



# Colin's Blog

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017

## Great Oaks from little Acorns grow

According to the definition in the Oxford dictionary: something of small or modest proportions may grow into something very large or impressive.

We could all relate this, to many aspects of life, indeed to natural phenomenon's, many projects, and many organisations in all three sectors.

One such organisation, which has grown from small beginnings, is of course Neighbourhood Watch, which was first conceived in Canada, and was adopted in the UK in the early eighties. Like many things in life, it has had its high's and low's, but in today's climate, it continues to grow, through more people coming forward, who want to make a difference, especially to compensate for the cutbacks which, under the banner of austerity, have been rightly, or wrongly, imposed by central government. We all know, that in some aspects, they have in fact travelled to 'a bridge too far,' and need to retrace their steps and try to make good the critical damage that they have caused to our emergency services.

Many chief officers, are now, coming out, and saying it as it is, warning the government as to the folly of their policies, and the danger in which they are now putting our country in, through their under resourcing of essential services, which, as I have said many times before, is now attacking the very structure of our society, which depends upon the response and effectiveness, of those hard working workers in each and every one of our emergency services, whether it be the Police, Fire, Ambulance services, the hard pressed NHS and our Hospitals, and of course, our armed forces, who we need to protect our very existence, in the troubled and turbulent times. This has of course, been highlighted by the latest Terrorist attack in London, which, at the time of writing, has caused our threat level to be raised from Severe to Critical.

In these uncertain times, we must not lose sight of the need to remain vigilant, and the need to look out for, and to care for each other in our communities.

All that said, we continue to be blighted by the increase in cybercrime and scams, with new ones coming to light every day.

Here are some of the latest: -

# Equifax cyber incident: how to protect yourself

**From ActionFraud, posted 12th September 2017**

We are aware of a cyber incident affecting the credit rating agency Equifax, and are working with partners to understand any potential impact in the UK.

Since the incident was first reported to us on Friday 8 September, we have been working with Equifax, as well as law enforcement partners in the USA and UK, in order to gain a precise understanding of the extent of the data leak and whether any UK citizens may have been affected. We will post a more detailed update when we have more information to give.

Until then, anyone concerned that their data may be affected can contact Equifax by visiting the Equifax website for further information: -

<https://www.equifax.co.uk/> **Here's what you can do to make yourself safer:**

If any of your financial details were compromised, notify your bank or card company as soon as possible. Review your financial statements regularly for any unusual activity.

Be suspicious of any unsolicited calls, emails or texts, even if it appears to be from a company you know of. Don't open the attachments or click on links within unsolicited emails, and never disclose any personal or financial details during a cold call.

Check your bank accounts and report any suspicious activity to your bank.

If you have been a victim of fraud or cybercrime, please report it to us on the Action Fraud website: [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud)

## **ActionFraud**

Report Fraud & Internet Crime

# **0300 123 2040**

Criminals often use information they have obtained during a data breach to commit fraud by contacting people by email and requesting them to provide personal information or click on malicious links.

An email address can be spoofed. Don't open attachments or click on the links within any unsolicited emails you receive, and never respond to emails that ask for your personal or financial details.

The sender's name and number in a text message can be spoofed, so even if the message appears to be from an organisation you know of, you should still exercise caution; particularly if the texts are asking you to click on a link or call a number.

Don't disclose your personal or financial details during a cold call, and remember that the police and banks will never ring you and ask you to verify your PIN, withdraw your cash, or to transfer your money to another "safe" account.

We would also reiterate our general cyber security advice, which people can apply to their own personal data and computer devices:

Use strong passwords by choosing three random words. Numbers and symbols can still be used if needed, however, using three random words is the key to creating a strong password.

Always use a strong and separate password for your email and other important accounts.



On a separate report, following one of the largest privacy breaches ever recorded, unrelated to the above, security experts have urged all PC users, to check to see if their passwords have been leaked online. Around 711 million email addresses and passwords have been stolen by what is known as a 'spambot,' this is a program that collects the address, in order to build massive mailing lists for sending spam, and putting them onto a server, which is believed to be based in the Netherlands.

I understand from the Department of Work and Pensions, that legislation is to be introduced (*when parliamentary time allows*), to ban the use of texts and emails, which are used to as part of pension scams. Only two types of call will be allowed: Companies will only be allowed to contact existing customers and offers, or to respond to a customers request for information. Watch this space.....

Whilst on holiday on the Isle of Wight, I was impressed by road safety signs which depicted a mobile phone and said: '**STOP IT or COP IT!**' It sums it up in a nutshell!

I have learned that motorists have been warned that tougher penalties are to be introduced next year, which will also cover the use of Sat-Nav apps on your phone. This will only become illegal, when you touch the screen to operate it. Motoring organisationd say that motorists should be alloweda quick touchof the screen. There will probably be much discussion about this over the coming weeks, before it is added to the legislation.

# BONKERS CORNER

In accordance with the 'Collin's dictionary,' interpretation of the common use of the expression in the UK: If you say that someone is '**bonkers**', you mean that they are silly or act in a crazy way. [British , *informal* , disapproval] *The man must be bonkers to take such a risk. I nearly went bonkers with frustration.*

Well, taking this one step further, here is the '**Bonkerism of the week!**' When I heard the latest renderings from our beloved government about Police pay, I was astonished to hear that they had given the go ahead for our Police to receive a long overdue pay increase of just two percent, and even more astonished to hear that the police forces would have to find one percent of this from their existing budgets. My mind immediately recalled the words of Richard Wilson (one foot in the grave), who used to say: "I don't believe it!" Then, I thought that, bearing in mind how much the government has already cut Police funding, such a decision, is utterly bonkers. My thoughts have of course already been loudly voiced by many chief officers across the UK. One worries that if they are making crackpot decisions like this, what on earth are they going to come up with over BREXIT?



One really does begin to wonder what planet some politicians (from across their political spectrum), are actually on. Perhaps we are actually paying them too much, and they no longer relate to the average man or woman in the street, or is it that they are happy to go along and self destruct their own political futures? *Answers on a postcard.....*

That said, don't forget to stick with your principles, and: -

**KEEP SMILING FOR ESSEX !**

KEEP ALERT, KEEP SECURE, KEEP SAFE, and have a good weekend! Colin

Cartoon licensed to: Colin I. Freeman

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Colin Blog can also be found at: <http://www.eppingforestnhw.org.uk/page15.html>

