



Issue 45 | June 2024

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Introduction

Well, another month has flown by and there has been no let-up in the challenging weather we are faced with, or the amount of jobs incoming.

We continue to receive a large number of nest disturbance jobs which is obviously disappointing when our wildlife really needs our help. That said, not all of the reports are always as they seem, but they still have to be investigated all the same.

The fields have turned a much richer green over the past few weeks. The oil seed rape comes to the end of its flowering season with the seed pods starting to appear, just as the winter wheat and barley ears also beginning to show. It will be interesting to see just how good the harvest is. Some rain is often called for at this time to assist in filling the grain, however you cannot forget the unbelievably wet winter they have had to endure!

This month ahead sees us return to the Royal Norfolk Show which is an annual privilege for the team to be invited back to alongside other policing colleagues.

Come and say hi if you're visiting.

June also brings an end to the closed fishing season on the 15th. We will be joining our colleagues from the Environment Agency in checking valid rod licences are in place, more on that later.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or

comments on any issues raised throughout this newsletter, please do contact us via email operationrandall@norfolk.police.uk

Outbuilding Burglaries - Secure your tools!

This month we have seen a small rise in the number of outbuildings being broken into, particularly with power tools and gardening tools being taken, alongside ride on lawnmowers and quadbikes. Again, can I remind everyone to make sure they know exactly what items they have got, and their unique serial numbers or identifying marks. These can then be quickly recorded on national systems should the worst happen.

It's also a good idea to consider marking valuable kit with your name, postcode and house number with a permanent marker or engraving tool. Make it as difficult as possible for your items to be sold on the 'black market'.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Join or Start a Neighbourhood Watch In Your Area

Join or Start a Neighbourhood Watch In Your Area
Neighbourhood Watch is being relaunched across Norfolk, strengthening the relationship between schemes and their local policing teams.

Funding for the project has come from the Home Office, following an application by Norfolk Police and Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch through the PCC's office.

Now, we are reaching out to communities to ask that they consider joining or setting up a scheme in their areas.

Neighbourhood Watch has evolved over the years and the scheme is about believing in the power of neighbours working together to build safer, vibrant and inclusive communities, helping prevent crime in order to make a positive and sustainable difference in our communities. Up to 20% of crime and ASB can be reduced with a well signed scheme in place. Norfolk Police are working with new and existing Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Norfolk to help tackle issues that are important to them.

For further information please contact PC Rebecca Harris or Sgt Sam Burton on
NHW@norfolk.police.uk or visit Find my local scheme | Neighbourhood Watch Network (ourwatch.org.uk)

Fishing and the Law

The closed fishing season ends at the end of the day on the 15th of June, and from then people can start fishing on rivers and other moving waters.

That said, there are many rules and bylaws you must be aware of before just heading out fishing on rivers.

The first thing you need, no matter whether you fish on rivers, private lakes or fishing clubs, you must have a valid rod licence. You must also have the correct number of rods on your licence. Children under 13 do not need a licence, children between 13-16 need a licence but do not need to pay the fee. To obtain a rod licence visit <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>. If you do not have a rod licence, you could be reported for prosecution. During recent patrols with Environment Agency Fishery Enforcement Officers and Angling Trust Volunteers, we checked over 80 rod licences in two days. We issued eight enforcement notices for expired licences, fishing with a two rod licence when using three rods and no licences at all. Its important to remember EA Fishery Enforcement Officers are warranted officers and it is a legal requirement to produce a valid rod licence to them (or name and address to check the database these days) or any police officer.

If you are fishing on private land or waterways, you must have permission from the landowner, failure to do so you could be committing an offence under the theft act (theft of fishing rights). Always follow local signs as they are put in place for a reason. There are also many laws around whether certain fish can be caught and taken or have to be released. It is important you are fully aware, if you plan to take any fish, the limits which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/freshwater-rod-fishing-rules/fish-size-and-catch-limits>

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 Crime Update

The last month has continued in a similar vein as the previous month, with lots of calls around nesting birds and the actions of a few who are disturbing them. It is a criminal offence to disturb any nesting bird and all work including hedge cutting where possible should be avoided until after the nesting season to prevent harm.

