

On the beat in

Hereford Southside & Rural

Safer Neighbourhood Team Newsletter

April 2026

Where we work



Team contact details

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*We are happy to receive calls from Members of The Public, however, please **do not** use these to report crimes and/or incidents. For more information on reporting a crime/incident please go to www.westmercia.police.uk and select 'Report' or call 999 (Emergency) / 101 (Non-Emergency)*

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Abandoned Buildings

We have received several reports of young people entering and exploring abandoned buildings in the area.

They may look tempting to explore, but they present **serious dangers** and can also involve **criminal and legal consequences**.

The dangers

Entering abandoned buildings puts you at significant risk. Common hazards include:

- **Unsafe structures** – floors, staircases and roofs can be unstable and collapse without warning
- **Hidden hazards** – exposed wiring, broken glass, sharp metal and uncovered holes
- **Fire risk** – flammable materials, faulty electrics and no fire exits
- **Hazardous substances** – asbestos, chemicals, mould and sewage contamination
- **Poor lighting and confined spaces** – increasing the risk of injury
- **No emergency access** – if you are injured, help may be delayed or unable to reach you

There have been incidents nationwide where people have been **seriously injured or killed** after entering disused premises.



What does the law say?

- **Trespass**: Entering an abandoned building without permission is usually a **civil offence**, meaning the owner can take legal action to remove you or claim damages
- **Aggravated trespass**: If someone enters land or buildings and **intentionally disrupts or intimidates others**, this becomes a **criminal offence**
- **Criminal offences may apply** if, while inside, a person:
 - Causes damage (criminal damage)
 - Steals items or removes materials (theft)
 - Breaks in or forces entry (burglary)

- **Parents and guardians** could be held responsible if children cause damage or are injured

Even if a building *appears* abandoned, it **almost always still belongs to someone** and is often secured for safety reasons.

Our advice

- **Do not enter abandoned buildings** – no matter how safe they appear
- **Keep children and young people away** from derelict sites
- **Report unsecured or unsafe buildings** to the local council or police via 101
- Call **999** if there is immediate danger or a crime in progress

Your safety is far more important than curiosity. Staying out helps prevent injuries, protects emergency services from unnecessary risk, and keeps our community safe.

Rogue Traders

We continue to receive reports of **rogue traders** offering work such as **building repairs, gutter cleaning, driveway resurfacing and tree lopping**, often by **cold calling at homes**. These individuals may claim the work is urgent (for example, damaged gutters, unsafe trees or failing driveways) and pressure residents into agreeing to work on the spot.

Common warning signs include:

- Cold callers offering work without being asked
- Claims that damage has been spotted which needs **immediate attention**
- Requests for **cash payments** or large deposits upfront
- No written quote, paperwork or proper company details
- Refusal to leave when asked, or high-pressure sales tactics

Protect yourself and your neighbours by remembering:

- **Never agree to work from a cold caller**
- Take time to **get written quotes** from reputable, established businesses
- Check traders are legitimate – look for reviews, a landline number and a registered address
- **Do not pay upfront** and never hand over cash on the doorstep
- If in doubt, say **no** and close the door

If you feel uncomfortable, pressured, or believe a rogue trader is operating in your area, please report it to **police on 101**, or **999 if you feel threatened or unsafe**. You can also report concerns via **www.westmercia.police.uk**. Prompt reporting helps protect vulnerable residents and prevents repeat offences.



Coffee Morning Attendance



Members of the Team attended the Friday coffee morning held at **Eastholme Community Centre**.

The next one the Team are attending is on **Friday 8th May, 10:30 til 12**.

This gives you the opportunity to drop in and have a friendly, informal chat. The centre provides a welcoming environment where the public can speak with Officers

about any concerns or issues they may have.

Are you involved with a group that would benefit from a visit? Invite the team to your club or event – it's all about being part of the community

Email: herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.police.uk

Water Safety

As the weather gets warmer, more people enjoy spending time near rivers, lakes and open water. While this can be great fun, natural water can be extremely dangerous, even in warm conditions and every year people are seriously injured or lose their lives.

