

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



Community Council:

Forth and Endrick, Balfon Community Council

Reporting Period:

October 2022 - Compiled by PC Steven Graham

Ward Plan Priorities

Antisocial Behaviour

Youths reported to be running in and out of traffic in Dunmore St, Balfon. Police attended however there was no trace.

A sofa was set on fire which had been within the woods. Enquiries continue.

Youths reported to be on the roof of Health Centre. Police attended and there was no trace.

Road Safety

There were no reportable RTCs in the Balfon area since the last meeting.

A tree fell on a vehicle in Dunmore St, Balfon. No injury was sustained however this also resulted in live electric cables being exposed. Dealt with assistance of Scottish Water and Scottish Power.

Theft

An attempt was made to steal a car in Roman Road, Balfon. Enqs continue.

There was a couple of incidents regarding residents reporting their details apparently used and receiving correspondence as a result, No monetary loss occurred however please see below re identity theft and the other advice re fraud.

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What basic steps can I take to protect my home?

The evenings are getting darker earlier and it is a time where traditionally housebreakings can occur. Having your home broken into is not common. There are however many ways that you can help secure your home. They don't all cost money – some are common sense and good housekeeping

First, think about basic good housekeeping routines that aren't expensive:

- Keep your home locked at all times
 - Many thieves do not need to break in at all because a door or window has been left open or unlocked
 - Don't leave keys on the inside of door locks, under mats or anywhere else they can be easily found
 - If you have a 'thumb turn' lock on the inside of a door, ensure that it cannot be accessed from outside
 - Don't keep house keys and car keys on the same key ring
 - Don't keep a lot of cash in the house
 - Mark your property with a UV marker pen or Security DNA marking Kit - these can be bought online or in some stores
 - Look for the Secured By Design accreditation on the product and register - you can place an invisible imprint of your postcode and house number on your possessions
 - You can record and register details of your valuables, serial numbers and features or marks, on devices on the national mobile property register on the immobilise website - this includes mobile phones, cameras, laptops and tablets
 - Don't leave valuables where they can be seen through a window - for example, around the tree at Christmas time
 - If you have a wall calendar, avoid having it shown near a window from where appointments can be seen - people may see when there will be no one in.
 - Use timer switches on lights and radios to make it look as if your home is occupied.
 - Ensure all doors and windows are secure when you leave and when you go to bed.
 - If possible use secure lighting at the front and back of your property.
 - Make sure all garden tools and ladders are locked away when not being used. Don't give the thieves the tools to break into your house
 - Use a good quality lock on any garden sheds and outhouses.
 - Make a note of all makes, models and serial numbers of expensive items in your home.
- If your house is fitted with an alarm then please use it. This is a good deterrent should thieves manage to force entry to your house.
- If you note anything suspicious in your neighbourhood report it on 101.

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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.

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.

PCs Steven Graham and Graeme McNulty are the Ward Officers 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. 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

www.facebook.com/policescotland

www.twitter.com/stirlingpol

www.twitter.com/policescotland