



Issue 20 | February 2022

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to another newsletter and it is with great pleasure to see the days slowly getting longer again... especially when we get some of the cold winter sun. It's been another hectic month, as always, with lots of ongoing investigations taking up my time as they naturally do. I also assisted colleagues from Downham Market to execute a joint warrant with the Environment Agency tackling illegal waste disposal. Alongside the normal day-to-day work and providing county drone cover, we have embarked on some additional training on rural crime for our OP Solve team. This is very important as they are often one of the first officers many victims of crime speak to, so it's essential they understand current issues and trends in rural crime too. I also delivered some online training to one of our cadet groups; something we hope to do in person in the future once things return to some sense of normality again, but it was great to see some young people interested in wildlife crime and of course the drone!

Theft of Calf

Police are appealing for information after a heifer calf was stolen from a farm in Salhouse overnight on Wednesday 26 January 2022.

The calf, named Betty, which was only a few days old, was in a field with its mother and other calves at a farm

in Vicarage Road, Salhouse, when she was stolen sometime between 10pm on Wednesday 26 January and 7.30am on Thursday 27 January.

Betty is a pedigree and is described as having white body, black ears, nose and feet (similar to the photo of one of its cousins pictured). It has the ear tag with reference 700101 on it.

PC Kathryn Archer said: "We are keen to reunite the calf with the mother as it will struggle to feed without expert help. It would be quite a heavy animal to move and as a registered pedigree will be difficult to sell."

Anyone who can help or has information can contact PC Kathryn Archer at Norfolk Police on 101 quoting investigation reference 36/6936/22.

Alternatively, you can contact Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111.



YANA
RURAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
Helpline
0300 323 0400
helpline@yanahelp.org



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Hare Coursing—OP Galileo

This month, and particularly in the last week or so, there has been an increase in reports of hare coursing and damage to crops. We continue to receive third hand reports from people after they've seen this type of criminal behaviour but we really encourage anybody who witnesses hare coursing to tell us about it as it's happening on 999, so we have the best opportunity to tackle this offending. Please never put yourself in danger by confronting the individuals or by blocking them in. Instead, please note down any number plates, descriptions of vehicles, clothing and dogs involved and this helps us to link incidents and have a clearer picture as to who is doing what and where.

Last month, I very briefly touched on the announcement that the Government is putting forward proposals to toughen up the powers and punishment in relation to hare coursing.

The first proposal is to increase the maximum penalty for trespassing in pursuit of game under the Game Acts. These are both very old pieces of legislation = the Daytime Game Act 1831 and Night Poaching Act 1828 - but are incredibly effective at dealing with hare coursing. Punishments are set to include an unlimited fine and up to six months' imprisonment.

The second proposal is to create two new criminal offences: firstly, trespass with the intention of using a dog to search for or pursue a hare; and secondly, being equipped to trespass with the intention of using a dog to search for or to pursue a hare. Both would be punishable on conviction by an unlimited fine and/or up to six months' imprisonment.

The third proposal is a big one for us in Norfolk as currently we seize any dogs involved in hare coursing that come into contact with us. We continue to see this as the biggest deterrent and the reason why incidents of hare coursing continue to decrease year-on-year.

However, it isn't the cheapest option. The powers proposed is to order, on conviction, the reimbursement of costs incurred by the police in kennelling dogs seized in connection with a hare coursing-related offence. Finally, the fourth proposal is to give courts a new power to make an order, on conviction, disqualifying an offender from owning or keeping a dog. I think this would be an Incredibly powerful punishment given they rely on dogs to commit the crime.

These on the face of it look very positive and it is hoped they could even be in place as early as September 2022.

GPS Thefts

Sadly, as I write this, we have seen a number of farms targeted again for tractor GPS Systems over the last weekend. A lot of working is ongoing with multiple forces across the UK and the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service but we continue to ask farmers to remove the systems from machines overnight if at all possible. Also try to make sure the systems are overtly marked with permanent marker or an engraver. Marking these systems overtly makes them less attractive on the secondhand market and also easily traceable.

Catalytic Converters/Post Boxes

We continue to see a number a of reports involving the theft of catalytic converters from vehicles. These are stolen for their precious metals inside. Please report any persons acting suspiciously around vehicles to us.

As you may have seen in the media recently, there has been several Royal Mail post boxes stolen. We are liaising with Royal Mail to investigate the security of these boxes but again, please report any suspicious activity around post boxes - particularly anyone looking to remove them – to us.

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

Wildlife Crimes in Norfolk

Just last week I was lucky enough to work alongside an RSPB bird of prey expert putting together evidence in relation to an ongoing investigation - his knowledge was so addictive! So much of my work relies on partnership working and working with experts outside of the police to bring about successful resolutions and prosecutions, and I am always incredibly grateful for their time and expertise. This case remains ongoing and when there is more detail to release, I will make sure to share it.

