

ICKLETON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Wednesday 5th May 2021 at 7.30pm. This meeting was held remotely using the software application Zoom.

Present: Parish Council Chair - Sian Wombwell, Parish Council Clerk - Leanne Smith, District and County Councillor - Peter McDonald, Sarah Thomson – Age UK, 13 Electors (including Councillors)

1/21 Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the electors to the meeting.

Apologies from:

Madelaine Smith – Village Hall Committee

Trevor Barwood – Allotment Association

Patrick Bloomfield - St Mary Magdalene Church

Glynis Hammond – Neighbourhood Watch

Jos Flitton – Parishioner, who wish to note the good condition and presentation of the recreation field, making mention of Charles Frankau and the Cricket Club in particular.

2/21 To approve minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2019

It was resolved that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2019 are signed by the Chair.

3/21 Report from the Chair of the Parish Council

See Appendix A

4/21 Report from District and County Councillor

See Appendix B

Councillor McDonald invited electors to ask questions. An elector asked if there have been any significant stages reached in the A505 review. Councillor McDonald stated that a southbound junction on the M11 near to junction 9 has been suggested but could bring with it more housing development.

5/21 To receive reports requested

• Village Hall Management Committee

See Appendix C – Read by the Parish Councillor Chair.

• Speedwatch

Terry Sadler reported that Speedwatch sessions were affected by lockdowns and restrictions during the last year. Sessions restarted at the beginning of May 2021.

• Ickleton Society

Rachel Radford reported that a summer walk was organised in June 2019 with a focus on biodiversity. An archaeological dig at Abbey Farm was started in the summer of 2019 and a socially distanced dig was continued in the summer of 2020. The dig will continue this summer and they are hopeful of finding medieval artifacts. An exhibition was held at the Church late 2020. The New Years Day walk went ahead in 2020 but was unable to go ahead in 2021. The Society held a wine tasting session before the covid pandemic and hope to hold another when restrictions are lifted. Andrew Shepherd is producing a time line of events in Ickleton, which he is overlapping with national events. Parishioners continue to share photos with the Society and upload photos to the Facebook page. The Annual General Meeting will be held on the 21st of May 2021. Rachel thanked the Society Committee and everyone who supports them.

• Ickleton Allotment Association

See Appendix D – Read by Lizzie Molloy.

• St Mary Magdalene Church

See Appendix E - Read by the Parish Councillor Chair.

In addition Jenny Duke thanked the Parish Council for the contribution made to the new Ickleton Guide Book along with input from the Ickleton Society. Lewis Duke explained that a House of Duty Priest is an arrangement whereby a part time Priest gains a house to live in, in exchange for offering

priestly ministry to a benefice. He stated that it has proved to be a cost effective and successful way of finding Priests.

- **Scouts**

No report received.

- **Froglets**

Email received and read by the Parish Councillor Chair. Not much to report on the last year.

They are hoping to reopen on the 17th May 2021 with certain conditions. They need to form a new committee so need to gather old members and find new ones. They will have to do a thorough clean and put in place some covid safety measures.

- **Ickleton Football Club**

Chair Steve Jenkins reported that the last two seasons have been cut short due to Covid-19. The 2020 season only ran from mid-September to early December. The team has struggled to keep numbers up for the last few seasons as players are unable to commit to regular Sunday football. Some older players have left the team and some young men in the village are away at university during term time. An elector asked how many regular and reliable players are on the team and Steve stated around 6. An elector asked how many are needed and Steve stated that 12-14 players and substitutes. An elector asked why there is a lack of commitment and Steve stated he thinks it's primarily because teams play during the week and players do not want to commit to a Sunday. The Parish Council Chair asked if the Parish Council could help and Steve stated that the facilities are good and it is just difficult to find committed players.

- **Ickleton Cricket Club**

See Appendix F – Read by Cricket Club Chair David Mathias.

- **Neighbourhood Watch**

See Appendix G - Summarised by the Parish Councillor Chair.

- **Age UK Community Warden**

Sarah Thomson reported that Age UK have been delivering Warden Schemes for 27 years. Funding has meant that 6 new schemes have started around Cambridge. A new Warden Scheme for Ickleton and surrounding parishes was started in 2020. A second warden post will be filled when the scheme grows. Currently there are 9 people in the scheme, 1 of which is from Ickleton. The scheme has been difficult to promote during Covid-19. All wardens have received both their vaccines. The scheme is currently advertised in Icene and the Parish Council website. The Parish Clerk will put posters up on noticeboards and deliver posters to residents of Icknield Close in particular again.

