

## Soccer club 'sickened' by weekend vandalism

MEMBERS of a local soccer club have been left "sickened to the core" by vandalism at their grounds. Fencing was dismantled last Friday night at the St Joseph's AFC grounds at the Williamstown Sports Complex. The club had erected the fencing around their pitch along with benches for both teams to sit on during games. Along with keeping spectators off the pitch, the fencing provided advertisement opportunities for sponsors. In a Facebook post, the club said they were "sickened to the core" that a "select few" had decided to vandalise and steal fencing. "They went to the hard work of dismantling it and storing it in waste ground to obviously come back and collect it again under darkness - fencing that we as a club fundraised and borrowed money to get erected which cost our club over €5,000." The club has pointed out that it is run on a fully voluntary basis. "All of the clubs in the Williamstown Sports Complex are all run on a 100 per cent voluntary basis," the club said. "It's very hard to fund these clubs but we all do it no questions asked."



Some of the fencing which was stored on waste ground for later collection.

The club said an "untold amount of damage" had been caused to the grounds that "normal law-abiding citizens" come from near and far to use. "We even gave back to the community and had guys that were out of work employed to paint this fencing over a few weeks," the club said. This is the latest incident to occur at the Williamstown Sports Complex which has been plagued by anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in recent years. Earlier this year, Cllr Adam Wyse (FF) said that threats made by knife wielding children were among the litany of issues continuing to plague the sports facility. He outlined a string of incidents which have occurred including fences being cut; rubbish dumped; fires started; gates pulled off hinges; horses brought onto pitches; blocks thrown at teams; intimidation of coaches; threats made by knife wielding children younger than 14; and other damage to property. Cllr Wyse, who is Chairman of Red Star FC which uses the complex, said there have been "huge problems" at the complex and that those responsible for causing disruption must be held accountable. He has highlighted that around 400 people use the complex every week, consisting of many volunteers and various different age groups.