



BAILIWICK OF GUERNSEY LAW ENFORCEMENT

31st July 2020

Bailiwick Law Enforcement has been taking part in national week of action to encourage people to download the free app What3Words.

As part of #KnowExactlyWhere, BLEs social media channels have highlighted exactly how the app works and hopefully has encouraged more residents and visitors to install it. It may be a cliché but it's true – in an emergency seconds really do save lives; the more accurate the location a 999 caller can provide, the faster the emergency services can arrive.

what3words has divided the world into a grid of 3m x 3m squares. It has given each square a unique combination of three words - a what3words address. `///tortoises.swarm.announce`, for example, will take you to a precise location on Ben Nevis where in February 2020 a group of hikers were rescued. The app is free to download for both iOS and Android and works entirely offline – making it ideal for use in areas of the UK with an unreliable data connection. what3words can also be used via the online map at [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com). The technology is available in over 40 languages, including Welsh, and can be used anywhere in the world.

'Where's the emergency?' is one of the first questions you are asked when calling 999. But saying exactly where you are can be challenging. Emergencies can happen anywhere, from a remote beach, a cliff path or in the middle of a field. Services often can't detect where you are automatically and dropped pins are difficult to explain over the phone. Landmark-based descriptions are prone to errors and GPS coordinates are long and difficult to communicate. At best, this is a frustrating drain on resources. At worst, it can mean the difference between life and death.

Locally it has also been used several times, allowing the services to ensure their resources were sent where help was needed, fast.

Successes have included the structure fire at Beaucette Marina – where What3Words was used to identify exact location of the building and caller.

A male stating he felt suicidal and was on the cliffs, but who was unable to give his exact location, used the app – for JESCC to then realise he was in Jersey. Emergency services in Jersey were contacted and dispatched to help.

It was also used in a less serious call for a visitor reported criminal damage – they did not know the address of where they were staying so used the app.

What3Words CEO and co-founder Chris Sheldrick said: "“A 999 call could be one of the worst times of your life. Having to provide additional directions when you're under immense stress and the clock is ticking is something that we want everyone to avoid. You never know when an emergency might happen, but with what3words, you'll always be able to say exactly where help is needed - quickly and easily. We're extremely proud and humbled to see what3words being used successfully in control rooms up and down the country, and every what3words rescue that we hear about touches our team personally.”"