



In this issue ...

Big-talking youth tell it like it is
—pages 4 and 5



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DPVwatch gets going

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Vredehoek residents are stepping up to the plate to join hands with the police and security service providers to fight crime in the area.

But the recently formed Devils Peak/Vredehoek neighbourhood watch (DPVwatch) need residents on board.

"We are planning a membership drive to promote the watch, which includes door-to-door visits to inform the community of the organisation," said Nicola Jowell, one of the prime movers of the watch.

"So far they have chosen a working committee, drafted a constitution and a code of conduct."

They are planning to divide the area into sectors with a leader heading each block.

The idea of a neighbourhood watch was first discussed in September last year by other community members but it became dormant. However, it was resurrected after incidents of petty crime.

Resident in the area for 12 years, Harriet Clift, said: "We decided to resurrect it after incidents of 'petty crime' where ladders, tools and clothes on washing lines were being stolen.

"We will always be vulnerable to organised crime but we can put a stop to the petty crime. Modern life is horrible because you don't know your neighbours. There are people in this area who are elderly and live alone, what happens if you get stuck and need help; who do you call?"

DPVwatch have had meetings with Tamboerskloof neighbourhood watch (TBKwatch) and Cape Town police sector manager Captain Joggie Jansen,

who are assisting them with setting up the initiative.

Ms Jowell said: "They have been really helpful. We admire what is being done in Tamboerskloof and we want to mirror that. They have been so successful in such a short time."

TBKwatch, which learnt the ropes from Hout Bay's neighbourhood watch, was started 18 months ago.

It's members have two-way radios that allow for communication between the community, police, security companies and fire services.

They have a patrol sheet and incident logging sheet on their website.

DPVwatch will not have a roster of patrollers but they encourage residents to be on the look-out for people acting suspiciously and strange vehicles while they are out walking their dogs or going for a daily run.

"We are not here to arrest anyone but to be the eyes and ears for the police," said Ms Jowell.

DPVwatch also planned to have hand-held radios.

Jo-Anne Friedlander said: "The police can't be everywhere at once. This is about having a good relationship with the SAPS and knowing who your neighbour is."

Even though DPVwatch has a blog, they do plan to start a website where the community can be updated with news in the area.

Makhaya Mani, spokesperson for Community Safety MEC, Leonard Ramatlakane, said residents were "taking responsibility" for their community.

Continued on page 3