



HERTFORDSHIRE

CONSTABULARY

Royston Rural Watch, November 2017

PC Mark Ellwood 371 & PCSO 6531 Penny Tomsett,
PCSO Chris Brabrook 6522

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***Our Non -
Emergency
Number 101***

On the Beat -

Telephone Fraudsters

Telephone scams have affected our area recently, please read and pass on the information to vulnerable residents. If you are suspicious of a call you receive, hang up and report it to police

Fraudsters have used a variety of methods in an attempt to con people out of cash.

- One victim lost more than £11,000 in Hertfordshire

A 53-year-old woman from the Sandon area was contacted by a woman who claimed to be from BT and persuaded the victim they had viruses on their computer. The victim was then transferred to a 'security expert' who accessed her computer remotely.

The offender then became threatening and told the victim to go to Tesco and purchase £5,000 worth of iTunes vouchers. Fortunately, officers intervened and no purchase was made.



An 87-year-old man from Markyate was contacted and told that he owed £500 to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The victim was persuaded to purchase £500 worth of iTunes vouchers as payment and read the codes over the phone to the offender.

Similarly, a 65-year-old man from Stevenage was contacted by a man claiming to be from HMRC who stated the victim owed taxes. Again, the victim was instructed to purchase iTunes vouchers from several outlets and read the codes over the phone. He was also persuaded to transfer money over to a Bitcoin account. Overall, he lost £11,500 to the fraudsters.

Reports of 'more traditional' phone scam offences have also been received in Hertsmere whereby offenders call victims and claim to be police officers investigating fraudulent activity on their bank accounts. They then ask the victims to hand cash or bank cards over to a courier as part of a fictitious investigation. No money was lost on these occasions.

Detective Sergeant Jon Leak, who leads Hertfordshire Constabulary's specialist phone scam investigation team, said: "We continue to do everything we can to bring offenders to justice. A number of convictions have already been secured but, unfortunately, these scams are still occurring with a variety of methods now being used.

"Thankfully, many people recognise them for what they are and refuse to part with any money however, there are occasions when people fall prey to the highly persuasive nature of these fraudsters and often lose thousands of pounds.

"I want to reiterate that you will never be asked under any circumstances, by police, banks or HMRC, to purchase iTunes vouchers as payment. Similarly, police and banks would never ask for your PIN or for you to hand cash and bank cards over to a courier.

"If you are suspicious of a call you receive, please hang up and report it to police. Remember to wait at least five minutes to ensure you aren't reconnected to the offender."

He added: "Please also share this advice with older relatives, friends and neighbours to help prevent them from becoming victims."

If you think you may have been a victim of a phone scam, please report it to police on the non-emergency number 101.

Is your vehicle winter ready?

- Make sure your vehicle is winter ready before the dark nights start drawing in
- Check your tyres, engine levels and lights, and ensure you drive to the conditions
- When de-icing your car, be sure to completely clear all your windows before setting off

The clocks went back on Sunday 29th October and that means the driving conditions that you've become accustomed to in recent months will change. The nights will start to draw in and the roads will inevitably become more dangerous.

To combat the earlier night fall, brighter mornings and unfavourable road conditions, Inspector Chris Huggins, from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Road Policing Unit has compiled a list of checks you should carry out to ensure your vehicle is prepared for the cold winter months ahead.



Tyres

The legal minimum tread depth in the UK is 1.6mm across the centre three quarters of the tyre.

Tyre treads are designed to give good grip on wet roads but this ability drops as a tyre wears down or as the depth of water increases. Drivers should take this into consideration and reduce their speed accordingly in wet conditions.

A quick and easy way to see if your tyre tread exceeds the minimum legal tread depth is to conduct the 20p test. Simply place a 20p coin into the main tread grooves of your tyre. If the outer band of the 20p coin is obscured when it is inserted, then your tread is above the legal limit. If the outer band of the coin is visible, then your tyres may be illegal and unsafe and should be checked immediately by a qualified tyre professional.

Making sure your tyres have the optimum air pressure is crucial. Check the required pressure of the tyres, which can vary according to load carried by the vehicle too.

To find the specifications for your tyres check your manual or inside your vehicle door. Check and adjust your pressure at your local garage or petrol station.

This should be done when the vehicle has been standing for some time. Warm tyres can cause tyre pressures to become elevated and manufacturers quote cold tyre pressures.

Engine levels

Ice is often inevitable in the cold weather – not only on the road surface but inside your engine too.

Keep your engine topped up with enough coolant to keep it running to the best of its ability in cold conditions.

Ensure your washer bottle is topped up and use a washer fluid to prevent the water freezing as temperatures drop.

If you're unsure of what coolant your vehicle needs, visit your local garage or vehicle shop and they will be able to advise you.

If you're unsure of where the coolant goes, open your bonnet and look for the cap that has displays the thermometer symbol. Pour the coolant into the reservoir until it's between the 'max' and 'low' marks. Never remove this cap when the engine is hot as scalding water can be ejected.

Lights

Make sure to regularly check your headlights, brake lights, indicators and reverse lights so other road users will be aware of your intentions when you're on the road. This will reduce the risk of an accident. Get a friend or family member to help you check your brake lights and reverse lights, or test them in the dark and look for the reflection in windows/other vehicles.

Vision

The low winter sun in the mornings and afternoons can be a real hazard and on rainier days it can also reflect off wet road surfaces. Consider keeping a pair of sunglasses in your vehicle to reduce the glare from the sun.

