



Issue 23 | May 2022

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Introduction

Another month has rushed past and here we are again. The past month has been a successful month with several events happening as well as several positive outcomes in relation to some investigations that I will touch on in this newsletter. I am also pleased to say the team I work with (Community Safety Operational Unit) is expanding and four new PCs will be deployed to our team, which will bolster our drone capabilities for the force primarily but also assist in other areas. I am pleased to announce PC Chris Holmes will be one of the new PCs joining us and when he is not providing drone cover, he will be working alongside me. Chris comes with a wealth of knowledge in rural crime and has a particular interest in heritage crime.

Last weekend, PC Lovelock and I along with colleagues in the Suffolk rural crime team, Environment Agency and another team from the Special Constabulary, including the horses, attending the two-day East Anglian Game Country at Euston. It was a fantastic event: the weather was incredibly kind, and the footfall was high. We had many conversations with people about rural matters. We were also joined by the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Giles Orpen-Smellie on the Saturday of the event.

In relation to engagement events, I am pleased to announce we have arranged two Rural Crime Briefings at two different locations for this coming year when we will be joined by Norfolk Chief Constable, Paul Sanford and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Giles Orpen-Smellie at both events.

Engagement Events

We have two dates for the diary when I will be joined by the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as my Inspector and Sergeant. These are informal events with an opportunity to see a small presentation on the work we do and have a chat with any of us. While these are informal events and people are free to drop in and out as they please, please let us know if you're planning to attend so we have an idea of how many people to expect. Please drop us an email at OperationRandall@norfolk.police.uk so we can make sure we have enough space. That said, if the day arrives and you'd like to join us, please still do come along...you will certainly not be turned away!

So, the dates and venues are:

Tuesday 21 June 2022, 2pm to 4pm at Camelia Barn, Pipistrelle Farm, Rectory Road, Tivetshall St. Margaret, NR15 2EJ (near Diss/Long Stratton).

Wednesday 5 October 2022, 2pm to 4pm, Glebe Farm Barn, Church Lane, Gressenhall, Dereham, NR19 2QQ (near Dereham).

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the owners of these locations for allowing us to use them for the day. Don't panic if you can't make these events we will be arranging further opportunities around the county.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Hare Coursing—OP Galileo

The general season for hare coursing has now come to an end as crops get much taller and the ground becomes dry and hard. That said, sadly we have seen an increase in calls around the Breckland and South Norfolk border around the Diss/Attleborough area. We would ask people to remain vigilant and report any issues.

In relation to overall statistics, I am pleased to report this year we have seen a 42% decrease in calls to police in relation to hare coursing and 25% reduction in confirmed incidents. Our work with the other seven forces in the eastern region has had a positive affect on breaking down the borders and tackling criminality.

Wildlife Investigations

The previous month has seen some progress in some investigations while others remain ongoing. We were notified of work at a small tributary of the River Wensum in the Breckland area that unfortunately resulted in water voles and their burrows being disturbed. The person responsible was very shocked that they had committed a criminal offence. We had a good discussion with them, and a community resolution was used as a successful outcome with a large donation to a local wildlife charity.

The other investigation we were able to close this month was a report of a person 'pricking eggs' of Greylag Geese. Unfortunately, these birds tend to be very messy and do cause pollution issues in waterways, so their numbers sometimes need controlling. However, such methods must be done under a strict licence granted by Natural England. Licences must be applied for every individual case and there is no general licence to control Greylag Geese

during the closed season. Once again, the individuals involved in this investigation thought they were doing the right thing and the discrepancy arose while they applied for the licence this year having realised a licence was needed. This was also dealt with via a community resolution which again resulted in a donation to a local wildlife charity.

What is egg pricking?

In general terms it is where a needle (generally) is used to put a small hole in the egg making the egg unviable. However, the bird will continue to incubate the eggs stopping them from laying another batch of viable eggs therefore slowly reducing numbers over time. This must be always be carried out under licence and licences are only issued by Natural England when appropriate to control numbers of birds. It is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to take or destroy an egg of any wild bird unless that licence is in place.

What are Community Resolutions?

Community resolutions are one way we can deal with crimes considered to be "low level". The idea behind them is that they give some closure with an apology or compensation to those who have been harmed. The 'offender' must admit wrongdoing and be genuinely remorseful, and not have a record for similar offending. These sorts of outcomes are a real positive for wildlife crimes at times as rather than a court issuing a fine, similar sums of money can be directed into relevant charities supporting the species that has been harmed.

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

Tractor GPS Thefts

As our arable farms move into spring and spring dressings start, unfortunately this is when we typically see the theft of GPS systems. Please remember leaving machines in fields should be a last resort. Wherever possible, always remove the GPS systems and clearly mark all systems with permanent marker or even better, engrave the system. Engraving or marking your system with your postcode and surname/farm name is often enough.

Dogs Worrying Livestock and The Countryside Code

As we come into the warmer months, we all want to get outside into the countryside, but we must also respect our surroundings and everybody else using it. Remembering the Countryside Code – its core message is: leave the area how you found it (respect, protect, enjoy), take your litter with you and leave gates how you found them (if shut, shut them behind you).

I would like to remind everybody if you own or are responsible for a dog you are liable to prosecution if your dog attacks livestock or disturbs wildlife contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act. You will see several signs

asking for dogs to be kept on leads, and this is especially important this time of year on many of our popular walking areas as vulnerable ground nesting birds will be disturbed by loose dogs. Just because you can't see the nests doesn't mean they aren't there and the fact you can't see them means the birds have done their jobs correctly! Please always respect the signs that are there to prevent harm and potentially protect you from prosecution. It is also important to remember that not everybody is a dog lover and having your bundle of joy running up to them can be incredibly stressful.

