

# Stratton St. Margaret



## **Vandals in sickening park attack**

Vandals smeared dogs' mess over benches and statues in a rose-planted park leaving a disgusting sight for walkers. Three bin bags of dog poo were emptied from bins and spread around Merton Fields in Stratton. Statues of the lifecycle of a butterfly, designed by children of Beechcroft Infant School, were daubed with mess as well as seats left covered in faeces. The vandals made the disturbing mess on Friday night, and the parish council was notified on Saturday morning. Kathleen Cattell, 72, of Upper Stratton, who visits the park every day, was upset at the desecration of the manicured park. "I could not believe what I saw," she said. As I walked around I kept seeing more and more mess. There are only three seats and they ruined every one" said Kathleen Cattell. "They just attacked the dog bins and emptied them. Something has to be done to bring whoever did this to realise they cannot do this."

A Swindon Council worker spent four hours on Saturday picking up the mess. Wearing gloves he used a high-pressure jet and disinfectant. Stratton St Margaret Parish Council clerk Bob Blake said ratepayers would have to foot the clean-up bill. He said: "It is totally unacceptable that people would do this. "The clean-up will cost a lot of money and our staff spend a lot of time keeping the park immaculate. It is very saddening. "We cannot prevent it happening as it is up to the police. "It is an absolutely brilliant park and must be one of the nicest in Swindon. The butterfly sculptures are lovely and have remained vandal-free until now." He said the park had a problem with youths drinking there at weekends. Merton Fields, which lies off Beechcroft Road, has had extensive regeneration thanks to the Countryside Agency, now known as Natural England, with lottery funding. The area has also been planted with many wildflowers and has a small copse of trees.

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