# Four children arrested after vandalism of phone box near Thetford’s Dad’s Army Museum



### Rising Tide of Vandalism: Incident in Thetford Echoes Wider Concerns

In a troubling development for the community of Thetford, Norfolk, four children under the age of 18 have been arrested following the vandalism of a local phone box, specifically targeting the structure near the Dad’s Army Museum. This incident, which took place on the evening of April 3, resulted in the shattering of five panes of glass, prompting a swift response from the Norfolk Constabulary who were alerted at 9.30 PM. The local police have since confirmed that the suspects were detained on suspicion of criminal damage and have been referred to the Youth Offending Team for tailored guidance and support alongside their families.

This latest act of vandalism is not an isolated incident. Not far from Thetford, the last remaining red telephone box in North Walsham suffered similar damage in December 2023, a reminder of both the novelty and the fragility of these historical structures. The mayor of North Walsham, Bob Wright, expressed his disappointment over the vandalism, highlighting the Grade II listed status of the phone box and the expectation of repairs. Such incidents have led to increased scrutiny regarding the behaviour of youths in local communities.

Adding to the alarm is a history of youth-related criminal activities in Thetford, including a series of burglaries that saw four teenagers apprehended in late 2022 after multiple thefts from local businesses. These incidents, along with recent reports of violence associated with youth crime—such as a robbery in September 2023 that resulted in injuries for several victims—paint a concerning picture of escalating anti-social behaviour in the area.

Moreover, incidents of vandalism are not limited to isolated phone boxes or local businesses; they reflect wider societal issues. Earlier this year, a group of teenagers vandalised a yurt used for a community playgroup, damaging property that served as a safe space for families. Even in Haverhill, another town within the same region, a phone box was similarly vandalised, prompting police calls for public assistance to identify those responsible. Such repeated occurrences highlight the urgent need for community engagement in addressing youth behaviour and supporting preventative measures.

According to local law enforcement, the four individuals arrested in the latest incident have been released on bail with strict conditions that prohibit them from entering the town centre. This decision underscores the seriousness with which the police and community leaders view the ongoing trend of vandalism and its implications for public safety.

With phone boxes once regarded as iconic fixtures of British urban landscapes becoming victims of wanton destruction, community members are left to consider how best to foster a sense of responsibility and respect among the younger generations. The involvement of the Youth Offending Team represents a proactive step towards rehabilitation, but it also raises questions about the collective responsibility of society in guiding youth away from crime.

As Thetford grapples with this troubling trend, the situation serves as a critical reminder of the importance of community cohesion and youth engagement in addressing the root causes of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25148099.four-children-arrested-phone-box-smashed-thetford/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/24018227.last-red-telephone-box-north-walsham-gets-vandalised/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.norfolklive.co.uk/news/norfolk-news/gang-teens-arrested-after-thetford-7827034), [[4]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/thetford/two-teenagers-arrested-after-town-attacks-which-injured-thre-9332136/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23398450.teenage-vandals-break-wildings-play-centre-thetford/), [[6]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/high-street-phone-box-vandalised-9225780/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25148099.four-children-arrested-phone-box-smashed-thetford/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25148099.four-children-arrested-phone-box-smashed-thetford/?ref=rss)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25148099.four-children-arrested-phone-box-smashed-thetford/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/news/24018227.last-red-telephone-box-north-walsham-gets-vandalised/> - In December 2023, North Walsham's last remaining red telephone box was vandalised. The phone box, located in Church Street, was found with smashed glass and police tape around it. The incident occurred shortly after the town's Christmas tree was stolen. North Walsham's mayor, Bob Wright, expressed disappointment over the damage, noting the box's Grade II listing by Historic England and the expectation of repairs. A man in his 20s was arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and possession of an offensive weapon, later released on bail until February 2024.
3. <https://www.norfolklive.co.uk/news/norfolk-news/gang-teens-arrested-after-thetford-7827034> - In November 2022, four teenagers were arrested following a series of burglaries at a business in Thetford. The incidents occurred on King Street, with unknown suspects forcing entry into the premises on three occasions. The first burglary resulted in approximately £400 worth of stock and £180 in cash being stolen. The second and third incidents involved additional thefts. The teenagers were questioned on suspicion of burglary and released on police bail. The total amount of stock stolen was not specified.
4. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/thetford/two-teenagers-arrested-after-town-attacks-which-injured-thre-9332136/> - In September 2023, two teenage boys were arrested on suspicion of robbery following a series of attacks in Thetford that injured three people. The incidents occurred between 11pm on Sunday and 1am on Monday, with victims in King Street, Minstergate, and White Hart Street. A woman in her 30s sustained minor injuries, while a man in his 20s was seriously injured and taken to Addenbrooke’s Hospital. A man in his 30s suffered a head injury. The teenagers were taken to Wymondham Police Investigation Centre for questioning and released on police bail until December 18.
5. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23398450.teenage-vandals-break-wildings-play-centre-thetford/> - In March 2023, a group of teenagers vandalised and stole items from a yurt used by a playgroup in Thetford. The incident occurred at the Wildlings site in the Charles Burrell Centre during the early hours of Friday morning. The yurt was cut open with a knife, and cushions, rugs, and equipment were stolen. The owner expressed disappointment over the damage, noting the impact on the family-friendly and safe space. Norfolk Constabulary was called to the scene, and enquiries were ongoing.
6. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/high-street-phone-box-vandalised-9225780/> - In November 2021, a phone box in High Street, Haverhill, was vandalised, prompting a police appeal for witnesses. The glass in the box, located next to Saffron Insurance and the entrance to the path leading to St Mary's Church, was smashed at about 7pm on Saturday. Suffolk police urged anyone who witnessed the incident or had knowledge of the responsible parties to contact them, quoting reference 37/64181/21. Alternatively, individuals could contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via their online form.
7. <https://timesofmalta.com/article/police-called-colonial-era-red-phone-box-found-pieces.1094452> - In November 2023, a British-era red phone box was demolished by a reversing delivery truck in Merchants Street, Valletta. The incident occurred at 8.40am, and the driver remained on-site to assist with investigations. The Culture Minister stated that the historic phone booth would be re-assembled and restored under the supervision of the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage. The red phone boxes, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935, were given Grade II protection in 2001, with plans announced in 2018 to restore the 11 examples found in Valletta.