

If its too good to be true - it probably is !

Sales promotions go on throughout the year, not just on 'Black Friday', but remember that if something appears to be too good to be true, then it probably is! If you go to a car boot sale or are offered something in a pub that really does seem out of place or is ridiculously cheap, please consider that it may be stolen or not as genuine as it could be.

This goes for internet auction sites too. Whilst they can be really useful for finding a particular item or for selling some of your own property without the need to get cold and trampled at a car boot sale, it is also an easy way to dispose of stolen goods. How do you know that the second hand watch you are thinking of buying is really the vendor's to sell?!

Before you buy that bargain piece of jewellery, or knock-down power tools from a 'mate', please consider how you would feel if it were YOUR pride and joy being sold for a fraction of its real value and with no consideration of the sentimental value to its rightful owner.

Remember, if you buy stolen goods, the only person that gains is the vendor. The property is still owned by the person who had it stolen, not by you just because you have paid cash for it, and there are no cash refunds when the item is returned to its rightful owner.

If you are found with stolen property, not only will it be seized but you may be charged with handling stolen goods, and it would be for you to prove to a Court that you had acted in good faith. However, paying 'a few quid' for a brand new boxed computer out the back of a van may need some creative explaining to justify how you thought it could be a genuine transaction! The Courts treat handling stolen goods as a serious offence; there would be no reason for thieves to steal if there weren't people prepared to buy 'bent gear'.

The long and short of it is that there will always be someone trying to trick you out of your hard earned money. Just this month, a local couple (and I'm sure many more of you) received a letter claiming to be from the Postcode Lottery which told them they had won £875,000. After their initial euphoria, they phoned the number on the letter and were told they would have to pay £1900 in admin fees to release their 'winnings'. Luckily the couple recognised the letter was a scam, but sadly not everyone is so wise.

Remember - if you have information about ANY crime, please do not hesitate to give Crimestoppers a call on 0800 555 111 or log on to [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) where you can also give information anonymously. If you are on twitter, please follow me @HantsCrimestopp