



**POLICE O**  
*Keeping you informed, ke*

As the days become longer and warmer with the promise of summer, Suffolk Police are reminding residents to protect their homes against opportunistic thieves.

Warmer weather can bring with it offenders on the look-out for lapses in security, such as open doors and windows, particularly when valuables are left on display.

In fact, since January 2016 at least 29% of burglaries in Suffolk have been as a result of an unlocked door or open window.

Detective Superintendent Andy Smith said: "At this time of year, burglars know that many of us will want to open windows and doors to let the fresh air in, even when we're in the garden. As a result, we tend to see more burglaries in the warmer months as homes are left more insecure.

"Thieves typically look for the easy option by looking for gaps in security and are often not afraid to try door locks. I would urge residents to look at their home security through a thief's eye to prevent them from becoming an easy target. For instance, if you can pull your front door handle down from the inside, so can a burglar."

In the coming weeks, Suffolk Police will be sharing crime prevention messages across its social media pages, with illustrative scenes involving garden gnomes to raise awareness of some of the simple steps residents can take to help them avoid becoming a victim of crime.

The posts will be shared using #GnomeSecurity in a bid to make them more memorable, whilst also appealing to the younger generation during school holidays.

D/Supt Smith continues: "Garage and outbuilding break-ins are also common at this time of year as burglars look for power tools, bikes and other expensive items. Thieves will also look for utensils to help them break into homes so make sure you use good quality locks and keep garden gates locked.

"I would also encourage people to keep an eye on their neighbours' homes, particularly when you know they are on holiday. Setting up or joining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is an excellent way to work together in preventing your area from being targeted.

"Being the victim of a burglary can have both an emotional and financial impact, however protecting your home doesn't have to be expensive."

## **LOCK**

- Lock all doors and remove the keys before leaving the house.
- Keep front doors locked even when you are at home and especially if you are in the back garden.
- Close all windows fully before you leave the house, lock downstairs windows and remove the keys.
- Use window limiters to allow air in instead of keeping windows fully open, even when you're at home.

- Install window locks on upstairs windows that can be easily accessed by a flat roof.
- Lock back gates using a sturdy lock such as a closed shackle padlock to no less than CEN 3-4 security grade or 5 lever lock.

#### **LIGHT**

- Make your home look lived in – use timer switches if you're not home.
- 'Dusk-to-dawn' sensored security lighting is a cheap, low cost way of making sure the front of your home or shed/outbuilding is well-lit.
- Visible burglar alarms can make burglars think twice; get specialist advice and consult your insurance company.
- Hedging and shrubs to the front of your property should be pruned to no higher than 1m and trim trees up from the ground to 2m. This will allow a clear line of sight across your property and will stop the garden being used as a hiding place.

#### **HIDE**

- Keep your valuables, jewellery, cash, passport and deeds to your property in a safe.
- Never leave spare keys in an open place. Be aware, burglars know all the usual hiding places so never leave a spare key under the doormat or under a garden gnome.
- Keep dustbins and wheelie-bins away from fencing/gates as these can be used by thieves to climb into windows or used to escape.
- Make sure valuables are property marked. Take photographs and keep a note of any serial numbers.
- Don't leave equipment and tools lying around that can be used by burglars to break into your home, such as hammers, shovels or gardening tools. Keep ladders locked away and out of sight.

**For more security advice visit <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/advice/crime-prevention-z>.**

Help us keep our communities safe by reporting any suspicious activity.

Please use the following link to pass useful information to Suffolk Police about any incident.

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us/report-something/report-crime>

**DO NOT USE THIS LINK IN AN EMERGENCY OR IN A SITUATION THAT REQUIRES AN IMMEDIATE POLICE RESPONSE WHEN YOU SHOULD RING 999.**

To report information anonymously on any crime, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Crime reduction advice can be accessed via the Suffolk Constabulary website <http://www.suffolk.police.uk/advice/crime-prevention-z>

Police Connect Team