



Issue 24 | June 2022

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Introduction

Another month rushes by so therefore it's another newsletter. I think the word rush really does describe this past month; it has been as hectic as I have ever known it in my time in this role.

We have taken on several new investigations, continued many others whilst 'keeping up appearances' within the community on patrol, dealing with calls to service and attending events. I was lucky enough to attend RSPCA Wildlife Centre at East Winch this month for an in-person discussion with Crown Prosecution Service and RSPCA. This was a great opportunity to discuss ongoing cases and best practices. Of course, I can't go to East Winch without seeing some of the amazing work, staff are doing there including the great work around seal rehabilitation. Also due to our new team members joining the team I have been covering the county drone cover whilst they are away being trained. This really is a long-term gain for the team moving forward.

This month has seen the great British weather as unpredictable as ever, but certainly warmer weather has finally arrived and with that comes many of our summer activities ahead.

I hope you enjoy a quick read through of a few things we are currently up to, as always if you ever feel there is a topic we should cover in the future please get in contact.

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

Royal Norfolk Show

As always, the team will be present at the Royal Norfolk Show across both days. They will be spending some time at the NFU tent and also CLA. They will also be supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner at times too.

For myself I am a Steward (of the Sheep Section) so won't be present on our stand until the Thursday afternoon when all the showing has been completed. However, the rest of the team will always be present at our tent within the Emergency Service Village, so do come and chat with them or raise any concerns. If they can't help straight away, we will be providing opportunities for people to leave details so we can make further enquiries into any queries raised.

Animals in Hot Cars—Die!

I find it still shocking in 2022 we continue to receive the number of calls alongside the RSPCA in relation to this. Whilst it may seem a cool day and you can leave a window partially down, cars get hot incredibly quickly with the smallest amount of sun. It can cause significant harm to animals not only in the short term but long term too, alongside death very quickly. No animals should be left in vehicles this time of year for any amount of time.

A colleague recently seized two rabbits and a cat found within an enclosed car, their owner remains under investigation for animal welfare offences.

GPS Thefts

This past week we saw a theft of GPS equipment from two farms in the west of the county, thankfully one of those farms had installed tracking software to their systems. They were tracked to an area of woodland and found sitting there, we suspect, for collection. Those that

go after these systems are organised crime groups with a couple of people working in tandem at different stages of the offence. These items were quickly recovered by police where the forensic team have done some work on them before being returned to their rightful owners. 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.

Fuel Thefts

We have seen a number of thefts of various types of fuel, now prices are at an all-time high. Cooking oil remains a popular commodity so please ensure if you're a business owner, that you are securing your new stock and also waste oil where possible. It should be collected by the correct company who have the correct licences to do so. Make sure your staff know who should be collecting.

We have also seen theft of diesel from tractors, many older machines can be hard to secure therefore it is essential to think where you are leaving these vehicles overnight.

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

The first is one you may already be aware of. The below press release explains this:

Two police officers together with partner agencies attended woodland close to the A1065 in Hilborough shortly after 5.30pm on Friday 29 April 2022 after police received intelligence that a bird of prey had been caught in a trap baited with a live pigeon. This is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. While in the wood, officers discovered a trap set with a live pigeon. The pigeon was released by officers and is being looked after by another organisation on behalf of the police.

At about 7pm, the officers saw two men in the same wood. The men were stopped and searched, and officers discovered a police-style baton in a vehicle being used by one of the men.

Four live pigeons, one deceased pigeon and the police-style baton were among the items seized by police. The pigeons are currently being cared for on behalf of the police.

The police investigation continues and anybody with information or any witnesses are asked to contact PC Chris Shelley, a rural crime officer, at Norfolk Police on 101 quoting investigation number 36/31685/22.

This investigation remains in its very early stages with ongoing work.

Other investigations we have picked up this month include several bat disturbance jobs in building projects. A couple are better examples than others of how to go about dealing with bats. All bats in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act including their roost (rest or breeding roosts). Bats will roost in some surprising places and go completely unseen until you decide to do something in these structures including sheds, barns and dwellings. Whilst all work requiring planning permission will generally need a full ecological impact assessment carried out which will highlight if any bat roosts are present, some low-level maintenance work won't require this. However, should you come across evidence of bats or find a bat(s) all work should cease immediately and ecologist should be contacted before carrying out any further work. This will protect you from

breaking the law. It's important to remember the Wildlife and Countryside Act has punishments of unlimited fines and 6 months custodial sentences if convicted of any offence.

We are currently dealing with one property development where it appears survey work highlights a need for a licence and this was not obtained before work was carried out. On the flip side we have had another one we've been notified of where a roof was being repaired and a bat was found - work stopped immediately and the owner immediately contacting an ecologist. They then have a duty to report any possible offences which we would deal with at an appropriate level. Another investigation reported this month is a landowner appearing to plough over a single badger sett entrance. This is an offence under the Badger Protection Act and you cannot do anything to an active badger sett. We have requested some expert advice on this one.

