

Agenda Item 6

Recent Reported Crime involving Public Sport and Charitable Facilities:

During the last two months Barrowford has seen an upsurge in crime and mindless vandalism aimed at public sporting and charitable concerns.

1. Toilets at the Fleece broken into extensive damage to the rear of the co-operated locks and internal security door damaged. (Estimated cost of repairs £1000 +) suggested repairs none as the actual theft would have been in the £5-£10 region. If the store room door is broken into then it is more cost effective to lose the money than risk catastrophic damage to the locking mechanisms.
2. Break in at Pendle Heritage Centre value unknown.
3. Severe fire damage to the retaining fence and straw bales associated with the park lake dredging scheme. This scheme is funded through the Friends Group using donations from both the defunct Barrowford Show and the Barrowford Lifestyle Festival. The additional cost of rectifying this wilful damage will run into several hundred pounds and may jeopardise the overall finish of the project.
4. Break in at the Barrowford Cricket Club, thief removed and smashed a section of slates from the roof and broke through the changing room ceiling before smashing their way into the two toilets causing considerable damage to one of the new doors. Again the return would be a few cans of pop and possibly the loose change float. The estimated cost of the repairs will again be around £1000

These crimes have been reported to the police and in most cases as the property theft has been exceptionally low the reports have been noted and crime numbers given without any police presence or attempt to assess the sites for evidence. In the case of the Parish toilets a follow up email within a week intimated that the investigation had been closed.

The current Police Policy of making rural crime its priority does not reflect the financial input through the police levy of larger conurbations who contribute proportionally more than isolated rural settlements and who may have lower valued theft the damage resulting from these crimes and lack of investigation and little prosecution or conviction has led to these offences being repeated again and again.

More consideration should be given by the Police as to how this problem can be addressed as in the case of the Cricket Club, Heritage Centre and the Fleece Toilets this is the third, fourth or fifth time that significant damage has been done with the Parish Council, Charities or the Sporting Group being left to find not inconsiderable funds from an ever diminishing pot for repair work.

If the Police cannot adequately protect public buildings and property now how are they going to address the problem when the proposed 50% cut for Pendle of Community Beat Managers which are the policemen who in the past have worked in specific parts of the Borough and have a built up knowledge of their specific areas.

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The Parish Council with its limited powers can only redress the problem by constant bringing to the attention of both the Police Commissioner and the local superintendent the lack of effective policing within the Parish and the fast accumulating feeling of local residents that they are not receiving value for money from the Police Levy.