

Neighbourhood Watch – Spotting Scams & Rogue Traders

23rd June 2026 – Parish Room, Martlesham

We would like to thank everyone who joined us last Tuesday for our Spotting Scams and Rogue Traders session at the Parish Room with Suffolk Trading Standards.

We also welcomed PC Amber Jennings and PC Chris Payne as representatives of our local Community Policing Team

Guest Speakers: Paul Miles, Suffolk Trading Standards and Lauren Speirs, Suffolk Constabulary

We were pleased to welcome Paul Miles of Suffolk Trading Standards and Lauren Speirs of Suffolk Constabulary, who provided an informative and engaging presentation on how to protect yourself from scams and rogue traders.

Role of Suffolk Trading Standards

Suffolk Trading Standards cover a range of issues including:

- Counterfeit goods
- Doorstep callers
- Weights and measures of goods
- Animal feed
- Product safety
- Food standards
- Illicit tobacco (cheap, unregulated and potentially more harmful)
- Age restricted items

Fraud Prevent and Protect Officers (FPPOs)

- It is a relatively new role that has been in place for approximately 18th months
- They work Suffolk Trading Standards on community awareness
- Provide support to victims
- They use IDB system intelligence to help recover lost funds

Suffolk Against Fraud (SAF)

SAF was launched on 17th June 2026. The group brings together local businesses, community groups, charities and local authority representatives together with Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Trading Standards to:

- Help protect them from fraud
- Deliver coordinated anti fraud campaigns,
- Improve public awareness
- Enhance the quality of victim support

Types of Scams

Fraud accounts for 41% of all crime in the county. Fraud is a significant and growing problem and is deeply distressing for all who are impacted.

Courier Fraud

- Courier fraud is when someone contacts you by phone, impersonating authorities such as police officers or your bank; they may even do this person. Their goal is to manipulate you into providing financial information. They can also deceive victims into purchasing and/or handing over other expensive items. The courier may not know they're being used as part of the crime.
- Criminals may:
 - Call pretending to be the police
 - Claim there has been fraud on your account
 - Ask you to withdraw money or share PIN details
 - Arrange for a courier to collect your bank card
- Tactics used include:
 - Keeping the phone line open while you call your bank
 - Request PINs and/or other personal banking information
 - Collecting cards and withdrawing cash or committing identity fraud
- How to protect yourself:
 - Wait 5 to 10 minutes or use a different phone before calling your bank to ensure the lines are clear
 - Call 159 if you don't have your bank's number
 - Never hand over your bank card
 - Take a moment to pause and think. Do not respond to pressure

Romance Fraud

Romance fraud involves deceiving someone into a fictitious romantic relationship, often online to gain their trust and exploit them financially. Victims are manipulated through emotional connections, leading to significant financial loss and emotional distress.

Fraudsters of this kind often "play the long game" showing intense affection to the victim and yet always providing a reason why they cannot meet, with the fraud spanning a year or more.

- How to protect yourself:
 - Reverse image search on Google if someone sends you a photograph to see if they are genuine
 - Always stay on the platform (dating app, Facebook for example) and moving to apps like Telegram or Whatsapp as they are harder to trace by police
 - Never send money. Report anyone who asks for money to the app or website immediately
 - Get to know the person and not the profile. Ask questions and take your time. Be cautious about how much information you share and keep your social media accounts private and secure.
 - Talk to friends and family. Sometimes a second opinion can really help if you are uncertain. Be wary of someone you meet online who asks you not to tell anyone about them

Doorstep Scams

This type of fraud involves promoting goods or services that are either never delivered to you or are of a very poor quality. Fraudsters may also bill you for work that you didn't agree to.

- Examples include:
 - Home improvements and repairs (e.g. driveways, roofs)
 - Gardening and tree work
 - Nottingham knockers (selling household items at an inflated price. These fraudsters prey on the kindness of others by claiming to be victims of domestic violence or just release from prison).
 - Aggressive, high-pressure salespeople (e.g. for solar panels, insulation)

How to protect yourself against doorstep callers:

- Do not immediately agree to any works that involve an advance payment or having to sign a contract on the spot.
- Verify local businesses through [Suffolk Trusted Trader](#)
- You should always check the credentials of an unexpected salesperson that knocks on your door. You can always call the company to verify their identity, but do not use any contact details they give you.

Additional Advice and Resources:

- "Have I been pwned" to check whether your email has been exposed to a data breach
- Consider a TrueCall device to block scam calls
- Report suspicious calls/texts (these reports go to Report Fraud in London)
- No Cold Calling Zones can be nominated and then registered by the council. It is an offense under Consumer Protection Law for traders to cold call to homes without being invited.
- You do not have to be in a No Cold Calling Zone to put a sticker up.
- Like/follow on Facebook – Trading Standards and Suffolk against fraud for regular updates

Community Contribution

A member of our community kindly shared his experience of fraud when selling his motorhome. The fraudsters used a rigged damp meter and high-pressure tactics to pressurise him into selling the vehicle for a much lower price than what it was worth. They also made sure that he left the "buyer's details" section of the V5C form blank. He has kindly provided a copy his report, which we have attached for your viewing.

Scheme Update

We have had ongoing reports of speeding and anti-social driving in several of our car parks and on other key roads including:

- Main Road
- Top Street
- Felixstowe Road

We are aware that these problems extend to Woodbridge as well as part of a wider issue. We have been in contact with our local community officers and they have stressed the importance of reporting. You can do this via their website or through 101. The more reports they have, the more

evidence they have for getting it sorted. We would really appreciate any additional information you may have, if there are any other areas that are problematic or key times that this is happening.

A big thank you to the 21 Young Hearts café for their continued support with promoting our scheme and events. We would also like to thank the Runway Café along with St Marys and St Michaels Churches and the Village Hall in Old Martlesham for giving us space on their noticeboards – it makes a real difference.