

Property Marking Handout

So why should we consider marking our property?

Whilst items such as electrical goods can be easily replaced this is not the case for items of sentimental value. Should you unfortunately become the victim of a burglary would you be able to accurately describe the 'lost' items to the police and insurance company? Every year the police actually recover £1000's of property that they cannot return to their rightful owners simply because they are not able to match it up to the descriptions of the missing goods. Articles which are marked in some way are also much more difficult to dispose of and this in itself will act as a deterrent to thieves.

A very effective way of property marking is to use your postcode in conjunction with your property name or house number e.g. The Cottage AB22 7XX. How you actually do the marking will depend on the item concerned and whether the marking is to be visible or hidden. Obviously a visible marking will be more of a deterrent but we appreciate that this is not always desirable. Ultra-violet marker pens leave an invisible mark but this needs to be **renewed annually** as the mark will degrade due to wear and light exposure. Engraving by mechanical means or etching using a chemical solution is permanent and suitable for metal, glass and ceramic items. Tamper resistant labels are difficult to remove and usually leave a mark which is detectable under ultra-violet light. Property marking solutions are becoming more popular and are suitable for almost any item. These solutions contain microdots which are not visible to the naked eye but contain a reference number registered to you. Again, these dots show up under UV light. One such system which you may have come to your attention as it is frequently used in public buildings and farms goes under the name 'Smart-Water'.

Taking photographs of valuable or sentimental items is also a good idea. Whilst an article may be difficult to fully describe verbally a picture records all the detail. With most people having digital cameras or mobile phones with built-in cameras, this is now an easy action to take. **Keep the pictures separate from the camera or phone in case they get stolen.**

Having taken one or more of the above actions, there is one last thing to consider. There is a nationwide FREE National Property Register which is used by the police throughout the country when trying to return recovered property. Further details and information can be found on their website at 'www.immobilise.com' (or from a link on the police website), and many of the security devices mentioned above can also be purchased for reasonably modest sums.

Our PCSOs have access to engraving equipment and will be happy to come to your home to help and advise with property marking. They have also been trained in general security matters and will be able to give an appraisal and recommendations for your home and buildings. To arrange any of these matters please contact them through the 101 number, email or ask your co-ordinator for an introduction.