Use of Traps and Pest Control

If you are using any kind of trap, make sure it is set legally and is correctly and suitably covered so it doesn't harm untargeted species, in particular birds and cats. The same also applies to using rat poisons and similar lethal substances as these can have serious adverse effects on other species and must be deployed in suitable positions or locations where other animals cannot access them.

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Bird Flu/Housing Requirement

It will come as a big relief for many poultry keepers that from Monday the 2 May 2022, the housing requirement for all poultry will come to an end. However, that doesn't mean the risk of bird flu to poultry is any less. This season has seen the highest-ever confirmed cases across the country, and some protection zones remain in place, particularly in Suffolk where some housing requirements will remain.

The government's chief vets are still encouraging owners of any poultry to remain vigilant and maintain stringent bio-security measures.

If you find deceased wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other deceased wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77. Do not touch or pick up any deceased or visibly sick birds that you find.

Cable Thefts

It will come as no surprise, I'm sure, that the price of scrap metal has increased significantly in recent months. At the same time BT cables from underground positions have been stolen across the country. The theft of these cables is incredibly disruptive to the community.

Please be vigilant and contact us if you see manhole covers moved or people hanging around manhole covers and something doesn't look right...if it looks suspicious, it probably is. I would encourage people to capture any number plates you see as these can quickly be checked against legitimate companies. Companies like BT or other providers do subcontract work to other organisations, but they will generally be in marked vehicles.

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May in the Countryside

Livestock farmyards become much quieter in the late spring/summer months with cattle and sheep nearly all turned out onto summer grazing. That doesn't mean livestock farmers get it easy this time of the year: all livestock must be checked daily with the grazing land correctly managed alongside producing the feed for the winter months. I have already seen one or two grass fields cut for silage but moving into May nearly all the first cut will be completed. Silage is either stored in the large clamps you see or in sealed bales (black bales) that are then stored to provide a really nutritious feed for winter months.

In addition, all livestock has to be regularly wormed, vaccinated and protected against flies during the summer months, which takes up a considerable amount of time and, of course, sheep will shortly need to be sheared. Fleeces were once a valuable by-product of the sheep industry however sadly, there is now a very small market for this product and is sometimes seen as waste. Farmers will pay around £2 to the shearer to shear the sheep and there's the cost of staff needed to keep the sheep moving through the races towards the shearer as well as those who fold the fleeces and gather the sheep initially. A farmer is paid around 80p per kilo for average quality and each fleece weighs between 1-3Kg therefore the price of the fleece is unlikely to cover the cost of the shearer. There are many entrepreneurs looking at other ways to use wool to try to increase its worth but with the increase in the use of synthetic fabrics over many years, the value of what was once a huge industry in the UK has plummeted.

On the arable farms all fields are planted with sugar beet and maize being the last few to be completed. Farmers will be busy applying dressings of fertiliser

and tackling the many pests and diseases that threaten the crops.

As we step into May our countryside comes alive with insects and birds coming to life and the signs of new life are a plenty - the morning chorus is full of many different sounds. So many of our summer migratory birds have returned and are busy keeping their nests in order and looking after the eggs or young. There are also many parts of the countryside that become vulnerable in the summer to disturbance, especially our ground nesting birds including little terns along the coast and lapwings in land to name just a few.

Foxes will be more active than ever and often more visible than normal, including in many urban areas, as they look for food to feed their young that are generally born around this time of year. Badgers also become more active as cubs born in January time start to explore their outside area. Also, many of the adults will also start to spend time above ground during daylight.

Final Word

Thank you again for taking the time to read this month's update and, as always, please do get in contact if you wish to raise any concerns or ideas.

Have a great month.

Chris

Please note if you are reading this version of our monthly newsletter, this is a simplified version created for ease of distribution on parish websites, community pages and similar outlets.

If you wish to receive a copy of this newsletter directly to your email in its fullest form with images and interactive options please visit: norfolk.police.uk/contact-us/police-connect-sign make sure you select 'Rural Crime' to receive direct to your email.



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POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
FOR JUSTICE, FOR SAFETY,
FOR NORFOLK

Operation
Randall
tackling rural crime

Rural Crime Briefing

Join us on one of the below dates to have an informal discussion and presentation with:



- **Chief Constable Paul Sanford**
- **Police and Crime Commissioner Giles Orpen-Smellie**
- **OP Randall PC Chris Shelley**
- **Insp Ian Cox and Sgt Matt Paine of Community Safety Operational Unit**

We will offer a small presentation on some of the work being done in the area of rural crime around the county. Then an opportunity for you to talk with key members of the force around any concerns or questions you have.

These are informal events and whilst the presentation will be at the beginning please feel free to drop by at any point. Whilst not essential, we kindly ask if you plan to attend to drop us an email to OperationRandall@norfolk.police.uk so we can keep track of numbers attending where possible.

Tuesday 21st of June 2022

Time: 1400hrs— 1600hrs

Camelia Barn, Pipistrelle Farm, Rectory
Road, Tivetshall St. Margaret, NR15 2EJ
(near Diss/Long Stratton)

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Wednesday 5th of October 2022

Time: 1400hrs— 1600hrs

Glebe Farm Barn, Church Lane, Gressenhall,
Dereham, NR19 2QQ (near Dereham)

WHAT3WORDS

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