



[Paula Brown](#)

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Standing with Southport

Paula, who lives in Southport, writes about the impact of the horrific events that have taken place in the town this week and the need for the community to stand together.

Last night I spent most of my time on the phone supporting friends, colleagues and fellow PCS members who live in Southport, witnessing the shocking scenes of a riot.

We live a few streets away from the place where a terrible tragedy took place on Monday 29 July. You never imagine that such a horrific attack will happen in your town. That such young lives will be lost. That people will be horrifically injured trying to defend children in their summer holidays who were just having fun at a summer workshop.

So when our streets were invaded by hundreds of men wearing balaclavas, and they began to tear down the walls and fences of houses near to a local mosque, none of us could believe it. On top of the tragedy, and instead of being able to focus on supporting grieving families, praying for victims still in hospital, and coming together as a community, people were locked inside their homes as a mob attacked. Waving flags the mob set fire to a police vehicle and bins. They tore down fences and walls to use as weapons and throw them at the mosque and at the police, and broke into back gardens trying to out-manoeuvre the police. Thirty nine of the police officers there were injured, some of whom only the night before had been on duty at the scene of the tragedy.

I'm struggling today to understand why anyone would want to organise a mob, and descend on my town. The mindless violence that took place was fostered by bigots who do not belong here. They have made a tragedy much worse and there

is no place for this in our society. The poor people trapped inside and around the mosque last night are innocent community members, and didn't deserve to be targeted in this way and have their property damaged.

Southport needs time to stand together to mourn those poor lost girls, and offer what help we can to their families. And that now includes supporting those affected by the violence last night, people who worship at a mosque, a temple, a church or wherever. We are an inclusive, diverse town, and we will not be divided by those who seek to use tragedy for their own ends.

We're sure everyone in PCS has the victims in our thoughts, as we send our heartfelt support and solidarity to their families and friends, and to all those caught up in the terrible events on Monday, as well as the wider community.

Please stand together with Southport.