Police Report 2015/2016

First of all I must send our apologies for not attending but I have a previous engagement in the community and I am the only one on duty. I have scanned the reported occurrences for the past year and the results are as follows:

There have been 16 reported incidents that are of public interest in the area of Atworth in the last year.

2 of theft (1 of a stolen piece of apparatus left at roadside)

2 of theft from a motor vehicle (1 secure and 1 insecure)

4 road traffic collisions (none life threatening)

1 dwelling burglary

2 attempted burglaries (1 private and 1 business)

1 dog bite incident - this was very distressing at the time for the victim and the dog owner, the incident was investigated by both the police and the dog warden. Having completed the investigation things were dealt with as appropriate by the dog warden

2 anti-social behaviour

1 criminal damage

1 caution for drug use (Suspects in parked car in industrial estate)

Advice on above would be never to leave anything of value unattended in public view. Even if you secure your vehicle if the items are valuable it makes it worth the risk for the passing criminal.

Burglaries are very distressing for the victims and often the things stolen are of greater sentimental value than costly. I would advise anyone with any such items to discuss their storage with family members.

Unfortunately ASB is a widespread ongoing issue and is dealt with at the time of the incident. Thankfully such issues are rare within Atworth.

Drug usage seems to be on the increase generally and our patrols are always on the lookout for vehicles parked up in secluded areas. It is in doing this that we are able to locate and educate those using drugs, especially those in control of a motor vehicle , the dangers of doing so. Drugs have the same effect as alcohol on reaction times and sense of danger, speed etc.

. A note for all dog owners are that there have been some significant changes to the dogs act that many do not seem to be aware of. One of which is that all dogs now have to be chipped or the owner faces a fine, also I have copied and pasted a passage from the dogs act for your information.

What's changed?

While owners need to be fully aware of all the changes, the biggest difference from now on is the Act also covers incidents on private property in addition to public spaces. This includes your own house and both front and back gardens.In addition:

- It will now be an offence for your dog to attack an assistance dog (Guide Dog, Hearing Dog etc).
- Prison sentences will be increased for those convicted of some offences
- Police or an appointed local authority now have powers to seize a dangerously out of control dog in a private place. The existing legislation already covers public places.
- What should dog owners be doing now?

Ensure your gardens are safe

The most important point to consider is how to keep unexpected visitors or delivery drivers safe on your property. The requirement for the law to cover private places as well as public ones has long been campaigned for by the Communication Workers Union. Numerous Royal Mail and other delivery services employees are injured by dog bites each year and up until now there has not been the legislation to enable action to be taken to ensure their future safety.

You need to make sure that any visitor can safely access your front door without encountering your dog.

There is a slight grey area in these changes in that if the person attacked is a burglar or trespasser your dog may not be considered dangerously out of control if it is in a building that is your private dwelling at the time of the attack. However, this does not cover incidents in your back or front garden so while the law is yet to be tested, all dog owners should ensure that all areas of their gardens where their dogs could encounter unexpected visitors are secure.If necessary it is also worth talking to your neighbours and asking them not to let their children climb your fences to retrieve balls etc to be on the safe side.

Manage your dog when someone knocks

We all know that fewer letters are being sent through the post, but the rise in internet shopping means that more parcels and especially signed for parcels are being delivered, which requires the delivery person to knock at the door. This change in legislation should be a wake up call to all dog owners to ensure their dogs are under control when they open the door otherwise they risk committing a criminal offence.

It is not unusual for a dog to be reactive to any visitor to your door, so you need to decide now how you are going to manage that situation. The easiest thing to do is to shut your dog in another room or in the garden, provided of course the dog cannot access the front door from the garden. If that is not an option, then you will need to seek the services of an experienced or qualified dog trainer or behaviourist to teach your dog some new behaviours around the door.

You also need to consider how your dog greets people. What you view as a dog being friendly by jumping up at visitors may be seen as threatening behaviour by a stranger.

Owning a dog is a huge responsibility and should not be taken lightly, however by taking some time to think about what these changes mean to you and your dog, you will be taking steps to keep everyone safe and avoid ending up in a position that no one wants to find themselves in.