

## Warwick Rural East Newsletter - 15 October 2018

### Community Messages

#### **20/10/18 - Shoplifting, The Maybird Centre , Stratford-Upon-Avon**

At 17.00 on Friday 19th October 2018 2 offenders entered a retail unit on The Maybird Centre , Stratford-Upon-Avon. The male and female couple both select items and leave the store without attempting payment. Store staff stop the male who returns items taken but distracts staff so the female can leave. Staff believe this couple have done this before. Total amount of theft £86.00

Female described as - White female, 30's, blonde hair.

Male described as - White male, 30's, short black hair.

Retail units please be vigilant.

<https://www.warwickshire.police.uk/article/52720/Shoplifting-The-Maybird-Centre--Stratford-Upon-Avon>

#### **18/10/18 - Almost 250 Residents Take Advantage of Free Electric Blanket Safety Tests**

Almost 250 residents took advantage of this year's electric blankets safety tests provided by Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards.

Each year the service runs a free electric blanket testing campaign for Warwickshire people aged 50+ in order to protect residents from old and dangerous electric blankets.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

"This year 28% of all the blankets we tested failed, a lower failure rate than last year and hopefully an indication that fewer people are using very old blankets and are replacing them more regularly."

"Old electric blankets are much more likely to develop faults that can lead to fires and very old ones rarely have the inbuilt safety protection that all modern electric blankets must have."

The electric blanket testing campaign has now finished but owners can check the safety of their own electric blankets by looking for the following warning signs:

- the fabric is worn or frayed
- there are scorch marks anywhere
- the tie tapes are damaged or missing
- the flex is worn or damaged
- any connections are loose

Remember older blankets in regular use are much more likely to have one or more of the above faults. If your electric blanket is more than 10 years old, industry guidelines suggest you should replace it. An old BEAB safety mark (a round symbol) is an indication that the blanket is more than ten years old.

For more information visit: <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/electricblanket>

A collection service was operated for living in rural/isolated locations or who were housebound or disabled.

Visitors to the test centres also received information and advice on scams and doorstep crime and were able to speak to a representative from Act on Energy, a charity that offers advice on keeping their homes warm and reducing their gas and electricity bills.

Act on Energy, phone 0800 988 2881 or visit: <http://www.actonenergy.org.uk/>

<https://www.warwickshire.police.uk/article/52637/Almost-250-Residents-Take-Advantage-of-Free-Electric-Blanket-Safety-Tests>

## 15/10/18 - Cowboy Builder Adverts Targeted in Rogue Trader Awareness Week

### Cowboy Builder Adverts Targeted in Rogue Trader Awareness Week

In Rogue Trader Awareness Week 2018, Warwickshire County Council's Trading Standards Service has been disrupting rogue traders by cracking down on illegal and misleading roadside advertising sometimes used by unscrupulous traders to promote their businesses.

Rogue traders sometimes promote their businesses using large pallet advertisement boards illegally placed on the roadside, pavement or attached to trees/lampposts. These advertisements can contain false claims that the business is based locally when it's not or that it is a member of a trade association or trusted trader scheme when it isn't.

In Rogue Trader Awareness Week Trading Standards Officers have been removing these illegal advertisements and have already destroyed over 100 since this initiative was launched. Rogue traders also advertise online and Trading Standards is actively closing down any websites that contain false claims.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

"Rogue traders can be very convincing, but their work will be overpriced and shoddy and their actions can have a devastating impact upon the lives of their victims, many of whom are elderly and vulnerable. Preventing rogue traders advertising is just one of the ways Warwickshire Trading Standards is cracking down on their activities, which also include the investigation and prosecution of cowboy builders and carrying out rapid responses to protect consumers on the doorstep."

A rogue trader conned a Warwickshire resident out of £25,000 after knocking at his door to claim a tile on the victim's roof was loose. A common ploy of rogue traders is to repeatedly return to the properties of doorstep crime victims falsely claiming that other work needs to be done and then charge increasingly inflated prices. In a similar case another homeowner was also told about a loose tile and agreed to pay £40 to have it repaired. However, once on the roof the rogue trader 'discovered' other issues and charged her £1100 for what turned out to be little if any work.

- 1) Rogue traders often operate door to door but also advertise on the roadside and with the use of flyers.
- 2) Rogue traders offer a range of 'work' including gardening, roof tiling, driveway repairs and guttering.
- 3) Rogue traders quote low prices, but costs soon rise and they often find more work 'that needs doing urgently'.
- 4) Rogue traders like to appear local and genuine, but the addresses they use are usually false and their memberships of trade schemes bogus.
- 5) Never agree to buy goods or services from people who unexpectedly knock on your door. If in doubt, keep your door closed.
- 6) If you are interested in having work done on your property, seek quotes from reputable local traders with verifiable names and address - visit their premises if necessary.
- 7) Warwickshire Trading standards operates an approved trader scheme, visit [www.norogue traders here.com](http://www.norogue traders here.com) or phone: 0800 233 5000.
- 8) If you suspect someone of being a rogue trader, or find yourself accosted by uninvited doorstep sellers, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

• Operation Rogue Trader is a national multi-agency campaign coordinated by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) with Operation Liberal, the Police National Intelligence Unit.

• Last year's campaign involved over 1400 personnel, 1806 people were stopped and searched, 87 arrests with 871 offences and over £40,000 in property seized.

• Operation Rogue Trader began specifically to target doorstep crimes, especially distraction burglaries and rogue trader offences. As rogue trading practices diversified, Operation Rogue Trader grew to allow participating authorities to proactively target criminal behaviour, and raise awareness amongst the most vulnerable groups.

<https://www.warwickshire.police.uk/article/52490/Cowboy-Builder-Adverts-Targeted-in-Rogue-Trader-Awareness-Week>

## Contact Details

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