

## **The Oasis Centre - Cornwall**

Registered Charity Number 1139355, founded to serve the communities in the parishes of St Columb Major, St Mawgan-in-Pydar, St Eval and St Ervan



### **Looking Out for ..... Purses and Wallets**

Number 02 in a series of notes on important issues.

What do you keep in your purse or wallet? No need to answer that question out loud – just think about what your answer might be. In your mental list, cash and credit / debit cards will probably appear. That, after all, is what purses and wallets are for. What else is there? To be more specific and to provide a clue, what would the other things that you keep in your purse or wallet disclose about you if it was lost or stolen?

A lady went shopping recently and, surprise, surprise, she went to the supermarket. At the checkout, she could not find her purse. Had she dropped it? Had she left it at home by mistake? She might have left it in the trolley when she was reaching up to a high shelf (we would never do that of course). Had it been stolen? It was all very embarrassing and she had to go home without her shopping. Her purse was not at home. Wisely, she called her bank to report the loss of her credit card.

Later that same morning, she received a call from the supermarket. Good news, they had found her purse. There did not seem to be a lot of money in it but her card was there. Could she collect it from till 3 before that staff member (Susan) was off duty in a couple of hours? No problem, she could be there in an hour.

The man on till 3 at the supermarket was mystified. He had no purse for her. To complicate matters, there was no staff member there called Susan and no other staff member had called anyone about a lost purse.

The solution to the mystery was discovered when the lady got back home to find that she had been burgled and a number of valuable items stolen. The contents of her purse had included her house key and a helpful note giving her name, address and telephone number!

The moral behind this tale is that it pays to ensure that, if your purse or wallet is stolen, that is all that the criminal will get. Pickpockets and opportunistic sneak thieves can be found everywhere, particularly where there are crowds, and they are quick and clever. There is no need to add your address to their haul. The police advise, for instance, that you are not required to carry your driving licence, which bears your address. You have seven days to produce it when asked.

Last, at the risk of stating the obvious, a note in your purse or wallet giving the password for your credit or debit card is gold dust for a thief. You may also have trouble recovering your loss following their fraudulent use of your card.

Jeremy Simmonds, Chair, The Oasis Centre - Cornwall