

*Monmouthshire*

# PRIME

ISSUE 02: 2013

FREE

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Gwent Police

*Helping to feed local families*

*Abergavenny Food Bank*

*- volunteers on a mission*



Also in this Issue: Rogue Trader Victim - 'Don't let it happen to you' | Getting to know... Ian Johnston, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent | Cut-out Halloween 'No callers please' sign

# 999 – Where are you?

**C**hepstow Neighbourhood Policing Team has launched a new scheme with HMP Usk to provide low cost house name and house number signs for local residents.

Members of the Chepstow Neighbourhood Policing Team noticed during their patrols that many properties and farms had no signs that were clearly visible from the road. This can be particularly problematic for emergency services responding to calls from the public.

With the help of local Councillor Beverley Moore, they approached HMP Usk, and have set up a scheme that sees prisoners making house plaques at a reduced rate for local residents. This is the first scheme of its type in Wales.

The plaques are hand engraved and made from beech wood grown at HMP Prescoed. The house plaques not only help provide an easy to read attractive sign but also enable prisoners to learn a new skill in their workshops.

The signs cost £6 each, which covers the cost of the materials in the workshop. All administration is dealt with by Lower Wye Valley Neighbourhood Watch meaning that the prison has no access to confidential information about residents. A £1 profit from the cost goes towards Neighbourhood Watch to help buy crime prevention materials.

PC Louise Thorpe explained: "Working in rural areas, properties are often a way from a main road and can be very difficult to find. You never know when you might need help from the police, an ambulance or



the fire service, and at that time, every second is crucial."

Steve Cross, Governor for HMP Usk prison added: "This an excellent opportunity for our prisoners to give something back to the community. They are also working hard, learning new skills and raising the chances of their sustained employment on release; something that will help us deliver our commitments to protect the public and reduce reoffending."

If you would like an order form for a house plaque or more information about the scheme, please contact the Lower Wye Neighbourhood Policing Team on 01633 642068 or e-mail:

[louise.thorpe@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:louise.thorpe@gwent.pnn.police.uk)  
or [andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

## How to contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team

[abergavenny@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:abergavenny@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

01495 233917

[monmouth@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:monmouth@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

01495 233903

[lowerwye@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lowerwye@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

01633 642068

[severnside@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:severnside@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

01633 642395

[usk@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:usk@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

01495 233905

For up to date news from your local team, please visit:

[www.gwent.police.uk](http://www.gwent.police.uk)

or request a copy of your local 'Neighbourhood Newsletter' from a member of the team.'

## and the winner is...

In our last edition of Monmouthshire Prime, we ran a competition for one lucky OWL member to win a luxury hamper from Waitrose.

The winner was Mrs Pamela Parry from Abergavenny who signed up to OWL in July.

OWL is an Online Watch Link and over 25,000 residents of Gwent are already signed up. Neighbourhood Policing Teams use the OWL system to alert residents to information that may be

of interest to them such as appeals for information, warnings about potential bogus officials, crime prevention advice as well as updates about the work of Neighbourhood Officers.

If you're not already a members of OWL, why not sign up today, it's quick and easy and completely free!

To sign up to OWL, please visit:

[www.owl.co.uk/gwent](http://www.owl.co.uk/gwent)

or speak to your Neighbourhood Officers.

# Getting to know... Ian Johnston

**W**e spent five minutes with Ian Johnston, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and a former police officer...

## **Did you always want to be a Police Officer?**

I had not given a career in the Police Service any thought until one day I was required to give a witness statement and the local bobby Jim Higginson suggested I should join as a Police Cadet. Jim should get the credit or the blame!

## **Where did you enjoy working as a Police Officer?**

I was fortunate to work in all areas across Gwent as a uniformed officer and a detective, including Newport, Blackwood, Pontypool, Caerphilly and Ebbw Vale. I was the Detective Chief Inspector at Pontypool for three years and the Chief Superintendent at Pontypool for a further three years covering the Monmouthshire area, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

## **What has been the highlight of your career?**

In 1995 I was appointed the Head of CID for Gwent which was a huge achievement but the highlight of my career was receiving the Queen's Police Medal in 2003 for distinguished service.

## **You were the first full-time Welsh President of the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales – did you enjoy that post?**

I served as the President of the Superintendents' Association from 2007-2010. My role involved influencing government policies and ensuring that the views of Police Superintendents and Chief Superintendents were acknowledged. It was a fascinating time regularly meeting with a number of Home Secretaries and Police Ministers. I also sat on many influential Home Office Committees and Working Groups.

