



Letter from Burglary Team Detective Inspector

Dear residents,

My name is Darren Ambrose and I am a Detective Inspector for our Burglary Team here at Wiltshire Police, covering the central and south of the county.

Our team of officers was established last year and are dedicated to tackling burglaries in Wiltshire.

The reason I am getting in touch is because in March we recorded a total of 27 burglaries in the county, excluding Swindon. Whilst we are doing all we can to identify those responsible, which often requires working closely with neighbouring forces as it is often the case that offenders travel cross border to commit crimes, I wanted to share with you some recent national research which has identified those houses most likely to be targeted and what you can do to help.

The majority of burgled properties are in a cul-de-sac – they are most often approached from the rear and are rarely overlooked. Burglars often gain entry by climbing over fences and gates. As a result, you may consider something called ‘defensive planting’ which has the potential to make a property less attractive and more difficult as a target. It involves planting plants with natural defences such as thorns, barbs or spines, along fences and windows.

As well as this, we’ve produced a checklist of some perhaps obvious but important things to do before leaving the house. We hope you find this useful.

Here’s what we recommend you do before you go out or go to bed:

- close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you're only going out for a few minutes
- double-lock any door
- make sure that any valuables are out of sight
- keep handbags away from the letterbox or cat flap and hide all keys including car keys, as a thief could hook keys or valuables through even a small opening
- never leave car documents or ID in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways
- in the evening, shut the curtains and leave lights on
- if you're out all day, then it's advisable to use a timer device to automatically turn lights and a radio on at night
- set your alarm, and if you have a Ring doorbell, please ensure it is set to record
- make sure the side gate is locked
- lock your shed or garage
- lock your bike inside a secure shed or garage, to a robust fitting bolted to the ground or wall, like a ground anchor
- Consider the purchase of a Faraday pouch/bag to place your car keys in. This reduces the risk of your car being stolen by gangs who have devices to steal vehicles without needing the keys.

Going away?

Here are five tips to help you keep your home and belongings stay safe while you're away:

- If you're off on holiday and wish to post anything on social media, make sure your posts aren't public and that they're only seen by your friends
- Leave lights and a radio on a timer to make the property appear occupied
- Get a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your property or join a Neighbourhood or resident Watch Scheme
- Consider asking your neighbours to close curtains after dark and to park on your drive
- Remember to cancel deliveries

To provide you with some reassurance, we are currently in the top 10 police forces in the country for burglary detection rates. We also have the least amount of burglaries amongst our most similar police forces. Therefore, we are making significant progress in preventing and detecting burglary in Wiltshire.

My pledge moving forward is to continue tackling burglary as effectively as possible, but having the support of the community is essential. Many of our burglary crimes are

solved through brave members of the public coming forward and providing essential information.

Kind regards,

DI Darren Ambrose.