



WILLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to Parish Council Mrs D Bird
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18th September 2025

BY EMAIL

James Vaughan, Chief Constable Devon & Cornwall Police
Alison Hernandez, Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner

Dear Chief Constable Vaughan and Police & Crime Commissioner Hernandez,

Formal Complaint re Police Handling of Criminal Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour reported in Willand

In June and July this year (2025) a number of incidents of criminal damage occurred in the Jubilee Field in Willand and were reported online to the Police by the Clerk. A crime number was allocated to each report. Some of the incidents were captured on CCTV and the Village Hall provided the footage to the Police where available. The reports were apparently picked up by Police Officers based in Exeter rather than the local police station and in all cases the Officer decided that they were unable to investigate the incidents further as either there was no witnesses or CCTV evidence available or the CCTV available was not sufficient to identify individuals. No recognition that a visit to the area by a police officer to speak to children in the field who would undoubtedly identify the offender(s).

There are costs to the Council and hence the local taxpayer when items are damaged and repairs or replacement are required.

Details of the damage are below:

1. 07/06 – Rocker damaged in play area, broken off at ground level (Spring). Not a simple repair and would likely require a full replacement at a cost of approx. £2,500 due to its age and the likelihood of being able to source a full replacement spring. There was a charge of £30 to remove the rocker and make good the ground area. The play area is too far away to provide any useful CCTV footage. A couple of adult females were seen using the new double seesaw but it is unclear if they used the smaller rocker. These items are for the use of young children only. Due to the cost and the availability of other items in the play area the Parish Council decided not to replace the item. (Crime Ref 50250154798)
2. 10/06 – The new wire mesh laid over the pump track drainage to stop stones being picked up and thrown around was ripped up at two of the drainage areas. The original mesh for all areas cost £335 including fitting. The mesh had to be fully replaced over one drain due to the damage caused and repaired over the second drain at a cost of £148. CCTV shows two individual wearing hoodies causing the damage. The Police Officer deemed that it would be very difficult to identify the culprits from the footage and that there are no suitable lines of enquiry so it was not considered proportionate to progress further. (Crime Ref 50250154798)

3. 13/06 – Bin by Pump Track came off mounting. CCTV shows that the bin just fell off and no one was near it at the time, so it is likely that it came off later on due to damage caused at some earlier point. The Village Hall were unable to find anything on CCTV. (Crime Ref 50250154798)
4. 21/06 – Pump Track safety sign pulled off and discarded. This was repaired at a cost of £30 but is in poor condition. CCTV is unclear but does appear to show someone, who is not clearly identifiable, removing the sign. (Crime ref: 50250159468)
5. 16/07 – Spraying of graffiti on the footpath. The Village Hall were unable to locate any CCTV of the incident. Cost to remove £46. The Police Officer advised that without having anyone linked to the offence or a way to find them, they were not going to be able to investigate any further, but to keep reporting incidents so they can get a picture of any antisocial behaviour or issues within the area. (Crime ref: 50250182858)

Although not directly impacting the Parish Council there have been some Facebook posts highlighting assault, verbal abuse, theft of a watch and general anti-social behaviour by a particular individual at the Jubilee Field. It is not known whether the incidents were reported to the Police. The Parish Council, if approached, will always encourage the reporting of any crime.

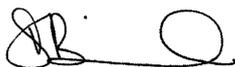
The Parish Council is disappointed at the Police's failure to carry out any investigation into these crimes and the message this sends to the perpetrators. In addition, there appears to be a lack of locally based Police Officer involvement or contact as these reports appear to have been picked up by Police Officer's in Exeter rather than the local police station

It was also noted that when Mid Devon District Council requested that a Police Officer attend with them to visit residents over the removal of vehicles from the site of a new development in Willand resources were found to accommodate this although the crimes committed as set out above are not to be investigated.

Finally, it used to be the case that local officers would attend Parish Council meetings on a regular basis. The last time an officer attended was in February 2024, at the request of the Parish Council and he advised at that time that he was happy to attend at least annually. When emailed to ask if he would attend this February's meeting there was no response.

I would ask that you respond to the concerns raised and advise what action is being or will be taken to address incidents of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour in our village.

Yours sincerely



Debbie Bird
Clerk to Willand Parish Council