



Southport Homewatch Association

Minutes of AGM 15th April 2026

1. Welcome and introductions

After the H&S/Welfare introduction Jacqueline outlined the agenda for the evening which was as follows -

1. Welcome and introduction of the Committee
2. Election of Officers
3. Chairman's address
4. Treasurer's report
5. Presentation by PC Gres Fontenell on Home security
6. Sergeant Rick Wincup will talk about current re-structuring of Merseyside Police, cover latest concerns and take questions from the floor
7. Thankyou and close

2. Election of Officers

Jacqueline outlined the fact that there are only three active Committee members which gives cause for concern for the long term viability of the Association and urged Scheme Leaders and Deputies to consider joining the Committee. Jacqueline stated it was not a huge commitment as the Committee only convenes monthly to discuss progress, agree future steps and ensure outstanding tasks are addressed. Jacqueline stated that if anyone was interested they could speak to a Committee member after the meeting.

Jacqueline stated that the following were willing to stand again as Committee members -

- Jacqueline Webb as Chair
- Dave Stanley as Treasurer
- Stuart Dunwoodie as Secretary

Proposers and Seconders for each of the three posts were taken from the floor and therefore the Committee remains as above. NB. Proposers and Seconders names can be revealed upon a formal request to the Chair.

3. Chairman's address

Jacqueline started off with thanks for the assistance and support provided by her fellow committee members, the local Police team, all the Scheme Leaders who make up

Homewatch and those leaders who assisted with the distribution of the printed AGM invitations.

Ward level meetings:

- The Ainsdale WhatsApp group is still active. The new PCSO, Pip Saffer, is very supportive and has started to give us input.
- In 2025 we had meetings for Birkdale and Dukes ward. Both were well received but attendance at the Dukes meeting was disappointing. We took the decision to combine Birkdale and Dukes for the WhatsApp group.
In Birkdale we are supported by PC Luke Holden and PCSO Barry Calder who are both very committed and helpful.
- In the future, we would like to see further meetings set up. We will probably look to combine Norwood and Kew for one meeting and Cambridge and Meols for another.

Newsletters:

- The monthly newsletter containing the monthly crime update from Sgt Dentith has been well received. We have recently covered telephone, postal and doorstep scams.
- The newsletter is only available digitally. We have been asked for hard copy but it's just not feasible.

Lamppost signs:

- Since the last AGM 19 new Homewatch lamppost signs, a total of 31 during 2025. We have requests in for a further 11. We have plenty of signs in stock so encourage Scheme Leaders to consider if their signs could do with replacing.

Audit:

- We have been undertaking an audit to ensure our records are accurate and up to date.
Current stats are:
 - a. 157 Schemes on record
 - b. In 2025 we lost 8 schemes and started 7 new schemes
 - c. Currently, we are processing requests from 7 Scheme leaders who have said they want to give up their group
 - d. There are still 39 responses outstanding – the big fear is that these are schemes which are no longer active.
 - e. We have sent a letter through the post to each of these leaders in the hopes it may just be a breakdown in communication.

Plans for the future:

- We want to try and increase visibility so people know about Homewatch and we can get more schemes running across Southport
Please have a think and let us know if you have any suggestions.
- We want to try and get more people involved in the work the committee does. This is to protect our viability in the future. The current committee won't be here forever and we would like to have some contingency to be able to cope with unexpected events.
- We will publish a list of the type of things we need help with.

Following Jacqueline's address several questions were raised from the floor as follows -

Question 1 - Can you please explain the difference between Southport Homewatch and Neighbourhood Watch?

Answer 1 - Jacqueline explained the differences. There is a page on the website which gives a breakdown of the differences:

<https://www.southporthomewatch.org.uk/neighbourhood-watch>

Question 2 - The use of Faraday Bags have been explained so does this mean there is an escalation in car keys being copied by thieves from outside your house in order to copy the signal?

Answer 2 - No but in general thieves move from house to house to try and find a car that has been left un-locked. If the thieves are intent on stealing a car they will take the easy option so if someone is protecting their car keys in a Faraday Bag then they will be safe but their neighbour may not be if the keys are not protected.

4. Treasurer's report

The financial year 2025 has continued to be a positive year with us receiving a donation from SES Security Ltd. of £500 and we were also successful in receiving a disbursement from Sefton MBC of £495 for Street Signs in Birkdale. These will be made available free of charge to new and existing schemes in Birkdale.

Please find below the summary of our accounts for the calendar year 2025.

Brought Forward Jan 1st 2025	-	£ 2491	Web / Email Hosting	- £ 120
Sales	-	£ 0	Accommodation	- £ 35
Donations	-	£ 520	Materials	- £ 1067
Awards	-	£ 495	Miscellaneous	- £ 15
Miscellaneous	-	£ 0	Stationery	- £ 0
Balance at End December 2025	-	£ 2269		

5. Presentation on home security

PC Gres Fontenell presented a power-point presentation on how best to protect your home against burglary and your car against theft. The presentation can be viewed on the Homewatch website. <https://www.southporthomewatch.org.uk/events>

6. Sergeant Rick Wincup

Sgt Wincup opened by talking about his background in the Police Force and that he was local to Southport. He then went on to explain about the re-structuring in Merseyside Police with the emphasis on quicker response times. He stated the aim was to respond to a 999 call within ten minutes and that this is being achieved 95% of the time. He stated that 101 calls (non-urgent) attendance was at 50-60% attendance within one hour but that now, following the re-structuring, 90% of calls are dealt with within the hour. He did state however that not all 101 calls need to be attended in person.

Sgt Wincup explained that there were four teams covering Sefton and that big events, such as the Open Golf Championship, would be Policed by Officers from outside Sefton.

This would ensure Sefton residents, homes and businesses remain with the Police coverage they are used to. Sgt Wincup explained that each team has seen an increase from four dedicated PO's to six dedicated PO's.

Sgt Wincup asked that any incident be reported to the Police, 999 if urgent or 101 if not. He stated the Police cannot deal with incidents if they are not informed about them and all too often residents mention an incident on a local chat page, WhatsApp or similar but without an official report the Police cannot take action. He said 101 calls can be made by telephone or via the internet by completing an on-line report.

Sgt Wincup talked about the theft of cars or their contents if they are left un-locked and so it is imperative your car is locked during the day and especially at night. He said Ring doorbells or CCTV can be vital in the detection of thieves and even if a direct image cannot be seen a lot can be gained from what the thief is wearing or the way he walks.

Sgt Wincup then took questions from the floor, as follows -

Question 1 - What can be done about the increase of electric bikes ridden by youths intent on wrongdoing?

Answer 1 - Sgt Wicup acknowledged this is a big problem especially as some youths modify the limiter on the bike to make it go faster. Bikes should be limited to 15 MPH but often they are adapted to go up to speeds of 50 MPH plus. The individuals using these machines are very hard to capture due to the speeds they get up to. Caution has to be adopted by the Police and if the wrong tactics were used the consequences could be fatal. These individuals will be stopped where safe to do so and they will be arrested.

Question 2 - I find trackers for luggage when flying somewhere very useful but that often the security staff in the airports are not willing to look for missing luggage even though the tracker indicates the luggage is nearby.

Answer 2 - Yes trackers can be most useful and can prove your lost luggage is nearby.

Question 3 - What can be done about youths that ride their bikes on the pavement often causing danger to passers by?

Answer 3 - We will stop anyone riding on the pavement if we can catch them but it is very difficult. If we are on patrol then of course we never see anyone riding on the pavement. As previously mentioned we need to use caution and not put the rider in danger. If we do arrest someone for riding on the pavement there is a fixed £30 penalty.

Sgt Wincup then finished by talking about the need for more PO's and to always report incidents so they can be investigated by the Police.

7. Thank you and close

Jacqueline drew proceedings to a close and thanked all the speakers and those Scheme Leaders and Deputies who attended the event. NB. It was very encouraging to see that over forty people attended the meeting.