



### Opening From Chief Constable

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the March edition of the Operation Randall newsletter. As your Chief Constable, rural crime remains a priority for me and the constabulary. I urge you to report matters to us (on 999 in an emergency or use the 101 or online services when



there is not an immediate threat to life or property). We will do all that we can to investigate crime and make Norfolk a unwelcoming place to those who seek to commit offences which cause our communities harm. I am continuing with work to improve visibility; including the use of drones and I am working with our partners on achieving successful convictions and designing out crime.

I hope you find the newsletter useful, and I look forward to hopefully meeting with you in person at the briefings/ meetings currently being organised – confirmed dates and venues will be publicised soon.

Norfolk CC Paul Sanford

### Introduction from PCC

Change often creates uncertainty. There may be some uncertainty about how a new Commissioner might change things. I would like to reassure everyone that rural crime, and especially agricultural crime, is very definitely on my radar. Why do I make the distinction between rural and agricultural crime? My view is that ‘rural’ relates to geography. For example, the greatest volume of reported crime in Norfolk is domestic abuse – 24% of all reported crime is domestic abuse – but this goes on in both rural and urban areas while being recorded regardless of geography as domestic abuse. Meanwhile, ‘agricultural’ crime seems to me to be a more focussed label for issues such as hare coursing, sheep worrying, GPS and machinery theft, heritage crime and so on. However, the key thing on my mind is how we achieve effects on the ground. I’m delighted to say that our new Chief Constable, Paul Sanford, is working hard to increase police visibility across our mostly rural county. This will further reinforce the successes that the Operation Randall team, together with the wider Constabulary, are having in driving down agricultural and other rural crimes. I am also keen to involve wider partners to assist with crime prevention as prevention is always far better than reaction. I am also looking at how the criminal justice system might be improved so that victims of crime get their day in court and do so much more quickly than happens at the moment. A lot of work is in hand and I look forward to meeting as many readers of this newsletter as possible when I’m out on the ground so that you can offer your thoughts to the debate. I will certainly look forward to such opportunities.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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## Introduction

It is great this month to open with contributions from Norfolk's Chief Constable (CC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Our team regularly discusses matters with both the CC and the PCC and their respective teams. While sometimes rural crime and matters affecting our rural communities and businesses don't always make the headlines, it remains very much on our agenda and we will continue to tackle it with every opportunity available to us.

As touched on by both the CC and PCC, we are currently planning to bring back our Barn Briefs - these are opportunities for communities to meet the team, discuss current issues and trends, and for us to provide crime prevention advice in an informal way. Due to a lack of opportunities because of the pandemic, at the moment we're planning to do four Barn Briefs in the coming year at four different locations around the county...all being well and if we remain without Covid restrictions. I will of course update you once we have more information and we're looking forward to meeting many of you. As for the last month, and although I say this every month, life doesn't get any calmer! It's been extremely busy and in the middle of providing county drone cover, progressing investigations and all the other day-to-day work, we were hit hard by two storms in quick succession. Officers and partner agencies worked tirelessly for several days to keep as many roads as possible open from falling trees. We were of course helped by so many local people and we're incredibly grateful to each one of them, so thank you!

## GPS Thefts

As I mentioned last month, we have received another report of this high value crime and I'd encourage all owners of these systems to please remove them where possible and mark them clearly with your name/farm name and postcode. Make sure you know the serial numbers of your units (these should be on the system itself or the box it came in) and consider other security options.

Several retailers are now offering aftermarket anti-theft solutions and it may well be worth discussing this further with your local dealership.

I'm pleased to tell you that thanks to more collaborative working with several forces across the country, one man has been arrested in Norfolk for the theft of GPS systems in Cheshire last year, and another two men were arrested in Cheshire following that arrest. This provides further evidence that these are criminals who travel and it is hard to predict where they will hit next, but with better information sharing and a national approach to tackling the issue we are making some headway. Here in Norfolk, we have been working with NAVCIS (National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service), a European Countries Consulate and their police force and several other police forces to investigate our most recent crimes. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and although I'm unable to share further details with you at this stage, please know we are investigating every opportunity we have. But the fact remains prevention is also key so please take steps to protect your property that I've outlined above.

