



Opening From Chief Constable

Welcome to the April edition of the Operation Randall newsletter. As this articles here describe, our policing teams have been working hard across the County to maintain visibility and pursue those intent on committing crime and causing harm to our



communities. I again encourage you to report matters to us (on 999 in an emergency or use the 101 or online services where there is not an immediate threat to life or property). Information will assist us with building a picture of criminality and allows us to effectively deploy our resources. Thank you and I hope you enjoy the newsletter.

CC Paul Sanford

Introduction

As we move into April the weather in March has already turned quite quickly, the past week we have seen some fantastic hours of sunshine and warmth. This has brought out the bright yellow flowers of the oil seed rape, daffodils are

now in full bloom alongside crocuses and the trees are starting to green up rapidly.

As for a month in policing it's been as busy as ever, this month has been slightly shorter for me with a couple weeks leave but colleagues have been busy in my absence. They have had some fantastic results with drone deployments in recent weeks, alongside high visibility patrols making use of advances in technology in policing. These are exciting times for policing when it comes to advances in technology in so many ways, and rural policing is no different and I look forward to seeing how technology advances further in the future to reduce rural crime.

We have launched a few wildlife investigations this month, which is always disappointing, however, I hope by explaining further details as they progress, these will act as educational pieces to people so others don't make the same mistakes. Some wildlife crime is committed with criminal intent, however sometimes it is more recklessness and a lack of understanding that makes people fall on the wrong side of the law, sadly. There is now so much information out there around wildlife and building work and also change of use or home improvements. Despite this, we would always advice people to do some research first and where necessary speak to an expert. So much of our wildlife sits in a precarious position and we must be doing all we can to protect it, and much of the law around wildlife is either there to stop suffering to living creatures or protect it for future generations. It is of much greater importance in the full ecological picture - the classic food chain images from high school science classes!



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Heating Oil/Fuel Storage/Fertiliser Storage

As we see the price of heating oil rise alongside nearly all other fuel types, we are encouraging people to again consider the security around their heating oil tanks. We have seen a small increase in reports of heating oil being stolen. These are the key points to consider:

- Keep your tank in a well-overlooked position – this will ensure thieves are more likely to be seen.
- If your tank is close to your house make sure that it can be seen from your windows – this coupled with lighting will make it less of a target.
- Security lights can help deter potential thieves. Low-level 'dusk 'til dawn' lights positioned close to the tank should provide sufficient light to illuminate any suspicious activity.
- Enclosing your tank in a building that can be secured is better still. It is important not to overlook the importance of ventilation.
- If you have a gate, keep it closed and locked when you are out.
- Make sure your perimeter fence is in good condition and is not easy to climb. Consider the use of trellis on top of any rear fencing to increase height.
- Invest in a good quality lock. Close shackle padlocks are recommended as they offer better resistance to bolt croppers and other tools that thieves usually come equipped with.
- Invest in an approved tank alarm.

- Check your oil gauges regularly to alert you to any potential thefts and help investigations by narrowing crime times down.

If you see something suspicious or not quite right you can report it to Norfolk Constabulary by calling 101.

We also want to ensure anyone who has other fuel stored, that it is correctly stored. Incorrectly stored fuel can pose a serious health and safety risk both to humans and animals/livestock.

Similar with farmers storing fertiliser in larger quantities. Again, the price of this has gone up significantly. Incorrect storage of such material can again lead to serious health and safety risks to humans and animals. Also, fertiliser compounds (ammonia nitrate) has previously been used by terrorists and it is therefore essential to make sure it is stored securely and records are kept accurately.

Points to consider:

- Wherever possible use a Fertiliser Industry Assurance Scheme (FIAS) approved supplier.
- Wherever possible keep in a secure area such as a building (with other security measures thought about; CCTV, lighting and alarms) or sheeted away from public view.
- Carry out regular stock checks and report any loss to the Police immediately (call 101).
- Avoid leaving fertiliser in a field overnight – never leave fertiliser in the field for a long period of time.
- Remember it is illegal to sell ammonium nitrate without the correct documentation.

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

Farms are Not Playgrounds!

As we move into the warmer months, we tend to receive reports of children trespassing on farms. Can I please ask you to have conversations with your children in the coming weeks around this.

Farms are incredibly dangerous places with animals, machinery, chemicals and so many other dangers around. No children or people who do not have permission should be playing or visiting farms. Many farms do open their doors to the public whether that be on a daily basis or as a one-off event. Please make the most of these opportunities as they provide a safe option for farmers to show young people what they do on a daily basis. They can also showcase where their food comes from, which is something all young people should understand.

One event to put in your diary will be Open Farm Sunday. Many local farms have taken part in years gone by and whilst there has not been so many in the last couple of years, hopefully things will be a little more normal this summer. Open Farm Sunday takes place on 12 June this year.

Harecoursing—OP Galileo

Over the last month (March) we have again been well below previous numbers year on year. March traditionally signals the end of the season as the ground starts to dry up, and the crops start to get taller in fields.

That said we do still see a few reports throughout the Spring and Summer. We would continue to ask for people to report any such behaviour to us immediately. We have issued three Community Protection Warnings to three people living in Norfolk, suspected of being involved with this illegal pursuit. We will continue to monitor their behaviour, and should they fail to take advice from the warning we can look to take further action.