Also, we had a report last week that heavy machinery work had been carried out along a riverbank that had disturbed and destroyed a water vole habitat. Water Voles are a Schedule 5 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and it is an offence to damage their habitat or disturb them in their 'shelter'. Any work on waterways generally should go through consultation with the Environment Agency (EA).

Unfortunately, this hadn't happened in this instance and the EA are dealing with THAT. Once again it goes to show the importance of us working together.

By way of an update on the previously mentioned incident, sadly nobody came forward with any further information or as a witness to the damage of a badger sett in Little Ryburgh and as such we have been unable to identify those responsible so this investigation will be closed. Of course, we would look it again if we received any new information.

The two-bat roost disturbance/destruction jobs remain ongoing with various evidence captured and we are looking at speaking to those involved.

Dogs Worrying Livestock

Whilst we haven't had any issues brought to our attention that pass the criminal threshold this month, we continue to receive reports of dogs off leads running around livestock. This can cause great distress to the livestock and cause many health issues for them and great stress for the farmer.

Last month, a man was sentenced for allowing his dog to attack a flock of sheep near Poringland last January that caused the death of four ewes. It's believed the dog grabbed about 10 sheep.

The dog's owner Joshua Ferret of Heathgate, Norwich,

admitted being a person in charge or a dog worrying livestock and criminal damage and was sentenced to 6 weeks' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, 20 days of rehabilitation activity and £500 compensation to the farmer. The incident had a huge impact on the sheep owner, who stated the incident had completely changed his life and described the scene as carnage and every farmer's worst nightmare.

District Judge David Wilson said the sentence should serve as a "salutary lesson for dog owners that they are not free from their responsibilities simply because they are walking their dogs in the countryside."

Ashley Petchey of the CPS said: "This case demonstrates the sad and tragic consequences of allowing a dog off a lead in areas where there is livestock.

"Allowing a dog to roam freely without maintaining sufficient control affects livestock and those farmers whose livelihood and well-being can be devastated in one moment of recklessness by an owner.

"The CPS will continue to work closely with the police to ensure that where the Full Code test is met, those who do not control their dogs and cause harm to livestock or wildlife will be prosecuted"

If you walk your dog in the countryside, please always keep it on a lead around livestock and safely under control. It won't be your dog up in court for wrong doing it, it will be you: the owner.

Countryside in February

Livestock farms remain relatively quiet or as quiet as they are ever going to be with only the earlier lambing taking place. The day for many farmers will be taken up with checking their stock regularly and making sure they have plenty of fodder and water available.

You may have seen flocks of sheep grazing in green fields one day and then in 'mud' with white bulbs the next day. These are stubble turnips and are a staple of sheep diets in this part of the world as they are very nutritional, affordable, and grow quickly. The only problem is it looks a bit messy, but the sheep generally do well in these conditions...as long as they have food, they're happy. But of course the farmer has to keep opening the next piece of field every now and again, moving the fencing, which is another job, because you don't want the sheep trampling over the whole field as so much would get wasted. Strip grazing allows you to encourage them to waste less.

Generally, cattle remain indoors in clean warm barns while the fields remain very waterlogged and the daily work to feed and clean them is no easy task either.

Pigs never really get a mention as they don't tend to have a season. We have some large pig herds in Norfolk, especially around the Breckland area due to the free draining light soil so the fields don't get water logged so easily. The majority of piglets are born outside before going on to be reared indoors in a barn - these are seen as much more favourable than some of the more intensive European standards and our pig farms are recognised worldwide as having some of the highest welfare standards. Did you know a sow is pregnant (gestation period) for 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days - a total of 115 days? The aim for a pig farmer is for a sow to have on average of 2.4 litters a year and in general litters are, on average, around 10 piglets.

The shooting season ended on the 1 February although some waterfowl can still be taken for the rest of this month. Plans will be afoot now for gamekeepers to prepare for next season.

In our countryside snowdrops should start popping through.

Sadly, these are often targeted by thieves, but these beautiful early flowering plants should be left alone to flourish when they appear. Snowdrops are a very welcome sight on the cold days of February and a reminder of the warmer months ahead.

Another welcome sign that spring is just around the corner is the catkins hanging from the Hazel trees long before any leaves appear. The catkins are actually the male flowers and the female flowers remain very much hidden and look like tiny buds.

