

# Keeping Your Home Safe



## Wiltshire Police invites residents to play the 'Game of Homes'

To help keep you safe in the Summer we are waging war on opportunist burglars and asking members of the public to play the **Game of Homes**. To play you must take some simple steps to help prevent yourself becoming a victim of burglary and make life hard for your enemies.

Words of warning and vigilance from House Wiltshire Police. Summer months bring opportunists who are willing to take what does not belong to them. We urge residents to protect their castles\* and prepare for battle.  
(\*terrace, bungalow, semi-detached and so forth.)

The nicer weather often means castle windows and doors are left open, the drawbridge is down and nobles are enjoying the grounds. For an opportunist burglar this is like the stars aligning, providing easy access to your treasure and free roam of your castle.

Heed our warning. If you are not blessed with owning a dire wolf or a set of dragons we recommend you take these simple steps:

Your first defence of your front door:

- Lock your doors and windows every time you leave the house, even when just in the garden. And make sure you have approved locks or bolts to all doors and windows.
- Trim back any plants and hedges at the front of your property to no higher than one meter to remove hiding places.
- Consider defensive planting. The use of prickly plants creates a physical and psychological barrier and have proven to be a successful deterrent.
- Never leave a spare key in a hiding place like in a plant pot or letter box - a thief knows all the hiding places.
- Consider installing a burglar alarm, and only use a company that is registered or certified with the NSI or the SSIAB.
- Consider installing dusk-to-dawn lighting out the front of your property
- Often burglaries take place when the house is empty during the evening or in the hours of darkness. Use automatic timer switches to turn lights on when it gets dark, these can also be used to turn on other appliances such as radios.
- Ladders and garden tools should be locked away, as offenders can use these to gain access to your home.

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Always be one step ahead of the enemy if they unfortunately do breach your walls:

- Take photographs of all jewellery including hallmarks and keep them safe. Also consider using an artificial DNA property marker on jewellery or other valuable items.
- Register all serial numbers from electrical items, tools and garden equipment with [Immobilise.com](http://immobilise.com) the free national property register. Mark items without serial numbers with an artificial DNA property marker such as Smartwater or SelectaDNA.
- Ensure that all security products and service providers are Secured by Design approved.

**In the spirit of Game of Homes, we have set up our own game.**

**Test your castle defences and play by visiting:**

<https://ecomms0.wixsite.com/gameofhomes>

More information about how you can protect your castle is available on our website. Rally your allies, know your neighbours and consider joining or starting a *neighbourhood watch scheme*.

Superintendent Sarah Robbins, Head of Crime for Wiltshire Police said: “Burglary can have a devastating impact on a person both financially and psychologically, so it is important that we continue to educate the public to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime.

“Whilst the ‘Game of Homes’ is a fun and innovative way for us to raise awareness, here at Wiltshire Police we are under no illusion that most people don’t live in a castle and dragons and dire wolves are things of fiction.

“However, we do know the opportunist burglar is very real, and as the evenings become lighter, and the weather is nice these individuals aim to take advantage of those who have left their property insecure, and take what is not theirs.

“Some of the advice may seem obvious, but we continue to receive reports of opportunist burglaries and by putting in place some simple precautions people can reduce the risk and improve the security in and around their home

“We urge all residents to follow our prevention messages and to work with us by reporting anything suspicious on 101.”

Police and Crime Commissioner Angus Macpherson, said: “Preventing crime is one of the key priorities I give Wiltshire Police; a priority which forms part of the Police and Crime Plan.

“I am pleased to say that Wiltshire continues to be one of the safest counties to live in – burglary has gone down significantly in the last year.

“However we are not complacent and I urge the community not to be complacent.

## **Keeping Your Home Safe**

“Burglary affects how people feel in their own homes, a feeling which can remain long after the incident or possessions have been replaced.

“The public play an important part in crime prevention and if we all take a few simple steps, together we can continue to take action against this horrible crime.”

If you have any information about offenders or see something suspicious, please call Wiltshire Police on 101, or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

**In an emergency dial 999.**

**Helen Daveridge**

Police, Community Co-ordinator, CPT West Wiltshire