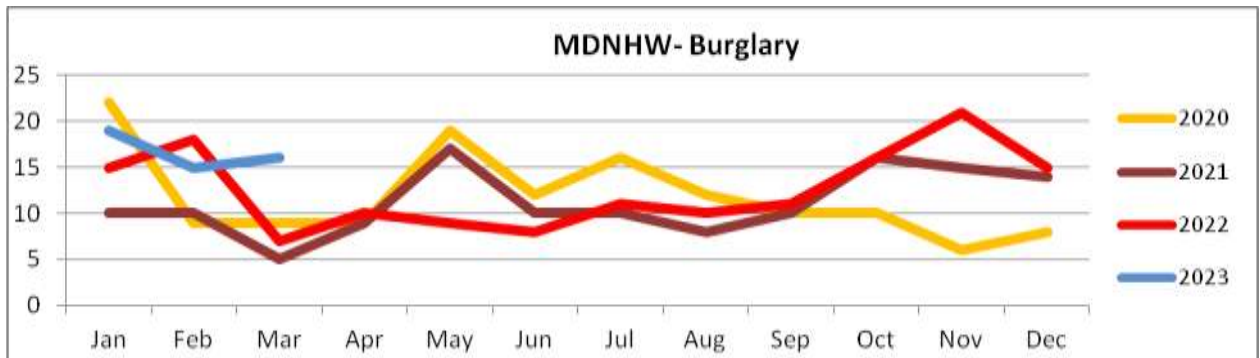
You see here the same trend as with total crime, suggesting that this is one main factor in that trend. Molesey West had raised numbers throughout January to March (accounting for three quarters of the regional increase), Long Ditton had raised numbers for January and February, and Hinchley Wood & Weston Green raised numbers in February, in contrast to a reducing trend for Molesey East.



The next most frequent crimes (and those that have the most impact on victims) have been Vehicle Crime and Burglary, accounting for 10.8% and 8.0% respectively of the total crime so far this year. Vehicle crime has more than doubled compared to the same period in 2022, in all wards except Thames Ditton.



Burglary has increased by 25% compared to the same period in 2022, all in Molesey East and Long Ditton, although offset by reductions in the other wards.