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Bird Flu/Housing Requirement

As you may have read in the news in recent weeks, colleagues at Trading Standards and Defra continue to deal with outbreaks of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu). This year has well surpassed last years total already. There remains an order in place that all poultry/ birds must be housed at all times commercial and private collections. Local Norfolk Trading Standards have reported finding some people are not keeping birds housed especially as the warmer weather has returned.

Housing requirement is essential to try and stop the spread of this highly infectious strain which is believed to be spread by migratory birds coming into contact with domesticated birds.

As I have said previously, the risk to humans from bird flu remains incredibly low however please do not touch any dead wild birds. If you find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).

Norfolk Wildlife Crimes

This month we have had a report of a buzzard trapped in a fen trap, thankfully and

somehow the bird was not badly injured and was released by finder. Our enquiries in relation to the trap are continuing and it is possible the bird moved the trap a significant distance before being discovered. If a fen trap is used correctly, it should be impossible such a bird should be trapped. Anyone using this style of trap please make sure you are complying with standards in relation to how the trap is set and species you are targeting.

Only in the last few days we have started an enquiry into some work carried out on Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which has highly likely damaged the features of the site. This is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and this is alongside damaging/disturbing Water voles (a schedule 5 protected species). Every time I do these site visits, I believe I won't see anything that will shock me but sadly all too often that isn't the case. The scale of the damage involving this one is quite significant at first look, and I now await an ecologists report to confirm initial thoughts. Due to being off a considerable chunk of this past month there is nothing to update in regard to ongoing cases.

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March in the Countryside

As the temperatures start to consistently remain warm, much comes alive in the countryside over the next few weeks. The hedges are already greening up and many trees will start to show life. I would encourage everyone now to be very careful around doing any work in hedges in gardens etc, as birds start to build and occupy nests. Birds will of course nest in unusual places too (post-boxes, bins and plant pots amongst many others). Remember that all nests whilst being built and in use are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act no matter where they are located. You will tend to see many more tits and finches in hedges and similar, as they become more active in their breeding season.

One of my favourite sites of spring is the return of the swallows (probably our most well known migratory bird) and we should start to see them returning. Many of our other native species who spend most of the winter months hidden up in warmer areas become much more active. If you're lucky enough you could see creatures such as badgers, hedgehogs, butterflies, and dormouse.

A lot of woods will start to have a distinctive purple to blue carpet where our beautiful native bluebells start to appear. Sadly, these all too often are targeted by thieves and I ask anyone who sees any person uprooting bluebells to contact police immediately. They are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and all wild native plants are protected from being uprooted.

Farms will be hitting a very busy period, many of our dairy's and cattle farms will be looking at turning the cattle out. If you ever get the opportunity to watch cattle being turned out on to spring grass, take a moment to watch them. The moves they can pull for such a large animal is incredible to watch. I have already seen plenty of very young lambs around which is always lovely to see especially in the sun. Again, if you can quietly sit and watch a field of ewes and lambs you may be lucky enough to see all the lambs playing together. You will often see the ewes quietly getting on and the lambs will run up and down as a group, these groups

can often be 30-40 lambs all playing together - a brilliant site.

Many farmers will be breathing a sigh of relief as they turn out their stock in the coming weeks and look at their food and bedding stocks and see that all last year's hard work paid off. However, there is no rest. Preparations started back in Autumn 2021 for Winter 2022 with the planting of crops like winter barley and winter wheat, many grass fields would have had preparations too. This month will see fertilising taking place alongside pest and weed control methods to make sure that this summer's harvest is good enough to see their livestock through Winter 2022. If we get a warm enough April, we may even see the first cut of silage taking place. The ideal time to cut the grass for silage is roughly a week before the full head of seed appears. This is when the plant contains its optimum amount of sugar and energy to produce the best quality feed.

As we move into the summer months and more grass is turned into silage and hay its important that visitors to the countryside take all their rubbish with them. If the litter ends up going through the machines and being digested by cattle and sheep it can cause them serious harm. In basic terms, think about micro plastics in the ocean, well this is the land version. Enjoy the countryside, respect it and leave it how you found it!

Final Word

Already looking ahead to this month it's clear to see it will be as ever, nonstop. I have several shifts covering our county drone resource covering annual leave within the team. I also have several meetings planned to continue many of the investigations we currently have ongoing. As always, please get in touch if you wish to raise any concerns or issues.

I should just add, I wrote the opening paragraph about a week ago, I sit here today completing the newsletter watching the snow fall!

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.



POLICE
NORFOLK & SUFFOLK
working together for you



Are you the owner of a Well-behaved and sociable dog?

Would you like to be part of our new
exciting Pilot Scheme?

Providing canine visits to various locations promoting
positive mental health and wellbeing



Subject to dog temperament test

Understanding and knowledge of dog welfare

Good communication and engagement skills

To show interest and for further information email:



Norfolk: Volunteer@norfolk.police.uk

Suffolk: SpecialsandVolunteers@suffolk.police.uk

Cleveland Police's first Wellbeing and Trauma Support Dogs:

"These interactive sessions provide light relief from the rigors of the job and the dogs help get people talking and create expressions of genuine feeling just by being friendly and non-judgemental"

"Over recent years, police forces around the country have recognised the value of dogs in helping officers and staff with their wellbeing"

"When a dog is introduced to the workplace, the atmosphere immediately changes, and people want to interact with the dog"

