



Now that the sun is making more frequent appearances the opportunist criminal is finding rich pickings taking advantage of householders who have left doors and windows open. Often they will be working in the garden, sitting outside enjoying the sunshine or have left them open while they “*just pop to the shops*” or “*pick the kids up from school.*”

The intruder will steal handbags, mobile phones, laptops, game stations, ipods or any portable objects that can be easily carried or hidden in pockets. Often householders do not notice they have slipped into the house – if they are spotted and challenged, they will often make up a plausible story such as looking for a lost dog or retrieving a child’s ball.

Crime prevention officers across the force have the same message, PC Pete Spicer said; “Simple crime prevention measures really can make all the difference. Thieves are often opportunists and if they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time, or risk being seen, they are less likely to take that risk.

“Even an open fanlight can be a temptation to a thief, since all they need do is slip their hand in to open a larger window, through which they can climb”

“Insurance companies advise that although claims are always looked at individually, people who don’t lock doors properly could invalidate a claim, or at least experience a delay in payment.”

Unfortunately, police find themselves dealing with these types of offences every summer, particularly during the first period of good weather. The good news is that such burglaries, like most acquisitive crime, can be prevented quite easily by taking a few simple precautions:

- **Secure your doors and windows whenever you are away from home**
- **When you’re in the garden secure any door or window that you cannot see from where you are**
- **Consider distraction burglars and if an unexpected caller comes to the front door ensure the back door is secure before answering**
- **If you have a burglar alarm routinely use it**
- **Repair rear fences that may have been blown over in recent winds**
- **Plant prickly bushes on garden boundaries**
- **Ensure side entrances are locked**
- **Security mark your property – handlers, as well as thieves, hate anything that can be traced back to the owner**
- **Consider joining Neighbourhood Watch and / or registering with the Ringmaster Community Messaging Service**

Contact the Crime Reduction Officer on 01234 275273 for further advice.