

Report for Shelsley Teme Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 12th January 2021

Dear Councillors,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas. I have included a short report for the meeting.

Cyber security reminder: We have been warned to expect an increase in cyber security attacks and to prepare for having our systems out of action for several weeks, if not months, in the event of such an occurrence. Emails are particularly vulnerable, and hackers will try various techniques, known as phishing, to trick you into clicking on links which look genuine but then allow them access to our systems. **Please be extra vigilant.**

How to spot a suspicious email: Spotting scam messages and phone calls is becoming increasingly difficult. Many scams will even fool the experts. However, there are some tricks that criminals will use to try and get you to respond without thinking. Things to look out for are:

Authority - Is the message claiming to be from someone official? For example, your bank, doctor, a solicitor, or a government department. Criminals often pretend to be important people or organisations to trick you into doing what they want.

Urgency - Are you told you have a limited time to respond (such as 'within 24 hours' or 'immediately')? Criminals often threaten you with fines or other negative consequences.

Emotion - Does the message make you panic, fearful, hopeful or curious? Criminals often use threatening language, make false claims of support, or tease you into wanting to find out more.

Scarcity - Is the message offering something in short supply, like concert tickets, money or a cure for medical conditions? Fear of missing out on a good deal or opportunity can make you respond quickly.

Current events - Are you expecting to see a message like this? Criminals often exploit current news stories, big events or specific times of year (like tax reporting) to make their scam seem more relevant to you.

If you think a message or call might really be from an organisation you have an existing relationship with, like your bank, and you want to be sure: Go back to something you can trust. Visit the official website, log in to your account, or phone their advertised phone number. Don't use the links or contact details in the message you have been sent or given over the phone. Check to see if the official source has already told you what they will *never* ask you. For example, your bank may have told you that they will never ask you. For example, your bank may have told you that they will never ask for your password.

Award nomination: Our Community and Environmental Protection Team has been shortlisted for a Keep Britain Tidy award for their version of the Adopt a Street scheme – a volunteer litter picking initiative. They find out on 3rd February if they have won. Good luck!

Stay safe.

Caroline

Councillor Caroline Palethorpe
Teme Valley Ward
Malvern Hills District Council
Tel: 07974 966412
caroline.palethorpe@malvernhillsc.net