## **Who has inspired you in your career?**

This is an easy question for me. In the Police Service the one man who inspired me was John Over who was the Chief Constable of Gwent from 1980-1994. He was an exceptionally strong and respected leader but was also known for his care and compassion for all officers and police staff. He has been retired for almost twenty years but I still regard him as the best Chief Constable Gwent has ever had. Outside of the Police Service my inspiration has been my wife Janet. We have been married for 41 years and she has supported me throughout my career.

## **How do you spend your free time now?**

Quite honestly, I do not have much free time. I gave a commitment to listen to all communities across Gwent which means that I am out at least three nights a week at various meetings and on weekends. I have attended meetings right across Monmouthshire and have many more planned. Janet and I enjoy walking and if I do get any free time I also enjoy reading.

## **Is there an ambition you have yet to fulfil?**

I have been extremely fortunate to have achieved so much during 40 years with Gwent Police. My aim, over the next three years, is to act as the 'voice' of the communities of Gwent to ensure that Gwent Police is the best Police Service in England and Wales.



**"...despite my miserable photographs in the media, I do have a sharp sense of humour and a very positive approach to life."**



## **What advice would you give to Senior Citizens in Monmouthshire?**

We live in a beautiful and safe part of the country. Keep smiling!

## **Tell us something that you think would surprise people about Ian Johnston?**

As a young boy I had trials with Swansea Town (City) and if I had not joined the Police Service I might have been a professional footballer! Also, despite my miserable photographs in the media, I do have a sharp sense of humour and a very positive approach to life.



**Please display our pumpkin in your window if you would prefer not to have Halloween callers**

Os yw eich diogelwch personol dan fygythiad, ffoniwch

**999**

is the number to call if your personal safety is under threat

PAN FYDD  
YN LLAI  
PWYSIG  
NA 999

**101**

WHEN  
IT'S LESS  
URGENT  
THAN 999

# It happened to me – don't let it happen to you...

**W**e talked to Gwent resident Eric James about how he became the victim of a rogue trader...

Mr James is a smart, intelligent pensioner. As he sat in his living room, it was difficult to see how anyone could fool him into parting with his hard earned money. But unfortunately, that's just what happened. Mr James was the victim of a rogue trader, and worse still, he's not the only person who has been tricked by unscrupulous 'tradesmen' who prey on trusting residents.

## How the Rogue Traders work

Last year in Monmouthshire, 54 people were the victims of distraction burglaries and rogue trader crimes. These types of crimes can leave the victims feeling ashamed, upset and very much out of pocket.

Mr James explained: "When a white van pulled up outside my house and a man got out to talk to me about my drive, I didn't think anything about it. He explained that my driveway needed some work but his records showed that it was still under guarantee so shouldn't cost anything. He said he'd come back to see me the week later, and I was happy at that point.

"The following week, I had to go to town to do some shopping. My wife was at home. She heard a noise outside and when she looked out, there was a man working on our drive. By the time I got home, he'd taken up a quarter of it!"

## He didn't look like you'd expect a 'rogue trader' to look ...

"Another man came along in a white van. He was well dressed and didn't look at all like you would expect a 'rogue trader' to look. He told us our drive really

needed attention and that it hadn't been made properly in the first place which was worrying.

## He wanted cash – they always do

"He quoted us a figure of £4,500 and at that stage we didn't know that this was expensive. He asked for cash and I know you shouldn't pay cash but we gave them the money.

**"They took the money and said they would be back shortly. That's the last we saw of them."**

"They took the money and said they would be back shortly. That's the last we saw them. I phoned the police and also spoke to Trading Standards for advice.

The police are investigating the crime and we've even had an appeal for information on Crimewatch, but unfortunately we're still minus the money."

