

BROADSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (BNW)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **HELD AT 7:30pm** **ON WEDNESDAY 20TH MAY 2026** **AT THE RESTAURANT, RBL CLUB, BROADSTONE**

Committee Members Present		Apologies
Peter Sidaway (PS) Chairman	Chris Walton (CW) Vice-Chairman	Wendy Perry (Membership Secretary)
Richard Hudson (RH) Treasurer	Jude Chapman (JC) Editor	Alan Beales (Contact)
Chris Burt (CB) Secretary	John Lodge (JL) Media Officer	Alan Lewis
Louise Dalrymple (LD)		Stella Lewis
		Jenny Adams (Secretary -Canford Heath NW)
Stall Holders Present		
Vicky Palmer – Dorset Police		

Welcome and Housekeeping

PS welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked all those attending for coming.

As with previous years there would be no Committee Officers reports as these had been rolled up into the Chairman/Treasurer reports for expediency.

Housekeeping matters were dealt with. No fire drills were scheduled so if there was an alarm the building should be evacuated as directed.

PS thanked The RBL Club for providing their excellent hospitality, facilities and provision of refreshments.

1

Apologies

See above.

2

Minutes of the 2025 AGM

The minutes of the 2025 AGM were on the BNW website and Facebook.

The minutes were accepted and approved.

Proposed: RH

Seconded: LD

Vote: Unanimous

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters nor actions arising.

4 **Treasurer's Report**

4.1 **Arrangements for Financial Reporting**

RH told the meeting that constitutionally, BNW is a Members' body, funded entirely by Members, and run by an elected committee. Therefore, it is fundamentally important that there are arrangements in place for transparent, comprehensive reporting of income and expenditure to the Committee and to Members. He delivered a slide show to the meeting and had summarised these arrangements in the first of his slides, as follows:

- RH reports income and expenditure to Committee members at BNW bi-monthly meetings;
- BNW's annual accounts are uploaded to its website every April;
- Members are informed of this in the Spring newsletter;
- Annual accounts are sent to Members on request;
- BNW's Honorary Examiner, Paul Day, checks the annual accounts back to supporting records and certifies this in his report;
- The AGM is very important for financial accountability. It is an opportunity for Members to question anything in the accounts;
- More generally Members are able to challenge any aspect of BNW's financial management about which they have concerns;
- Finally, the AGM agenda always includes a motion for the approval of the accounts for the previous financial year.

Taking all these points into account, RH contends that BNW has sound arrangements for financial reporting, and hopes that Members here tonight will agree with him.

4.2 **Three Year Results Summary**

The best way to understand BNW's finances is to look at its results for the last three years ended 31 March 2026, 2025 and 2024, as shown by the second slide.

4.2.1 **Accounts**

Consequently, looking at BNW's previous financial year, income from members was £20. Expenses totalled £1,227, which are analysed in detail on the third slide, so there was a deficit of £1,207. Reserves were £4,581, represented by £4,329 at the bank and other assets of £252. Four key points arise from these figures:

4.2.2 **Deficits**

First, BNW can currently afford to run deficits. As the slide shows, it has in effect used some of the funds of £5,491 raised from its generous Members in financial year 2024 to fund operations in 2025 and 2026, when BNW did not ask for donations.

The bank balance has, as a result, fallen by £2k since then, but is still very healthy.

4.2.3

Financial Position

Second, BNW remains in a strong financial position. The bank balance of £4,329 at 31 March 2026 is 3.5 times expenditure of £1,227 last year, which is more than adequate cover for sustaining operations, unless these change significantly.

4.2.4

Donations

Third, following on from the second point, there was little or no case for asking Members for donations this year, even though it is three years since BNW asked for their support. If RH had written a piece in the newsletter this Spring asking for donations, some Members would quite rightly have asked what this money was needed for, given the funds BNW has at present.

Fourth, BNW, of course, will need eventually to ask members for donations, perhaps next year. But the means of collecting these will probably be primarily bank transfers, rather than knocking on doors to collect cash, which many of its Coordinators and Contacts are increasingly and understandably reluctant to do.

4.2.5

Expenditure Analysis

The Treasurer's third slide is an analysis of BNW's expenses for the three years 2024 to 2026.

4.2.6

Newsletter

The newsletter has always been BNW's biggest operating expense. At £837 it was just under 70% of total expenditure of £1,227 in 2026. As shown by the slide, the cost of the newsletter has varied by a fair amount over the three years. This is due to the change from monthly to quarterly newsletters in the y/e 31 March 2025 and publishing four colour newsletters in the y/e 31 March 2026, one of which was four pages as opposed to the usual two.

4.2.7

Meetings

Meetings expenditure includes costs for BNW's successful coffee morning programme, launched last October.

4.2.8

Donations

The line showing donations made by BNW is interesting. For the last three years, it's been £50, for a wreath on Remembrance Sunday. But if RH had extended the analysis to say 10 years, the picture would be very different. In some years, the total spent on donations was in fact on a par with total operating expenses. As some Members here this evening

- 4.3 will recall, in pre-Covid times, BNW gave money to all sorts of deserving community groups and projects in Broadstone, which added to our reputation as a high-performing Watch. The Watch can afford to revive this strategy, but needs new Committee members to help take it forward.
- 4.3.1

Any Questions

Income

- 4.3.2 **Q.** Why has income reduced.

A. It is a result of not collecting donations/subscriptions which, as explained previously, was not needed.

Newsletter

Q. Since the newsletter is the biggest operating expense why not print it electronically.

A. The Watch does print it electronically and continues to encourage members to register to receive e-mail newsletters. BNW has had some success in this respect, but the fact remains that many Members prefer a hard copy newsletter. Although that may end in due course.

5 Approval of the Annual Accounts

RH advised the meeting that BNW's Committee had approved the accounts at its meeting on Tuesday 12th May. Therefore, it remained for Members at today's AGM to approve and ratify these accounts.

Proposed: RH
Seconded: Derek Pope
Vote: Unanimous

6

Chairman's Address

6.1

Chairmanship

PS delivered his presentation with slides and opened by telling the meeting that although he had enjoyed his time in the role of Chairman of the Watch and was standing for re-election at this AGM he would be standing down at the end of the year.

Having recently been appointed as leader of the new Broadstone Town Council he felt there was a potential conflict of interest and it would be a time to move onto other priorities.

6.1.1

New Members

PS told the meeting that not only was there a case for new blood as Chair, but the Committee itself needed new younger members. He stressed that the roles were not overly onerous with only six Committee meetings a year plus the AGM.

6.2

He confirmed and assured the meeting that the Committee was a really rewarding job. Therefore, if anyone is interested in being co-opted onto the Committee and/or into the Chair he urged them to come and see him or any other member of the Committee.

Crime

PS informed the meeting that BNW had to move with the times and adapt to the way crime and police priorities and resources had changed.

6.3

That does not mean that there would be less focus on traditional crime, but BNW must move on to address and tackle modern crime such as scams, phishing, fraud and cyber.

Newsletter

Despite its early teething problems the new format quarterly newsletter has settled down and the general view is that it is welcomed.

6.4

PS expressed thanks to the editor, Jude Chapman, for her work on its design and production. He also mentioned BNW's great gratitude to Alan and Stella Lewis for batching the newsletters and delivering them to the Co-Ordinators and Contacts who complete the task each quarter.

Delivery

6.5

BNW continues to suffer gaps in its number of volunteers who deliver its newsletter quarterly. He appealed for anybody who could devote some time each quarter to deliver to a road near to them to get in touch.

6.5.1

Events

Coffee Mornings

6.5.2

BNW's Saturday Coffee Mornings launched last October have been a great success proving to be a great opportunity to meet neighbours, share issues and enjoy a friendly chat with free refreshments. He hoped to welcome even more people to the two future mornings this year on 25th July and 24 October respectively.

Bike Marking

6.5.3

These have been extremely popular and incredibly successful so much so that on the last occasion at the library cyclists were queued out of the building for the whole session and in the end people had to be turned away as the police had run out of stickers for the bikes. There is a further event coming up shortly.

Presentations

6.6

BNW's Media Officer, John Lodge, had given presentations on cyber fraud and protection

- 6.6.1 to some local communities, including a couple to the Chitter Chatter Club. He hopes to do more talks in the future.

Local Criminal Activity

Shoplifting

- 6.6.2 A brazen and frequent crime in Broadstone which does not get the outcomes it should due to the number of incidents not reported by retailers. The statistics do not reflect the true position because the police can only report on information received. Effective action cannot be taken on something police do not know about. Nevertheless, the police identify hotspots and target those areas with their limited resources.

6.6.3

Bike Theft

PS recommended PCSO Pete Raymond's excellent article on this activity in the Broadstone Link Magazine.

The Importance of Reporting

- 6.7 PS confirmed that the importance of reporting to the police cannot be stressed enough. It might be a vital piece of information which could lead to the police taking action in the area.

If there is a danger to life or a crime in progress it should be reported by a 999 call otherwise a report should be made using the 101 service or preferably online.

The Bobby on the Beat

- 6.8 PS said that the days of the familiar 'Bobby on the Beat' had gone. It is not an effective countermeasure against modern crimes. Additionally, the limited police resources do not allow such deployment. That is why police have to rely on intelligence gathering, building patterns to identify 'hotspots' and target them. They also face problems of increased criminal activity in the Summer when the population of Bournemouth doubles as well as being the worst government funded police force in the country
- 6.8.1

The Watch and the Neighbourhood Policing Team work hard at keeping Broadstone a low crime area and a safe place to live.

Q&A Session

101 Service

- 6.8.2 **Q.** LD asked why she had experienced a two week wait after using the 101 service to report an incident before finding out about any action taken as a result.
- A.** Police will respond to calls. The system involves grading calls on a scale of 1 to 5. If a call is not picked up straightaway there is a 24 hour turnaround when it will be reviewed. Time delay calls go to the Contact Management Team who determine its urgency. If urgent it

is given a blue light, but it still depends on how busy the police are for it to receive urgent action.

Online Reporting

6.8.3

Q. Mike Brookes asked why when reporting anything online there were a number of questions about yourself that had to be answered. This was not only time consuming, but could dissuade people from reporting incidents.

A. PS thought it was probably to confirm the efficacy of the report and to obtain the specifics of both the report and the reporter.

Newsletter

7

Q. Derek Pope asked that although the newsletter was printed in colour in fact much of the content was not in colour so what was the point.

A. JC replied that the cost of printing in one or two colours is the same. PS added that the coffee morning notices are in colour and that as the newsletter is developed/expanded more it is likely there will be more colour content.

Election of Chairman

8

Treasurer, Richard Hudson, took the Chair for the motion that Peter Sidaway be re-elected as Chairman of the Watch.

Proposed: CB
Seconded: CW
Vote: Unanimous

Therefore, Peter Sidaway was re-elected un-opposed as Chairman of BNW

Election of Officers and Committee Members for the year 2025/26

All Officers and existing Committee members were willing to continue for another year.

Proposed: PS
Seconded: CW
Vote: Unanimous

9. Guest Speaker – Police and Crime Commissioner David Sidwick

9.1 Role of the PCC

DS wanted to let BNW members know what the PCC does for them and the good people of Broadstone. DS was elected on 2 May 2024 to represent residents' views on policing and crime locally. He was directly accountable to the public.

9.1.1 Appointment of the Chief Constable for Dorset

The PCC appoints the Chief Constable who runs the operational side of policing and holds them to account for delivering an effective and efficient police service.

9.1.2 Police and Crime Plan

After consultation with local people a Police and Crime Plan is published to identify local priorities and how it is planned to meet them.

9.1.3 Budget

PCC sets the police budget and decides how much the public pays towards policing from their Council Tax to add to the funding from central Government of £98 million, the lowest in the country, and he then decides how the total budget is spent.

9.1.4 Services

PCC commissions dedicated local Victim Support Service that people can access to help them cope and recover from being a victim of crime.

He also funds crime prevention services to address issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, youth crime and anti-social behaviour to keep communities safe.

