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## CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN THE HARROGATE DISTRICT

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### SWITCH ON TO BURGLARS

As dark nights beckon, the Harrogate District Safer Communities Partnership is urging residents to 'switch on to beat the burglar'. It is widely believed that there is a direct link between winter nights and increases in burglary but we can create a powerful deterrent by carefully lighting up our homes.

PC Geoff Crocker, from the Partnership, said: "Switching lights on in the house needs to give the impression that someone is home. It is no good just leaving a small light on in the hall or on the landing. It is also generally agreed that it is a good idea to draw curtains as well so that lights coming on do not make it easier to see what is available to steal in a room that obviously has no occupants.

"Perhaps this is one area where technology is ahead of the burglar. With such things as automatic curtain drawing devices and lighting circuits all available on the market, which can be set on automatic timers, we can easily give the impression that the house is occupied. We can also use other household appliances in this way with timer switches on radios and television sets."

Many homes already have passive infra-red (PIR) controlled tungsten halogen floodlights but Robin Davies, Harrogate Council's Crime Prevention Officer, suggests that dusk to dawn sensors are better. He said: "The PIR type floodlights only illuminate when a burglar has picked a house and crossed its boundaries, or indeed when friends come to call. This doesn't deter criminals when they are selecting a house and this harsh lighting can cause a nuisance for neighbours.

"We would recommend low wattage lighting controlled by a photoelectric cell – otherwise known as the dawn to dusk sensor – which provides a more constant level of illumination with fewer shadows and in a more environmentally friendly way, which costs little to run."

The Partnership has also written to local electrical retailers asking them to help spread this beat the burglar message by promoting this type of anti-theft equipment.

ENDS

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** is available from PC Geoff Crocker and Robin Davies on 01423 556504 and 556986.