



Keeping watch

By day, Lyn is a business processes manager for a Japanese logistics firm; by night (or any other spare moment she has) she's one of our borough's unsung heroes. She is one of the founders of the Beckton Parkside NWG and has recently been appointed as acting chair of the Newham Neighbourhood Watch Association.

Lyn explains that she 'fell in love with Beckton' with its green expanses and

diverse community. But, like anywhere, it has issues. Lyn said: "It's beautiful, quiet and idyllic, but that makes it a target for certain types of crime."

Lyn was nominated by the council to undertake Community Crime Fighter training (funded by the Home Office). Now she is fully equipped with the know-how to complement her passion and the Beckton Parkside NWG have seen tangible

improvements to their area – with a little help from the council and the Beckton Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT).

How did your NWG come about?

I am a leasehold/freehold director for 80 flats in the area, so knew a lot of people. I wanted to make my area feel like a proper neighbourhood, get people talking to each other and revive some of that post-war



> WORKING LIVES

People do sit up and listen to a group but I think it's about the approach. I think people don't put enough thought into what they want help with – or how they can help themselves. My advice is speak clearly, understand what the issue is, direct that issue to the right people and be willing to offer yourself as part of the solution.

How do you make people listen?

The council and police have a task list longer than I can imagine and a limited purse. We had a massive walk around Beckton District Park in November with DLR security, councillors, Newham's community engagement team and the Beckton SNT. I'd listed our issues, thrown in some solutions and put them on a wish list. Not everything was possible but some really good things came about. The council replaced some of the street lighting and thinned out the brush to make it easier to see people who may be hiding at night.

How long do you have to live somewhere before you're part of the community?

How long you've lived in an area isn't relevant, it's about being non-judgemental when you first see someone, helping someone with a shopping bag if they look like they may be struggling – even if you don't know them – or holding a door open in a block of flats. That's how you create community relationships. It's not about rocking up to someone's door and saying: 'we've got a crime issue, do you want to be part of our gang?' Just say hello to someone, next time they'll say hello back – it gradually starts like that.

Want to know more?

To find out about NWGs local to you contact your local SNT, details can be found at www.met.police.uk/teams/newham. If you live in the Beckton community forum area read more about the Beckton Parkside NWG on the back page of Beckton In Focus, free inside this issue.

The days when Neighbourhood Watch Groups (NWGs) meant twitching curtains and hushed whispers are over. NWGs have evolved but community is still firmly at their core with community safety at the top of their agendas. One person bringing NWGs into the new millennium is Lyn Juniper-Solley.

camaraderie when everyone looked out for each other and cleaned their own doorsteps – that's the kind of place I want to live in.

Who runs NWGs?

Newham NWGs are independent of the police and council, although we've had a lot of support from both. We know our SNT by name and face and they come to our meetings when they can.

If there are incidents in the area the SNT will send me a bulletin. I'll forward this through our Google Discussion Group, which has about 50 members. This means we've immediately got a heightened awareness. It's also extra eyes and ears, which helps the SNT to do their job.

Do you think it's better to tackle issues as a group?