



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Issue 10 | 1st Of April 2021

@RuralCrimeNfk

Introduction



Welcome to another newsletter. The signs are very much in the air for summer now. Longer days are here and it's now

light on the way to work in the morning. As I sit here writing this week's newsletter at the weekend, the clocks go forward and we 'spring into Spring'. Not only is the weather generally improving, the easing of Covid restrictions is potentially just around the corner. The message remains: be sensible and keep up to date with all the latest developments so you're aware of current restrictions.

I had a few days off last week which was a nice break but glad to be back and getting back into the rhythm again. I don't want to tempt fate but it has been a quieter period with the Hare Coursing season coming to its 'traditional' end, and previous weeks had been busy in preparation for the successful Chief's rural briefing. Plans are now afoot for Summer and I don't think any of us are oblivious to the fact that we are likely to see a lot more UK holidays. This of course is brilliant for our local economy, however it will also have a knock on effect for our rural areas and wildlife. Much of our work at the moment is around preparing for some of the wildlife areas where people will be visiting from outside Norfolk and unaware of the damage they may cause. We are

looking at the approach of engage, explain and educate again, similar to what has been in place over the Winter with the Covid regulations with enforcement only used for blatant wildlife crimes and persistent offenders.

Engagement Events

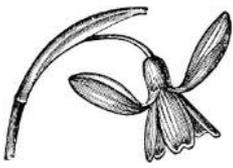


As we move into the easing of some of the lockdown restrictions, we hope to get out and about much more. We are currently considering holding surgeries at various rural locations across the county to allow people to come and discuss any rural issues. I will keep you updated as and when details are confirmed over the coming months.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

PC Chris Shelley | christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk | 07900 407106



Theft Of Snowdrops/Bluebells

I touched on this last time and whilst many Snowdrops are now coming to an end of their season, Bluebells are now starting to appear across the

county.

We have already seen the first report of Bluebells being stolen and this is currently being investigated. Again, if you see anyone collecting wild bulbs please make sure this is reported to police. Bluebells are a protected plant under the Wildlife and Countryside Act making it an offence to even pick them. All native wild plants are protected from being uprooted as well.

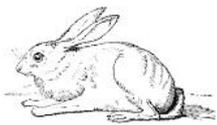


Wildlife Crime

With regards to the Buzzard that I mentioned in the last newsletter, we have confirmed that the bird didn't contain any shot. We are currently exploring whether we can do toxicology work to establish if

there is any criminality involved or it died of natural causes.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have received reports of nesting birds being disturbed when trees have been cut down. We are still a little early in the season for birds to be nesting but many Robins and Blackbirds will now be starting to setup their nests for the year. It is an offence to disturb any wild birds nest whilst in use or being built. Please be mindful when carrying out gardening work in the coming months, many of our garden/hedgerow bird populations are in decline and need our help. Also please remember that some of our native birds have a habit of nesting in unusual places — post boxes, cigarette bins and pots on walls are just a few I have seen in recent years.



Hare Coursing

I am pleased to report the 5th and final dog we had confiscated at court last month has been rehomed into a loving forever family home.

We had another court case in court on Friday 26th of March 2021 which is a case from January 2020 in Downham Market. Both men are from the Essex area and were found guilty. One man was fined £332 and the other fined £232. Both were ordered to pay court costs of £465 each. All three dogs seized were also confiscated and we will now start looking for forever homes for them too.

We have only had one report of Hare Coursing in the last fortnight. The OP Galileo season is generally seen as running from 1st of September to the end of March and we will look to provide the season stats in the coming weeks.

As always, please continue to report any suspected hare coursing because despite the 'season' coming to an end, we may see a few reports throughout the year and we will continue to take robust action.



Closed Fishing Season 15th March 2021 to 15th June

WhatsApp Group

The Operation Randall WhatsApp group is expanding. At present the group mainly consists of partner agencies, key landowners and administrators of other social media rural groups. I am currently looking at increasing the size of this group so if you meet one or more of the above criteria – work for a partner agency, key landowner or you administer another rural group on social media - or if you think you would benefit or be able to contribute in any way, I want to hear from you. You can contact me on email at christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk



Dog Thefts

Please see below a statement that we issued on social media on Friday 26th of March 2021:

We are aware of concerns and rumours circulating on social media about dogs being stolen or men in a van, including a van allegedly marked with the RSPCA logo, acting suspiciously around people out walking with their dogs.