9.1.5 Joined-up Working

PCC works with national and local policing and Criminal Justice partners to reduce crime and help make communities safer. He also works with local authorities, health services, plus the voluntary sector and local business to create a joined-up response to local problems. Additionally, works closely with the emergency services.

9.2 Vision

The vision is to make Dorset the safest county by the four values of justice, fairness, community and respect and delivery of six priorities:

- Cut crime and anti-social behaviour
- Make policing more visible and connected
- Fight violent crime and high harm
- Fight rural crime
- Put victims and communities first

- 9.3
- Make every penny count

Priority 1 – Cut Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Incidents of ASB have fallen to their lowest levels in 16 years due to proactive and robust hotspot policing with both the data driven Operation Track and Operation Relentless and targeted Beach Beat patrols during the 100 days of Summer. In its first phase a significant number of hotspot areas saw, under Track, a significant reduction in ASB.

The Operation Relentless Community Fund has granted £208,000 to 52 schemes. These range from community outreach programmes and mentoring schemes to sports and skills-based activities, all focused on creating positive opportunities, particularly for young people, and tackling the root causes of ASB. Examples include AFC Bournemouth's one-to-one mentoring for young people, Home-Start Wessex's targeted for families facing complex challenges and Weymouth Skate Park's reduced-cost sessions offering a safe and positive outlet.

There is a strong partnership between Dorset Police and BCP who work hand in hand because some incidents of ASB (for example noisy neighbours) are a BCP issue not a police one and complainants have to direct their reports to the right authority.

- 9.3.1
- High visibility foot patrols by police in known ASB hotspots has been integral to the success so far, but there is more to do to ensure residents feel safe.

Road Safety

Dorset Road Safety (DRS) proactively deal with education, enforcement and operations supported by Dorset Police Interceptors. Also the Speedwatch organisation, with 1300 volunteers across the county, has proved successful in cutting down the number of speeding motorists

- 9.3.2
- In the 10 years since 2015 there has been a reduction in casualty severities from 365 to 284. The target is to have a 40% reduction by 2030.

Business and Retail Crime

BID's, Chambers of Commerce, Dorset Police, OPCC's and key lead businesses work together under the Dorset Safer Business Partnership.

UK Partners against Crime (UKPAC) are groups of businesses working together to fight business crime by sharing information, within their business community and BID's and reporting crime, where necessary.

PCC has

- 9.3.3
- funded membership for up to 200 businesses that sit outside of the BID's for UKPAC
 - funded up to £5000 per BID
 - championed Shopkind a joint Home Office and Crimestoppers campaign that encourages kindness to retail workers

Shoplifting

A proactive approach has been taken with

- 9.3.4
 - Operation Shopkeeper which targets prolific and high harm offenders
 - Operation Spotter to spot and catch thieves
 - Plain clothes officers to fight shoplifting

These operations continue to focus on business engagement to demonstrate the efficiency of the new processes. The force works with NPT's in the South West to drive a common practice and identify prolific offenders. There have been positive outcomes over 2025/26 for the shoplifting rate of 1,520.

9.4 Digital Capabilities Unit

9.4.1 The Unit has two main purposes.

1. To provide individuals, businesses, charities and community groups with tailored cyber awareness advice
2. Prevention by identifying and guiding young people away from cybercrime.

9.4.2 Priority 2 – Make policing more visible and connected

Calls

9.4.3 400,000 calls are received annually which equals 174,000 logs for police action. Dorset police is exceeding the national target of 90% for 999 calls with 92.7% of calls being answered in under 10 seconds.

Community Contact Points

9.4.4 For the year ending 31 March 2026 307 points were held across Dorset and BCP.

Mobile Police Stations

9.4.5 Two stations are touring Dorset at consistent locations and dates each month consequently there have been 59 since August 2025.

Front Counters

9.4.6 So far three have been set up in Weymouth, Bournemouth and Blandford respectively.

9.5 Dorset Alert

9.5.1 Engagement with the wider community and linking police and public via Dorset Alerts.

Project Resolve

More and more police officers are being put on the front line via Project Resolve.

9.5.2 **Priority 3 – Fight Violent Crime and High Harm**

Operations

9.5.3 Operations Scorpion and Viper continue to disrupt drug supply in the county and across the South West shutting down county lines, safeguarding vulnerable people and seizing hundreds of pounds worth of drugs and cash. Drug offenders receive help to rehabilitate when they are released from prison, but there is no government funding for prevention; all funding is local.

Videos

9.5.6 A number of hard-hitting videos have been created on the impact of knife crime to be shown to young people in schools as part of the education delivered by the police's Safer Schools and Communities Team. Also the Violence Reduction and Prevention Team is working on engaging with young people on reducing violence and knife crime. Implementation of the Harm to Hope initiative is somewhat bumpy.

9.6 **The Importance of Intelligence**

9.6.1 Police intelligence is information which the police receive or collect from the public and their information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, could be the missing puzzle piece that would help catch a criminal and keep people in the community safe.

Other Agencies

Other partner agencies deal with issues the police cannot eg noisy neighbours, fly-tipping and health and safety. These can all be reported to the local council or in the case of fly-tipping, the Environment Agency.

9.7 **Priority 4 – Fight Rural Crime**

9.7.1 **Rural Crime Team**

Team is expanding and continues to deliver positive results seeing a 10% reduction in rural crime over the last two years. Additionally, they have recovered and repatriated £2.2 million of stolen machinery since 2022.

9.7.2 Funding was provided towards a fly-tipping officer position with Dorset Council resulting in a doubling of penalty notices issued in their first five months compared with the previous five months.

Priority 5 - Put Victims and Communities First

Victim Support Dorset

9.8 Provides a range of services for victims of crime, including domestic abuse and crimes involving burglary, robbery, ASB, as well as specialised support for children and young people, which is free, confidential and delivered by dedicated, experienced staff. They will

listen with compassion and help victims find ways to cope and feel safer.

Enhanced Video Response

9.9

Dorset Police's Project gives victims of crime the opportunity to speak to an officer via a video call rather than in person. This is victim-led giving each victim greater choice of how they interact with the police and is important for people who might not want a stranger, police officer or marked police car at their home.

9.9.1

It has benefitted not only victims, but also the police by helping them ensure officer time is used even more efficiently

Priority 6 – Make Every Penny Count

9.9.2

As well as £1 million of extra funding to continue high visibility foot patrols to tackle ASB and violent crime there was £1.6 million to increase the numbers of police officers and staff working in frontline neighbourhood policing roles. The police's plans for this investment are recruiting police staff investigators, detention officers and contact officers to release police officers into neighbourhood policing roles. It will reinforce the message to residents that "neighbourhoods" remains at the heart of Dorset policing.

Telephone Calls

Q The 101 service is not really responsive and it is impossible to receive an answer as to the outcome of
a reported incident or enquiry.

9.9.3

A 73% of 101 calls get answered and completed within 3 seconds. The other 27% are the problem because
they are more complicated. The key is technology for the many people who phone up to find out what is
happening to their case. It is the hope and desire to automate the service. The public are urged to use
the 'Report Your Intelligence' facility which collects a wide range of information, but is designed to ensure
that the reports are actionable by the police. Collecting everything needed at the first point of contact
means nothing important is missed nor are callers necessarily required to spend further time with
separate calls or e-mails to the police.

Retail Crime

9.9.4

Q When we see shoplifters blatantly walking out of stores with pilfered goods and in one case going to the
pub next door and selling them; what is going on.

A Retail chains and their processes are part of the solution. With shoplifting sometimes the store reports
to their head office when they should be reporting it to the police. Head office may decide to take no

action for their own reasons, one of which is staff welfare and safety. DS holds 6 monthly meetings with the retail chains in an effort for stores to report incidents to head office and the police in one. DS accepts shoplifting is not a victimless crime because customers can feel victims through seeing it happen.

9.9.5

Clear Up Rate

Q The success rate of cases resolved with a positive outcome ie convictions is 7.1% which is lamentable.

10

A somewhat tetchy exchange followed during which differing percentages were bandied about. Dorset

10.1

Police for all offences have a POR of 16.5%.

A The PCC is subsequently writing to the panel with further detail on this. It should be borne in mind that

with the success rate everything is variable and comparable. Other than convictions other measures such

as out of court and diversional schemes count towards a success rate.