## My advice to you

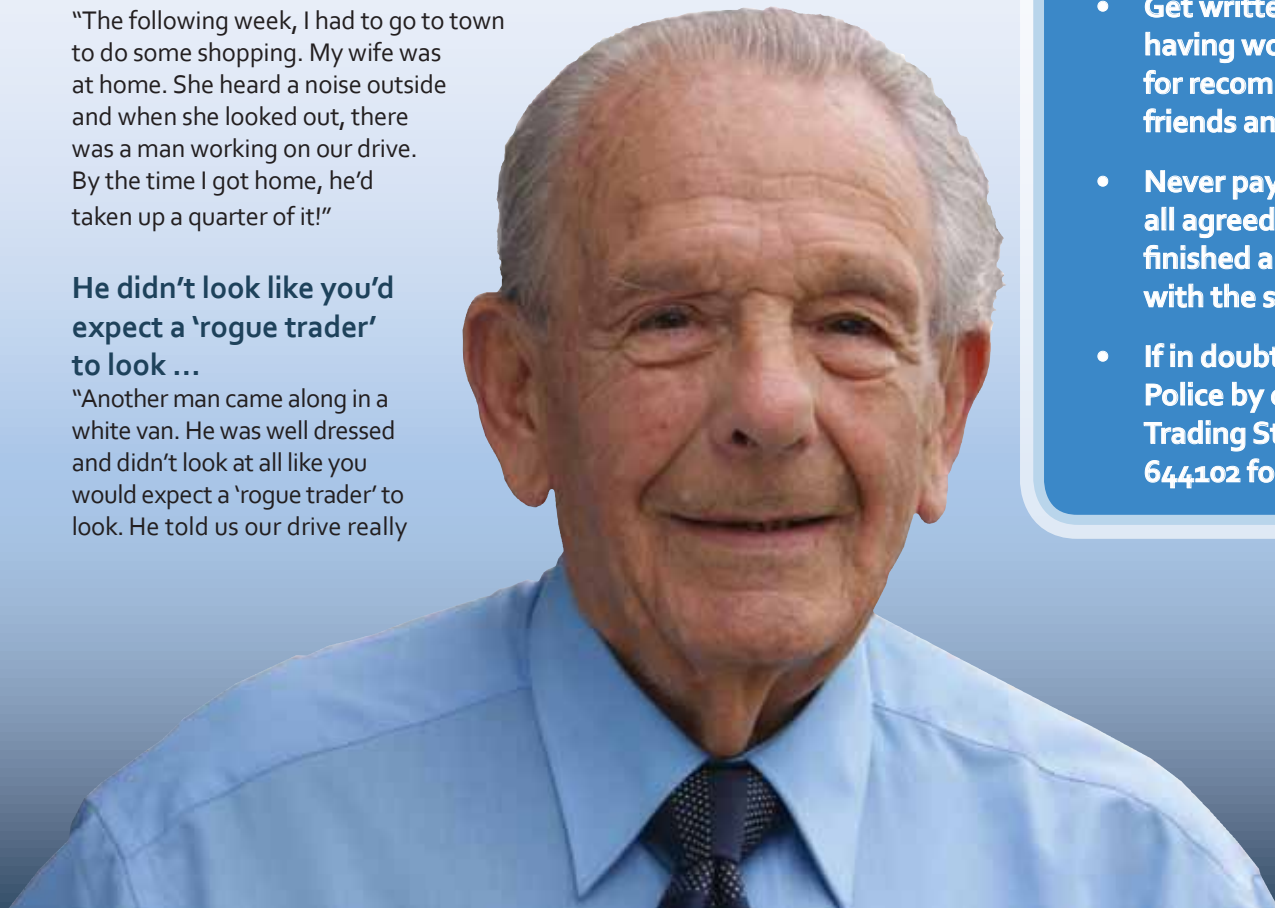
"I would advise all local residents to be careful! If you have any concerns, contact the police or call Trading Standards before having any work done.

"You can always ask for a written quote and check with other companies before agreeing to work.

"Learn from my mistake and don't part with any money until you're 100% happy with the work and company – I learnt the hard way."

## Our advice to you

- **Never feel pressurised to open your door to someone you don't know**
- **Never give any personal details to anyone calling at your door, especially not your bank account details**
- **Get written quotes before having work done or ask for recommendations from friends and relatives**
- **Never pay for work unless all agreed work has been finished and you're happy with the standard**
- **If in doubt, contact Gwent Police by calling 101 and Trading Standards on 01633 644102 for advice**



# A woman on a mission!

## Kathy Medicott: Helping to feed local families

**How often have you thought to yourself mid-morning, 'I'm starving! I can't wait for lunch!' Well for too many people, going hungry and worrying about where the next meal will come from is a grim reality.**

**The first food bank in Monmouthshire**  
Every day, people in the UK go hungry for reasons ranging from being a victim of crime to redundancy or receiving an unexpected bill on a low income. In 2012-13 food banks fed 346,992 people nationwide.

In Abergavenny, those who need help can turn to a local food bank to ensure that they have regular meals.

Local resident Kathy Medicott decided

to set up the food bank back in 2011 together with a group of volunteers from Cornerstone Church and The Trussell Trust. It was the 16th food bank to be established in Wales and the first in Monmouthshire. Today, a group of 12 people lend a helping hand each week, but more than 50 people have given their time in total.

### How it all began...

In November 2011, the group of volunteers started renting a room in the offices of Morgan's Solicitors – and it soon filled up with the food that they collected. So they soon spread into an adjacent room and the basement!

By June 2012, the team had collected enough stocks to start giving out food parcels. Each parcel contains a minimum of three days nutritionally balanced,

non-perishable food. Since then, over 383 food parcels have been given out to the most in-need in Abergavenny and the surrounding area. These parcels have provided 6,749 meals, feeding 3,078 people, including children.

Kathy Medicott explained: 'Everyone who receives a food parcel has been referred from a local agency or organisation. In theory, any organisation that regularly comes into contact with people at a point of financial crisis can work with us and give out vouchers for food parcels. Those professionals can then assess whether their clients genuinely need the emergency food.'

