



ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE SECURE?

Melissa Toombs investigates greenkeeping theft and offers advice on golf club security

Padraig Harrington has just won The Open at Carnoustie and suddenly thousands of young hopefuls can be seen on golf courses across the globe, aspiring to follow in his footsteps.

The popularity of this Championship increases year on year, mainly due to its increased media exposure. However, as the sport's popularity increases, so does criminal awareness that golf equals rich rewards.

The aftermath of burglary can be an overwhelming stressful time. Lost machinery can incur considerable costs, add to that the hassle of acquiring replacement machinery at short notice, valuable time spent talking to the police and your insurance company, the possibility of having to attend court and, being lumbered with a hefty increase in premiums.

Burglaries tend to either be planned by thieves who are targeting specific machinery to sell on, or those who may have noticed a weakness in the club's security system and fancy their chances. However, there is always the opportunist thief who may act on impulse after noticing an unattended piece of machinery that happens to still have the keys in its ignition.

The main issue it seems, is that many properties within a golf club are vacant during the day with greenkeepers having to work quite a distance away from their facilities.

So what preventative steps can we take to ensure our machinery and belongings are secure while we are out on the course?

IDENTIFICATION

Ideally golf clubs should invest in an organisation offering property marking and asset registration services. If money is an issue, an ultra-violet pen can be used to mark your equipment, however, a UV Mark can fade in time.

Marking your equipment can help with Police tracking and, at the same time, make life a lot harder for the thieves selling the goods on.

BARRIERS

Automatic barriers provide effective control of vehicle access and more

and more golf clubs are having them fitted. There are various types of safety barrier, rising road blocks, automatic gates etc.

It is also possible to lead thieves through an alarmed route by building ditches and blocking unnecessary tracks around the golf club.

CCTV

Closed Circuit Television is an extremely useful tool for both monitoring and deterring criminal activity. The only downside to CCTV is that it is costly. CCTV cameras need proper maintenance, the lenses need to be kept clean, the correct area of the golf course needs to remain covered and the tapes need to be changed daily.

ALARMS

Alarm Systems are a popular, effective deterrent against burglary. However, it is always best to seek advice from your local Police when investing in a system, as various types of alarm are available from wireless – which sends radio signals to a central control panel that activates either an audible alarm, flashing lights or fills the building with dense smoke, to signalling alarms - which alert your local Police that an offence is taking place at your premises.

LOCATION

If your club is planning a new machinery facility then it is worth discussing a change of location. Machinery sheds should be placed as near to the clubhouse or hotel as possible, where most staff, members and guest will be situated – their presence acting as a deterrent. It is also important to keep this area free from trees and shrubs etc, which provide ideal cover for thieves.

MACHINERY

It is of utmost importance that all ignition keys are removed and securely locked away when machinery is not in use.

Towing eye locks enable a number of units to be chained together, while wheel clamps and wall locks also prove useful for securing equipment.

