

You don't have to be a victim of crime

There has been much talk in the media of the economic downturn. Some people are saying that this will inevitably lead to a rise in crime but this need not necessarily be so and you can in any event minimise those risks.

There has been a slight rise in some property crimes but this follows some sharp reductions over the last two years. Burglary of dwellings has been rising since last summer and the Crime & Disorder Reduction Team has given regular advice through the media on how to avoid becoming a victim.

Methods of breaking into homes have included using an implement to open a UPVC door through the letter box. This can be avoided by locking the door on the inside with a key and keeping the key where every occupant can find it in case of emergency. An alternative method for the burglar is to use a garden implement to force a rear or patio door. It is therefore sensible to lock away in the garage or shed all garden implements. Other useful advice would include never leaving the house in darkness when you are out, fitting PIR lights that are activated by movement, joining a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and ensuring that neighbours look out for each other.

Burglar alarms are a great deterrent and marking all property (including recording serial numbers) increases the likelihood that you would get any stolen property back. Remember as well that most cars are stolen these days by burglars getting hold of the keys so keep the keys out of sight in the house.

There has been a slight increase in the number of thefts from cars although this does follow a massive reduction last year. The advice as always is don't leave anything attractive to a thief on view. In particular, Satnavs and laptops but clothing and sports bags are attractive to the desperate thief.

Finally, there has also been a slight rise in the number of assaults in the Borough. Bracknell Forest doesn't have a significant drug problem when compared with similar areas but the misuse of alcohol can lead to people acting irresponsibly and certainly raises the likelihood of becoming a victim.