

NEWSLETTER



Pauline O'Brien
Tel: 01923 802304
Fax: 01923 288134
Mobile: 07595 218136
email: pauline@watford-chamber.co.uk

April 2009

Your success stories

There have been so many incidents in recent months of members using their knowledge and WBAC equipment to deal with criminals or those intent on committing crime, that there is only room here to tell you about the most recent success stories.

Two men were arrested for being in possession of a knife thanks to the diligence of two of our newest members on Saturday 11 April. **PC world** were suspicious of three men in their store whom they believed were in possession of a knife. Once the men left their store and made their way to **Currys**, PC World alerted Currys on the radio. The three suspects then walked over to Comet, situated at the other side of the retail park. Currys telephoned the police, who arrived and immediately arrested the suspects. All three were later charged and are due in court on 15 May.

A suspect on the WBAC 'Top 12', well known for prolific shop theft, walked past **Boots Waterfields** on Thursday 15 April. He was immediately spotted by the sharp eyed security guard at Boots who radioed through to **SportsWorld** that the suspect was about to enter their store. Sportsworld staff kept the suspect within their sights at all times, unnerving the suspect so much that he actually purchased a pair of trainers! Staff were unconvinced that he was not out to commit shop theft, so once the suspect left, they used their radio to warn **PCSO Shaw** that he was travelling towards Tesco's. The PCSO was able to telephone the security manager at Tesco's to tell him of the shop thieves' imminent arrival, who as a consequence, had him followed. The suspect attempted to steal three mobile telephones worth hundreds of pounds, but was apprehended on his way out of Tesco's by security staff, thanks to the teamwork and knowledge of WBAC members Boots and SportsWorld. The suspect is now charged with shop theft and is due in court.

On 20 April, **Gap** grew suspicious of a man in their shop who they believed had stolen some clothes. Uncertain, and not wishing to confront the man unnecessarily, Gap used the WBAC radio to ask **town centre CCTV** to keep an eye on him once he had left the store. CCTV were able to follow him to some benches in St Mary's Gardens, just off the High Street. There he sat with, as it later transpired, stolen goods from Gap in his bag, whilst CCTV liaised with the police using the radio who turned up and arrested the man.

Well done to all involved in these incidents, but also to all of you that have been involved in detecting and deterring crime. Keep telling us your good news stories.

WBAC membership update

Since the last newsletter, we have had a number of new members join. They are Computer Exchange, Currys, PC World, New Look and the Jury's Inn. A very warm welcome to all our new members. We now have 43 members on the scheme. If stores around you are not in WBAC, why not try and encourage them to join? The more people around you that are on the scheme, the better it will work for you.

Some member stores have unfortunately closed down. These are Zavvi, Principles and USC, although as this newsletter went to press, we believe that USC have just re-opened. In future, where a company has gone into administration, WBAC will at that point be calling to collect all radio equipment. WBAC simply cannot sustain the losses of shops shutting down and not returning hundreds of pounds worth of audio equipment.

WBAC Contact List

At the last operational meeting, the contact list was updated by those present. The updated list will be distributed to you all shortly. Please contact Pauline if your details are incorrect or if you do not feature on the contacts list at all!

WBAC training

Training on correct use of the radios and how to write witness statements is available through PCSO Steve Shaw. Requests for training and/or copies of specimen witness statements should be put to Pauline.

The Royal Mint has been contacted for advice on counterfeit coins. Commemorative £5 coins have not proved to be a problem, so the current advice is that if presented with a £5 coin, it is very unlikely to be a forgery. Since £5 coins tend to cost more than £5 to buy as they normally come in a presentation box, they are not seen very often by retailers, but they are legal tender.

A bigger problem, not surprisingly, is with £1 coins. As time goes by, the counterfeiters use better and more sophisticated processes to forge £1 coins which can make them difficult to spot. However, forged £1 coins will not normally have the correct year on them to correspond with the design on the back of the coin; Pauline has a full list of designs and years in which they were used by the Royal Mint if you require further advice or clarification.

Operational matters

The Exclusion Order Scheme is finally nearly ready to go live. As soon as WBAC gets the go ahead from Hertfordshire Police, warning letters can be sent to individuals who have been the subject of three or more incident reports in the last six months. One more incident after that, and a year long exclusion order will be issued, preventing that individual from entering any member store.

Some of you have asked if you can have ear pieces for the radios. Ear pieces and other accessories are available to buy from Matthew Napier at Audiolink on 020 8955 1117. In order to keep costs down, WBAC cannot unfortunately buy extra accessories for members, but Audiolink can provide equipment at reasonable prices if you contact them directly.

There has been lots of discussion over the last few months about Harlequin Security and how their remit for assistance has or hasn't changed. The Harlequin have now issued a newsletter of their own to member stores which makes reference to this issue. For those WBAC members in the Harlequin who have not seen this newsletter, it says: "Our security team can assist you when you make a stop on the mall, but we cannot do the stop for you." For further clarification, I would advise Harlequin based stores to contact The Harlequin direct on 01923 250292.

Leading on from this issue, Hertfordshire Police have issued the following guidance: "If any WBAC member has a person within their store who commits a criminal offence they should detain the person (if practical) and call Police or if the offender leaves the store it should still be reported to Police asap.

The three '9's system should be used if the offender is displaying signs of violence or if there is a crime in progress e.g. criminal damage.

In relation to anti social behaviour, this should also be reported to Police, if there is no risk to staff or the public then this should be called through on the non emergency number."

WBAC operational meetings

The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday 5 May, 10:00 in the second floor restaurant at the YMCA. Please try and come to the monthly meetings and bring along photos and incident reports to discuss.

And finally.....

- There is a vacancy at Currys, Century Retail Park for a full-time loss prevention officer. The role will involve shop floor security, product protection, training staff on security and liaising with the loss prevention team at Currys Head Office. For further details or to apply contact Richard Winthrop on 07984 338227 or Ralph Iannone on 07739412563.