Please know there haven't been any crimes recorded this week that relate to dog thefts nor have we received any reports of dogs being stolen from a property or while out walking with their owners over the last week. One person in North Walsham reported an incident on Saturday in which a man in a transit van asked questions about their dog while out walking. We asked them to report any further sightings to us and we haven't received any further reports of this happening.

In addition, the RSPCA has told us that a number of incidents circulating on social media claiming people are impersonating their inspectors do not appear to have been actual cases of people trying to pass as bogus officials.

It's important to know there are very few incidents whereby an RSPCA officer will approach someone in public, unless they witness animal cruelty or see an animal in immediate danger. Officers will also wear RSPCA brand clothing and always carry RSPCA identification. RSPCA officers do not have power of entry or seizure unless accompanied by a police officer.

If you're approached by someone who makes you feel concerned about you or your dog's safety or believe someone is posing as an RSPCA officer, tell us on 101. Try to give us as much detail about the person or the vehicle they were in as you can. And do not hesitate to call us on 999 if a crime is happening and you need our help.

It remains essential that any incidents of attempted dog thefts, dog thefts or similar circumstances are reported to us. We cannot build an intelligence picture of what is going on if we are not aware of it. I have been nominated as the force's point of contact in relation to tackling dog thefts and working with partner agencies and other forces in tackling the issue. Here in Norfolk our numbers of reported dog thefts remain very low and we have not seen the increases some areas of the country have seen.



Final Word

Thank you again for reading. As always the next page includes a few recent witness appeals applicable to the rural community.

– If there is anything you feel should be covered in the newsletter please get in touch! Please also note the OP Randall Newsletter will be returning to a monthly publication, with the aim to publish on the 1st of each month.
Chris



@RuralCrimeNfk

The police will never...



Contact you to ask for your PIN or bank details



Ask to withdraw cash to hand over to them for safe-keeping



Ask you transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons



Send someone to your home to collect cash, PINs, or cards

Action Fraud

Witness Appeals

Appeal after business premises targeted in Long Stratton

Police are appealing for information after six business premises were targeted by thieves in Long Stratton earlier this week.

Three shops in Swan Lane were broken into between 3am and 5am on Wednesday 24 March and cash was taken. Another three premises on Wellesley Road were broken into between the same times and tools were taken from one of the properties.

Officers believe these incidents are linked and they are appealing for anyone who may have dashcam or CCTV footage in the area to contact them.

Anyone with information should contact DC Tiffany Haggith at Norwich CID on 101 or alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Appeal after gravestone damaged (Stoke Holy Cross)

Officers are appealing for information after a gravestone at a church in Stoke Holy Cross was damaged.

The incident took place sometime between 8am on Monday 22 April and 10.30am on Wednesday 24 April at the Holy Cross Church in Norwich Road. The damage was spotted by a visitor to the churchyard who placed flowers at the gravestone and noticed a large scratch and marks, possibly caused by a hammer, as well as a large muddy footprint on the stone.

Anyone who may have seen anything suspicious during the times stated above or has information about the incident is asked to contact the Op Solve team at Norfolk Police on 101 or email investigate@norfolk.police.uk quoting crime reference 36/19086/21.

Appeal after theft and attempted theft of caravans - Attleborough and Thetford

Police are appealing for information or witnesses after the theft and attempted theft of a caravan in the Thetford and Attleborough areas that may be linked.

The first incident took place in Watton Road, Great Ellingham, on Thursday 18 March at 5pm when two unknown suspects turned up in a blue/black BMW and gained entry to a site by grinding the lock on gates and on the caravan, a Super Quattro FB Twin Axle Caravan, before being disturbed by the victim. (reference: 36/17963/21)

In the second incident, on the same evening, between 6pm and 7pm two unknown suspects in a dark-coloured BMW SUV used an angle grinder to access an industrial unit in Telford Way, Thetford, via a corrugated fence and towed the caravan out. The model of caravan, which is very rare, is a Knaus Tabbert PEP 540 2018. (reference: 36/17660/21)

Anyone with information can contact PC Christian Newbery at Norfolk Police on 101 quoting the relevant reference.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111

Police warn against illegal raves over bank holiday weekend

Police are warning anyone planning an illegal rave that they risk being fined £10,000.

