



VILLAGE WATCH



Newsletter of South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch
in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police
Edition 289 – MARCH 2022

➤ SCAM WARNINGS

Following an increase in the number of complaints to Consumer Direct and Trading Standards, be on the look-out for scams designed to trick you into divulging personal details or making payments for nothing.

- Being told you have won the 'Microsoft Lottery'. The 'Microsoft Lottery' does not exist –so it's not true if you're told you've won. This is just one of several forms of lottery fraud. Lottery fraud is an advance fee fraud, which fraudsters use to try to trick people into paying an upfront fee for a fictitious gift or cash prize or to cover certain costs before you can claim the money. They also use well known brand names to make the scam more believable.
- Computer Software Service scams can come from bogus 'Computer Software Tech Support' or 'Microsoft Tech Support' phone calls, telling you there is a problem with your device, or asking for credit card information to 'validate your software'. The customer may be directed to a website that allows the caller remote access to the customer's computer. The fraudster then appears to make a number of 'fixes' to their computer. In fact, they gain access to the victim's personal information, often by installing malware. This personal information can then be used to commit fraud.
- Unsolicited e-mails with attached security updates. Computer firms tend not to send out unsolicited communication about security updates, unless you are a subscriber to a security notification package. If in doubt, don't open the e-mail. If further assurance is needed, contact the firm directly using the phone number obtained from their web site or other trusted source.
- Being asked for your credit card information to 'validate your copy of Windows'. Microsoft does not request credit card information to validate copies of Windows. Microsoft does validate requests to download software from its website via its 'Genuine Advantage Program', but never asks for any personally identifying information, including credit card details.

➤ PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD AND CYBER CRIME

- Destroy and preferably shred receipts with your card details on, and post with your name and address on. Identity fraudsters don't need much information to be able to clone your identity.
- If you receive bills, invoices or receipts for things that you haven't bought, or financial institutions contact you about outstanding debts, take action. Your identity may have been stolen.
- Be wary of post, phone calls or e-mails offering you business deals. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Genuine banks and trusted organisations, won't pressure you into making a financial transaction, if something feels wrong then it's always right to question it.
- If you have been a victim of fraud, be aware of fraud recovery fraud. This is when fraudsters pretend to be a lawyer or a law enforcement officer and tell you they can help you recover the money you've lost.
- Avoid misleading government websites, emails and phone numbers. Some websites, emails or phone numbers look like they're part of an official government service when they're not, or claim to help more than they actually do. Some make you pay for things that would be free or cheaper if you use the official government service. Always use <https://www.gov.uk> to find official government services and phone numbers.

❖ Reporting internet scams and phishing

The government website <https://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing> has information on reporting internet scams and phishing, HMRC emails, texts, phone calls and letters, and visa and immigration scams.

If you become the victim of a scam, contact Action Fraud – see CONTACTS below.

Report suspicious e-mails to report@phishing.gov.uk

Forward scam text messages to 7726 - it's free. This will report the message to your mobile phone provider.

Report scam or misleading adverts found on websites or on social media, including in search engines such as Bing and Google, to the Advertising Standards Authority (<https://www.asa.org.uk>).

➤ **UKRAINE CRISIS: WARNING ABOUT FAKE CHARITY APPEALS**

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia is resulting in loss of life, horrific injuries, the destruction of property, homelessness and an increasing refugee crisis. There are a number of charitable appeals that have been set up to provide urgently needed help for victims of the crisis. Unfortunately, conflicts such as that we are witnessing in Ukraine, as well as other political crises and natural disasters, are almost always exploited by fraudsters who set up bogus charity appeals.

❖ **Types of Scams**

The scams are perpetrated via e-mails, text messages, social media posts and phone calls, and are frequently highly convincing. They appeal for card payments directly or set up fake websites designed to defraud you, steal your personal information, or infect your computer or other device with ransomware or some other kind of malware.

Another commonplace issue during such crises is that of clickbait, where rather than appealing for money, people post sensational stories or images which if clicked on, can lead to similar websites, or those containing fake news or misinformation.

❖ **Safeguards**

- Donate directly to the Disasters Emergency Committee, where 15 of the leading aid charities in the UK are working together to provide aid: <https://www.dec.org.uk>
- Do not click on links in unexpected e-mails, social media posts, instant messages, or texts. Instead, search authentic charities online and visit their website.
- Ensure that appeal website addresses are spelled correctly and payment pages are secure (look for 'https' and a locked padlock in the address bar)
- Do not click on attachments in unsolicited e-mails.
- If you get a phone call appealing for charitable donations for victims of the Ukraine or other crises, regard it as fraudulent and put the phone down.

➤ **CONTACTS**

❖ **SY Police:** <https://www.southyorks.police.uk>

❖ **Emergencies:** call 999: when there is a threat to life (including traffic accidents where persons are injured, the road is blocked or a vehicle involved in the accident has failed to stop); violence to a person or damage to property is imminent; a suspected offender is at the scene of a crime or any delay in reporting the incident may prevent the offender being apprehended; serious disruption to the public is currently taking place or is likely to take place.

❖ **Non-emergencies: call 101:** to report a crime not currently taking place, or to give information. Calls to 101 cost 15 pence per call from landlines and mobiles - no matter how long you're on the phone.

❖ **Report an incident online:** As an alternative to 101, you can report a non-emergency incident online at <https://www.reportingcrime.uk>, or from the main SYP web page under **Report something**
Reporting domestic abuse and **advice for victims** are also the SYP site.

For general enquiries, you can email enquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

Please do not use this email address to report crime – see above to report an incident online.

❖ **Crimestoppers:** report crime or suspicious activity anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 Monday-Friday 08:00-22:00; Saturday and Sunday 10:00-16:00 or online at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

❖ **Action Fraud:** To report fraud if you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber crime: the Action Fraud contact centre: 0300 123 2040. You may make the report anonymously. Text phone users can ring 0300 123 2050. Report fraud online at www.actionfraud.police.uk

❖ **Citizens Advice**

The Citizens Advice service offers practical, up-to-date information and advice on a wide range of topics, including; debt, benefits, housing, legal, discrimination, employment, education, relationship and family matters, welfare benefits, immigration, consumer and other problems. Advice is available to everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, disability or religion.

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 03454 04 05 06 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

The website of the national organisation: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

Rotherham & District Citizens Advice

<http://www.citizensadvicerotherham.org.uk>

The Rain Building, Market Hall, Eastwood Lane, Rotherham, S65 1EQ

Advice Line: 03444 111 444 open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

❖ **South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator:** Bryan Saunby: 01909 565194

Crime reports for January 2022 were not available at the time of publishing. They will be included in the April Village Watch.