Should we get any stretch of a warm days, this could spark our common frogs into action and you may start to see them spawning in ponds. Another sign towards the end of February and beginning of March is the Primrose coming into flower. This woodland plant often seen alongside Bluebells in our forests is traditionally classed as the first flower of the year while, of course, many commercial daffodils will also be popping through at the same time. Another creature that has an important month ahead is the Badger. Female badgers often give birth either in January or February - a very clever trick by nature as by the time the cubs are venturing out looking for their own food of worms, insects and plants; spring will be well upon us and there will be plenty of food available. This gives them the best chance of fattening up over spring, summer and into autumn before food sources dry up next winter

Final Word

Thank you for taking the time to read through the newsletter. As always, please continue to report incidents or suspicious activity to us. Sometimes, people tell me 'I didn't think it was worth reporting after the event' but please remember that little bit of information you provide might be linked to something and be the missing puzzle piece! Our online reporting form is really simple and an effective way to report incidents to us. Simply Google 'Norfolk Police Report' or follow this link [6. Report It | Norfolk Constabulary](#) Have a great month and don't hesitate to contact me.

Chris

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111

Witness Appeals

Appeal following serious collision in Lenwade

Police are appealing for witnesses following a serious collision in Lenwade on Friday (28 November 2021).

The collision happened on Fakenham Road along the A1067 near to the junction of Nowhere Lane at 11.15am. It involved a red Polo, a green Volvo, a blue Nissan Almera and a white Peugeot Bipper van.

The driver of the Polo, a woman aged in her 50s suffered serious injuries as a result of the incident. She remains in hospital in a serious but stable condition.

The other drivers involved suffered minor injuries as a result of the incident.

Officers are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the collision or has any information about the manner of driving of the Polo along the A1067 between Norwich and Lenwade prior to the collision, to come forward.

Anyone with information should contact PC Mike Stolworthy in the Acle Roads and Armed Policing Team via

Michael.stolworthy@norfolk.police.uk or call 101 quoting incident NC-28012022-127.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Appeal following theft of memorial planter memorial planter

Police are appealing for information following the theft of memorial planter in North Walsham.

The incident happened sometime between 8am on Sunday 23 January and 2pm on Tuesday 25 January 2022 when a memorial planter was stolen from outside a property in Wood View.

The planter is of sentimental value to the victim and is engraved with the names 'Stuie' and 'Fraser'.

Officers are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the incident or anyone with any information to come forward.

Anyone with information should contact PC Will Harlow in Op Solve on 101 quoting crime reference 36/6477/22.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Broadland residents reminded to be vigilant to rogue traders

Norfolk residents are reminded to look out for vulnerable neighbours and family members as police receive reports of suspected rogue traders operating in Broadland.

Police were contacted on Tuesday 25 January 2022 regarding a report of unknown men knocking on the door of an address in the Hellesdon area, offering to replace a missing tile. After convincing the residents, the men removed the roof ridge from the property, exposing it to the elements,

and issued the residents with a £4000 bill.

Another report was made to police on Wednesday 26 January 2022 when residents, also in Hellesdon, were targeted in a similar way. Unknown men who had 'cold-called' at the property knocked down part of the chimney at the address after convincing the residents that repairs were needed, issuing the residents with a £1000 bill.

Officers are investigating these reports, including whether they are linked, and are reminding residents not to accept offers of labour or services from people selling door to door.

Doorstep rogue traders will pretend to be skilled tradespeople such as builders, gardeners, or handymen, offering services which often turn out to be of poor quality or unnecessary, resulting in costs that can rise far beyond an agreed quote.

If tradespeople are needed, these should be secured from reliable sources such as Norfolk County Council's Trusted Traders website: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader>

Officers are reminding residents of the following advice, to help them stay safe against rogue traders:

Never allow a cold caller access to your home, roof, or garden.

Don't agree to have work done by someone who is 'just passing' or has 'just noticed' an issue with your home. While many people are genuine and want to help you, there are others who will try to take advantage of you.

Always remember in the case of cold calling, it is your home and you don't have to agree to anything. Do not be bullied.

Take your time when making decisions. Only criminals will try to rush you.

Search for tradespeople through reliable sources or take recommendations from people you trust.

Never pay for work before it is completed.

If you feel threatened or in danger, go inside, stay inside, and call 999.

If cold callers are currently at your home or will be coming back, you can contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 for advice, or Norfolk Police on 101.

If you think you've been a victim of rogue trading or a scam, you can report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Norfolk Special Constabulary are recruiting...

Special Constables in Norfolk

Come to our online information evening on:

Wednesday, 9 February 2022

19:00 hrs (prompt) to 20:30 hrs

Confirm your place by calling us on:

01953 425699 ext 2371 or email bespecial@norfolk.police.uk

(MS Teams Meeting Link will be sent after confirming your place)

- Welcome
- Advice on completing the application form
- Recruitment Process and Induction Course
- What does a Special Constable do?
- Meet Special Constables
- Questions

