



Southport **HOMEWATCH** Association

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JUNE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Southport Homewatch June newsletter.

This month we have:

- the crime update for May
- how to protect yourself from online scams

CRIME REPORT FOR MAY 2026

Residential Burglary

- Roe Lane - offenders break into rear of property by removing a lock from rear door, car keys stolen
- Hawkshead St - tools used to damage lock on rear door, no entry gained
- Ruddington Rd - males walk up driveway and try to open garage overnight

Vehicle Crime

- Seaton Way - keyless theft of motor vehicle overnight from driveway
- Bankfield Lane - attempted theft of vehicle, entry forced to vehicle overnight but failed to start it
- Bath St - attempt to break into a van overnight
- Promenade - items stolen from inside vehicle
- Sussex Rd - wheel nuts taken from parked car
- Central 12 - suspects attempt to steal parked motorbike
- Southbank Rd - theft from motor vehicle
- Part St - suspect seen on ring doorbell trying to enter parked vehicle
- York Rd - insecure vehicle entered overnight and items stolen
- Essex Rd - keyless theft of vehicle overnight
- Liverpool Rd - number plates stolen from vehicle

Points to note:

Again, more vehicle crime than burglaries. The vehicle crimes were mainly overnight. Another theft of number plates (see advice in our April newsletter). 2 keyless car thefts. Ask us for a Faraday pouch if your car doesn't need you to press a button on the remote to open.

ONLINE SCAMS



We are rounding off our scam prevention advice by looking at online scams.

Online fraud makes up around 2/3 of all reported fraud in the UK.

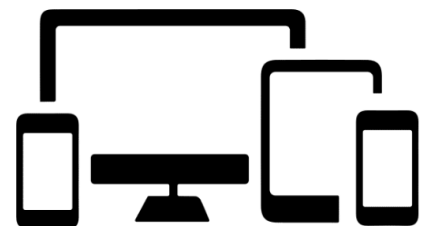
Unreported online scams probably account for a lot more.

Online fraud and scams are evolving all the time. As such, it is very difficult to provide a definitive list of what to look out for. Our advice is to be aware of

what support is out there to help you avoid becoming a victim. Our website includes links to the following sources:

- **Which?** - Scam Alert Service (one of our top tips for advice)
Free Which? Scam Alerts are regular email updates on the latest scams doing the rounds – and practical advice to keep you one step ahead of the scammers. Your friends and family can sign up too. You can register at www.which.co.uk/scam-alert-service
- **Cyber Aware** is an initiative within the National Cyber Security Centre. They also have a website section specifically aimed at individuals and families
www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/individuals-families
- **Report Fraud** is the place to tell the police about cyber crime and fraud. Using their service you can make a report online <https://www.reportfraud.police.uk/reporting-a-fraud/> or by phoning their Report Fraud Contact Centre 0300 123 2040
They also provide the Report Fraud Victim Service which offers dedicated, and specialist help to victims of cyber crime and fraud.
- **Age UK**
Although targeted at older individuals, Age UK offer relevant advice on many security and safety related issues including their Scam Alert webpage
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/scams-fraud/>. Check this page regularly to find advice on current scams.

It is also worth checking out online tools which can help you identify scams. Which? have consulted their members and have come up with the following recommendations:



1. Ask Silver

Using artificial intelligence (AI) to spot patterns and analyse scams, Ask Silver enables you to check whether images, websites, text messages and phone numbers are likely to be scams. <https://www.asksilver.com/>

It carries out other legwork, such as visiting webpages to check for warning signs, looking up the company behind the website, and checking for reports or reviews on the scam or the company behind it.

2. ScamAdviser

The ScamAdviser website can help to detect whether scam websites, numbers or bank accounts are legitimate. <https://www.scamadviser.com/>

Type in a website address, phone number or crypto address on its site, and you'll see a trust score indicating how likely it is to be a scam. ScamAdviser determines the score by drawing on various online data sources.

3. Who Called Me

Members of our group also mentioned finding Who Called Me a useful scam-detection tool.

<https://who-called.co.uk/>

It's a website where people share reports on suspicious calls they've received; you type in a phone number to see what other people have said about it. If it's a scam call currently doing the rounds, you'll get to see other people's experiences with the scam and know not to answer or call back.

4. Bitdefender

Members of our group also said they use Bitdefender Scamio, a chatbot developed to help you analyse potentially fraudulent content and communications. <https://www.bitdefender.com/en-us/consumer/scamio>

You can ask the chatbot to analyse an image, verify a link or decode text and email content. It will look at signs such as the sender information, patterns in the language and the structure of the message to give you a verdict. It also looks at common scam signs taken from Bitdefender's database of known scams and phishing attempts.

5. Image Whisperer

Image Whisperer attempts to determine whether images are AI-generated. While not all AI-generated content is scam content, scammers are increasingly using it as a tool. <https://imagewhisperer.org/> Unlike some other AI detectors, Image Whisperer will tell you if it doesn't know and give you further information to help you make up your own mind.

Finally... Scams can be incredibly sophisticated, and these free tools may not easily spot the signs of a dodgy website, email, call or text. So a reliable mantra in the fight against scams is to always 'Take Five' and stop to think before you part with any money or share any sensitive details.

<https://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/protect-yourself/>

If you've lost money or spotted an unauthorised transaction on your account, contact your bank immediately using the phone number on the back of your card. Scams should also be reported to Report Fraud

Thank you for supporting Southport Homewatch.

Jacqueline, Stuart and Dave (the committee)