

# NEIGHBOURHOOD ALERT WHATSAPP SCHEME

Bramhall &  
Cheadle Hulme

## INTRODUCTION

ILoveBramhall.com and ILoveCheadleHulme.com have developed a Neighbourhood Alert Scheme on WhatsApp.

The Neighbourhood Alert Scheme is a next-generation neighbourhood watch initiative, delivering information to users' phones instantly. In this way, a lot of information can be shared with a lot of people instantaneously, which may be vital in an emergency or crime prevention situation.

The advantage of using WhatsApp is that neighbours, and in turn neighbourhood groups, can communicate in real time. The Neighbourhood Alert Scheme is location-based and connects neighbours on their roads.

Neighbours can alert each other to suspicious activity or potential crime - even sharing up-to-date news about incidents in nearby areas. Photos, CCTV footage and descriptions of suspects can be shared, keeping residents informed and providing information to the police. The Neighbourhood Alert Scheme promotes safer neighbourhoods for everyone.

PLEASE NOTE: when a crime is in progress or criminal activity is suspected, always report to police immediately. Members are advised not to intervene.

Currently, the Neighbourhood Alert Scheme covers more than 100 roads in Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme, with 3000+ individual users. Residents of each road use their mobile phones to notify each other of incidents or observations. A modern way to look out for yourself, your property and your neighbours, the Neighbourhood Alert Scheme can help provide peace of mind. Privacy is protected: each road's group is private and communications among members can only be seen by their neighbours. However, the coordinators of each road are also able to view and post updates in the Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme coordinators' groups.

This is a community-led initiative, offering quick, effective information sharing and responses to security concerns or criminal activity.

The scheme revolves around the simple, yet the essential concept of community: *We can achieve more together than we do alone.*

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## OBJECTIVES:

- To report crime as it happens
- To report suspicious persons or activity - thus potentially preventing crime
- To facilitate contact with neighbours for assistance and support
- To build a stronger community
- To encourage neighbours to look out for each other
- To reduce crime in the area
- To provide a deterrent to would-be criminals
- To help build a sense of belonging and community spirit
- To enhance personal safety - a helpful neighbour is just a message away
- To share information via text messages, video, pictures and audio
- To act as additional eyes and ears in the neighbourhood
- To send as many messages as needed, ensuring information is up-to-date
- To help the police to track down suspects and apprehend offenders faster

## WHAT IS WHATSAPP?

In a nutshell, WhatsApp Messenger is a free messaging service that connects users all around the world in moments.

More than one billion people worldwide use WhatsApp to send unlimited messages, voice notes, pictures and videos - just download the app to your smartphone (connected to WiFi or 3g) and register to start enjoying the benefits of effective communication.

WhatsApp is private - only your contacts can get in touch. It's also secure, using end-to-end encryption (E2EE) to prohibit hackers and other third parties - including the government and even the company itself - from accessing information shared through the platform.

A special feature of WhatsApp is the ability to create groups. Groups allow communication between members that is visible only to a specific set of people.

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## ROAD COORDINATORS:

- The Neighbourhood Alert Scheme needs coordinators for every road in Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme.
- There are no rules about the size of the road. Ideally, coordinators look after each whole road, although longer roads can be split into sections.
- If you don't know your neighbours, now's a good time to connect. Invite them to join your Neighbourhood Alert Scheme WhatsApp group; all you need are their mobile numbers. Leaflets are available from Damson Tree Cafe on Fountains Road, Cheadle Hulme - just add your name and number.
- Only add neighbours from your own road; messages become diluted otherwise.
- No smartphone? No problem. Coordinators can give their phone number to people without a smartphone so they can contact them directly with any information.
- Each road coordinator is added to the WhatsApp Bramhall or Cheadle Hulme coordinators' group.
- Coordinators from each road can share information which can then be passed on to your neighbours' groups if relevant.
- Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme have two groups each: an SOS group and a Chat group.
- Coordinators have voluntarily joined the group/s for the purpose of information sharing. You have the right to leave the Chat group anytime but, if you wish to leave the SOS group, please let us know so we can find an alternative coordinator on the road.
- Coordinators' details are not publicly shared, though we will pass on your email address to the police so you will be added to their Police updates email circulation

## Neighbourhood Alert Scheme SOS WhatsApp group guidelines

- > Alert people to specific security issues and suspicious activities, keeping the details brief and factual.
- > No unnecessary comments please, as this can generate a great deal of unwanted notifications.
- > No 'chit chat', pleasantries or courtesies (e.g. "thank you", "shame", "hope all is well") and no emojis please – comment only if your information adds value.

## Neighbourhood Alert Scheme Chat WhatsApp group guidelines

- > Constructive comment and positive engagement is welcomed.
- > Everyone is involved and free to have their say. Users like to voice their opinions and be kept in the loop.
- > If you are busy, you can turn off your notifications or put the chat on mute and catch up on any missed information later, though we ask you not to mute the SOS group.