Sadly, I had a first this past month, with a report of a laser being used to disturb the peregrines on Cromer church. The laser was shone into the box, not once but twice, disturbing the female, causing her to clamber over her last remaining chick and fly off. She left the nest for several hours, but thankfully her maternal instinct clearly kicked in as she did eventually return. The chick seems none the worse.

****UPDATE****

After this newsletter was written the male involved 'handed himself in' and the following update has been made available:

The suspect who disturbed the nesting Peregrines identified himself at Cromer Police Station on Saturday 1 June.

The man aged in his 40s and from the Cromer area apologised and said it was a genuine mistake.

The incident was dealt with by way of a community resolution and it was agreed the laser would be destroyed, the man would make a donation to the Peregrine Project, and that he would engage in a formal discussion with a police officer about the safe use of lasers.

Officers have also dealt with a young teenager who was using an air rifle at wild birds. The teenager has

been dealt with on a local level. This is a concerning trend being seen across the country in urban areas, with ongoing work at a national level to tackle the issue with potential legislation changes in the future. As a force we will always take appropriate action and deal with those involved, such incidents can also effect individuals should they wish to apply for shotgun or firearms licences in the future.

Lovelock in the West (West Norfolk Rural Crime Beat Manager)

With another month passing, the ever changing and unstable weather has brought us more rain fall and another Lovelock in the West update. In the West Norfolk area, we are seeing a high number of shed breck ins, be it commercial or residential. The suspects seem to be targeting small handheld items such as chainsaws, strimmers and power tools and on occasion going for ride on lawn mowers and quadbikes from farms. With this information I would ask you not to become complacent with your own security, look to maybe upgrade/improve your own systems and to be observant of anyone who you may see in your farmyard/surrounding areas and report suspicious behaviour either on 101 or to your local rural crime officer to investigate.

As always, I would like to thank you all for your support in tackling Rural and Wildlife Crime in the West Norfolk Area and please get in contact if you have any concerns or issues.

PC 2061 Alex Lovelock

Alexander.LOVELOCK@norfolk.police.uk

07989193846 (please do not report crime on this number)



Kingy in the South (South Norfolk Rural Crime Beat Manager)

Hello!

I am PC 475 James King (Jimmy) and since October 2023 I have been the Rural Crime Beat Manager for the South Norfolk area.

I continue to meet and talk with as many farmers, landowners, and gamekeepers as I can, and I'm still looking to speak to anyone else I have not gotten to yet. I talk about crime prevention advice, reporting methods for crime and intelligence, suspicious vehicles/people, and wildlife crime to name just a few topics.

I think that it's very important to keep the lines of communication going between the public and the police and this is certainly the case in the rural community.

We have seen and do see yearly, thefts such as diesel, heating oil, tools, equipment and more recently firewood, to name just a few. Most recently there has been a continued trend of tools, garden equipment and ride on lawn mowers being stolen and I would like to appeal to all owners to check your security measures and report any suspicious vehicles or persons near or on your properties.

As the weather improves and land dries, I anticipate that we may see a rise in Hare Coursing incidents and encourage you to report any suspicious persons or vehicles and to call 999 if you are concerned about any coursing or poaching is taking place.

If you would like me to pay you a visit and give some crime prevention advice, please get in touch.

The message I want to get across is, please report these thefts, you're not wasting anyone's time. Even if we cannot always link a suspect, it's vital we have all the information we need as it could help us link it to

another crime or crimes and build the bigger picture for us.

Also, on many occasions we come across items that we cannot link to an owner or prove are stolen, meaning the opportunity to return them is lost, so please report the theft, take serial numbers from your property or security mark them so we can trace the ownership back to you.

If we have not met yet, please do get in touch with me, or if you see me out in the truck, I'm happy to stop and speak to you then.

Have a great Spring season.

