

RURAL TIMES

PROTECTING
OUR RURAL
COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT

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Hampshire Alert
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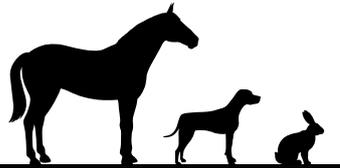


Meet the team

Contact numbers and locations for our Country Watch officers are shown here, should you need to contact them about your concerns and issues. Please note that these phone numbers should not be used to report crimes. You should call 101 if you think an offence has been or is about to be committed, or call 999 in an emergency. Although our officers are based in the locations stated, they have a countryside responsibility and can help you with any issue.

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- Special Inspector Iain Tomsett
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Assistant Chief Constable, Scott Chilton
Hampshire Constabulary, Rural Policing Lead

WELCOME TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF RURAL TIMES

During the past year, tackling crime in our rural communities has remained a real focus for our policing teams.

Rural parts of Hampshire are being targeted by more organised criminals, with figures showing that offending levels remain broadly the same but with more lucrative property being targeted.

As a result, the profile of the Country Watch team has been evolving, meaning our officers will be more proactive in targeting such criminality.

We are now working far more closely with landowners and their staff to identify opportunities to undertake

intelligence-led operations targeting these criminal groups, who travel into our area specifically to commit crime. Despite this, Hampshire remains a safe place and one of the most desirable counties to live in the country.

As ever, we want our communities to tell us about unusual activity or concerns they have. There is a joint responsibility in tackling crime, with a need for people to protect their property and also for the police to ensure we bring people to justice.

A recent development is our investment in technology and in

particular the use of aerial drones to capture evidence, search for missing people and track offenders travelling through our villages and surrounding areas.

In the next edition of Rural Times we will have an article expanding on this new initiative.

In this edition, we have articles on fly-tipping, the national wildlife crime conference and relationships with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, along with our second Meet the Team feature and various other items. I hope you find this an interesting read.



Michael Lane
Police and Crime Commissioner

SAFER RURAL COMMUNITIES

As we start 2019, I want to be clear that I will continue to ensure that rural communities and rural matters retain my focus amidst the inevitable changes we are facing this year.

My first action is to focus on the fundamental need for appropriate funding to allow us to sustain community safety for the coming years and beyond.

Government has provided policing with additional funding through the core grant and also allowed an increase in the local council tax policing precept of up to £2 a month for a Band D property.

I want to be clear that there is only one option that I can recommend to the people that I serve, which is to take full advantage of the settlement to protect current police services and use the additional £2 per month option to deliver local safety.

During the last month I have been consulting on these plans, and you can find out more about this on my website: www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/budget.

Up until the end of March, a lot of work will focus on Brexit issues. I will do my best to ensure that,

regardless of decisions made nationally, we retain a close focus locally on enabling the continuation of economic and social activity in a safe environment.

In what will undoubtedly be a very busy year I hope everyone will be able to fulfil their personal and business ambitions, and I wish you, your family and your communities a joyful and peaceful 2019.



Hugh Oliver-Bellasis is chair of the Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG) and acts as a critical friend to the force.

HUGH'S VIEWS

I cannot remember such uncertain times, which probably shows I am losing my marbles. The nation is consumed with the debate over leaving the European Community; a debate which sets good friends against each other with views so rigidly fixed. More important issues, such as the fate of Hampshire Constabulary, aren't getting the focus they deserve.

When it comes to the announcement just made by HM Government on this year's police funding, I have to say that I wasn't holding my breath after the well-reported increase in the amount our force is having to pay to the government in pension contributions. There can be no logical rationale for the fact that for the health service and education things are different, with this full pensions tab being picked up nationally. We shouldn't be surprised as fairness for policing went out of the window a long time ago.

We need to be fair ourselves, so it is right to state that the government has provided some new money in the form of a small increase in grant and the chance to raise council tax. Taking this full opportunity is important as it will protect against more cuts, and so I'd like to thank everyone who took part in the survey to support at least the £2 per month extra. This is in our gift. But for Hampshire, and for the rural community in particular, hiking local taxation can only be a short term fix.

Why should local people have to foot the cost in the long run? This year the government will do a full review of the police Home Office budget and how that cake is divided between forces. This is when we all need to make our voices heard, as it can't be right that a good force like Hampshire is afforded such a meagre slice.

For the meantime, the budget for the police in Hampshire is, and will continue to be, stretched to its limit. Crime is on the increase and not, as the government has avowed, a seasonal increase. This is particularly true of rural crime. I have

suggested before that the majority of rural crime is now Serious Organised Crime and they are not stupid or slow to identify that the response is likely to be patchy. We are very fortunate that we have Country Watch. The team has been increased as earlier this year they were allocated three Police Staff Investigators (PSIs) – a great addition to the team, which now has a total of 24 including Specials and PSIs. Their telephone numbers can be found on page 16.

However outstanding they are, the resource is spread painfully thin. Therefore, additional responsibility falls on us – the rural community – to make an effort to help outwit these clever criminals. We have to be alert at all times – be unBritish and report anything that we see that is unusual or out of place, from 4x4 vehicles we do not recognise to dogs in the wrong places, to vehicles selling anything from garden furniture to waste disposal. The constabulary is very conscious that the Achilles heel is lack of intelligence. They hope to rectify that in this new year.

