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expressyourself

IS HALLOWEEN REALLY JUST HARMLESS FUN?



Halloween can be a scary time for homeowners

Wednesday October 31, 2007

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TONIGHT most of us will be visited by little angels dressed up as Halloween horrors for a bit of fright-night fun, but have some children taken the tradition of trick or treat over to the dark side? Nicola McCafferty reports...

For most young children, Halloween is all about warty-witch's noses, fake blood and a broomstick.

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They knock on your door with one of their Dad's bad jokes and a pumpkin-print bag ready to entertain you in the hopes you have something sweet on offer.

But for thousands of terrified residents across Britain this magical night is no longer a bit of childish fun.

Police across the country are expecting a surge in anti-social behaviour and special helplines have been set-up to cope with a flood of calls from spooked homeowners.



Teenagers are increasingly use the guise of creepy costumes to demand money, damage property and scare older people.

A non-emergency helpline, which covers five UK cities, has been set-up to protect residents from anti-social behaviour and expects tonight to be a particularly ghoulish evening.

Manager of the 101 call centre Nicola Newman said: "Most people who join in the customary fun of spooky masks, pumpkins and ghosts and ghouls are out to enjoy themselves but a small minority can get rowdy or threatening."

“For many people Halloween is a nightmare.”

The service, which is based in Leicester and has already received 700,000 non-emergency calls, hopes to advise and reassure scared residents. If successful, it could be extended to cover the rest of the UK in future.

Mick Kelly, Neighbourhood Watch

Police stations around the country are also preparing for the witches' covens to spill out onto the streets.

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Additional staff will be drafted into 'nerve centres' around the country to help with the surge in 999 calls complaining of Halloween horrors.

The move comes after the Teesside police last night - dubbed Mischief Night - dealt with 900 emergency calls from members of the public - double the usual amount.

Many reported criminal damage to cars, homes and street lighting - with creepy costumes acting as the perfect criminal disguise.

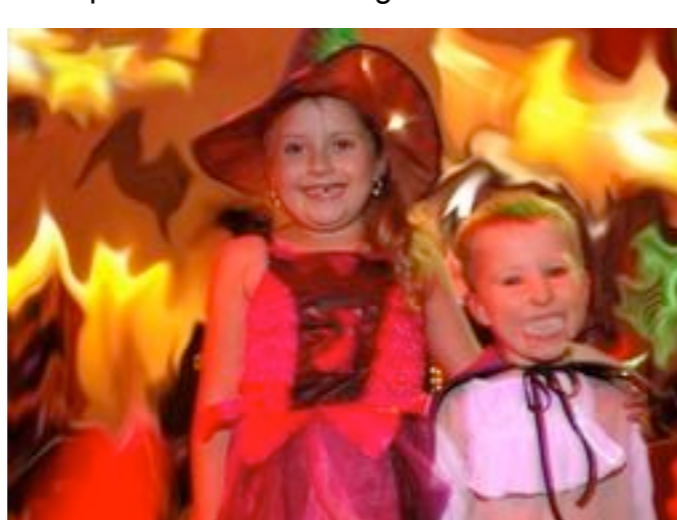


Halloween is a terrifying time for some

Cleveland Police said a minority of youngsters were to blame.

A police spokeswoman said: "A minority of young people seem to use so-called 'Mischief Night' as a licence to do as they please.

"They can even see it as some sort of free-for-all. However, some of the behaviour is of a criminal nature and is complete unacceptable as well as illegal.



The Halloween spirit is still alive in children

"The pressure of these calls draws police resources away from our fight against crime and reduces our ability to deal with emergencies."

The community-friendly Neighbourhood Watch has also developed its own deterrent to the happy - Halloweeners with 'The Neighbourhood Witch poster' campaign.

Residents who say no to trick or treating can download the poster from www.neighbourhoodwatch.net to display in their windows.

Spokesman Mick Kelly said: "We don't want to be party-poopers but for many people Halloween is a nightmare.

