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*Delivered free to 45,000 homes in Weston and the villages*

# The Gazette

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## BEAT ARSON IN SCHOOLS

A life saving campaign to install sprinkler systems in schools has been launched by local MP John Penrose. Installing the sprinklers, which automatically spray water onto fires, will save millions of pounds in damage.

John has tabled a Parliamentary motion calling on the Government to promote the safety devices in all new schools and those undergoing major refurbishment. His proposals are an attempt to beat the thugs and arsonists who are putting children's lives in danger.



*What price a child's life?*

John said: "Last year an arson attack resulted in serious damage to Wyvern Community School. Thankfully no one was seriously hurt or killed, but it caused major upheaval to the students and staff at the school. The blaze, started deliberately, gutted the dance studio and caused more than £100,000 of damage

"Unfortunately, cases of this kind are not uncommon. In the past five years there have been nearly 150 arson attacks on schools in the old Avon area.

"Across the country, over 2,000 schools a year suffer school fires. The majority are set deliberately. School fires cost an estimated £67 million in 2005. In the first six

months of 2006 alone the cost of school fires in the UK reached £52 million.

"As a first stage, I want the Government to consider installing sprinklers and better fire alarms in all new school buildings and in those being redeveloped. The financial savings alone, particularly regarding insurance premiums, could make this approach cost neutral.

"More importantly, they save lives."

**In North Somerset, sprinklers are installed in just five of its seventy nine schools.**



*There are over 2,000 school fires every year*

## Crackdown On Cowboy Bailiffs

**The behaviour of cowboy bailiffs is a national scandal says MP John Penrose.**

He is campaigning in Parliament for tough legislation to control the behaviour of bailiffs. His campaign has the active backing of the Citizens Advice Bureau and has attracted cross party support.

John said: "I am regularly contacted by local residents who have been harassed, intimidated and overcharged by bailiffs.

"There are some real horror stories. Our local CAB has exactly the same experiences. But the behaviour of bailiffs is not a problem that is unique to Weston or North Somerset. It is a national scandal.

"At a local level we have been raising both specific cases

and the generalities with Liberata and the Council. But we need national action too.

"The Government's latest proposals increase bailiffs' powers of entry. But they do nothing to establish a national code of conduct or set up a watchdog with some proper teeth and decent investigative powers.

"There are plenty of well-run and reputable bailiff firms, but voluntary codes of conduct and industry guidelines don't work on the cowboy operators.

"Many of those who come to my surgery are in a desperately vulnerable state. They need the chance to sort out and repay their debts without fear of bullying and harassment."



**John Penrose MP - Working for you all year round**