

Police remind drivers to protect their cars

WITH the warmer weather and lighter nights, officers are reminding drivers to take extra precautions to protect their cars.

Figures show that between January and March this year, there were on average 430 vehicle crimes across the county. A reduction of 21.8 per cent compared with the same period last year.

Despite the reduction, officers are warning drivers not to be complacent. This time of year can present would-be offenders with opportunities to commit vehicle offences.

Force Crime Prevention Manager Laura Major, said "Our officers have been working hard with our partners, and in particular under Operation Guardian, to combat vehicle crime and catch offenders.

"The reduction is really encouraging, but unfortunately, there are some people still falling victim to vehicle crime. I would encourage car owners to consider the following crime prevention advice:

- Always keep your car locked, closing both the windows and sunroof - even if you are only leaving the vehicle for a few moments.
- Always remove all items from your vehicle when parked; even an old coat may be enough to tempt a thief.
- Ensure when removing your sat nav that the cradle and suction pad are also removed and any suction marks are wiped away.
- Store your car in your garage, and keep both the car and garage locked and secure.
- If you do not have a garage, park on your driveway or in well-lit areas, which are overlooked.
- If you park on the street, tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to avoid criminal damage to your vehicle.
- When using public car-parks try to look for a one which is part of the police approved safer parking scheme and displays the Park Mark® brand
- Never leave keys in the ignition - it only takes a few seconds for a thief to jump into your car and drive away.
- When at home always keep your car keys in a safe place, out of sight and reach from doors, windows and letterboxes.

"Owners of prestige cars in particular can fall prey to car key burglaries - simply putting your keys away securely can prevent a lot of hassle. It is important to ensure you can easily find your keys to escape in the event of a fire.

"Following these simple crime prevention steps can help remove opportunities for offenders and prevent you from falling victim of car crime.

"For further advice please call 03000 111 222 and ask to speak to your local crime prevention officer."