

Sussex Neighbourhood Watch update

Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation moves ahead

Brenda Whitmell and Robin Matthews, the Chair and a Vice Chairman/Treasurer respectively of Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation, retired from the Federation at the recent Annual General Meeting, after many years of long and loyal service.

The newly appointed Chairman is John Wright, Chairman of Crawley Neighbourhood Watch, and the Deputy Chairman is Derek Pratt, the Vice Chairman of Crawley Neighbourhood Watch and also Chairman of the Neighbourhood Watch North Sussex Search Team. Crawley Neighbourhood Watch is widely respected as being one of the most pro-active Neighbourhood Watch town schemes in Sussex.

Paying tribute at the AGM John said: "Brenda has been the Chairman of the Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation for over 10 years, and during that time she has also served on the Neighbourhood Watch South East Regional Forum, and represented the interests of the South East at the Neighbourhood & Home Watch Network, the national umbrella organisation for Neighbourhood Watch. NHWN represents all Neighbourhood Watch and Home Watch members across England and Wales. It is the body that engages with the Home Office and other partners at the strategic level. Similarly Robin has been a stalwart of Neighbourhood Watch in Sussex, and we wish them both a very long and happy retirement."

Three Vice Chairmen were also appointed; John Holman represents West Sussex and also becomes the new Treasurer, Mike Hewens represents East Sussex, and Peter Brookshaw represents Brighton & Hove. Other key appointments were Ann Goodridge as Secretary and Robin Hargraves as Sales Officer.

The Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation, set up in 1995 with the full support of Sussex Police, acts as a forum, co-ordinates resources, provides help to its members and helps to share good practice across the County, as well as seeking to raise the profile of Neighbourhood Watch. It also represents the views of our members to the South East Regional Forum, and where necessary to National Neighbourhood Watch.

The main purposes of Neighbourhood Watch are to promote good citizenship and greater public awareness through Neighbourhood Watch groups, increase public participation in the prevention and detection of crime, reduce the fear of crime, improve police/community liaison and increase community safety. Neighbourhood Watch is about making sure that no one has to feel afraid, vulnerable or isolated in the place where they live. It's about people looking out for each other, crossing barriers of age, race and class to create real communities that benefit everyone.

Neighbourhood Watch is a "grass roots" organisation, run by its members for its members and is one of the UK's largest voluntary organisations. Anybody can join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Usually residents in a neighbourhood who support the aims and objectives of Neighbourhood Watch agree amongst each other that they will come together and form a local scheme, with the help and support of Sussex Police. This might be one or two streets in a town, or even part of a street, or it could be an entire village. Sussex Police maintains a register of all recognised schemes, and checks the suitability of the local co-ordinator to hold that position.