

Anonymous correspondence from a member of the public:

Dear Sir/madam/automated telephone answering service

Having spent the past twenty minutes waiting for someone at Leith police station to pick up a telephone I have decided to abandon the idea and try e-mailing you instead. Perhaps you would be so kind as to pass this message on to your colleagues in Leith by means of smoke signal, carrier pigeon or ouija board.

As I'm writing this e-mail there are eleven failed medical experiments (I think you call them youths) in West Cromwell Street which is just off Commercial Street in Leith. Six of them seem happy enough to play a game which involves kicking a football against an iron gate with the force of a meteorite. This causes an earth shattering CLANG! which rings throughout the entire building. This game is now in its third week and as I am unsure how the scoring system works, I have no idea if it will end any time soon.

The remaining five walking abortions are happily rummaging through several bags of rubbish and items of furniture that someone has so thoughtfully dumped beside the wheelie bins. One of them has found a saw and is setting about a discarded chair like a beaver on speed. I fear that it's only a matter of time before they turn their limited attention to the bottle of Calor gas that is lying on its side between the two bins. If they could be relied on to only blow their own arms and legs off then I would happily leave them to it. I would even go so far as to lend them the matches. Unfortunately they are far more likely to blow up half the street with them and I've just finished decorating the kitchen.

What I suggest is this. after replying to this e-mail with worthless assurances that the matter is being looked into and will be dealt with, why not leave it until the one night of the year (probably bath night) when there are no mutants around then drive up the street in a panda car before doing a three point turn and disappearing again. This will of course serve no other purpose than to remind us what policemen actually look like.

I trust that when I take a claw hammer to the skull of one of these throwbacks you'll do me the same courtesy of giving me a four month head start before coming to arrest me.

I remain sir, your obedient servant
??????????

Mr ??????,

I have read your e-mail and understand your frustration at the problems caused by youths playing in the area and the problems you have encountered in trying to contact the police.

As the Community Beat Officer for your street I would like to extend an offer of discussing the matter fully with you.

Should you wish to discuss the matter, please provide contact details (address / telephone number) and when it may be suitable.

Regards

PC ???
?????????????
Community Beat Officer

Dear PC ?????

First of all I would like to thank you for the speedy response to my original e-mail. 16 hours and 38 minutes must be a personal record for Leith Police station and rest assured that I will forward these details to Norris McWhirter for inclusion in his next book.

Secondly I was delighted to hear that our street has its own community beat officer. May I be the first to congratulate you on your covert skills. In the five or so years I have lived in West Cromwell Street, I have never seen you. Do you hide up a tree or have you gone deep undercover and infiltrated the gang itself? Are you the one with the acne and the moustache on his forehead or the one with a chin like a wash hand basin? It's surely only a matter of time before you are headhunted by MI5.

Whilst I realise that there may be far more serious crimes taking place in Leith such as smoking in a public place or being a Muslim without due care and attention, is it too much to ask for a policeman to explain (using words of no more than two syllables at a time) to these twats that they might want to play their strange football game elsewhere. The pitch behind the Citadel or the one at DKs are both within spitting distance as is the bottom of the Albert Dock.

Should you wish to discuss these matters further you should feel free to contact me on ??? ???. If after 25 minutes I have still failed to answer, I'll buy you a large one in the Compass Bar.

Regards
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P.S If you think that this is sarcasm, think yourself lucky that you don't work for the cleansing department.