

DARKER evenings are with us earlier now – and householders and vehicle owners are being urged to ensure they are aware of the increased threat posed by opportunist criminals. The weeks following the end of British Summertime traditionally see a peak in the burglary rate across Northamptonshire.

Burglars and thieves love operating in the shadows and the sudden onset of longer hours of darkness catches many householders unawares.

The Force's Operation Guardian teams are re-iterating their crime prevention messages to the public now the clocks have gone back an hour ~ please see below.

A large proportion of break-ins are simply down to a burglar or thief gaining entry to a house or a car that has been left unlocked.

Detective Chief Inspector Nick Purdie, of Operation Guardian, said: "The really encouraging news is that the number of burglaries across the county has been falling significantly since the introduction of Operation Guardian.

"We are working hard to make sure this reduction continues but we cannot afford to be complacent in our efforts and certainly not at this time of year.

"The onset of darker nights can catch you out and many people leave their homes and vehicles vulnerable to crime.

"Many of the burglaries or vehicle breaks are opportunist crimes, where the offender has taken advantage of the darker nights cover, has identified a house in darkness with no sign of someone being home and has seen this as an invitation to burgle.

"Similarly, valuables left on view on car seats provide an ideal opportunity for a quick smash and grab.

"People can do a lot to help themselves by adopting basic security measures.

"Use an alarm, make sure all doors and windows are locked and leave a light on in your property or use a timer if the property is not occupied, to help remove the opportunities for offenders.

The bottom line is ensuring that homes and vehicles are kept fully secure at all times.

REMEMBER - IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, DON'T OPEN THE DOOR

The Police have issued the following advice to remind residents to implement crime prevention measures:

Burglary

1. Keep front and back doors locked at all times - even when you are at home or in the garden. Around 25% of burglaries are through unlocked doors or windows.
2. Make sure you lock up your home when you go out, even if you are only popping out for a few minutes.
4. Keep keys out of sight, and reach, from cat flaps, letterboxes, and downstairs doors and windows.
5. Keep your house and car keys in a safe place. Make sure that they cannot be seen from the outside.
6. If you are out in the evening, make sure you leave a light on and draw the curtains.
7. Set your house alarm before you go out. If you do not have an alarm, then consider investing in one to improve your security.
8. Use timer switches so lights or radios come on at certain times, if you know you're not going to be home before it gets dark.

Vehicle Crime

1. Always keep your car locked, even if you are only leaving the vehicle for a few moments.
2. Always remove all items from your vehicle when parked, even an old coat may be enough to tempt a 'smash and grab' thief.
3. Ensure when removing your sat nav, that the cradle and suction pad are also removed and any suction marks are wiped away.
4. Store your car in your garage, and keep both the car and garage locked and secure.
5. If you do not have a garage, park on your driveway or in areas that are overlooked.
6. If you park on the street, tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to avoid criminal damage to your vehicle.
7. Never leave keys in the ignition, not even at a garage when paying for petrol.

Please report any suspicious vehicles and/or persons you see in our parish immediately to the Police on 101 or, anonymously, to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Thank you