

# NEWSLETTER



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The Watford Business Against Crime Newsletter is back! This is your opportunity to share useful tips and ideas with other members and to keep in touch with what Watford Business Against Crime is doing for you. If there is anything that you would like to see included in the newsletter, please contact Pauline O'Brien (details above).

## Your success stories

On 5 November, there were fireworks on the High Street when a couple of fraudsters were thwarted by diligent staff at **The Entertainer!** A man and a woman, partners in crime, split up and attempted to defraud a number of shops using fake or stolen credit cards.

The Entertainer used their WBAC radio to liaise with police about a suspicious man in their store. The suspect was followed by a police constable and arrested soon after. His partner was arrested later the same day near one of the nearby retail parks. And thanks to the initial quick thinking by The Entertainer, and the assistance of police, both suspects are now charged with a total of seven counts of fraud.

On 17 November, **HMV** became suspicious when a man waiting for his credit card payment to be authorized made off. HMV used their WBAC radio to have him followed and he was soon arrested. When his two accomplices returned to their car, they were prevented from leaving by staff from **The Harlequin** and they too were arrested! All three are now charged with offences of fraud and are awaiting trial.

On 1 December, the eagle eyed security staff at **HMV** spotted a group of youths in the shop who staff believed had stolen goods. Once they left the shop, HMV used the WBAC radio to ask CCTV to assist them by following the group. CCTV watched the group of up to nine youths carry on their shop-theft spree before five of them were finally arrested with stolen property from at least three shops in Watford.

During the last week of November, **Town Centre CCTV** spotted what they believed to be two suspicious looking girls on the high street. CCTV continued to watch the girls who changed their appearance as they maneuvered through the town centre. The girls, who had stolen a handbag, boarded a bus thinking they had made good their escape. However, thanks to the ever watchful eyes of the town centre CCTV staff, the bus was stopped by police who arrested the girls and recovered the stolen handbag.

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

## WBAC membership update

Gail Priddle from the Mosaic Group attended one of our monthly operational meetings a while back. Following this and subsequent discussions with Pauline, Mosaic have joined four of their shops to WBAC. The new members are: Karen Millen, Coast, Principles and Oasis. A very warm welcome to all our new members. We now have 38 members.

During this difficult economic climate, it is easy for head offices to try to make quick savings by withdrawing stores from business against crime schemes. This short-term saving is, as all of you know short-lived because business crime then begins to rise. Please ensure that your managers and head offices know how beneficial it is for you to be in the scheme.

#### WBAC Contact List

At the last operational meeting, the contact list was passed around so that updates to it could be made. Please contact Pauline if your details are incorrect or if you do not feature on the contacts list at all! Once we have an up to date list, this will again be circulated to all members.

#### WBAC training

Radio training and statement writing is available through PCSO Steve Shaw. Requests should be put to Pauline.

The Bank of England has provided us with lots of literature on how to spot counterfeit notes. Anyone who has not received these leaflets or has run out should contact Pauline.

The Crown Prosecution Service came to the operational meeting last month and all those who attended found the presentation from Richard Yap very helpful and informative. There was a very lively question and answer session which has been written up in the minutes and distributed to you all. Let Pauline know if you do not have a copy of the minutes.

#### WBAC operational meetings

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 10 December in the second floor restaurant at the YMCA. We will be addressed at that meeting by Chief Inspector Dempsey-Brench, Hertfordshire Constabulary. The January 2009 meeting (exact date to be confirmed) will be attended by Sgt Ian Smith, the police officer who deals with licensing issues in Watford. Please try and come to the monthly meetings and bring along photos and incident reports to discuss.

#### And finally.....

- We have had some publicity for WBAC in the local press. Both the Watford Observer and the new 'My Watford' magazine carried very positive stories about the scheme. The message that shoplifters in Watford risk a ban and a criminal record was made very clear and will hopefully have some impact – Every little helps.
- Acquisitive crime is set to rise by approximately 10% in the current economic downturn so be forewarned – the credit crunch makes our shoplifters more industrious so we need to re-double our efforts to deter or catch them.
- From Christmas Eve – 5 January the WBAC office will not be open. Pauline can be contacted on 07595 218136.

We would like to wish you all a busy and prosperous Christmas and New Year.