



# Alresford and District Neighbourhood Watch Association



## **25 YEARS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH IN ALRESFORD**

Back in November, I attended a meeting to mark the 20th anniversary of the Hampshire County Neighbourhood Watch Association. The fact that both the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner joined us, indicates the importance with which the Police now regard Neighbourhood Watch.

I did remind several people that the Alresford Association was actually set up some five years before the county achieved such status!

In 1989 Geoff Harris had received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Metropolitan Police at Potters Bar, so was well qualified when he moved to Alresford. He was amazed at how lackadaisical we were here in not locking doors and was concerned we were that no one seemed to be aware of the worrying increase in crime figures, or the need for property protection. So he set about creating the organisation we very quickly became.

As well as Geoff, the original local team included Dorothy Bulloch and Derek Moore, with Alex Hankin, who mapped the Watches. They received excellent support from Sergeant Jim Cook and Constable Peter Evans, delegated by Superintendent Colin Lewis, who had been told by Hants Constabulary to promote Neighbourhood Watch.

1990 saw a small informal Committee, with the first Neighbourhood Watch road sign being erected in the February. The first Newsletter went out in Spring 1992.

By July 1993, within three years, the whole town of 2,300 properties was officially covered by 53 watches all registered with the Police - the first Hampshire town to achieve this. Domestic burglary was halved within five years.

Around 1996 Russell Hellier came on board to help extend Neighbourhood Watch into the surrounding villages. In 1997 Alresford received a national award for its achievements.

We have maintained the 100% Town coverage ever since and there are still six of the original Co-ordinators doing the job. We are very grateful to all Co-ordinators, past and present. Since we stopped the Newsletter, a year ago, there is less for them to do, but the role is still important. The key activity is to pass information down to their residents and up to the Police when necessary. To this end we encourage anyone who wants to receive the regular Crime Reports by email to contact their Co-ordinator.

At the present time there are vacancies for Co-ordinators in two Town Watches (Benenden Green and Chiltern Court) and in Kilmeston South, so if anybody is willing to cover one of these, do please get in touch.