Many cases relate to cybercrime which is often perpetrated by criminals located internationally and,

therefore, unlikely to be brought to book in a British court. Additionally, it is the CPS, not the police, that

determines whether a case has a chance of ending in a conviction.

Core Grant

Q Dorset's funding grant is so low compared to other counties.

10.2

A It is true that Dorset receives the second lowest amount of police grant funding in any force in England

and Wales and this squeeze on its finances gets tougher each year. The PCC's case to central

10.2.2

government for a fairer distribution of the grant appears to have got stuck up in Downing Street. Despite

being relentless in pursuing the issue all he receives is a lot of obfuscation from Government.

10.2.3

Nevertheless, the fight to ensure Dorset is the safest county continues with a good strategic grip on

safety making Dorset the fourth safest county in the country and an excellent police operation with good

people doing the job.

10.2.4

Future of PCC's

Q The Labour government has announced that it will disband PCC's by 2028.

10.2.5

A As far as he can understand it the plan is to centralise the country's police forces thereby reducing police

numbers and creating a state police force. All that can be said at this stage is that DS will

keep on going
until that time.

10.2.6 **Guest Speaker – Inspector Nick Lee – Dorset Police**

Background

NL detailed the background to the Neighbourhood Policing Team which consists of police officers and PCSO's assigned to the community to enhance public safety by building relationships with residents and addressing local issues proactively. It aims to make the police more visible, reduce the fear of crime and gather intelligence and information from the public.

The NPT is responsible for patrolling and policing the Poole area which consists of 16 wards. Its duties include:

- Engaging with local residents to understand their concerns and priorities
- Preventing crime through a visible presence and community initiatives
- Supporting local projects related to safety, licensing and restorative justice
- Collaborating with schools and organisations to promote safety and awareness.

10.3 Key benefits are strengthened community trust, improved intelligence gathering and assurance that policing is responsive to local needs.

Actions and Priorities

Targetted Activity

NPT operations include days of action, issue of warrants, plain clothes deployments and high visibility policing.

Engagement

11 Measures taken to increase engagement with the public involve Community Contact Points, targeted engagements, Dorset Alert, mobile police stations and social media.

11.1 **Problem Solving**

Police are using problem solving to remove issues by seeking longer-term solutions like Community Based Organisations (CBO's), Anti Burglary Initiatives and Core Safety Information.

11.2 **Partnership Working**

Implementing formalised processes for working with partner organisations. Running joint days of action, collaborating on cases and getting the right agency to own the problem.

11.2.1 **Neighbourhood Police Guarantee (NPG)**

Under their guarantee the police will

- Put officers back on the beat focussing on town centres
- Community-led policing- officers with named police officers and contactable. The public will know who officers are
- Have clear performance standards
- Have implemented Operation Guardian to tackle knife crime and other high harm offenders
- Address neighbourhood crimes like dwelling burglaries, vehicle related crime, theft from the person, robbery, shop theft and retail crime
- Operate measures against ASB by town centre focus and being aware of seasonal trends, ie influx of people arriving in BCP in the Summer months
- Introduce 'friendly and social' ideas to combat ASB such youth-related football
- Concentrate on repeat victims, offenders and locations
- Map in and target all calls so reporting by residents is really important.

11.2.2

11.3

11.3.1

Broadstone ward accounts for 6% of what the NPT do.

Next Steps

Under Next Steps the police have

11.3.2

- Written a Summer Policing Plan in conjunction with BCP to deal with seasonal demand
- Ring-fenced NPT staff to be retained into teams to deliver neighbourhood policing
- Protected PCSO's to be highly visible, connected and engaging

11.3.3

- Trained the team in line with the NPG
- Concentrated on building the team and expectations

Systems and practices will be applied to ensure delivery and measure what the team do.

11.3.4

Guest Speaker – Hannah Bird – Cyber Crime Protect and Prevention Officer

Cyber Crime

11.3.5

Of all crime committed cybercrime and fraud accounts for 50%. However, only 43% of people are very/fairly confident in recognising cybercrime. The critical facilities where people are most vulnerable are social media, online banking, making purchases online, online browsing and romance fraud.

