



# Relaunching a Neighbourhood Watch scheme: Introduction

This module looks at some of the things you will have to deal with if you try to relaunch a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

The aim of this module is to provide you with a technique that will allow you to review the problems that your scheme has met with and identify what you can do to re-start your scheme.

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- identify the questions to ask to help you get your scheme re-started;
- organise a meeting to discuss and plan the way forward for your scheme.

This module is in two parts:

- Part one contains the Development Notes which explain how to identify problems in your scheme.
- Part two contains the Session Notes which you can use to run a relaunch meeting for your scheme.

## ***Important note***

It would be useful to read the module on 'Starting and maintaining a scheme'. It contains information that will be useful in relaunching your scheme.



## Notes



# Relaunching a Neighbourhood Watch scheme: Development Notes

It is sad to say that despite the heroic work of individuals, some Neighbourhood Watch schemes fail.

It is often questioned whether it is possible to revitalise an ailing Neighbourhood Watch. The answer is **yes** but it needs to be done in a structured way otherwise you will only recreate the same problems which caused it to fail in the first place.

*Think about the following two stories with a moral.*



## First

A man bought a video recorder. Having had a quick look at the instruction book he started to set it up, plugging in bits of wire and pressing every button he could find. He finished up with all sorts of sounds and flashing lights but unfortunately no pictures. Once again he started pulling out and putting in different coloured wires all over the place before giving it the ultimate technical solution – an almighty kick. That, too, didn't work so he rang the dealer. The dealer advised him to switch everything off and unplug all the wires. He then took him through the instruction booklet from stage one. Soon, he had it up and running.

## And second

A butcher bought a consignment of sausages. He placed them in his window labelled 'Best Sausages in Town'. For whatever reason he didn't sell any and every night they ended up back in the fridge. It was Bank Holiday weekend and by Friday he was beginning to fear that he would soon have to throw them out and accept the loss. On the Saturday he woke to a beautiful sunny morning. The same sausages went in the window that morning labelled 'Special Bank Holiday Barbecue Sausages'. By 10 o'clock he had sold the lot and customers were demanding more.

What he had done was to change the image or public perception of the sausages. Suddenly, they had become specially for barbecues, making them more attractive to public demand. Second, he had changed the circumstances. What better time is there to sell barbecue sausages than a sunny Bank Holiday weekend? Had he kept on selling the 'Best Sausages in Town', whatever reason they didn't sell on the first day would be the same for any other day.



## And the moral is

If your Neighbourhood Watch is ailing and ready to fold up, there is little point in sitting in a room talking over who did or didn't do what, why it had no support and whatever else went wrong. Your scheme needs to be reconsidered step by step. Otherwise all you are doing is the same as the man pulling wires out of the back of the video. Like him you need to go back to the beginning and start again.

## So how do you do that?

Take out the module entitled 'Starting and maintaining a scheme'. In it you will find four steps which need to be retraced.

*However, before you start, one thing is essential if the whole exercise is not to be a total waste of time.*

## Look at the scheme, not the members

This exercise is about the recovery of your Neighbourhood Watch scheme. It is essential that you concentrate on why the scheme failed and not the people in it. There may well be good reasons why people lose their commitment to Neighbourhood Watch. They may have family illness, job insecurity, or any number of personal reasons.

*Trying to place the blame on individuals won't get your scheme any further forward and may damage it beyond repair.*



Having made that important point, let's move on to how we recover an ailing scheme step by step. In the package entitled, 'Starting and maintaining a scheme' you will find a number of stages which you need to consider before starting up a scheme.

In trying to revitalise your scheme you will need to go through the stages again as if you were just starting up.

### **Stage one**

When you first started the scheme what were the expectations; what did people hope to gain from the scheme?

### **Stage two**

What activities did you have to support the scheme?

### **Stage three**

What were the commitments in terms of:

- time?
- resources?
- finance?

### **Stage four**

Were your activities and commitments in stages two and three sufficient to meet the expectations you agreed in stage one?

