

## **Burglaries in Bradley Stoke and few prevention tips**

Burglary is the most damaging form of property crime and the most common criminal offence reported in the UK last year. Last year from October leading up to Christmas, there were unprecedented number of burglaries in Bradley Stoke and surrounding areas. There were 16 incidences of burglaries in the month of November alone that is more than one every other day. Large amounts of high value items were stolen from many households and there was also an occurrence of aggravated burglary where people in the house were threatened at knife point and robbed.

Following an outcry from fretful citizens, a public meeting was held at Bradley Stoke on 24th of January 2017 to discuss the community's fright with the police official in charge of the detective operation and to think together ways for further robust action and to raise awareness amongst the people. The meeting was attended by hundreds of people and many victims came and shared their trauma. Many community members criticised the police for their passive approach towards investigation, absence of strong interrogation and laxity in recovery of stolen goods. The meeting demanded for increased patrols during the months from October to February and for swift response, meticulous investigation and tough prosecution from the part of the police as well as community orientation and prevention measures. At the meeting, Detective Chief Inspector of Police Mr Dominic Graham listened to community concerns and assured all possible help and support to the community.

However, in October this year few incidents have been reported already. Since prevention is the best option, we have alerted the police about the situation and have requested for a closer watch. We have requested the police to mount up additional high visibility patrols and deploy unmarked cars during the winter season as well as to take measures to comb up intelligence work behind the scenes to track various burglary groups. We also have asked the police to make use of the CCTV cameras available in this neighbourhood to detect burglars and suspected persons.

The advice for the public would be to remain vigilant and report any unusual activities in your neighbourhood such as strangers parked outside your homes and cold calling. Contrary to popular idea that intruders habitually sneak into a home late at night, they are most likely to be active between 9am and 5 pm. This is because they understand that most people will be at work during the day. Burglars are opportunists. Open windows and back doors are immediate invitations. Be cautious.

It is therefore fundamental that you ensure all doors and windows are securely locked before leaving for work in the morning, and that all entry and exit points are secured with one or more high quality locks. If the front door is secure or easily visible from the street, burglars will move to the rear of the house where they are

less likely to be seen. A common fault is homeowners leaving their house keys within reach of the door. It is advisable to cage your letterbox inside the door. It is frequent practice for burglars to put a long stick through your letterbox and “fish” your keys off the hall table. Not only will they be able to break into your house, but they will be able to steal your car, then take away more of your possessions. Also lock your garage and make sure all your house tools are also under lock and key at all times.

It would be also worth investing in security alarms, cameras, and sensor lights as they seem to act as deterrents. Many people also forget to activate their house alarm, while going out of their home unless going for long holidays. It is ideal to buy burglar alarms from reputable, well-known companies. It is because burglars bypass the cheap systems and spot dummy alarms a mile off. For maximum security, alarms fitted with cameras will also allow you to view your home from your laptop or mobile phone, wherever you are.

You should also avoid leaving obvious signs that the house is unoccupied when you are away. You must stay away from posting about your holidays plans and high value objects on social media. It is also advisable to form a Neighbourhood Watch Network in your street or else join a Neighbourhood watch if it is closer to your street. It is prudent and worthwhile to insure all your valuables with reputed insurance companies. To make recovery easier following a loss or burglary, check the Police’s advice for property marking. If a criminal can tell a property is marked or traceable, they may choose to leave it behind. The police have advised us, not to keep high value objects at home.

The Police have assured support including regular patrols and quick response. If there are any incidents, please inform the police immediately and engage with your local beat team regularly. If you need any support on burglary issue, we are glad to provide any help for you and will liaise with the concerned authorities. Together we will be able to weed out this heinous crime from our communities. Thank you.

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