6/21 Open Forum

- An elector introduced himself and explained that he had recently moved into the parish. He was welcomed by the Parish Council Chair.
- An elector who has been involved with the Openreach fibre broadband funded by the Government Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme stated that letters from Openreach are still to be received by parishioners. The Parish Council Chair thanked him and Martin Woodhead in particular for their contribution to the effort.
- A Parish Councillor wished to give thanks to Dilip and Sunita at the Costcutter shop for their service to the community over the last year.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Appendix A – Report from the Chair of the Parish Council

It is 2 years since the last Chairman's Report. The covid 19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the 2020 APM, and the suspension of face to face Parish Council meetings for 12 months from last April. We have continued with Parish Council business using Zoom, but I think we will all be pleased to return to the Village Hall in June for a "normal" meeting.

Finance - The year end balance is £38,854.66 less than in 2019. There has been an increase in the precept to £25,500. Copies of the draft financial statements are available on request from the Clerk, and will be published on the Parish Council website.

Leanne Smith, our Parish Clerk, joined us in June 2019, and has proved to be a great asset to the Parish Council. One of Leanne's first initiatives was the development of a dedicated Parish Council website which I hope has proved useful and informative. We were pleased to welcome Edmund Heaney as Councillor, but Katherine Denman-Johnson stepped down, so there is a vacancy. If anyone would like to apply, please contact the Clerk in the first instance.

2020 was a strange year, with repeated lockdowns and restrictions affecting all of us to some degree. Despite this, Parish Council were able to continue with a programme of works to improve and repair infrastructure in the village. The bus shelters have been repaired and painted and notice boards installed. Benches and railings on the recreation ground and in other locations have been cleaned, repaired, and painted as appropriate. Regular maintenance of the playground has continued, and new grit bins and dog bins installed at Stackyards and Coploe Road.

Biodiversity, or lack of it, was a hot topic in 2020. Parish Council are keen to do their bit to improve wildlife habitats and increase biodiversity in the village. The first step has been to plant new hedging around the allotments and along Coploe Road. Our thanks to Simon for sourcing the plants from the Woodland Trust, and to Dominic for preparing the ground and planting the hedge. It looks really great, and should help to provide food for pollinators and birds, as well as sheltering the allotments from the wind.

In August 2019, Hugh Molloy organised a work party to inspect and clean the Cemetery Chapel, a lovely Arts and Crafts building which is seldom open to the public. We had hoped open the Chapel for events during the year, but of course, these plans were put on hold. However, broken roof and ridge tiles have been replaced, and the gully's cleared of moss. All of the windows were damaged to some degree, and urgent work to repair the worst was done in January 2020. The remaining windows have been removed, repaired and replaced and this work should be completed soon. Parish Council agreed that the expenditure was justified to keep the building watertight and in good condition.

Through the Local Highways Initiative, the Frogge Street traffic calming build out was completed, and the Butcher's Hill pedestrian safety measures installed. I thank Simon and Terry for their input with this. We remain frustrated at the lack of response from Highways to reports of potholes and poor road surface conditions in the village. Councillor Peter MacDonald has been helpful in getting some of the repairs done, but it is still a slow process.

Due to covid restrictions, the Speedwatch team were unable to do their regular monitoring, but the vehicle activated speed sign was in use and certainly seems to be effective in slowing traffic down. Speedwatch will soon be back in action, and I thank them in advance for their efforts. One positive result of the pandemic has been the reduction in rat running through Ickleton and surrounding villages. Unfortunately, this will increase markedly as restrictions lift and people return to their places of work. Parish Council is not aware of any major infrastructure improvement proposals, but the conclusions of the A505 study may be of some influence in future planning decisions.

There was little progress in 2020 with the major developments likely to impact on Ickleton and the surrounding area. Although NUGC and Smithson Hill have gone away for the moment, the Wellcome expansion already has approval, and will begin at some stage. A worrying concern is the proposed Thakeham development, because the developers appear determined to bypass the local plan procedures and take their proposals direct to Government.