## 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](mailto:christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

### **Criminal Damage in Rural Area**

There has been some reckless damage to public owned property, including public toilets, churches, band stand and park equipment, over the last few weeks. This is sad to see given these are provided for public use or left open for the the public to visit. I am keen to encourage anyone with information about these crimes to come forward and please do contact us if you see any suspicious behaviour.

### **Wildlife Crimes in Norfolk**

Unfortunately, we have received a report this month of a tractor driving over a badger sett, causing at least one entrance or tunnel to collapse. The landowner worked with us and the contractor was identified as being responsible for the damage – the contractor admitted the damage and claimed he wasn't aware. It was decided the best course of action would be to deal with this crime with a Community Resolution and ask the offender to give back to the 'harmed'. This involved me working with the contractor, so he fully understood the Protection of Badgers Act as well as his legal obligations. He also donated money to a local wildlife charity.

Regarding our other ongoing investigations, they remain live so nothing to update you on this month. I continue to work closely with the RSPB and Natural England collating evidence on a couple of these investigations. Most of these now are awaiting full scientific and forensic reports before we can progress further.

### **Harecoursing—OP Galileo**

After a small rise in reports last month, this month has been very quiet again thankfully and we've received fewer reports than last season. We are now coming to the end of the traditional season, and I am really pleased to say reports have remained incredibly low. I believe this is partly due to our collaborative work with our six neighbouring forces so it's worked for one year, and we will continue to enforce and work with our colleagues across borders. This time next year, we may also have new legislation that will make it more difficult for this type of criminality.

I continue to urge anyone who believes hare coursing is ongoing or has any information relating to hare coursing to please get in contact with us or anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers.

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## March in the Countryside

Well, I think it's safe to say it should be less breezy this month...or at least I hope it will be! The temperature should start to slowly warm up with longer days and the sun sitting higher in the sky. Snowdrops will be well in bloom alongside the yellow and purple crocuses brightening up the roadside - one day there will be nothing to see, and the next we'll see a wash of colour... crocuses can grow very quickly. Add the daffodils, which seem to pop up earlier and earlier (I have already seen several this year in sheltered areas), and we can be sure spring is on its way.

Many of our native birds will start to speak their minds at morning chorus, and this sound really is a sign of spring. We will also start to see some of our migratory birds returning from warmer winter climates. One of the first to return is the Chiffchaff (some do overwinter in UK now) which often head south to Spain and Northern Africa during the winter. Towards the end of the month, we may be lucky enough to see probably the most famous of our migratory birds - the Swallow - starting to appear as they return with the warmer days and an increase in flying insects: their natural food source. Many of our winter visitors from the north, the wetland and wading birds, will also remain in the county a little longer before leaving for northern areas in April. Another one to mention for the month of March is the Great Crested Newt, Sadly, these have been in decline over the last few decades mainly due to the rapid growth of urban areas. The Great Crested Newts start to come out of hibernation this month and all pond maintenance should have been completed by the end of February to prevent any harm or potential offences being committed as Great Crested Newts are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

On the farm, the drier days will see the cultivation equipment out in the fields preparing the ground for

spring planted crops: spring barley, wheat, early peas, and sugar beet. You may also still see sugar beet being harvested as this is one of very few crops in the UK that can take up to 12 months to grow. At the time of writing, the factories around the county remain open and generally do into March and possibly even April if the harvest is taking longer than normal.

Livestock farmers will be starting to think about their spring turn out plans with many looking at how they can prepare their fields to get the best out of the grass growing season and repairing fencing and walls. Some early spring lambs will start to appear, especially in the slightly warmer climate of the east and most of our lambs are born indoors initially so get a head start before making it into to the fields a few days later. In the north, many ewes lamb outside so the season tends to be well into April to allow for better weather.

## Final Word

As always, a big thank you for taking the time to read this month's newsletter. Please feel free to get in touch if you feel something should be included in the newsletter. The idea of this newsletter is to give you an insight into our varied work and make sure you're updated on what's going on. Sometimes, we can't share everything as it's part of a live investigation. This month I am lucky enough to have a couple weeks off work, so March is likely to fly past as trying to fit everything in before and after my annual leave...and I'm sure the rest of the team will be busy in my absence! As always, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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](https://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](mailto:Volunteer@norfolk.police.uk)

Suffolk: [SpecialsandVolunteers@suffolk.police.uk](mailto: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"*

