

# Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



**Community Council:**

Forth and Endrick, Balforn Community Council

**Reporting Period:**

September 2022 - Compiled by PC Steven Graham

**Ward Plan Priorities**

You may have noticed that PC Graeme McNulty compiled last month's report. He will be joining me in the Ward Officer role for the Forth and Endrick area on 12<sup>th</sup> September. Graeme was previously the School Based Officer at Balforn High School.

**Antisocial Behaviour**

There have been no reports of anti-social behaviour since the last meeting.

**Road Safety**

An RTC occurred near to Balforn Golf Club. No injury however damage was sustained to a hedge. Details were exchanged between driver and owner of hedge.

**Theft**

There have been no reports of any thefts since the last meeting.

A report was received of suspicious persons in a garden. This was investigated and it turns out it was a false alarm with good intent. These calls are always welcomed and all will be investigated.

In the recent past I was at the mobile bank in Balforn issuing advice regarding fraud. Although no reports have been received in the last month it is important to keep vigilant and not give out information the scammers will use.

**Identity theft**

Identity theft is when criminals get access to someone's personal information. They then use it to steal their identity. They could then pretend to open bank accounts, get credit cards, loans and mortgages or to claim benefits. They could even take over someone's accounts and change the address. They can steal someone's name and reputation. Then can use this to make money.

Here are a few ways which these criminals work:

- They search through rubbish to find bills or bank statements
- They target flats where shared mail boxes make theft easier
- They bribe or rob postal workers or purchase the information from other criminals
- They search through unattended bags.

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## **Warning signs**

There are a number of warning signs to look out for:

If you get bills or invoices for goods you have not ordered  
If you get collection letters for debt that isn't yours or  
There are transactions on your bank or credit card statements that you do not recognise  
Important documents such as your passport or driving licence may have been stolen.

## **Take action**

There are a number of steps you can take to avoid falling victim to identity theft:

Keep all your important documents safe and secure  
When using a credit or debit card, make sure it's never out of your sight  
Cash machines may have been tampered with. Your cards could be skimmed and cloned  
Never give out your personal details when you're contacted by phone, fax, post or email  
Always offer to ring back any suspicious callers but check the phone number you are given  
When throwing out documents which contain personal information try to shred them so that nobody could read your personal details  
Always check your bank and credit card statements. Report any transactions you don't recognise, even small amounts  
Close all accounts you no longer need  
Move your mail when moving home by arranging with the post office to forward your mail to your new address  
Get organisations to send to your new address.

If you think you might be a victim of identity theft, don't delay:

Contact your bank or building society  
Keep a record of all communication  
Report the matter to the police  
Request a copy of your credit report (such as Equifax or Experian) - you can ask for incorrect information to be removed.

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## Online Safety

There are a number of steps you can take to help make sure you don't get trapped in the web and become a victim of crime online.

- Create a separate password for your email.
- Create a strong password using three random words.
- Save your passwords in your browser.
- Turn on two-factor authentication.
- Update your devices.
- Turn on backup.

### *Practical Guidance*

## Protecting your computer

- Secure your Wi-Fi using the encryption option.
- Do not open emails from people you don't know.
- Install anti-virus / anti-spyware software and a firewall.
- Keep your computer software, web browser and security up-to-date.
- Don't use obvious passwords e.g. birthdays. Use a mixture of numbers, symbols and upper and lower case letters and use different passwords for different sites.

## Social networking

- Keep your personal information hidden.
- Set security levels so that only your friends can view your profile.
- If someone sends you an abusive message, save them and contact the forum administrator.
- Don't arrange to meet someone that you have only met online - some people might not be who they say they are.
- You should also check your privacy settings on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Cyber Aware provides essential advice on protecting yourself online from National Cyber Security Centre.

## Online finance and shopping

- Look for "https://" and the padlock image to show that the site is secure.
- Use a secure payment option such as PayPal or a dedicated pre-pay credit card for all online purchases.
- Beware of sponsored links at the top or side of search pages. These are now always reliable and can be used by criminals.
- Remember, banks and financial institutions do not send emails asking you to verify your bank details by clicking on a link. Always check with your bank.

## Get help

- If you suspect you have been a victim of cybercrime contact Police Scotland on 101 to report it.

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## Community Engagement and Reassurance

It is important to you to have community officers who you know, who are accessible and who address local problems.

PC Steven Graham is the Ward Officer for the Forth and Endrick area. They are based at Balfron Police Office and can be contacted at the office, on 101, or at [ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk](mailto:ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk). It is recommended that this email address is used by the local community for email contact.

Please remember that we regularly publish useful information and updates on social media, including appeals for information, updates about road closures and crime prevention advice. Our Facebook and Twitter pages can be found at

[www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision](http://www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision)

[www.facebook.com/policescotland](http://www.facebook.com/policescotland)

[www.twitter.com/stirlingpol](http://www.twitter.com/stirlingpol)

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