In my last report, Ickleton had been selected for a trial looking at converting some streetlights to LED. The trial has been very successful, and has saved the village over £500 per year in energy bills. Engagement with CCC about poor lighting and pedestrian safety in Icknield Close, resulted in the installation of a solar powered street lamp for the parking area, and solar pavement lights. We hope that residents approve.

During the last year, as many people have been working from home, the issue of slow and variable broadband speeds in the village has been brought into focus. The Rural Gigabit voucher scheme is looking promising, and I thank Martin Woodhead for canvassing the village and moving this forward. We are hopeful that, if sufficient numbers respond to the next consultation, Openreach will proceed with the project.

I am grateful to everyone from the village who continues to give their time to keep Ickleton running smoothly. The Village Hall management committee, John Williams and Hilary Rule for editing and distributing the Icene, the Speedwatch team, Glynis Hammond for Neighbourhood Watch, David Lilly for checking the cemetery and churchyard, Gerry Birch for looking after Coploe Pit, Elaine Statham for welcoming new residents, Claire Driver for the food bank, and many others who litter pick on their daily walks, and generally keep an eye on things. Special thanks are due to Charles Frankau, Dominic Pallett and Ickleton Cricket Club for their maintenance of the recreation ground.

I thank all my fellow councillors for their assistance and support during the last two years. We look forward to a return to normality in the coming months.

Sian Wombwell

Appendix B – Report from District & County Councillor

South Cambs District Council

Councillor Peter McDonald - District Councillor for Duxford, Ickleton, Hinxton, Babraham, Pampisford

Key Changes 2020/2021

- Third year of New Administration in the Council from May 2018.
- Appointed Independent Councillor as Chairman.
- Appointed Conservative Councillor as Chairman of Scrutiny Group.
- Now 45 Councillors instead of 57.
- Lower cost to residents
- More work for us!
- Massive C19 support:
- Community groups formed
- Officers moved from normal duties to C19 support.
- Business Grants paid:
- Lockdown 1 of £30m
- Nov-March 2021: £10m to 4,000 businesses, many hardship grants made.

Financials

2021/22

- SCDC takes c.£155 of the £1,500 of Band D Council Tax.

- Council Tax Increased this year by 3.4% or £5 to £155.31
- Correcting a deficit of £500k in 2019/20
- C19 expenditure of £2,3m- received £1.9m from Government
- Councillor expenses increased by 1%.
- County C Tax Increased by £40 or 2,99%.

5 yr Business Plan

- No Government grant.
- Savings planned of £5m next few years
- £2m identified so additional £3m
- Plan to generate a quarter of the money the Council spends on services from investments within five years.
- By the end of March 2024, Council investments are forecasted to return an income of just over £5 million a year which will be used to protect the services people want and need.

Services, Business Plan & Business Support

1. My South Cambs Portal
 - To increase customer service.
2. Aim to improve planning with new shared service and IT platform
3. Higher number of planning delegations
 - Previously <5%, now c 25%
4. Re structure of the Council Management
 - New CEO
 - New officer structure
5. Business Plan Focus
 - Income generation - £5m investment income (from £20m).
6. Call for Sites Process
 - Engaged with residents/Parishes
 - 200+ people attended Guildhall meeting
 - Roadshows all across S Cambs
 - Looking at carbon & water resources.
7. New 6.1 yrs housing land supply
 - prevents speculative development
8. New Business Support
 - 4 new staff
 - Focus on SME < 10 employees
 - Focused on the business growth/expansion.

My Priorities

- 1. Monitor & influence planning projects.
- Influence the local plan process/call for sites.
- Monitor the 5 year housing land supply
- Genome Campus step by step development & housing covenants
- AgriTech stays away
- Gonville & Caius proposed AeroPark Duxford
- 2. Keep residents up to date
- Facebook & Twitter.
- Focus leaflets – 5 x since Election in 2018.
- 3. Carry out effective case work on:
- Planning

- Housing
- Highways
- 4. Represent the villages on Grants Advisory Committee.
- New Covid grants - £30k
- New Zero carbon grants- £100k
- 5. Work effectively on Cabinet
- Business Support responsibility

Cambridgeshire County Council

Councillor Peter McDonald - Represent 11 Parishes: Duxford, Whittlesford, Foxton, Fowlmere, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Shepreth, Thriplow & Heathfield, Chishills, Heydon, Ickleton.

