

Kirk and Little Smeaton Parish Councils



Alert

TO ALL SMEATONS' RESIDENTS

On the 22nd of December at approximately 02.00 am a family on Manor Close, Kirk Smeaton was subjected to a dreadful burglary at their home.

There has been considerable debate generally about this burglary, and we are delivering this letter to every household in order to confirm actual facts and hopefully to scotch rumours and allay fears. This message is intended to make people aware, not to scare.

This account has the family's full support and we would like to pay tribute to their bravery in reliving the whole episode and giving such a candid account of all the sordid details. There is also extensive CCTV footage showing the whole event.

The family were roused at 2 am by the sound of crashing glass, this was their front door being smashed by 4 men all wearing the same clothes, balaclavas; gloves; jackets etc. Please note, the robbers did not appear to be armed. The weapon they used to smash the glass was a stone ornament the couple had in their front garden.

The homeowner ran downstairs leaving his wife and daughter upstairs in the bedroom. The homeowner witnessed men trying to get into his home, they were aggressively shouting and using extremely foul language asking for the keys and if he did not give them the keys he would be killed. The burglar alarm was sounding and this did not deter the perpetrators at all neither did calls for help. They were determined to make entry regardless of any alerts to the neighbours.

At this point the homeowner ran back up the stairs, his wife called the police, a 999 call at approximately 2.15 am, the homeowner opened the front bedroom window and was shouting "help" to try to raise neighbour support. The 4 men saw this and threw a further rock up to the bedroom window, smashing this window and sending shards of glass across the bedroom.

The family exited their home via an upstairs back bedroom window and sat on a ledge above their conservatory. The men were able to gain access into the house and obtained keys for the two cars parked outside in the driveway. It appears the prime motive for this burglary was to steal the Audi S3 as nothing was taken from the home, although the wife's handbag was emptied onto the floor, no purse was taken or credit cards. The men took the car keys to the wife's car but did not take the car. **The only thing they stole was the Audi S3.**

This car was driven to Brierley then to Royston where it was left. As the car had a tracker, it was quickly found by the police, once again nothing was stolen from the car. At approximately 2.30 one policeman arrived in a car.

This incident is by far the worst but by no means the only crime we have suffered across our villages this year. Both Parish Councils have agreed to put Rural Crime on the January Parish Council agenda and will be working together on a joint plan of action.

WHAT ARE WE DOING IMMEDIATELY?

- Approach the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner; Selby DC and our Community Police representative to request meeting/s to discuss the increasing number of incidents in our area. What can they do to increase their presence in our villages? what crime reduction schemes/initiatives already exist? which are the most successful for rural communities and is there evidence of positive outcomes and reduction in crime when used.
- We believe that the motive appears to be stealing a car to order. Therefore, we want to consult with the police about how criminals find their target vehicles and addresses, and what preventative steps are recommended.
- Consider the formation of a robust Neighbourhood Watch Group.
Is there an appetite for this, as we will need village volunteers?
- The family have kindly agreed to speak at a public meeting if needed and we will be organising this when Covid restrictions and evidence of transmission has eased.

Please Note

- ❖ If a dreadful crime like this is repeated in the villages, when calling 999 mention the possibility of an “armed attack” this results in a different response with more police presence. One man would be somewhat ineffective against 4!
- ❖ Check again burglar alarms, door and window locks, secure precious items both inside the home and in outbuildings.
- ❖ Lock cars in driveways (if a garage cannot be used) ensuring all precious cargo is removed or not visible.
- ❖ The fire service recommend you keep keys in the door to gain a quick exit if there is a fire. The police advise you to remove keys from doors and keep hidden as far as possible.
Everyone needs to make their own choice.

We will keep residents informed of progress by a multitude of communication methods, WhatsApp groups, Parish Council Facebook pages, the Smeatons’ Magazine and more flyers as necessary.

CLlr Tricia Storey – Chair, Kirk Smeaton Parish Council

CLlr Gillian Ivey – Chair, Little Smeaton Parish Council

January 2022