

## RURAL CRIME DETERRENCE- SMARTWATER

Fortunately Cardington Parish is a relatively low crime area and hopefully it can remain that way. Anyone who has or known others who have experienced theft or burglary will always remain particularly conscious of the threat and rural properties would seem to be at increasing risk. Hence particular interest in a Police campaign to encourage each Parish to become a "We don't buy Crime" area. As we travel around the area it is obvious that an increasing number of villages have become part of the campaign as evidenced by prominent roadside signs.

Cardington Parish Council would like every resident to consider signing up to the scheme. At a meeting in the Village Hall on September 17th around 40 residents heard a presentation by the Police and everyone present agreed to become a "Smartwater" home. Should at least 70% of homeowners commit the Parish Council will be able to buy Smartwater kits at a cost heavily subsidised by the Police and Crime Commissioner (£8.75p instead of £25 to the general public) and the Police will assist by erecting the roadside signs, disseminating the kits and providing advice to householders.

The kit consists of a jar of "Smartwater" and a small brush which householders quite simply use to apply to any possession that they value. Every bottle of Smartwater contains "water" with a unique code which can only be read with a UV torch. The Smartwater is colourless, odourless and harmless and once applied will last for many years. Should property be recovered the code can be read and the item traced back to the owner. Any property found in the hands of someone arousing suspicion can be easily checked as to whether the possessor is the rightful owner.

Should the residents of Cardington determine in sufficient numbers to sign up the Parish Council will acquire the kits and provide them to each householder who has joined the scheme. The cost will be raised by a modest increase in the annual precept paid by every council tax payer in the Parish as part of council tax. **The main advantage to residents is that of deterrence of criminals** due to the signage at roadsides, in property windows and stickers on individual items of property. Clearly if a burglary or theft is still suffered there is greater chance of being reunited with the stolen items and certainly if suspects are apprehended the old story that the item had been bought from an unknown seller in a pub or at a car boot will no longer be tenable leading to more convictions.

Residents who did not attend the September presentation can find out more information from any Parish Councillor and can commit to the scheme simply by signing one of the forms that each Parish Councillor holds.

Please ensure you consider the proposal, discuss it with friends and neighbours and if convinced sign up- its that simple! It would be helpful if residents who wish to join the scheme sign up before the end of October so the Parish Council can make a decision at the next meeting.

Clive E. Tonks (Chairman Cardington Parish Council)