Budget Headline

- For 2021-22, Cambridgeshire is set to receive £645m of funding*, excluding grants retained by its schools. But its total expected spending 2021-22 - despite finding savings and additional income of £4m, will be £655m - leaving a £9.612m gap.
- The costs of running the Council have risen by £42m (6.9%) compared to the last financial year. In particular, the impact of COVID-19 has led to increased challenges across all services areas but especially in Adult's and Children's Social care which have seen increases in both the amount and complexity of need.
- Increasing the rate at which the Adult Social Care Precept is set. The council's current Business Plan is currently based on the council being able to set an Adult Social Care precept of 2% in each of the five years that the plan covers to 2025 – 26.
- The key sources of Cambridgeshire County Council's funding are council tax (£323m), business rates (£64m), central Government grants (£136m) and fees and charges income (£122m).

Additional Spending

- 2021/22 Budget
- £20 million extra for footpath maintenance
- £2.73 million extra for flood attenuation and improving our biodiversity.
- £6.97 million in improvements to the B1050, however
- A cut of £7.5m to the roads programme!
- What the Lib Dem group wanted to see....
- Increased adult social care especially money for Long Covid
- Green apprenticeships.
- Roads programme to be enhanced.
- More information on 'This Land' (loans of £122m from County Council)

My Priorities

- 1. Two committees:
- Commercial & Investment
- All commercial aspects e.g. new capital spending
- General Purposes
- Oversees general financial position – I have asked for clarity on This Land the Development company.
- 2. Highways Matters
- Pot holes!
- General maintenance
- Gulley cleaning.

- 3. Thakeham Action Group- SWCAG
- Fighting the proposed new 25,000 house development
- 4. Infrastructure
- A505
- Foxton & Whittlesford Travel Hub.
- 5. School support
- Post C19
- Duxford school re-build
- Supporting Foxton on the preschool provision.
- 6. Represent you on County Farms
- Currently 33,000 acres
- Environmental Land Management
- Tree planting
- New farm acquisition.

South West Cambridgeshire Action Group

Update on Progress

District & County Councillors

- Jose Hales - District Councillor for Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon, Shepreth
- Sebastian Kindersley - County Councillor for Barrington, Orwell, Wimpole & the Gamlingay Division villages
- Peter McDonald – County Councillor for Shepreth, Foxton & the Duxford Division villages
- Susan van de Ven - County Councillor for Bassingbourn-cum Kneesworth, Whaddon, Meldreth, Melbourn
- Aidan Van De Weyer - District Councillor for Barrington, Orwell, Wimpole
- (District Cllrs Nigel Cathcart and Deborah Roberts – Observers only, protecting their right to vote on the Local Plan)

Representing villages within the Thakeham proposal area, & promoting SWCAG objectives – ‘Prevent the proposed Thakeham development’

What SWCAG Have Done..

1. Engaged with 900+ people in a new Facebook page & website.
2. Filed Fol's with HM Government departments – HM Treasury, Ministry of Housing.
3. Lobbied Thakeham directly.
4. Started to engage with the ‘Save West Grinstead & the Weald’ campaign in Sussex.
5. Engaged with Anthony Browne.
6. Held 2 public meetings.
7. Held 2 parish meetings.
8. Now engaging with National Trust, RSPB

Support we requested from Anthony Browne:

1. Get the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to make a Government statement that the stakeholder bid for 4 new settlements excludes Thakeham.
2. Represent us on the select committees with ref to OxCam Arc, that the 25,000 homes proposal is completely unsustainable.
3. Write to Environment Agency to ask them to highlight water resources are completely unsustainable for Thakeham.
4. Write to the Mayor to confirm his opposition to the Thakeham proposal, based on lack of infrastructure.
5. Write to the Greater Cambridge Partnership to secure opposition based on housing numbers and traffic (50,000 extra cars).

6. Ask The Chancellor to make a Government statement ruling out Thakeham as one of the 2020 budget stated development corporations.
7. Write to the NFU asking landowners not to engage with Thakeham as the plan will never come to fruition

Appendix C – Report from Village Hall Management Committee

2020 began well with a busy hall and plans to install energy saving lighting and to refurbish the kitchen. The hall was required to close in March due to Government restrictions necessitated by Covid 19, but we were able to get the aforementioned works done during lockdown, with the appropriate safety measures taken by the contractors.

Unfortunately, the lovely new kitchen has yet to be used due to continuing restrictions. But we were able to welcome back a small number of users with the correct measures in place at various times between September and mid - December and hope that once restrictions are lifted during the coming months more groups and users will be able to return.