It comes after officers received information about a potential event happening over the Easter bank holiday weekend.

With cases of Coronavirus still present in Norfolk and large gatherings still prohibited under the public health regulations, officers will take firm action against such events.

Organisers face a fine of £10,000 while officers also have the power to fine people attending illegal events £100.

Residents and landowners are also being urged to report suspicious activity over the Easter weekend in a bid to prevent illegal raves and unlicensed music events (UMEs).

Norfolk's County Policing Commander has said officers will not hesitate to use these powers where evidence is available.

Chief Superintendent Dave Buckley said: "Coronavirus is still with us and while we've seen the lifting of some restrictions this week, large gatherings inside or out are not permitted. These events are not only illegal but carry a significant risk of transmitting the virus. We would urge people to think twice before attending such events and will, where appropriate, take action to disrupt and shut them down."

"Experience tells us early intervention is key in prevention and disrupting these events and in the past the vigilance and response from the public has been extremely useful.

"If we receive the information when the event is already underway, we may instead monitor it to ensure as far as possible the safety of those in attendance. Vehicles trying to get on or off site will be stopped and dealt with for any offences they might be committing. Officers will not be afraid to use the powers available to them."

The tougher penalties will be used alongside existing legislation, wherever evidence is available. Members of the public and landowners can play a key role in disrupting these events by providing information to police about activity around open land or disused buildings, including;

- Any information that a rave is taking place (loud music/lights)
- Sightings of vans, lorries or large numbers of vehicles gathering near woods, rural car parks or near to disused buildings/warehouses
- Fliers advertising raves
- Broken padlocks on access gates, to areas where a rave may take place

Posts on social media advertising events

Anyone with information about an illegal rave or UME and witnesses any suspicious activity on farmland or in buildings should contact Norfolk Constabulary on 101.

CrimeStoppers. WildlifeAlert

Stop wildlife crime

Wildlife crime includes offences such as deliberately killing or abusing animals, disturbing protected species or damaging breeding and resting places, and illegally trading in endangered species.

Some wildlife crimes, such as badger-baiting, hare coursing and the illegal use of poisons and traps can cause unnecessary pain and suffering.

Additionally, attacks on farm livestock, including by dogs, and theft of livestock, are increasing. This includes sheep rustling and butchery in fields, which is a devastating crime for farmers and their businesses. It's also distressing for other livestock.

It could also have an impact on the food chain through illegal meat trading which increases the risk of contamination.

Links to major crime

Often those involved in wildlife or livestock offences are known for their links to other types of crime including anti-social behaviour, serious violence, firearms offences and organised crime. You can help to bring offenders to justice.

When you see a crime...

- Don't disturb the scene.
- Don't touch or remove dead animals or birds - you could be committing an offence.
- Record as many details as you can - date, time, location, details of anyone involved.
- If possible, take photos or record video.
- Note any vehicle registration numbers.
- Don't put yourself at risk and don't approach anyone.



A once magnificent Red Kite hunted and killed.

Just tell us what you know

If you hear of or suspect anyone is involved in wildlife or livestock crime but do not wish to talk to police, then tell Crimestoppers what you know **100% anonymously**. If you are not sure but you have a hunch that something is not right, just give us a call.

In countryside communities, people often know who's who and they may have information about crime but don't want to tell police because they fear reprisals. Crimestoppers charity can reassure them that their anonymity is guaranteed.

We won't ask for your name or any personal details, we'll just listen to what you know and pass that information on to the police. Your calls or online information can't be tracked or traced.

Contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org.

It's 100% anonymous. Always.

The only person who will know you contacted the independent charity Crimestoppers is you.

CrimeStoppers.

0800 555 111

100% anonymous. Always.