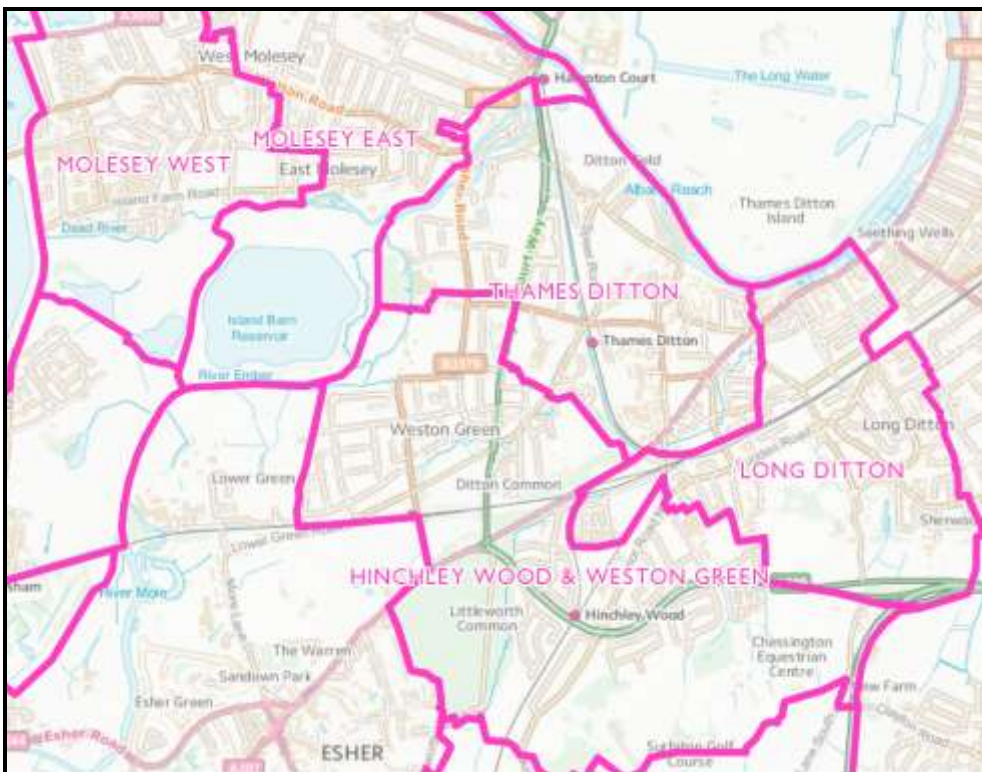


The other 8 crime types account for the remaining 17.5% of all crime, and only two of those show an increase in 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Bicycle Theft, accounting for 4% of total crime (+20), has increased significantly in Thames Ditton, and to a smaller extent in the other wards.

Drugs, accounting for 2.9% of total crime (+8), has increased in both Molesey wards.

From Ordnance Survey Election Maps



Election wards

It wasn't possible to capture the full map of our NHW region, but the northern border of Molesey West and Molesey East wards is the river Thames.

To see this map on-line, go to:

<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

zoom in to your area, click on the 'BOUNDARY' button, scroll down and select 'Wards / District Wards' and click the 'Show names' button.

Numbers To Keep

IMMEDIATE POLICE RESPONSE 999
POLICE NON-EMERGENCY 101
Elmbridge Police Safer Neighbourhood Team
elmbridge@surrey.police.uk

To report a crime go to:
Surrey Police website www.surrey.police.uk

DESIGN OUT CRIME OFFICER (DOCO)
ANGELA CHRISTIE 01483 631632
Angela.Christie@surrey.pnn.police.uk

CRIMESTOPPERS (anonymous) 0800 555 111
www.crimestoppers-uk.org

ESHER POLICE STATION (Civic Centre) 101
Monday-Friday: 8:45am to 5:00pm

TRADING STANDARDS 08454 04 05 06
via Citizens Advice consumer service

ELMBRIDGE COMMUNITY SAFETY 01372 474398
Email: communitysafety@elmbridge.gov.uk
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ElmbridgeBC#>

NOISE COMPLAINTS 01372 474750

ABANDONED VEHICLES, GRAFFITI, LITTER
Clean Up Line 01372 474474

SURREY FIRE & RESCUE 01737 242444
Home Fire Risk Check 0800 085 0767
Contact Centre 03456 009 009

VOLUNTARY ACTION ELMBRIDGE 01372 463587
www.vae.org.uk

TELEPHONE/FAX/MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE
To stop unsolicited sales or marketing calls
Phone www.tpsonline.org.uk 0845 070 0707
Fax calls www.fpsonline.org.uk 0845 070 0702
Mail www.mpsonline.org.uk 0845 703 4599

To report suspicious activity call:

- **Crimestoppers** – 0800 555 111
- **Anti-Terrorist Hotline** – 0800 789 321

Or in an emergency call 999

Useful Websites

www.banksafeonline.org.uk
www.bba.org.uk
www.cardwatch.org.uk
www.communities.gov.uk
www.crimeconcernuk.net
www.getsafeonline.org
www.homeoffice.gov.uk
www.identitytheft.org.uk
www.rightupyourstreet.net
www.surreycc.gov.uk
www.surreypa.gov.uk
www.thisismoney.co.uk
www.immobilise.com

Residents Associations:

www.esher-residents.com
www.moleseyresidentsassociation.org.uk
www.hinchleywood.org.uk
www.residents-association.COM (Thames Ditton & Weston Green)
www.longditton.org



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999 For deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired people in the UK alert police, ambulance, fire, or coastguard services by either calling via a relay assistant or texting a message to 999 using an emergency SMS service. Go to www.emergencysms.org.uk for information about how to register.

Keep Them Out!

- **Remember** Lock your car at all times when parking and don't leave valuables on view
- **Remember** leave lights on in your property if you are going to be out after dusk; many properties targeted appeared unoccupied
- **Remember** Most burglars enter a premises from the rear, and many burglaries take place during the day



- **Remember** Burglars don't like security deadlocks on doors because they can't open them from the inside, and have to leave through a window
- **Remember** If your vehicle is "keyless", keep the key in a secure "Faraday" pouch or metal tin and keep keys AWAY from the front door or kitchen window
- **Remember** Make sure sheds and gates are locked, and outside bins are not left where burglars could use them as a stepping stone.