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# Cricket club hit for six by pavilion fire

A PUB cricket team has been left homeless after a fire reduced their pavilion at Braishfield to ashes.

Thousands of pounds worth of machinery and team kit belonging to the Newport Inn Cricket Club was inside the wooden clubhouse and adjoining outbuilding, which were both destroyed in Monday evening's blaze. The fire is not being treated as suspicious by the police.

Firefighters from Romsey

**By Andy Simmonds**

and Eastleigh tackled the blaze in the 10m by 20m building at Dummers Road, which broke out at about 10.45pm.

When crew arrived, the building was already "well alight", said a Hampshire Fire and Rescue spokesperson.

Two liquid petroleum gas containers were inside the building at the time.

Newport Inn Cricket Club captain, James Light said the fire had dealt a "huge blow" to the team.

Mr Light said: "We were due to stage a six-a-side tournament on Sunday to raise funds for the club. I think we will have to cancel it because we won't be able to prepare the pitch without the machinery."

James is now appealing to anyone with spare garden machinery such as mowers, rollers, or team kit to get in touch with him.

"We lost about £5,000 worth of equipment including a tractor with gang mowers and wicket mowers that we use for the square. Furniture we had in the building has also gone in the fire."



**Ashes loser...Eric Philpott, of the Newport Inn Cricket Club, Braishfield, surveys the charred remains of the club's pavilion**

Order no: 12666846

said the 32-year-old, who went to the scene shortly afterwards.

James who has been the club's captain for the last six years, said: "It's not known how the fire started, but the police and fire services are investigating the cause. The pavilion and the outbuilding were burnt to the ground. I was shocked when I saw it. I got there at about 11pm and the

fire brigade had put the worst of it out. They were there for a good hour and a half."

One of the club's founders, Eric Philpott, said: "It's devastating. We've worked hard for years at the club to get this far. The building was put up after the Great Storm in 1987 and there was a lot of memorabilia inside it. There wasn't any mains electricity in the building. We had Calor gas, but that

was all turned off because I checked it when we were last there on Sunday. There is no reason why it should suddenly go up in flames, I think it must have been started deliberately. It's going to cost at least £15,000 to replace the building and all the equipment."

Anyone who can help the club out with equipment is asked to contact James, on 023 8073 2899.