

Community Safety

The newsletter from
Hart District Council



Issue 47 March 2025

This Newsletter aims to provide information around safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), raise awareness of current issues across the district, promote the good work of our partner agencies and celebrate the successes we have had.

We can be contacted online: [Report antisocial behaviour | Hart District Council](#)
by phone: **01252 774476** or by e-mail: communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

Protecting Your Van and Tools from Theft

Tool theft from vans is an ongoing issue, and recently we've seen a notable increase, especially targeting personal commercial vans. Thieves are becoming more inventive, using different methods to break in and make off with valuable tools and equipment.

Here's a breakdown of how they typically operate:

- **'Peel and Steal'**: In this method, thieves apply pressure to the van's side doors with their knees, creating a bend at the top, making it easier to pry the doors open and gain access.
- **Electronic Key Theft**: Sophisticated thieves often use skeleton or electric keys to open vans. These keys are easily accessible and can open a van without causing any visible damage—making it a quick and stealthy way to steal tools.
- **Lock Forcing**: One of the most common methods, where thieves use a wrench or similar tool to remove the plastic around the door lock, then twist and force the lock open. Once they unlock the door, the back doors are typically unlocked as well, giving them easy access to everything inside.

The result? Potential theft of thousands of pounds worth of tools and equipment, not to mention the costly damage to your van, which can disrupt your work and business operations.

Here are a few effective steps you can take to protect your van:

- **Lock Your Van**: It sounds simple, but many people forget to lock their vans, giving thieves an easy opportunity. Always double-check that your van is securely locked.
- **Park Smart**: Isolated vans are a prime target. Park near other vehicles, ideally in a well-lit area with CCTV coverage. If possible, park near your house or next to a wall or fence, limiting access to your doors.
- **Enhance Security**: Install extra safety measures such as alarms, immobilizers, or a deadlock/second lock system. These may seem like small investments, but they can serve as powerful deterrents.
- **Store Tools Securely**: If possible, remove all tools from the van overnight. If that's not an option, invest in secure storage solutions inside your van to lock away your tools and keep them safe.



Residential Break-ins: The Same Precautions Apply

We've also seen an increase in residential break-ins, particularly through downstairs windows and patio doors. Many of the same precautions for van security apply here:

- Ensure all doors and windows are locked, especially when you're away or at night.
- Keep valuables out of sight and securely stored.
- Consider installing enhanced security systems, such as alarms or CCTV.

If you spot someone acting suspiciously near homes or vehicles in your area, don't hesitate to [report it to the police](#). The more details you provide, the better the chances of catching the criminals and protecting your neighbours. You can also speak to the **Community Safety Team** about prevention advice and concerns at communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

Stay alert and secure your property to prevent costly theft and damage!

Community Safety visit Yateley Women's Institute



Community Safety had a lovely afternoon with Yateley Women's Institute. We discussed many topics including anti-social behaviour and County Lines. We talked about the work that Community Safety do within the local schools with projects such as Think Safe and Stay Safe. We also chatted about our partnership working with the Police and other local authorities and how a joined-up approach is key to keeping communities safe.

We are always keen to visit groups and community meetings to discuss our work and your concerns. The only way we can help solve problems or issues, is if we know about them.

If you attend a group or club and would like CST to join you for a session – please contact us at communitysafety@hart.gov.uk

Online Safety for Children: A Guide for Parents

As technology continues to shape our world, ensuring children's safety online has never been more important. The internet offers incredible opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection, but it also exposes young users to potential risks. Parents play a crucial role in guiding their children to navigate the digital world safely.



Key Risks to Be Aware Of:

- **Cyberbullying:** Children can be vulnerable to online harassment, which can affect their mental and emotional well-being.
- **Inappropriate Content:** The internet can expose kids to age-inappropriate material, from violent videos to explicit content.
- **Online Predators:** Strangers can use the internet to attempt to groom or manipulate children.
- **Privacy Issues:** Children often share personal information unknowingly, risking their privacy and security.

Practical Tips for Parents:

- **Establish Open Communication:** Encourage your child to talk openly about their online experiences and any issues they face.
- **Set Clear Boundaries:** Discuss which websites, apps, and games are appropriate, and set time limits for screen usage.
- **Use Parental Controls:** Leverage tools to block harmful content and monitor your child's activity.
- **Teach Privacy Awareness:** Teach your child not to share personal information like their name, address, or school online.
- **Lead by Example:** Model good online habits, showing respect and caution when using the internet.

By staying engaged, setting clear rules, and educating kids about the dangers and benefits of the online world, parents can help children make smart and safe decisions in their digital lives.

If you have received this monthly **Hart Community Safety Newsletter** forwarded to you and you would like to subscribe and receive it directly, please drop us a line with your request at:
communitysafety@hart.gov.uk