Please remember the following water safety advice:

- **Cold water shock** can occur at any time of year. Sudden immersion/jumping in can cause involuntary gasping, breathing difficulties and loss of muscle control.
- **Never swim in rivers, canals or reservoirs as open water is not the same as a swimming pool**, even if you are a strong swimmer – currents, hidden hazards and cold temperatures can quickly become life-threatening.
- **Always Keep children and pets under close supervision** when near the water at all times, most open sources of water have an undercurrent.
- **Avoid alcohol near water** – it significantly increases the risk of accidents and drownings.
- **Do not jump or dive into open water** – submerged objects and shallow depths can cause serious injury as you don't know what's underneath the surface.



- **Look out for warning signs** and follow any safety advice or restrictions in place.
- **Look out for your friends** – if something doesn't feel safe, speak up and walk away.

If someone gets into difficulty in the water:

- **Call 999 immediately** and ask for the **Fire & Rescue Service**
- **Do not go in after them**
- **Throw something that floats**
- Encourage them to **float on their back** to help control their breathing

Being aware of the risks and taking simple precautions can help prevent tragedies and keep everyone safe while enjoying the warmer weather.

Making the right choices could save a life – maybe even your own.

Diesel Thefts

With the rising cost of diesel, there has been an increase in diesel thefts, which continue to be a problem for many farms and rural properties. Fuel tanks stored in rural and isolated locations are particularly attractive to thieves looking for an easy target.



- keep tanks stored close to the property where you can see them. If this isn't possible, you should consider installing CCTV to watch over isolated tanks and restrict access with walls, fences and hedges. Security lighting such as 'dusk till dawn' or motion detection lighting can also be an effective deterrent to thieves
 - remember to check the oil level in your tank regularly. Look for any spilt fuel, marks on the locks or anything else suspicious
- avoid installing a storage tank in an isolated area or outlying building
 - consider using a mobile bowser (tanker) kept in a secure place when not in use
 - use 'diesel dye', making your diesel traceable and less attractive to thieves

Scrap Metal Thefts

Across the county we continue to see opportunist thefts of scrap metal from front and rear gardens. Items such as old appliances, car parts, metal gates, fencing, lead, copper piping and other discarded metal can be targeted, particularly when left visible or unattended.

How you can help prevent scrap metal theft:

- **Do not leave scrap metal on display** in front or rear gardens – arrange prompt disposal where possible.
- **Secure metal items** such as gates, ladders or tools with appropriate locks or anchor points.
 - **Store valuable items out of sight**, especially overnight or when away from home.
 - **Mark property** with your postcode so items are harder to sell on.
- **Be cautious of cold callers** offering to collect scrap metal – legitimate collectors should be registered and won't pressure residents.
- **Consider fitting motion-sensor lighting or CCTV**, particularly around side entrances and rear gardens.
- **Get to know your neighbours** and report unusual activity, especially unfamiliar vehicles or vans driving slowly or stopping frequently.
- **Remove ladders and tools** that could be used to access sheds or outbuildings.

If you see suspicious behaviour or vehicles acting unusually in your area, please report it to police via **101** or online at www.westmercia.police.uk. Always call **999** if a crime is in progress or there is an immediate danger.



Date for the Diary

Members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a bike marking event at **Halo** on **Saturday 9th May, 10:00am – 1:00pm.**

BIKE-MARKING EVENT



Bike marking helps deter theft and increases the chances of bikes being returned if stolen. The event is free to attend and open to everyone — just bring your bike along.

Officers will also be available to offer crime prevention advice and answer any local policing questions.

We look forward to seeing you there.

SNT Police Surgery

Your local Safer Neighbourhood Team will be at the coffee morning on **Monday 20th April 2026 at 09:30** at **Newton Farm Community Hub**

Please take this opportunity to raise any concerns you may have and to find out what we are doing to tackle the issues that matter to you.



Everyone is welcome and it would be great to see you there. For more information, please contact: PCSO Hayley WARNE on hayley.warne@westmercia.police.uk

Neighbourhood Matters

Sign up to Neighbourhood Matters your brand-new community messaging service.

Neighbourhood Matters enables residents, businesses and community groups to keep in touch with local policing teams. You can choose exactly what type of alert you wish to receive and how you receive them, whether that be by email, text or telephone.

Sign up now at: www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk

