

NOMINATED NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Hambleton South Neighbourhood Watch Association and your local police recognise the benefits that a Nominated Neighbour Scheme can contribute to the safety, security and wellbeing of the elderly and vulnerable residents in the community. Unfortunately there have been several instances of cold calling by bogus officials, who gain entry under false pretences and use distraction techniques to steal money or valuable goods. Similarly, it is known that criminals are engaged in convincing the elderly that the property is dangerous and requires urgent roof repairs or the drive needs resurfacing to avoid an accident and subsequent claims. Invariably either the work is badly done or not at all or there are subsequent charges, sometimes resulting in over-charging with total costs running into thousands of pounds.

The clear objective of initiating the Nominated Neighbour Scheme is to avoid these instances before they occur by identifying the vulnerable and formulating a 'self-help' system. Trading Standards have set up several No Cold Calling Zones, which inform bogus callers that all residents do not want unsolicited callers. This system does not supersede NCCZs but complements them, focussing the priority on the vulnerable with a measured solution.

To be effective it is proposed that the Neighbourhood Watch coordinators identify the elderly and vulnerable and explain to them the system and confirm that they wish to participate in the scheme. Having identified the need, the next stage is to find a Nominated Neighbour who would be prepared to help check on the unexpected caller and establish how genuine he/she is and if appropriate accompany the caller. The coordinator should register both the vulnerable individual and the nominated neighbour with HSNHWA and the association will notify the local Safer Neighbourhood Team and other related bodies. The coordinator will be supplied with a small information pack, which includes a card used to inform the caller of his nominated neighbour and on the reverse a description of how to use the form, a sheet describing the scheme and one describing the role and instructions to the nominated neighbour. These will be available through the local police station or via NHW at info@hsnhwa.org.uk where the scheme will be administered.

The vulnerable can be people requiring the support of social services, such as handicapped and disabled, partially or totally blind or a single person without close relatives or friends. Having identified persons requiring some help further assistance, such as the fitting of smoke alarms, can be arranged to improve personal and household safety.

Anyone afraid of crime or living alone should be able to have a friendly neighbour to help.

Remember: to prevent crime is everyone's responsibility