PC 475 James KING
Poringland Police Station
07989197403
James.king@norfolk.police.uk

Final Word

Thank you again for taking the time to read through.

I hope you have a great safe month and please feel free to contact us with any concerns.

All being well the OP Randall Special Constabulary Officers will be popping into several events on Open Farm Sunday, myself and PC Lovelock will be at the Wittingham Country Park Open Farm event this coming Sunday 9th of June. For more info on Open Farm Sunday and events locally please visit Homepage - Open Farm Sunday

PC Chris Shelley

The police will never
ask you for cash or
your bank details.

STOP...
this is a scam!

THE
TRAP

What is happening in the countryside in June

Livestock farms will be as busy as ever this month with several having the added pressures of agricultural shows including the Royal Norfolk Show (we've already had several shows locally including the Suffolk show). They will be spending days preening and washing the stock ahead of showing them in the ring over the two-day spectacle. These show prizes can carry significant importance as they can add value to the stock for breeding purposes. If you get a chance to visit the livestock rings, spend some time watching these stockmen showing their stock off. It takes months of training, cleaning and trimming to get them looking as good as they do and is a great opportunity to see the many different breeds and their unique features.

These agricultural shows are also a lifeline to rural communities. They bring large numbers of likeminded individuals together, who are often from isolated backgrounds, for a few days enjoying each other's company, sharing ideas and stories. They have been a long-held tradition for hundreds of years.

Many of the sheep flocks in the fields will start to look a little more naked this month as shearing gets under way, I have already seen some and they looked as though they were praying for the sun to shine. In truth, sheared sheep can withstand very cold temperatures perfectly happily. Shearing is a costly business these days, the value of wool is very poor and it doesn't even cover the cost of shearing. The shearing has to be done for welfare reasons once a year. It is no longer a profitable by-product these days. It used to be an incredibly profitable industry during the industrial revolution and before the importation of cotton, but those days are long behind us. The industry was hit even harder during covid when the price of the wool plummeted even further and currently remains stubbornly low.

Some farmers are now in fact breeding sheep which naturally shed their wool, similar to malting dogs and this is becoming a sought-after breed characteristic these are often referred to as 'Easycare' sheep for obvious reason. This shows how agriculture can evolve in changing times.

Farms will also be dosing wormers and fly repellents to sheep and cattle to protect them from two of the biggest threats

over summer. Whilst there are industry concerns around the use of wormers (in particular with some worms becoming resistant to the wormers used) so many now only do this when necessary, rather than routinely. The use of wormers is generally seen as necessary as we don't have enough land to rotate around, to allow stock to be on constantly clean ground. These worms, like in humans and other animals, can cause serious illness and death if left untreated.

Livestock farmers are also watching closely what is happening in Europe as there are concerns around the risk of Blue Tongue Virus returning again with the midges. This remains a notifiable disease but there is some positive news recently that the Spanish have developed a vaccine against the current strain and has been authorised for us in the Netherlands. This is yet to be approved for use in the UK.

The fields are already starting to change colour, most of the oilseed rape has turned green now with the yellow flowers being replaced with the green seed pods which will eventually turn brown/black as they become ready for harvest. The fields of winter barley are now well in ear and starting to turn a wispy green as the ears swell and grow, this will shortly be followed by the winter wheat coming into ear ahead of harvest maybe towards the end of this month although more likely beginning of July.

The countryside remains in full song with so many of our native and visiting birds present. Many of our native species have already had their first clutch of chicks. The likes of tits, blackbirds and corvid species will now be looking to have a second clutch.

The swallows and swifts seem a little 'MIA' (missing in action) thus far, probably not helped thus far by the incredibly unseasonably cold weather. They are about if you look in their normal nesting place.

Our meadows, roadsides, and woodlands are literally bursting with life with flowers popping up everywhere and bees busy pollinating and collecting pollen. June can really be a great month to get out and enjoy our natural world before it gets a little too hot or dry with everything turning brown (if anything like last year!).