We have also seen a number of reports of nesting birds being disturbed. It is essential that everyone understands all birds (a few exceptions under General Licences which have strict conditions that must be met) and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Whilst the nest is active (including being built) you must not block access to a nest once it becomes active or remove it in anyway. Whilst birds do nest in some strange places they must be left alone. We have seen the usual garden maintenance, hedge cutting and large scale grass cutting destroying nests which all are or have been investigated. We have also seen sea gull nests being destroyed on houses, a nest inside a cavity wall whereby the suspect had blocked access to the nest, and then also a jackdaw nesting in a chimney and the suspect put a mesh over the opening. Thankfully with this one the clever birds continued to feed their young through the mesh until we were able to get the mesh removed. Whilst of course these do cause issues you cannot do anything without seeking a licence from Natural England and often the best way to deal with it is to allow the nest to naturally vacate in late summer and then look at preventative measures ahead of next spring which is completely legal to do. We don't have any birds in Norfolk currently whereby their nests are protected all year round.

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Dogs Worrying Livestock

This is a slight re-hash from last month as I have just this past week reviewed two offences whereby dogs have got into livestock (sheep). On both occasions lambs have been killed. This is not acceptable; we will seek to prosecute where opportunities allow us, and we are working closely with the Crown Prosecution Service on this. If you own a dog, it is your responsibility to ensure it remains under control at all times.

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.

Fishing Licences

We have been out on patrol alongside the Environment Agency tackling illegal fishing during the closed season. The closed season is really important to allow our fish stocks to breed and keep our waterways healthy. As we go through June the closed season comes to a close on 15 June 2022.

Whilst it will be legal to fish on waterways again, it is essential you follow all local byelaws which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-rod-fishing-byelaws-anglian-region>

It is also important you have permission to fish on private land and have the appropriate rod licence. Anybody over the age of 13 require a fishing licence if you're fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel with a rod and line. Under 13's don't require a licence, whilst 13 to 16-year-olds do need a licence but it is free to obtain. More details on rod licences and how to obtain one can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>
We will again join Environment Agency on joint patrols checking rod licences in the future.

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

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June in the Countryside

June brings the start of many agriculture shows where many livestock farmers will show off the very best of their flock or herd. The prizes won in the ring at the likes of the Royal Norfolk Show carry significant importance to the value of their stock moving forward. If you can breed a champion bull or heifer, it secures more value to that animal and bloodline as breeding stock moving forward. Livestock farmers will spend days and hours halter training these animals to walk around the ring quietly and really show off their best attributes. These animals will be washed, brushed, and have a very thorough trim to make them look their very best. These show days are often very long days but a brilliant opportunity for a very isolated community to come together and engage with each other. They have been a tradition that have been going for 100s of years in various forms all around the country. Also remembering there will still be stock at home that needs looking after so it is often a family affair to make this all work. So please do take the time if you get to the Norfolk Show later this month to appreciate these beautiful animals, a lot of hard work has gone in to get them there.

On the arable farms, preparations start in their earnest in regard to preparation for harvest, grain stores will be being emptied and cleaned, combines greased and fired up, all ready to go when the grain reaches its sweet spot. Hay making should start this month if we get a couple days of hot sunny weather needed to turn the green grass into a storable commodity for the winter months. You will have already seen several green fields cut in the last couple of weeks, most of this will have been for silage which is a slightly different sort of feed. This is preserved by a natural fermentation which occurs as the grass is packed in tight to the clamp or bale. Hay uses a different preservation method by completely drying out the grass, stopping it from rotting once baled up. Both these methods provide essential high nutrient value food for

livestock over winter months. If farmers get their timings wrong it can be very costly, so as with so many parts of farming, the farmers will be sweating over the weather forecast.

In the countryside many of our early nesting birds will have had their first clutch and fledgelings will start to appear and the possibility of second clutches for many of our common residents including blackbirds, robins, house sparrows, and wood pigeons. Many of our migratory birds do also try to fit in a second clutch which is a rush against time to be fit to migrate again at the end of the summer. With our migratory birds here it's a great opportunity to see them, the likes of swallows will be busy collecting flying insects over meadows especially around waterways. Their movements are incredible.

With the flowers out in full bloom in wildflower meadows (of the few that remain) and then alongside many of our propagated plants it's an awesome time to watch bees carrying pollen from plant to plant. If there is one thing you can do to help this British staple, it is to 'rewild' a small part of your garden, planting some wildflower meadow seeds or selections especially designed for attracted bees. They are a creature in rapid decline but are essential to our survival and many other species. We need to do everything we can to help them.

This is a great month to get out and explore our countryside! There is so much to see and explore with the warmer evenings. Please respect it though, take your litter home with you and leave it how you found it. Please respect any signs or cordoned off areas as you will see many signs asking that dogs are kept on leads at popular dog walking sites. This is aimed to protect ground nesting birds like Lapwings. Along our coast a few areas will also be closed off for the same reason, mainly our healthy Little Tern populations. They nest on the ground and are incredibly vulnerable to natural predation and inclement weather without human interference.

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)

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