Having listed your expectations, activities and commitments under these headings, the next stage is to look at each item in your lists and ask the question:

***“Did we achieve this item or not and if not can it be put right?”***



For example, under ‘activities’, you may have produced a newsletter which has stopped being published. You need to ask the question “can we kick-start it again?” Think in particular of the good things that you achieved and how to build on them.

In this package you will find a session plan which will help you to structure your meeting to obtain the best results.

## Starting again

Once you have gone through the process of finding where things went wrong and putting them right, you then have the task of once again selling the scheme to members. This is the difficult part. Like the butcher with the sausages, there is little point in trying to sell the same thing to the same people again if it has already failed once.

If you think about the butcher, although he was selling the same sausages he altered two things, the **image** and the **timing** or occasion.

## Image

In changing the image you will obviously need to retain the title ‘Neighbourhood Watch’. However, you could expand the area of the scheme slightly and alter the name. For example, it could be changed from Green Road Neighbourhood Watch to the Greenhill District Neighbourhood Watch – when in fact you are covering virtually the same area.

Although you need to retain the Neighbourhood Watch logo, you could consider altering the design of your newsletter and publicity material to create a different image.

Think about the strengths of the scheme and the good things that you achieved, and emphasise those things in relaunching the scheme.



## Timing

Meanwhile, back to the sausages ...

Remember the timing – the sunny Bank Holiday weekend when everyone wants a barbecue. You should also consider the timing of your relaunch, even if you have to delay slightly to take advantage of the right circumstances. Although far from the happiest circumstances, a spate of burglary in your area could be turned into the opportune time to relaunch. (It is not advisable to create this opportunity in partnership with the local burglar!)

You may want to relaunch it again in more happy circumstances. For example, the local carnival is a good place to relaunch. If you relaunch, make sure it is seen as a new beginning.

Finally, keep a record of what you decide. It is essential that you keep a check that you are still in line to achieve your objectives. This should be done every 12 months or so. If you are in a relaunch situation, you should consider reviewing your position at more frequent intervals, say every three months, at least in the initial stages.

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**In the next part of this module you will find Session Notes to help you organise a meeting to relaunch your scheme.**

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# Relaunching a Neighbourhood Watch scheme: Session Notes

This plan is not intended to be used as a 'lesson' so much as a structure for attempting to re-start an ailing scheme. The plan is closely related to the package on 'Starting and maintaining a scheme' and it is essential to read the notes on that package before starting this exercise. You should also read the Development Notes on 'Relaunching a Neighbourhood Watch scheme' before starting this exercise.

## How long the session should last

If the time taken gives your Neighbourhood Watch a better chance of survival then it is time well spent. On the other hand, 45 minutes to an hour is the most meetings should last. So you may wish to spread the process over a few meetings, considering one or two stages at a time.

## How many people should attend

Given the circumstances, it may be that you will not be able to gather too many members together. However, don't be put off. A small group of only four or five could carry out this exercise just as effectively.

## The resources you will need

- a good comfortable room with seating in a circle;
- a flipchart or something similar to write on.



## Session plan

The stages of this session follow the format of the 'Starting and maintaining a scheme' module which should be referred to. This exercise is about where **the scheme** went wrong and not where **the people in the scheme** went wrong.

### Step one

Use the flipchart and list the expectations that you and the members had of the scheme. In other words:

***“What did you want Neighbourhood Watch to do for your community?”***

### Step two

List the activities (newsletters, social events etc.) you have undertaken in your scheme, including those that fell by the wayside. Just list them at this stage. Avoid getting into discussion as to why they no longer exist.

### Step three

List the costs, resources and commitments needed to keep your scheme going. Again, just list them; avoid getting into discussion as to why things went wrong.



### Step four

Go back to step two. Consider each item in your list and decide whether the activity had gone wrong and what is needed to put it right.

### Step five

Do the same for step three. That is to say, reconsider your resources and commitments and decide if they need to be adjusted or renewed.

### Step six

Ask the question:

*“If we make the adjustments to our activities, resources and commitments, can we achieve the expectations we set out with in step one?”*

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**If you feel it is worthwhile renewing your Neighbourhood Watch, read the notes with this plan with regard to giving the scheme a new image. You could spend some time at the end of this session planning how to relaunch your scheme.**

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## **Notes**