In icy conditions, set aside an extra five minutes to ensure your vehicle is fully defrosted and you are able to see out of all of your windows before setting off.

Keep some de-icer and a window scraper handy in your car and ensure the whole window is clear of ice – not just a small patch. Window covers can be

fitted to keep frost off your windscreen and get your journey off to an easier start.

Don't be tempted to leave your engine running in order to clear the windows when your vehicle is unattended: you may come outside to find an opportunist thief has made off with your vehicle.

Drive to the conditions

Cold and wet roads can make manoeuvres more dangerous so ensure your speed matches the conditions of the road, particularly on corners where turning can become treacherous on slippery surfaces.

Inspector Huggins said: "I cannot stress enough how important the above checks are in making sure that your journey, of whatever length, is as safe as possible for you, your passengers and other road users."



Local Crime Information

G4E - Ashwell, Hinxworth, Bygrave, Newnham and Caldecote

Shed Burglaries, Radwell - Overnight between Friday 13th and Saturday 14th October two properties in Radwell were targeted for shed burglaries. The offenders have used the fields at the rear of the houses and have cut fences to gain entry. The offenders have stolen gardening power tools and have made off over the fields. G4/17/999 and G4/17/1007 Refers

House Burglary, High Street, Ashwell - On Tuesday 17th October a house was targeted in the High Street, Ashwell. The offenders have entered the house using a shovel found in the garden. The shovel was used to jimmy open the down stairs window allowing the offenders into the property. Once inside the whole property was searched including the attic. Cash cards stolen from within. G4/17/1014 Refers

House Burglary, Ashwell Road, Hinxworth – A property in an isolated in Hinxworth was targeted twice during October. On both occasions the offender has smashed through the rear door to enter the property. The first occasion

on Thursday 19th October the offenders stole cash and made off. The second occasion on Wednesday 25th October the offender's stole and air rifle and silver cutlery. G4/17/1024 and G4/17/1042 Refers

Outbuilding Burglary, Ashwell End, Ashwell – On Tuesday 24th October a former employee of a farm entered the farm. Once on the farm the offender removed property that was being stored in a barn. The offender returned to his vehicle and made off. Police has since arrested the suspect and property has been returned to its owner. G4/17/1043 Refers

G4D – Barley, Barkway, Reed, Therfield, Kelshall and Nuthampstead

Theft, Farm Land, Therfield – Between Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th October. Using a vehicle the offenders have trespassed on to a farmer's field and have approach an unlocked Partridge pen. The offenders have captured approx. 30 birds and have made off. G4/17/946 Refers

Shed Burglary, Cambridge Road, Barkway – Between Wednesday 4th and Friday 6th October a shed was broken into on the recreational ground in Barway. The shed door was forced open but nothing was taken. G4/17/957 Refers.

Attempted Garage burglary, Therfield – During the day time on Friday 6th October a garage to a property on Haywoods Lane, Therfield was targeted. The side window to the garage was forced and smashed, no entry was gained and the offenders left the area. G4/17/959 Refers

Fraud, Willow Close, Reed – Tuesday 10th October at 12.00 an elderly resident had a call at his address. The offended claimed that he was his gardener and that he is owed some money for work. The elderly gentleman was confused and gave the offender £80. G4/17/1004 Refers

Attempted Outbuilding Burglary, Windmill Close, Barkway – Between Monday 2nd and Friday 13th October and offender has approached an outbuilding at the rear of a house in Windmill Close. The offender has attempted to gain entry by forcing a tool into the lock of a double glazed door. The offender was unable to gain entry and made off. G4/17/1006 Refers

Theft, Newsells Park, Newsells – Between Saturday 14th and Monday 16th October a post box has been stolen from Newsells park. G4/17/1010 Refers

Theft from Motor Vehicle, High Street, Barkway – Overnight on Tuesday 17th to Wednesday 18th a Ford Transit van was parked on a drive off the High Street In Barkway. No damage was caused to gain entry to the van but a Sat Nav was stolen. G4/17/1018 Refers

Outbuilding Burglary, Sandon Road, Therfeild – The offenders entered a barn situated on a farm in Sandon Road. Entry was gained to a barn and a ride on lawn mower was stolen. The offenders made off direction unknown. G4/17/1035 Refers

G3C - Sandon, Wallington, Rushden, Clothall and Weston

Criminal Damage, Fore Street, Weston – Whilst a car was parked on a driveway in Fore Street, Weston and the victim was asleep. A vehicle was approached and the window was smashed, nothing stolen from within the vehicle. Sunday 1st October - G4/17/617 Refers

Fraud, Sandon – Tuesday 10th October the victim received a phone call and the caller stated that access was needed to her computer to get rid of bad files that are dormant on the computer. The victim allowed this and the caller accused the victim of supporting terrorism and made the victim panic. The offender ordered the victim to purchase iTunes vouchers to the sum of £5000. The call was intercepted by police at the super market prior to any purchase of vouchers. G3/17/639 Refers

Damage, Sandon – On Sunday 8th October a farmer disturbed a group of men hawking off the A505 near to Sandon. The males ran back to the vehicle and drove off, the only exit for the field was through a garden of a property nearby and the offenders have driven through a fence and a gate to make their escape. G3/17/647 Refers.

Your local Neighbourhood Police Teams website

<http://snt.herts.police.uk/Teams.aspx?TeamID=G01>

Useful Links

<http://www.herts.police.uk/>

<http://www.doglost.co.uk/>

<http://www.stolenhorseregister.com/>

Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team Tel – 01438 757935