



**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
5 OCTOBER 2020**

Agenda No

14

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

Smartwater

Purpose of Report

To consider the Town Council's position in making a contribution towards Smartwater

Introduction

Smartwater is an initiative which is being promoted by West Mercia Police's Wed Don't Buy Crime crime prevention initiative.

Smartwater is a Water based solution with a unique forensic code. It's made invisible to the naked eye but can be seen under UV light. Only a small amount needs to be applied to an item and left to dry and then the property is marked. Each bottle is unique which enables the police/Smartwater to identify the owner of property and therefore return it if stolen, link it to any associated crime and prosecute offenders. West Mercia Police officers now have a UV light to detect the presence of Smartwater when arresting or stopping and searching suspects. Second hand stores are also being offered UV lights which they can use to establish whether property is marked and possibly stolen.

Currently the Police & Crime Commissioner is offering 25% funding towards the purchase of Smartwater and free signage for an area on the basis that Town & Parish Councils pick up the remaining 75% and there is an 80% take-up on the initiative in the area in question. This has been used differently by Parish Councils with some who have targeted small hotspot crime areas whilst places like Bayston Hill were offered the initiative across the whole of the parish council area.

<https://baystonhillparishcouncil.org.uk/we-dont-buy-crime-smartwater-roll-out>

Cost of the kits are £8.90 +VAT per household. The PCC funding would reduce that cost to £6.68+VAT.

Smartwater Requests in Shrewsbury

Currently we have two requests for Smartwater in Shrewsbury.

RADBROOK WARD – 450 households - £3006

Residents of the Barrett/Bovis development between Mytton Oak Road and Hanwood Road have requested the Town Council purchase kits. 128 residents have set up a Neighbourhood Watch Group following a number of crimes in the area.

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2020/09/23/police-welcome-newly-formed-neighbourhood-watch-in-shrewsbury-suburb/>



Enquiries were made with the SNT Inspector to ascertain the extent of actual crime as opposed to the fear of crime. There were a spate of incidents reported in late July but nothing since.

SUNDORNE WARD – 1000 households - £6680

Councillor Pardy reported “Sundorne and Old Heath residents have, over the summer, been victims of the worst crime spree in the thirty seven years I have lived here. I have received many emails and telephone calls from, saddened, angry and afraid residents of all ages.

It was quite obvious that a chat with the local Bobby wasn’t going to be of any assurance to the victims or would be victims of crime. Therefore I wrote to the PCC and encouraged constituents to write to him asking for help and reassurance that he would ensure action was taken to reduce crime.

Sergeant Rebecca Thomas has since contacted me and been very helpful. One of her suggestions was to apply to the PCC for a grant toward the Smartwater initiative under the ‘We Don’t Buy Crime’ scheme.”

Enquiries have been made with the SNT Inspector to ascertain the extent of actual crime. At the time of writing this report nothing had been received.

Council Budget

Currently the Town Council has no budget for crime prevention initiatives like Smartwater. There is the Community Grant Scheme and the Councillor Grant Scheme but the likely costs of such initiatives are beyond both funding streams.

Shrewsbury has 32,000 household in Shrewsbury.

FOR DISCUSSION:

- (i) That members are asked to consider its policy on whether it funds Smartwater**
- (ii) That members sets a budget if it were to agree to support such an initiative**