We were sad that Pam Fearn had decided to stand down as our Chairman and from the committee at our AGM in November and would like to pay tribute to her hard work and dedication over the many years she has served on the committee.

Madelaine Smith, Vice-chairman

Appendix D – Report from Ickleton Allotment Association (IAA)

Chairman's Statement for 2020/21

2020, an awful year for so many and we remember how lucky we are. It was for the Allotments, an amazing year. The seeds germinated and flourished while we wilted in hot summer sun and lugged water around. In short, we all sought sanctuary on our plots and reaped the rewards. We enjoyed an amazing crop of most things especially soft fruit and black tipi beans!

The site is full, I we warmly welcomed the 'class of 2020' who have certainly excelled and have been a massive shot in the arm to the entire site. We have thanked all plot holders who have made the entire site look so tidy this year, we can all be proud of the site now. We had a waiting list with no empty plots, with the support of IPC, who generously gave us a grant of £500.00 we have been able to provide four new plots, which are completed, three have tenants, and we have one ready to go, for the next applicant. Myself and the committee wish to express our sincere thanks to IPC, for your generous support. The forming of these plots became a real community project; A truly Herculean effort which saw some of our plot holders willingly give up their Sunday mornings for a month.

Fund raising efforts included a quiz evening made us £308.00, Plant and cake sale in May, raised £134.02.

I believe our finest hour of 2020 was the Allotment show, we raised £584.56 and we were able to donate £300.00 to Arthur Rank Hospice, more importantly everyone had the best day out in the sunshine, we have a date for this year event, where we plan to build upon last year's success. More importantly we want this to be a real village event.

As we look to 2021, its more of the same, we must to keep fund raising for site improvements, we have a growing list of maintenance tasks, that our becoming more urgent, these can't be paid for by the plot rents hence our need to raise funds to meet these costs.

I have a small but truly magnificent committee, that suffer me largely with good humour and great support, but for them our site would be a disaster, I thank them for all that they do.

Appendix E – Report from St Mary Magdalene’s Church

Patrick Bloomfield, Churchwarden

New Priest

Following our prolonged interregnum, Lydia Smith takes office as our new our priest in charge in July 2021. Lydia’s role is a House for Duty, which is three days a week plus Sunday. She trained in Saffron Walden and currently lives near Colchester, so knows the area already.

Hinkledux

We continue to share our priest with the neighbouring benefices of Hinxton and Duxford. We recently appointed a part time administrator to work across the three benefices and support Lydia.

Finances

Despite lockdown challenges, we achieved a positive financial out-turn in 2020/21, due the lower cost of a House for Duty priest and some very kind donations and legacies.

Recent years have been financially challenging. Despite enormous fundraising, we needed a loan from the Diocese to balance the books. Moving to a House for Duty priest has put us on a sustainable financial footing. Once we have repaid our loan and repaired reserves, we hope some of our fundraising can support local good causes.

Services

Through the year the church has been open for private worship and restricted physical services, including outside services on some festival occasions. Weekly Zoom services have helped sustain morale and brought the three Hinkledux congregations together.

Regular physical services have now recommenced, with covid precautions. We are reflecting on what we’ve learned through the pandemic and the nature of services which will best suit the Ickleton and Hinkledux communities going forwards.

Buildings

The church’s quinquennial inspection was due last year and should go ahead this year. Significant planning is going into the restoration of our historic wall paintings, which will be a major event.

Fete and events

We don’t think a traditional fete will be possible in the circumstances, but we are planning to hold alternative events with more manageable risks.

School

Working with Duxford School has been particularly challenging due to covid. We’re optimistic this will resume a more normal pattern in 2021.

Youth

We appointed a new Youth Worker in 2020, continuing the good work through the Youth Inc programme. This too has been online and we hope physical meetings will begin again soon. A Youth Council was formed in 2020 and they helped us select our new priest.

PCC

Several exceedingly long-standing PCC members are retiring from the PCC and new members have come on in their place. Some more new (i.e. younger) members will be needed in next year or so.

Appendix F – Report from Ickleton Cricket Club

The 2020 season was going to be packed full of cricket and events building on the success from previous years. Unfortunately for all of us, things did not quite work out as planned.

