

The Neighbourhood Policing Team at Belle Vue have closed down a number of cannabis factories which were operating in the local community.

PC Mick Smith has given advice about what to look for in his Police Update in the Headingley Directory. If you missed it, here are a few things to look out for:

- the property may have curtains drawn and lights on during the day
- there may be a very distinct and unusual smell in the vicinity of the property
- the occupiers may be coming and going with electrical equipment, bags of compost and fertiliser - whilst it might not be unusual for compost or fertiliser to be taken to a garden shed or garage, it may be unusual for it to be taken in through the front door
- the windows may have a plastic covering on the inside

Landlords in particular should be aware that:

- drug dealers often rent property to avoid having utility bills in their name
- cultivating cannabis puts a significant demand on electricity for heating and lighting and those responsible will often leave substantial unpaid bills behind them

In order to avoid detection by the authorities some cultivators tap into the electricity supply in the street in order to bypass the meter. Doing this means that their high electricity usage goes un-noticed (and billed). This creates a risk to public safety.

Do you know who lives in the house near you?

If you have any suspicions about properties in your neighbourhood then bring it to the attention of the police. You can leave a message for Neighbourhood Watch on 0113 205 3063, speak to an NPT officer on 0113 205 3025 or email them at aa.nptnwinner@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk. Alternatively, contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 - where your call cannot be traced.

Cannabis factories can be set up quickly so when the police close one down it can cause another to open nearby. The good news is that Neighbourhood Watches can be set up quickly too and crime cannot survive in strong communities. Don't worry about being wrong, as the police will carry out their own investigations and make up their own mind about what is happening at the property.