



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Issue 25 | June 2022

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Introduction

Welcome to another newsletter. It's been another incredibly busy month with investigations as well as our usual work of crime prevention and engagement.

Firstly, I'd like to thank Mr and Mrs Harrowven who kindly hosted the first of our rural crime briefings at their property near Diss recently.

We were joined at the event by our Chief Constable Paul Sanford and Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Giles Orpen-Smellie, and we started by giving a brief update on rural policing before opening the floor for members of the community to raise and discuss any issues. I think it is fair to say this was a positive event and I hope everyone was able to get something out of it. Please do come along to our next rural crime briefing in Gressenhall in October (details below). By the time you read this we will have been to the Royal Norfolk Show and I hope everyone who visited enjoyed themselves.

This month has also been the first full month when we've been joined by PC Chris Holmes, who has fully stepped into the world of rural crime working alongside me, and taking a keen interest in heritage crime. I will let him introduce himself:

"Hello all, I am PC Chris Holmes and the latest addition to the Rural Crime Team. I have been in the police since 2015 and spent the last five years as a response officer in Norwich. This has been a busy and challenging environment especially through the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I have a love of the outdoors and a keen interest in history, which is why I will be tackling heritage crime and

Nighthawking as part of my role.

"Nighthawking is the name given to illegal metal detecting. However, in reality, it is theft...or going equipped which really explains the offence in law. All land is owned by someone so you must have the landowner's permission before you go metal detecting. The only exceptions to this are beaches that are considered Crown foreshore. This information can be found online.

"Nighthawkers will target land which is known to be rich in history such as scheduled sites or even around protected monuments and are after the financial gain awarded from the finds.

"I am heading up a portfolio to understand the scale of the problem in Norfolk and we're looking at what preventative work can be done to tackle this type of rural crime. This has started with high visibility patrols around scheduled sites such as Caistor St Edmund Roman Town (VENTA ICENORUM).

If you have any information regarding Nighthawking or heritage crimes, please contact me on 07989300352 or via email Christopher.holmes2@norfolk.police.uk



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Engagement Events

We have a further date for the diary where I will be joined by the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as my Inspector and Sergeant again. This is an 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 date and venue is:

- 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 owner of this location for allowing us to use them for the day.

Don't panic if you can't make this event we will be arranging further opportunities around the county.

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

As we reach harvest time, we would like to take this opportunity to urge farmers and landowners to please look at the security around your GPS equipment. We continue to work with many other forces and the national project in tackling this issue.

Det Con Chris Piggott, agricultural vehicle crime co-ordinator at (NaVCIS) has recently been quoted offering the following advice: "These criminals are well organised and know what they are looking for - so it's essential to remove GPS kit from tractors and combines when they're not in use and store them securely.

"It's also well worth using indelible ink to mark GPS cases and domes with your farm name and post code to make it less attractive to thieves - and to help police return recovered kit to its rightful owner.

"Many systems now have PIN security – and activating it makes it much harder for thieves to sell systems on.

"Some stolen GPS kits are offered for sale in the UK. One of the best things farmers can do to reduce this crime is to carefully check the provenance of any second-hand equipment offered for sale - including checking if it's legitimate with the manufacturer."

Farmers are also advised to keep photographs and serial numbers of their equipment and report any suspicious activity to the police.

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

There has been a continued trend of reports of people disturbing nesting birds. Can I please remind everyone that all birds and their nests are protected from disturbance and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA). It is the responsibility of those carrying out any work to make sure no nests are present before work is done, and we would always recommend any hedge cutting or clearing is done in the Autumn after the nesting season to prevent committing any criminal offences.

We have also seen a couple reports of birds, some of which may be classed as pest species by some (i.e. Pigeons, Seagulls and Crows) being shot with air rifles. As per above, all birds are protected under the WCA and cannot be killed unless permitted under the rules of a General Licence. There are only a few species of bird that can be killed, and this is only under very specific circumstances. Anybody killing wild birds for any reason that does not comply with the rules of the General Licence is committing an offence and can expect a visit from the police. For more information on General Licences, please click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/general-licences-for-wildlife-management>

Just last week we secured a couple of warrants on the back of some reports about a Peregrine Falcon coming into captivity from the wild, and concerns around how this has happened and the suitability of the person to rehabilitate the bird for release. This was a joint operation with Suffolk Rural Crime Team, Bird of Prey Expert, RSPB and National Wildlife Crime Unit. I am pleased to report we seized the bird, and it will be suitably rehabilitated into the wild in the Autumn. I would always encourage people with any information around any wildlife in captivity and any suspicious behaviour to get in touch with us.