With the support of the Parish Council and The Village Hall Committee we were able to get out and play when restrictions lifted and enjoyed 15 fixtures in a truncated season, but sadly we were unable to offer cricket to our youngest members.

Of the 15 games played we had over 36 different players from the village and local vicinity with ages from 14 to seventy-something! And new players continue to join the club. We won more than we lost and considering the obstacles faced this was a terrific outcome.

Our 10th season is now underway and it promises to be somewhat back to normal with Saturday league fixtures for our 1st XI and 2nd XI.

The midweek season will also resume with matches on Wednesday evenings for both teams.

Most importantly the youth cricket sessions return on Thursday evenings, developing the next generation of Ickleton cricketers.

We'd like to express our sincere thanks to the Parish Council for your continued support, particularly in what has been very difficult circumstances for everyone.

We have a fantastic village club and are lucky to have such a beautiful place to play cricket on the Ickleton Jubilee Playing Fields..... Long may this continue.

David Mathias, Chairman, On behalf of Ickleton Cricket Club

Appendix G – Report from Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is about local people working together to create safer places to live and where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen. There is no set Neighbourhood Watch programme - each scheme is run by its community. They are generally led by a volunteer co-ordinator from the local community who takes on the role of linking the community to the police. The volunteer for Ickleton is: Glynis Hammond, 07918 647504 (mobile) 01799 530127 (home), glynis.hammond@googlemail.com

Neighbourhood watch is a great way to keep an eye on crime in your neighbourhood. It will alert you to any unauthorised activity. It can also help to catch criminals as they may change their ways when they know that they are being watched. The criminal will think twice before trying to break into your neighbourhood and this can stop serious crime from happening.

Whilst, we know that crime in Ickleton and the surrounding area is low, it is important for all of us to be vigilant and report suspicious behaviour.

Scams: With fraud accounting for more than half of the UK's reported crime, it's time for us all to take a stand. Scams come in many forms; uninvited contact is received by email, letter, telephone or in person. The most common scams include fake lotteries, deceptive prize draws, computer and romance scams. Postal, telephone and doorstep scams are often targeted specifically at disadvantaged consumers or those experiencing a period of vulnerability. I want to take this opportunity to highlight a couple of examples of this growing crime.

Victim gets a phone call claiming to be from the Post Office. Scammer asks the individual for £2.99 for an outstanding delivery charge. They are then asked to log on to a web site to settle the matter. On the site they are asked for their bank details. The bank account is emptied shortly after.

Victim receives an email claiming to be from Hermes asking for £2.95 to enable a parcel to be delivered. There is an embedded link within the email which when clicked on asks for bank details. The bank account is emptied shortly after.

Small amounts of money are asked for but unfortunately this is the pathway into your personal bank details and available funds. Never, ever, give bank details unless you are certain it is going to a reputable organisation.

This is the latest campaign from Cambridge Police: PROTECT YOUR CAR CAMPAIGN

Due to Covid-19 and repeated lockdowns, people haven't been using their cars as much as they used to. However, car crime remains a pressing problem in the UK – alarmingly, one car is stolen every ten minutes. The latest figures from the Police National Computer indicate car crime decreased during Covid-19 restrictions but with the expectation of social restrictions soon easing we could see a surge in car crime. Neighbourhood Watch are launching a new campaign on the 31st March to encourage everyone to keep their car's safety top of mind.

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of Neighbourhood Watch Network, says "Most car crimes happen because cars are left unlocked. There is a misconception that some cars are auto-locking and lock themselves if left unattended after a period of time. This isn't always correct. Another misconception is that your car is too old and no one will bother stealing it. This is also incorrect – both new and old cars are at risk.

The thumb-stopping social campaign launching on the 31st March will provide car users with three quick steps to increase protection of their vehicle and direct them to our website www.ourwatch.org.uk to find out more. The key messages of the campaign are:

- Leave your car locked

A simple mistake that can prove calamitous: 44% of cars are broken into via an unlocked door.

- Leave your car well-lit

80% of car crime occurs during the evening or at night. Parking near street lamps or in a busy area can deter thieves.

- Leave your car empty (or with no items on show)

Owners often forget that personal belongings within the car are at as much risk of being stolen as the car itself.

Car thieves are opportunists. Leaving items on a car seat or forgetting to lock your car can act as an invitation for crime. We want to instil the habit of double-checking where and how you've parked with our three simple steps: leave it locked, lit and empty.

Glynis Hammond