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**Community Warden is helping people fight against fraud this Christmas**

A community warden at Chichester District Council is helping residents and businesses fight against fraud this Christmas.

Rich Moorey is so concerned about the amount of money being lost to fraudsters in the Chichester District, that he has launched special scam awareness events, to help residents, community groups and businesses become more aware of the risks and to help people to fight back against fraud.

The council is also launching a special campaign, featuring Rich, to provide people with his top tips on how to stay safe from scams.

The Chichester District remains one of the areas with the highest amounts of money lost through scams in the country. Although figures have improved, between July and September of this year there were over 120 reports of scams in the Chichester area alone.

“Scams and fraud are having a significant impact on our community. They literally can affect anyone regardless of who they are,” says Rich. “We know that fraudsters will be even more prevalent on the run up to Christmas and so we want to make sure that residents are well informed and know that help is available if something does go wrong.

“My top tip for anyone is to start treating anything that you were not expecting to receive, either through text, email, or the post, as if it is a scam. And from there, take steps to check if it is legitimate.

“For example, you can call 159 to check with your bank if a letter or email that claims to be from them is legitimate. Or, if you receive a link to a website in an email, you can use Get Safe Online’s free online check-a-website tool to check if a website is harmful or safe by visiting: [www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite](http://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite). Being cautious and considered when you receive something you are not expecting will immediately put you in a better place to protect yourself from a scam.”

Rich adds: “It’s also important to watch out for rogue traders. I emphasise not being afraid to contact the police if you have real suspicions and concerns. It’s also worth using the Trading Standards ‘Buy with Confidence’ scheme when looking for suitable traders. This allows you to enter details online, the trade you need, and access a list of traders who are registered with Trading Standards.”

Rich’s events cover several different, but prominent types of scams and fraud. These include courier fraud, where a person is contacted by a criminal claiming to be either from their bank or police and claiming their bank card is needed relating to a criminal case, and a person is on the way to collect. As part of these crimes, the victim is also often put under pressure to provide a payment or large sum of money with no time to check if this is legitimate.

Rich also covers other types of financial and investment scams; romance fraud on dating apps and social media; fraudulent correspondence, letters, and emails; and rogue traders. According to a study by ‘Which?’ residents of Sussex made the most reports of dating scams, which involve duping people looking for love into transferring money to a fake romantic connection.

Councillor Tracie Bangert, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council says, “We are very proud of the work Rich has been doing for residents and groups across the district to help them be more scam aware and safe.”

“Scams are a huge threat to us all – even more so at this time of year – and so we are encouraging people to sign up for one of Rich’s community events or refer to his top tips through the campaign that we are launching.

“Helping to keep people safe is a top priority for us.”

To request or attend a community event people should email: [CommunityWardens@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityWardens@chichester.gov.uk) They can also find Rich’s top tips on our Chichester District Council ‘Fight Against Fraud’ web page: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/fight-against-fraud**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/fight-against-fraud)

**For further information, please contact Thomas Carr, Communications Assistant at Chichester District Council on 01243 521297**

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