

Concerns raised over brazen break-ins

An Edinburgh business owner has spoken out after his clothing shop was stolen by a balaclava-clad burglar, as concerns grow about a surge in local break-ins

David Ferguson, owner of the Andiamo clothing shop in Bruntsfield, said a burglar broke through the bottom pane of his shop door at 9pm on 1 March, escaping with the shop's till.

He said: "The bottom pane of the door was kicked in, it was a smash and grab.

"The first thing I saw getting to the shop was the lights of two police cars. Thankfully, I came up with the keys, so they didn't have to break the glass to get in.

"I'm concerned that it's going on. Several other businesses in the area have been affected."

CCTV images seen by the Local Democracy Reporting Service showed the balaclava-clad thief kicking in the panel on the door, then escaping with the till, with a trail of receipt paper blowing in the wind from the machine as he ran.

Other businesses in the area have seen break-ins in recent weeks, including Japanese restaurant Aki, which saw £100 in cash and a company credit card taken from the till on 25 February.

The card was used at the Sainsbury's in Bruntsfield soon after the break-in. The thief was caught by police soon after, but released on bail.

Marie-Clair Munro, the Conservative councillor for the local area, said: "I am horrified by the recent surge in break-ins. Such actions are unacceptable and have a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of our local businesses and the well-being of our residents.

"I will persist in raising this issue with the authorities and work towards implementing effective strategies to restore safety and peace to our community.

"These incidents have not only caused financial harm to business owners but have also instilled fear within the businesses. Residents and business proprietors deserve to feel secure in their daily lives, free from the threat of such disruptive behaviour."

Under £100 was in the Andiamo register when it was taken, but the total cost of boarding the door, replacing the glass and buying a new till ran up to £600.

Several sets of shop keys were also taken, as were a customer credit card left behind, though the till itself was found dumped behind a nearby pharmacy.

Ferguson said that Police Scotland had advised him to purchase roller blinds or metal grids to cover his shopfront.

But he said that the cost of doing so would be prohibitive, and that it would harm the appearance of his business.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter