



# VILLAGE WATCH



Newsletter of South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch  
in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police  
Edition 295 – SEPTEMBER 2022

View on the Anston Parish Council website: <https://www.anston.gov.uk> under **Community**

## ➤ **COURIER FRAUDSTERS**

Typically, courier fraudsters target their victims by claiming to be a police officer or a member of staff from a victim's bank and they often pressure people into making quick financial decisions to assist with fictitious investigations. In 2021 alone, 3,625 people were victims of courier fraud, with losses totalling more than £15.2 million.

### ❖ **Four common methods used by courier fraudsters**

- **Bank card expiry:** Fraudsters claim to be from the victim's bank and say their card is no longer valid. They ask for the pin number and then send a "courier" to collect the card before using it for fraudulent purposes.
- **Purchasing high end items:** The criminal pretends to be a police officer and asks the victim to help with an undercover operation by purchasing expensive items like watches, jewellery and gold. Once the item is bought, it is collected from the victim.
- **Counterfeit cash/bank investigation:** A person claiming to be a police or banking official informs the victim that they need to help with a banking corruption investigation. The victim is told to withdraw a large amount of money and the cash is picked up later by a courier to "check for fingerprints or to identify counterfeit bank notes".
- **Computer takeover:** The fraudster telephones the victim, purporting to be from their internet service provider, saying that they have had an issue with their internet connectivity and they are due compensation. The victim is persuaded to download a remote access application, giving the suspects access to their home computers. The fraudster persuades the victims into thinking that they have been paid too much compensation and the victims are asked to withdraw cash to pay the money back, which is later collected by a courier.

Fraudsters prey on some of the most vulnerable and most trustworthy members of society. Victims of courier fraud typically tend to be 70 to 89 years old, with women more likely to be targeted than men. From the Lead Force Operations Room at the City of London Police: *"We would urge everyone who is involved in a caring or supportive role to people of these ages to start conversations about the tactics used and warning signs to look out for on courier fraud. Just having that conversation could be the difference on whether someone becomes a victim of this trust-eroding crime."*

A number of services can help combat nuisance calls, one of these is **trueCall Call Blocker**. This is a small box that is plugged in between your phone and the wall socket. You tell it who can be connected to you, but unrecognised callers are required to identify themselves before the call is put through. Unwelcome callers are blocked.

### ❖ **Signs of courier fraud**

Courier fraud usually starts with an unsolicited telephone call to the victim.

- Typically the fraudster will pose as a bank official, police officer or a computer or utility engineer.
- Courier fraudsters may request that the victim purchases high value items such as a Rolex watch or gold bullion, withdraws cash or provides a bank card for collection. They then arrange for a courier to meet the victim to collect the item.
- Fraudsters will instruct victims not tell any family or friends about what they are doing.
- The fraudster may request the victim hangs up the phone to ring their bank for confirmation – but they keep the line open. This means the call to the bank is connected to the same fraudster who then purports to be a bank official and provides false confirmation that everything is perfectly fine and they can go ahead with the transaction.

## ➤ **REDUCING THEFT FROM VEHICLES**

There are three categories of property commonly stolen from vehicles:

- ❖ **Category 1:** property that should not have been left there and includes: mobile phones, Sat-Navs, laptops, handbags, wallets, coins for parking meters, shopping, vehicle documents. Do not leave property in an unattended vehicle. If you keep coins in your car for parking meters, keep them in a closed ashtray or in some other out-of-sight compartment. If they are on view a desperate thief will smash a window to steal a few pounds. Things like handbags, jackets, wallets, laptops and shopping should never be left on view in the vehicle. Lock them in the boot. Any suction cup marks on the windscreen from a Sat-Nav should be wiped away as their presence will indicate to the thief that you may have a device hidden in the glove compartment. You may not have, but this won't stop the thief from smashing a window to take a look. Sat-Nav mats don't leave suction cup marks on the windscreen. Vehicle Registration documents and test certificates should be kept at home.
- ❖ **Category 2:** property stolen from within the vehicle that needs to be there and includes: sound systems, Blue Badges and fuel. Sound systems and other in-car entertainment can be marked using a proprietary marking and registration system. Keep a record of the make, model and serial numbers and other distinguishing marks. Labels supplied with marking kits warn thieves that the removable property in your car is marked and traceable. Blue Badges should be kept in secure display holders. These holders can be rested above the dashboard to display the badge and clock and are attached to the steering wheel via a lockable steel cable.
- ❖ **Category 3:** property that is stolen off the vehicle such as wheels, spare wheels (especially those carried in insecure cradles beneath the car), top boxes, Registration plates and catalytic converters (particularly from vehicles with high ground clearance, such as 4X4s). Wheels can be protected by using locking wheel nuts. Spare wheels that are carried outside of the car in a cradle can have locks fitted, but they have to be fitted by a competent person. If your Registration plates are stolen, report the theft to the police immediately. Failure to report the matter may lead to you receiving countless offence penalties such as theft of fuel from a service station, speeding fines, parking fines, and it will be down to you to prove yourself innocent of these charges brought against you. You can fix plates with security screws or even use a little superglue on the underside of the screw head. Theft resistant number plates can be found on the Sold Secure website (<https://www.soldsecure.com>). The majority of top boxes have rack fittings inside the box and are protected by the box's locking mechanism. Always keep the box locked. Catalytic Converters (vehicles with high ground clearance, such as 4X4s, are particularly vulnerable) can be chemically engraved.
- ❖ **Reducing the opportunity to steal things**
  - Always close the windows and sunroof, lock the doors and set the immobiliser and alarm before leaving the vehicle, even for a minute, such as when paying for petrol at a service station.
  - If your vehicle does not have an alarm then have one fitted. Always insist on a Thatcham approved alarm system. (<https://www.thatcham.org> under *What we do - Security*)
  - Take extra care if you are driving a vehicle with the roof down. Consider raising the windows when stationary or in slow traffic and keep the doors and boot locked.
  - When parking away from home try to park in a place that is well lit and overlooked. When using a public car park try to use one that is supervised or a Park Mark Safer Parking Facility.

## ➤ 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); A serious offence is actually in progress; Violence to a person or damage to property is imminent; A suspected offender is still 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**
- ❖ **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](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
- **South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator:** Bryan Saunby: 01909 565194