"Too often what starts out as a bit of a lark can become very unsettling when you are faced with the threat of being pelted with eggs and flour on your own doorstep.

"This is particularly the case for the elderly and infirm who live alone.

"The message is polite but firm: 'Trick or treat? No thanks!'"

Many believe the 2000-year-old Pagan tradition of dressing-up as devils and witches should be banned anyway. There are fears that residents, in particular the elderly, will be too terrified to find a Satan impressionist at their front door on a dark night.

Director General of Age Concern, Gordon Lishman, issued a 'Happy Hallowe'en not Grisly Ghouls' statement today to warn those embarking on the trick or treat run.

He said: "People of all ages can find unexpected callers to their homes intimidating or frightening, particularly when it is dark outside.

"If you are anxious about being the victim of a prank or a crime, then check who's at your door before opening it.

"Using a door-chain and a spy-hole may make you feel safer.

Halloween should be a bit of fun for families, but it could be spoiled by the irresponsible or threatening behaviour of a few people."

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BAN THE FIREWORKS AND IT MIGHT BE LESS HARMFUL.. 01.11.07, 1:30pm The dressing up and sweets for kids are pretty harmless, but the availability of fireworks is what ruins it. Animals terrorised and even fireman targetted. Ban them for the good of all. Posted by: reduceco2 • Report Comment

IS HALLOWEEN REALLY JUST HARMLESS FUN? 01.11.07, 5:07am Does poor old Godforsaken Britain really need another excuse to celebrate the devil and grant permission to the yobbo to terrorise their neighbourhoods anymore than they do already?!! Funny too at a time when Christmas is being kicked out & dumped to appease the wealth of multicultural beliefs. Any wonder the country has sunk to the levels of depravity that it has now. How I miss the the place where I grew up . Australia seems a lot more familiar to me now. Relief to be out of the madness that is now Britain thanx to the Bliar/Broon deadly duo. Posted by: Cathryn • Report Comment

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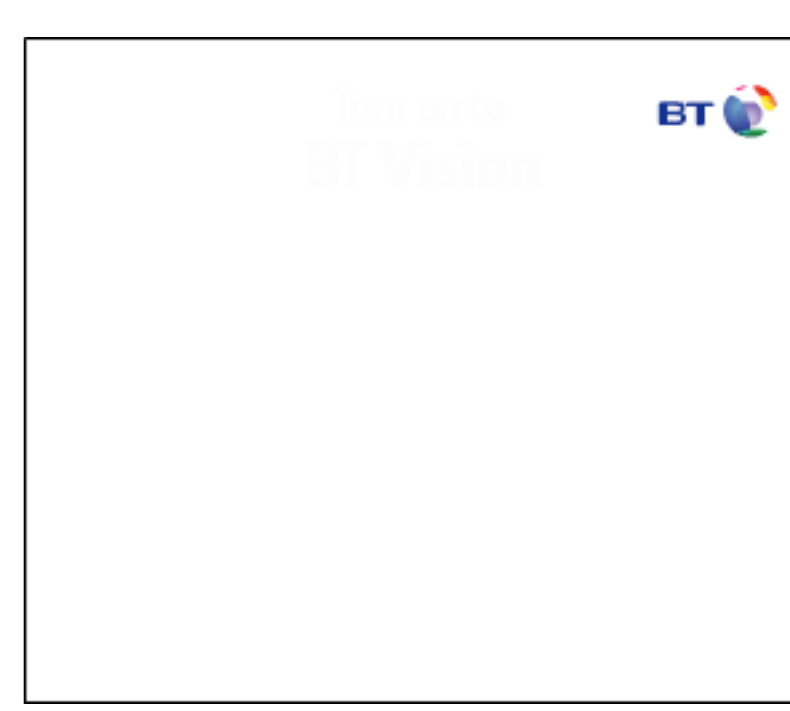
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