

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



Community Council:

Forth and Endrick, Balfron Community Council

Reporting Period:

January 2023 - Compiled by PC Steven Graham

Ward Plan Priorities

Antisocial Behaviour

Report of a disturbance within the car park of Balfron Co-op. 4 females reported to the PF for a disorder offence.

Loud party reported in Lomond Terrace, Balfron. Police attended however there was no noise on their arrival.

Road Safety

Driver skidded and struck a tree on the A811 between Ballat Crossroads and Kepculloch Toll. No injury was sustained.

A female was putting her child in the car seat in the rear of her car when a van struck the open door which in turn struck her. Van failed to stop after incident. No serious injury was sustained. Enquiries are continuing to trace the van.

Theft

There has been no thefts in the Balfron area since the last meeting however a theft by housebreaking occurred in the Killearn area and tools, quad bikes and machinery were stolen from a yard in the Gartness area.

Please be vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

Police Service of Scotland

Community Council Report



Vehicle safety – Getting winter ready

Prepare for the winter by keeping your vehicle well maintained before you take to the road. Take special care that brakes, tyres, lights, batteries, windscreens and wiper blades are in good condition. In addition, washer bottles need to contain an additive to stop the water from freezing.

Tyres should also be checked weekly to ensure they are legal and at the correct pressure (consult your vehicle handbook). The minimum legal tread depth for cars is 1.6mm across the centre 3/4 of the breadth of the tread around the entire circumference. They should also be checked for bulges, cuts or tears which weaken the tyre. Failure to maintain your tyres could lead to a maximum of £2,500 fine and 3 penalty points per tyre.

Make sure your windows are clean, properly demisted and clear of snow and ice before you drive. Also make sure that your roof is clear of snow as this affects drivers behind you and can also cause obstructions on your windscreen when braking. Be careful with low sun as it can make it difficult to see and a dirty, greasy or damaged windscreen can make this worse.

All lights must be kept clean and clear and be in good working order, including registration plate lights. Use the help of someone to check that all of your lights are working.

Consider keeping an emergency kit in your car for severe weather, this should at least include:

- An ice scraper and de-icer
- A shovel for snow
- A torch and spare batteries
- Warm clothes, boots and a blanket
- Some food and a warm drink in a flask
- A first aid kit
- Battery jump leads
- A map or device with offline maps for any unplanned diversions.

In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. Aquaplaning can be a frightening experience; this is where a wedge of water builds up between the front tyres and the road surface. If this happens, the safest solution is to remove pressure from the accelerator, allowing the vehicle to lose speed which will help the tyres regain their grip.

Ice and snow can increase stopping distances by up to ten times so keep well back from the vehicle in front. Anticipate when you will need to be stopping and be alert to other road users. When the roads are icy, drive at a slow speed in as high a gear as possible; accelerate and brake very gently.

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



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.

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



Fraud -

Fraudsters can make contact with you by phone. The caller might pretend to be from your bank and ask for personal information such as bank details or they might be someone offering you a deal or a prize. Other calls have been made by persons purporting to be from HMRC stating that there was a warrant out for the receiver of the call and was asked to contact the number that was given. This is clearly a false call so please heed the below advise:

- Consider making your phone number ex-directory.
- Don't give out any personal information unless you are the one who made the call and you are certain of the identity of the person you are speaking to.
- Don't give out your credit card or bank card details to strangers on the telephone.
- NEVER tell somebody your bank PIN number, even if they claim to be the bank or police. If the caller is genuine they will never ask for this information.
- Don't give out information which may infer that you live alone, are older or vulnerable.
- Never send money to anyone who claims to have a prize for you.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Contact local trading standards – they may be able to use approved 'call blocking' technology

Online shopping/action frauds

To help keep yourself safe, here are a few golden rules to follow.

So much of our daily routine is now online. There's banking, shopping and social networking. Criminals are also going online to exploit people. Using the internet to buy goods or services is now so easy.

Unfortunately, fraudsters use online shopping scams. They can hide their identity and target many victims at the same time.

Your online transactions can be targeted by criminals and fraudsters. This is because you cannot see who you are paying money to.

Fraudster either advertise products that do not exist or agree to buy items and then not paying for them. This is done on sites such as eBay, Gumtree, Depop and Schpock.

The most common items in these scams are electronics and vehicles. Tickets are also advertised at prices below regular market prices.

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



When making fake purchases, fraudsters will send fake confirmations of payment to the victim of the scam. This could be a fake PayPal email.
The following tips will help you enjoy a secure online shopping experience.

Choose carefully where you shop

Use a credit card for online payments

Only provide enough details to complete your purchase

Check your bank and credit card statements regularly

Check the correct amount has been debited

Query any suspicious payments with your bank or credit card provider immediately

Keep your accounts secure

Watch out for suspicious emails, calls and text messages.

Use a strong password or passphrase.

Your password should be at least 12 characters long

The password should contain a mixture of letters, numbers and symbols

Never give personal or sensitive details out online or over email

Make sure all devices have the latest anti-virus software and a firewall installed

Keep software and apps regularly updated

Only download from legal, trusted websites

Only open emails and attachments from known and trusted sources

Check the address starts with 'https://' whenever you're asked to enter sensitive information online

Avoid using public Wi-Fi hotspots that are not secure.

Don't use if they ask you for personal information to access public Wi-Fi

Regularly back up your data

Control your social media accounts

Regularly check your privacy settings and how your data is being used and shared

Be extremely cautious if you're asked for money.

Police Service of Scotland Community Council Report



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's Steven Graham and Graeme McNulty are the Ward Officer for the Forth and Endrick area. They are based at Balforn 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 however this should not be used to report crimes.

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