PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 November 2026

BPRCVS devastated by break-in at much-loved Gannow Community Centre

Community café temporarily closed as police investigate damage and theft

BPRCVS has delivered services at Gannow Community Centre for more than 10 years, with strong support from local residents. On 11 November 2026, the Centre was broken into and items were stolen. The front and side doors were badly damaged, the kitchen appeared to have been searched for valuables, and an attempt had been made to break into the office.

Fortunately, staff had secured the television and other valuable items in the office or removed them from the Centre.

"We have had to close the popular community café for now whilst the damage is assessed, Police Crime Scenes Officers investigate, and we try to pick up the pieces after this destructive break in. Local people will lose out on their affordable breakfast and lunch as well as being unable to socialise in a warm, friendly atmosphere. It is very sad."
Jackie Oakes, BPRCVS Chairman

The Centre's history and community role

Gannow Community Centre was owned by Lancashire County Council for many years and faced closure around 10 years ago. Councillor Charlie Briggs and others approached Gannow Big Local, a resident-led group that had received a £1 million grant from the National Lottery's Local Trust to improve the area over 10 years. Rather than take on the substantial responsibility of owning the Centre, Gannow Big Local asked BPRCVS to draw on its experience and take it on. BPRCVS agreed, and ownership was transferred.

Gannow Big Local invested heavily in the Centre, funding a new kitchen, decoration, security measures and other improvements. For many years, it also funded the free Gannow Christmas Cracker event, bringing residents together to celebrate and visit Father and Mother Christmas in their grotto.

Over the years, the Centre has hosted a wide range of activities, including Lego building, training courses, a Youth Café, youth clubs, DJ sessions and parties.

The community café began as a Wednesday soup-and-sandwich session. It developed into Winter Warmers, supporting older, isolated residents, before becoming the café it is today. BPRCVS and Gannow Big Local jointly funded this work until Gannow Big Local funding ended in 2024. Since then, the café has continued as a BPRCVS project.

Save the Centre

BPRCVS Trustees recently faced a difficult decision about whether to sell the Centre. Higher National Insurance contributions, rising energy costs and scarce funding to support volunteers and small volunteer-involving groups mean BPRCVS can no longer afford to fund it.

BPRCVS does not want the Centre to close. A former member of staff and a group of volunteers have set up a petition to help save it.

The Centre needs £150,000 a year to operate properly. If funding can be secured for the next few years, it can remain open, with bills covered, the café running, and a dedicated worker to coordinate activities and develop the support available.

"This is truly devastating. We are a charity which tries so hard to support our community. Times are hard for us all. Unfortunately, break ins like this may speed up the process of closing the Centre and selling it."

Christine Blythe, BPRCVS CEO



Gannow Community Centre in Burnley, a vital community hub operated by BPRCVS for more than a decade, has been forced to temporarily close its popular community café following a break-in on 11 November 2026. The incident caused significant damage to the building and has raised concerns about the Centre's future at a time when funding pressures are already threatening its long-term sustainability.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS supports voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations across the three districts.
- Further information: https://bprcvs.co.uk

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