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## SCHEME USERS INSTRUCTIONS

- Download WhatsApp.
- Admin will register your mobile phone number and address with your road coordinator.
- Get to know your neighbours and encourage others to join the scheme.
- Alert your neighbours via the WhatsApp group to any suspicious activity - every member of the group is notified and can act accordingly, such as by asking friends to keep an eye on their house, locking doors, checking on vulnerable neighbours or just being vigilant.
- If there is a crime in progress or imminent danger, please call 999. For reports of crimes that have already occurred, contact 101.
- The WhatsApp group is a great way to keep each other informed of any local crime in your area. For example, if you hear about a spate of bike thefts, let your neighbours know so they can be sure to lock their bicycles away securely in their sheds or garages.
- On joining the scheme and providing your address and phone number, your details are passed on to your road coordinator.
- The benefits are potentially endless; as well as sharing information about the crime, the group can help users locate their missing wheelie bin or undelivered parcel - even a lost cat or dog. In one case, one of our roads organised a street party and spread the news via the group!
- Any information shared can also be posted on the I Love Bramhall/I Love Cheadle Hulme Facebook pages to reach around 20,000 people - we do not include names or personal information.
- To join the scheme please email [wendy@ilovebramhall.com](mailto:wendy@ilovebramhall.com) for Bramhall or [hello@ilovecheadlehulme.com](mailto:hello@ilovecheadlehulme.com) for Cheadle Hulme with your full name, address and mobile number to be put in touch with your road coordinator.
- A full list of roads already included in the scheme is available via [ilovebramhall.com](http://ilovebramhall.com) and [ilovecheadlehulme.com](http://ilovecheadlehulme.com).

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND GROUND RULES

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Be objective and focus on the issues.
- Please be aware of the importance of privacy; most people value their privacy and may be put off by a Neighbourhood Alert Scheme if they think it means scheme users will start living up to the nosy neighbour stereotype of “curtain twitcher”.
- Only share activity that’s deemed suspicious.
- Between the hours of 11pm and 8am, please only share information urgent in nature.
- Share useful home safety tips and local crime updates.
- Anything personal is strictly off limits.
- If you notice that an individual neighbour has perhaps left a window open or their handbag on the front seat of the car, avoid alerting everyone in the WhatsApp group. Maybe send them a private message instead.
- If you go on holiday and you have a neighbour in your WhatsApp group, let them know without alerting the whole road. They can keep an eye on your property, maybe even put out your bins and take them back in again.
- Religious comments, offensive language, racism, hate speech, politics and off-topic posts are not tolerated.
- It is also vitally important to remain polite and civil.
- Most importantly, these groups can really help to restore the meaning of a community.
- We do not make the names and phone numbers of coordinators public and we don't share any of your information with anyone except your coordinator.
- Always report incidents to the police, they take any reports of thefts and intruders - attempted or actual - very seriously. In the event of a minor offence like the rifling through of an unlocked car, the police must still be informed so they can respond to patterns or frequencies.
- Anti-social behaviour or criminal activity should be reported on 101. Always dial 999 to report a crime in progress or a person in danger.

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## SCHEME SUCCESSES AND PROGRESSION

- Since its inception in Feb 2017, the Neighbourhood Alert Scheme has grown into a community-wide initiative. We work closely with the police force and local councillors, who have expressed their support for the initiative not only as a crime prevention and reporting tool but also as a way of strengthening the community.
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- **News coverage**
- Coordinators and group members have worked to raise the profile of the scheme as a low-cost, efficient means of information sharing, crime reporting and community building. As a result, the initiative has been picked up by broadcasters and featured on both regional and national news via BBC NorthWest and ITV's Tonight programme.
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- **Member offers**
- Through the scheme, we have also secured some member-exclusive special offers on security measures from websites Ring.com and SelectaDNA.co.uk.
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- Ring.com sells video doorbells, security cameras and related products; SelectaDNA.co.uk produces property marking kits using clear UV liquid, making it easier to reunite recovered stolen or lost goods with the rightful owner.
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- On entering the promotional code ILOVEBRAMHALL at the Ring.com checkout, members of the scheme are entitled to a £20 discount on purchases.
- Similarly, by entering the code NHWSTOCK at the SelectaDNA checkout, for £20 you will receive the following : 8ml SelectaDNA Property Marking Compound (XT Code) | Blue Applicator | 2x Pairs of SelectaDNA Window Stickers | QC111 SelectaDNA Instruction Booklet | 2x Sheets of 10 SelectaDNA Warning Stickers | 2x Sheets of 15 SelectaDNA Warning Stickers | Membership Card (numbered to match 8ml DNA container)
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- **Moving forward**
- The Neighbourhood Alert Scheme has achieved significant progress but we are always looking for ways in which to improve the service. Going forward, work is ongoing to secure more special member offers and ensure the service reflects the needs of the community.