### Somebody to lean on

The food bank also provides a friendly, non judgemental ear and food bank volunteers are able to refer people in need to professional agencies such as



Kaleidoscope, MIND, Citizens Advice Bureau and Christians Against Poverty (CAP) for further help.

Kathy said: 'On a daily basis, we come face to face with the cold reality of what it means when you hit a financial crisis. It is never long before we meet someone who has not only been without food, but also electricity and gas, because they have little or no money, sometimes for several months.'

'There have been occasions when we have delivered food parcels to a home only to find someone sitting in darkness and in the cold because the meter has run out.'

'Recently, we helped one young family who, for five weeks, only had child benefit to live on – that's less than £15 per week for rent, heating, lighting, cooking, food, baby essentials and everything else!

'You might think that affluent Abergavenny has no homelessness problem but there are many people who find themselves unable to get accommodation, having to 'sofa surf' at friends and relatives, or rely on B&B accommodation with just a kettle for cooking facilities.'

Unfortunately, there are also individuals who have no choice but to sleep outside at night.'

### 'Glad to be able to help'

Kathy, who lives locally in Gilwern and is a married mother of two, is a committed Christian. She gave up her job as a solicitor four years ago to pursue her volunteer work at the food bank. Typically, she spends 28 to 30 hours every week helping the food bank provide for people in need.

Kathy said, 'I worked as a solicitor for 28 years and 18 years of my career were spent in Abergavenny. I worked as a personal injury solicitor for the latter part of my career and enjoyed my work. But I definitely felt that God was telling me my time working was limited. I now think of the food bank as my job. I love it and am thankful and bowled over every day for the privilege to help those in need.'

'Each one of us could so easily and unexpectedly be in the same situation. I'm glad to be able to help in any way I can.'

### Collecting everything but the kitchen sink...

Charitable donations include toiletries, baby products such as nappies, jars of food, pasta sauces, pasta, rice, biscuits and chocolate.

The team is always in need of long life fruit juice, tinned products, UHT milk and instant coffee.

Storage is limited though, so do let them know what you have beforehand.

### How you can help

Any donations are gratefully received and the work of the food bank could not continue without public generosity.

Donations can be dropped off at Abergavenny Library, Abergavenny Natural Therapy Centre, R George Davies & Co. Solicitors or at the food bank, Lion Street, Abergavenny.

For more information, please visit: [www.abergavenny.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.abergavenny.foodbank.org.uk) or email [fb@abercec.org](mailto:fb@abercec.org)

You can also contact the food bank on: 07534 318670.



# WORD SEARCH

As the autumn nights draw in, we are aware that anti-social behaviour can be a cause for concern for many residents – particularly around Halloween and Bonfire Night.

We've hidden some words related to anti-social behaviour in the word search below – can you find them?

- nuisance
- vandalism
- graffiti
- underage drinking
- intimidating
- noise
- alarm
- distress
- harassment
- asbo

If you believe you are a victim of anti-social behaviour, please report it to us on 101.

F	E	S	I	O	N	H	U	N	N	C	I	U	D	W	L
G	J	P	Q	J	M	Z	N	R	D	J	N	E	P	I	T
S	W	Y	H	N	D	E	D	U	D	Q	T	H	Y	Y	T
M	Y	I	Q	P	X	B	E	T	U	D	I	S	I	M	I
E	T	Z	Q	C	P	O	R	M	B	I	M	M	Q	Z	Y
D	G	S	I	V	O	B	A	K	D	S	I	S	H	Y	I
Z	H	I	P	E	O	S	G	C	Z	T	D	I	M	Z	H
Z	A	B	R	A	Z	A	E	I	J	R	A	L	V	J	J
Z	R	W	X	G	H	P	D	W	C	E	T	A	T	P	A
Z	A	V	L	G	G	N	R	F	D	S	I	D	G	W	Q
O	S	G	R	A	F	F	I	T	I	S	N	N	M	X	V
V	S	R	Z	V	H	Q	N	F	K	P	G	A	R	O	V
G	M	E	X	Q	W	G	K	M	T	A	V	V	A	P	K
Y	E	D	R	J	Z	P	I	W	S	K	M	A	L	T	B
G	N	N	U	I	S	A	N	C	E	K	X	U	A	T	K
R	T	L	Q	T	E	O	G	V	C	P	T	X	N	X	I

## Spot the difference with **OWL**

Online Watch Link  
[www.owl.co.uk](http://www.owl.co.uk)



There are nine differences in all...

We hope you enjoyed this edition of

*Monmouthshire*

**PRIME**

and would like to know what you thought about the magazine and its content.

Please email any feedback to:

[corporate.communications@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:corporate.communications@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

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