Understanding and Recognising Cyber Threats

11.3.6

The common types of cyber threats to be aware of are phishing attempts and understanding malware and its risks.

Phishing

11.3.7

It is where attackers/scammers attempt to trick people into revealing personal information through e-mails, text messages, or phone call that seem to come from trustworthy sources such as banks and government agencies. These messages often ask for sensitive details or prompt the user to click on harmful links.

- 11.4
- 11.4.1 This can result in account or multiple account compromise where if the scammer gains access to one password they can potentially use it to access a person's other accounts as well.

Understanding Malware and its Risks

- 11.4.2 Malware is a term for software specifically designed to harm a person's devices or steal their data. It includes viruses and spyware. Once it infiltrates a system it can result in data breaches, file corruption, or loss of access to device(s).

Essential Cyber Security Tips

- 11.4.3 HB outlined a number of essential straightforward tips and practical advice to enhance safety and security.

Strong and Complex Passwords

- 11.4.4 Create long passwords that include a mixture of upper and lower case letters, numbers and special characters. Do not use common words that do not make good passwords such as pet names and dates of birth. It is recommended to use a passphrase made up of three ransom words.

Install a reputable anti-virus software

Anti-virus programs are a safety net, protecting against any malicious files that find their way onto devices. Users need to make sure it is always on, and always up to date.

Ensure Devices are Regularly Updated

- 11.4.5 Make sure software updates are installed as soon as they become available. They often contain important security fixes.

Beware of Public WiFi

- 11.5 Whilst okay for casual browsing, free WiFi is not secure. Sensitive data like passwords and banking details can be spied upon. Use mobile data, or a Virtual Private Network (VPN) instead.

Be mindful about Sharing Personal Information Online

Be careful what information is shared on social media and public forums. For example, details of schools attended, work, holidays is information more valuable than some people think.

Enable Two-Step Verification

- 12 Enhance account security by enabling 2SV. This requires an additional verification step, such as a code sent to the user's phone or authentication app, whenever they log in.

Regularly check Privacy Settings

Regularly check the privacy settings on your social media and online accounts. Adjust them to ensure that only trusted contacts can view your personal information.

Smartphones and other device GPS Location Services

Background

Many devices use GPS (Global Positioning Service), a satellite-based service that tracks your location in real time. It is essential for navigation, fitness tracking and finding nearby services. Being mindful of which apps and services have access to your location helps you maintain control over your privacy and security.

Review

Take your time to review and adjust your phone's location settings. Disable GPS when not needed to reduce unnecessary location sharing. Many Smartphones allow use of "limit location access while using app" preventing apps from tracking you in the background thus giving greater control over when and how your location is shared.

Biometrics

Secure your phone with biometric locks, such as fingerprint or facial recognition, to prevent unauthorised access to your phone location data if your device is lost or stolen.

Manage Apps that Share Location

Regularly check the permissions granted to apps via your phone's settings to review which apps can access your location and revoke and/or uninstall apps that do not need it or you no longer use.

Some apps eg map apps, have timeline features showing your recent locations and activity. Clear location history if you do not want it saved.

Finally, choose apps from trusted developers and avoid installing apps from unknown sources.

Turn Off Location Sharing With Others

Many apps allow you to share your real-time location with friends and family. While useful, regularly review who has access. Stop sharing your location if it is no longer necessary and double check your settings to ensure old permissions have not been looked.

Useful Links and Resources

HB finished by saying that although staying safe online may sometimes feel overwhelming, there are many other resources out there to help not to have to navigate it alone. She mentioned Dorset Police Cybercrime Unit, National Cyber Security Centre of GCHQ, Report Fraud, Think Fraud and Report Phishing all of which are detailed in her handout. Another important contact if a person believes they may be a victim of fraud is their bank who can be contacted on 159.

Close Meeting

PS thanked everybody for attending with special thanks to the guest speakers for their very interesting, informative and rewarding presentations. PS then declared the meeting formally closed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 22.10 hours

Minutes prepared by: Chris Burt

Minutes issued on: 08 July 2026