It's also really disappointing to tell you that we have been notified of a dog walker who entered a piece of beach on the coast that had been cordoned off to protect Red Listed Ringed Plovers, which are incredibly vulnerable ground nesters. Please be a responsible dog owner, adhere to any signs and follow any restrictions in place - these are there for

the right reasons and to protect you from potentially committing an offence. This dog walker is now under investigation for several offences.

Cooking Oil Thefts

Please remain vigilant and make sure your staff know who is collecting used cooking oil and similar products. PC Holmes is leading our operation to prevent and detect this crime and has designed a small poster which you can print out and put in the area you store your waste oil. If you require this as a PDF please get in touch.

Stack Fire—Prevention

As we move into the harvest season it's important for farmers to consider security and prevention around stack fires:

- Ensure the site where bales are stored is as secure as possible.
- Hay and straw should be removed from fields as soon as possible after harvesting, stored away from other buildings, in stacks of a reasonable size, spaced at least 10 metres apart.
- Store away from livestock.
- Store away from the road if possible, so as not to be an easy target to anyone passing.
- Petrol, diesel and other fuels should be stored in secure areas; storage tank outlets should be padlocked.
- Fertilisers and pesticides should be kept under lock and key.
- Rubbish should be disposed of safely and on a regular basis.
- Electrical safety checks should be carried out and firefighting equipment should be checked frequently.
- Prepare a fire routine and action plan to ensure all farm workers know what to do in the event of a fire.
- Ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished in an appropriate container.
- Where possible, regularly check and maintain open water supplies for firefighting.

If you see any suspicious behaviour around stacks please call 999, likewise if you spot any signs of fire call 999 immediately.

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Countryside in July

July is one of the busiest in the farming calendar: arable farms will be working day and night to get the cereal crops in from the fields, cutting winter barley and oilseed rapeseed first. Oilseed rapeseed will be a vitally important crop this year for the UK agriculture industry. Winter barley is generally considered a feed product used to feed livestock; it has larger yields than the spring variety. Once these are in the shed, they will move on to winter wheat which is generally used for bread and pasta: a staple in our diets. Once these are done, they will move onto the Spring varieties of barley generally used in the brewing industry, which has a rich history here in the Eastern region. The Spring wheat is generally used for 'lighter' products such as pastries and cakes.

There are many other crops being harvested currently including peas, which have a very long season and are planted from March to June with a 16-week growing window. The idea of this staggered drilling is to ensure a consistent supply to factories as peas have to be frozen incredibly quickly generally within 2 hours of being harvested. Many of our livestock farms in modern farming also have arable operations so they too will be busy with that side of things, alongside the continuing care of their animals. Cattle and sheep will require regular fly treatment to prevent a nasty thing called Fly Strike, which can be a real issue in sheep. Fly Strike is when flies lay eggs in the sheep's wool and they hatch and start eating the flesh of the live animal and, if left untreated, can lead to death. Another key part in avoiding this is obviously shearing.

The long summer days of heat and sun increase the numbers of insects, which will provide a feast to many bird species who will be extremely grateful as they look to stock up for the winter months and as they prepare to migrate to warmer climates in the Autumn. Also, many of our adult birds will start moulting so will be slightly scruffier than usual...you often see a scruffy blackbird this time of year! With the warmer weather here for a month or two, however, there will be plenty of butterflies around, so keep an eye out as you walk around as they have some amazing colours and patterns. Alongside the colourful array of butterflies, don't miss out on the beautiful colours of many of our wild plants which are now in stunning bloom. This really is a month to get out and about and enjoy our open spaces and the ultimate display of nature that many have worked all year to create.

Final Word

Thank you again for taking the time to read this month's newsletter. We will be back next month with an update from the Royal Norfolk Show. Fingers crossed the weather remains pleasant for summer!

Have a great month.

Chris

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

Operation
Randall
tackling rural crime

Rural Crime Briefing

Join us on 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 Operations 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.

This is a informal event 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.



Wednesday 5th of October 2022

Time: 1400hrs— 1600hrs

**Glebe Farm Barn, Church Lane,
Gressenhall, Dereham, NR19 2QQ**

WHAT3WORDS

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