

# Community Safety

The newsletter from  
Hart District Council



Issue 60 April 2026

This Newsletter aims to provide information around safeguarding and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), raise awareness of current issues across the district, promote the good work of our partner agencies and celebrate the successes we have had.

We can be contacted online: [Report antisocial behaviour | Hart District Council](#)  
by phone: **01252 774476** or by e-mail: [communitysafety@hart.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@hart.gov.uk)

## Crime Prevention Alert: Keyless Car Thefts

We have seen a recent increase in high-value vehicle thefts in the local area, particularly involving vehicles with keyless entry and start systems. This method of theft, often referred to as 'keyless' or 'relay' theft, allows criminals to steal a vehicle without forcing entry or taking the physical car keys.



### How does keyless car theft happen?

Modern vehicles with keyless entry constantly send out a short-range signal to detect whether the key is nearby. Criminals can exploit this by using electronic devices to capture and relay the signal from your key fob, even if it is inside your home. This can unlock and start the car in seconds, often without triggering alarms.

### Steps You Can Take to Protect Your Vehicle

While no method is guaranteed, taking a few simple and effective precautions can significantly reduce the risk:

- **Protect your keys:** Store car keys (and spare keys) away from doors and windows. Use a signal-blocking pouch or tin (often called a Faraday pouch) to prevent key signals being intercepted. Check periodically that your signal-blocking pouch is still effective.
- **Add visible security:** Use a steering wheel lock or other physical security device – these act as strong visual deterrents. Consider additional security such as an alarm, immobiliser or tracking system, where appropriate.
- **Park smart:** Park vehicles in a garage if possible. If parking on a driveway, park close to your property or in a well-lit area. Consider motion-activated lighting or CCTV at home.
- **Lock and check:** Always physically check your car has locked, criminals can use signal jammers to prevent locking. Do not rely solely on mirrors folding in or indicator flashes. Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- **Know your vehicle:** Check your vehicle handbook or speak to the manufacturer to see if keyless entry can be disabled when not in use. If buying a second-hand vehicle, ask for keys to be reprogrammed to the car.

### Report suspicious activity

If you notice suspicious behaviour around vehicles, particularly individuals loitering near cars with electronic devices, please report it.

**Call 101 for non-emergencies, 999 if a crime is in progress, you can also report information anonymously via Crimestoppers. Prompt reporting helps police identify patterns and prevent further thefts.**

Keyless car thefts are often quiet, quick and targeted, but simple preventative steps can make a real difference. By taking a few extra moments to secure your keys and vehicle, you can help protect your property and your neighbourhood.

### Warmer Weather: Help Prevent Wildfires and Heathland Fires

As the weather becomes warmer and drier, the risk of wildfires, grass fires and heathland fires increases significantly, particularly across open spaces, parks and countryside. These fires can start very quickly, spread rapidly and have serious consequences for people, wildlife, homes and emergency services.

Many fires in the countryside are accidental and caused by human activity, often linked to barbecues, outdoor gatherings, discarded cigarettes or litter during warm, dry periods.



### Why are BBQs and outdoor gatherings a risk?

During hot and dry weather, grass, heathland and vegetation can become extremely dry. It only takes a small spark, hot ash or heat from the base of a disposable BBQ to ignite a fire, which can escalate out of control within minutes. Fire services across Hampshire and nationally regularly see grass and heathland fires caused by disposable BBQs, unattended cooking equipment and smouldering waste.

### How can you help reduce the risk?

- **Avoid BBQs in open spaces:** Do not use barbecues (including disposable BBQs) in parks, heathland, grassed areas or countryside. In some areas, including protected heathland and the New Forest, BBQs and outdoor cooking equipment are banned due to fire risk. Consider packing a picnic instead.
- **If you BBQ at home:** Only use BBQs in your own garden, on level ground and well away from fences, sheds, trees and dry grass. Never leave a BBQ unattended. Keep a bucket of water, sand or a hose nearby in case of emergency. Make sure coals and ashes are completely cool before disposal, never place hot ashes in bins.
- **Dispose of smoking materials safely:** Ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished and disposed of properly. Never throw cigarettes out of car windows or onto the ground, especially near dry vegetation.
- **Take litter home:** Glass bottles and rubbish left in the countryside can contribute to fires, sunlight shining through glass can start a fire. Always take litter home or dispose of it responsibly.

### If you spot a fire:

- Get to a safe location and call 999 immediately.
- Do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself.
- Try to provide clear location details, apps like what3words can help emergency services respond quickly.

Wildfires cause lasting damage to wildlife habitats and place significant demand on emergency services, often tying up firefighters and equipment for many hours. Most fires of this type are preventable, and small actions can make a big difference.

By being mindful during warm weather and following fire-safety advice, we can all help keep our communities, countryside and emergency services safe.

### Hart Youth Achievement Awards 2026

Nominations are now open until 25 September 2026 in two age categories – up to school year 6 and school year 7 to age 25 across the following categories: Community Champion, Courage, Academic Achievement, Fundraising, Group Achievement, Sports and Arts and Volunteering.

Get your thinking caps on, share with others and submit your nominations [here](#).



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**communitysafety@hart.gov.uk**