Please review your security and make it as difficult as you can for them to access your property and pilfer. If you are in doubt call Victoria Snow, our new rural crime prevention adviser – she would be delighted to help.



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SHED THEFTS

Useful tips on how to keep thieves out of your garage or shed

COUNTRY WATCH
Protect your Property

1 MARK IT
Mark your property with a unique reference like your house number and postcode.

2 SNAP IT
Take a photo of your items which shows the unique markings and serial numbers.

3 LOG IT
IMMOBILISE PROPERTY CRIME
Register your items for free at www.immobilise.com

For more advice and information search for 'crime prevention' at www.hampshireconstabulary.co.uk or email countrywatch@hampshireconstabulary.co.uk Call us on 101 or in an emergency always call 999

HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

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Following a number of thefts from outbuildings and sheds in the north of the county, Hampshire Constabulary and Safer North Hampshire have been working together to deliver crime prevention messages in the area. Hannah Levy, from Country Watch, and Victoria Snow, our new rural crime prevention adviser, have co-ordinated a number of awareness events to encourage members of the public to secure their sheds and register their property on Immobilise.

Many people take a great deal of trouble securing their home, while at the same time leaving valuable garden tools and cycles in a shed that is either unlocked or not maintained. Tools such as lawn mowers, strimmers and power tools are expensive items to replace and may incur the victim extra insurance premiums. This can also be an open invitation for thieves to use garden implements to break into their house or car.

What is Immobilise?

- Immobilise is a national database for members of the public to register their property.
- There are currently more than 34 million items registered on the site.
- The police will always check Immobilise when they retrieve stolen property.
- It is important to record the serial number where possible as well as photographing the item. Marking it in some way (such as engraving, Datatag, SelectaDNA) will also make it easier to identify and return to you.

Shed security checklist:

- Shed alarms or a wireless alarm can be a useful deterrent. Alarms can send an alert to your phone or email.
- The padlock should have a closed shackle and the locking mechanism shrouded to prevent cutting or leverage.
- Use coach bolts to secure hinges. These cannot be unscrewed from the outside.
- Display weatherproof signage warning criminals that property on the site is marked and traceable.
- Secure expensive items, such as mowers and bikes, to an anchor point within the shed or garage.
- Cover windows with curtains/blinds to obscure the view of the contents. Put your Immobilise sticker in the window.
- Consider installing external lighting.
- Keep side gates locked to prevent access to the rear of the property. Periodically change the gate lock.
- Ensure your property is registered with www.immobilise.com

COUNTRY WATCH

Meet the team



Inspector Korine Bishop

I've been in post for more than a year now and what a whirlwind it has been! I work with an amazing team of officers, Police Staff Investigators, Specials and volunteers who have a passion and drive for investigating wildlife and rural crime. Having been a frontline patrol officer for the majority of my 22-year career, I have to say that my current role is probably the most rewarding and interesting I have had.

The most important thing I've learnt since becoming the strategic rural lead is the need to work in partnership. I have attended and presented at numerous meetings about how the community can support us. I think that active citizenship is really important and I will continue to be an advocate for this.

The highlight of the last year was being invited by ornithologist Keith Betton to assist with the ringing of peregrine falcon chicks in the New Forest. Having never held a raptor before, I felt very privileged to be part of this.

Outside work I am a police volunteer cadet leader in the New Forest, a Duke of Edinburgh's Award co-coordinator for Hampshire and a keen photographer. I love walking in the outdoors and we are privileged in Hampshire to have such beautiful countryside and open spaces, which I am keen to make sure are protected.

I am looking forward to what 2019 holds and working to protect our wildlife and rural communities.



Temporary Sergeant Justin Pringle

I have been a serving member of Hampshire Constabulary since 2006 and have worked in the West Wight Rural Neighbourhood Team (WWRT) for a number of years as a PC and an acting sergeant. I was promoted to temporary sergeant during May 2018 at which point I was seconded to the Response and Patrol teams. I returned to the WWRT at the beginning of October 2018 and now supervise a team of PCs and Police Community Support Officers as a Neighbourhood Sergeant. I am passionate about the area I police and am very keen to hear from members of the rural community about concerns and issues they have, as well as identifying priorities for my team to focus upon.



PC Vincent Lane

I have been a police officer for 13 years, including a long spell as a dedicated rural response officer. On the team for roughly two years, I am very lucky to be covering the leafy Hart area, with its numerous forests and vast arable and pastoral land. I was once told that a good rural officer should never have clean boots. This is a mantra I subscribe to (certainly at the end of most shifts), as I'm often wading through streams or trudging through fields in pursuit of the criminal element who continue to blight our countryside.

Aside from wildlife crime, I have a particular passion for tackling vehicle crime and have personally recovered a considerable number of stolen working vehicles. Building on this success, I now co-ordinate our response to all construction and agricultural plant machinery theft throughout the county, and this has already yielded some promising leads. I hope to expand on this to reunite considerably more owners with their property and crucially to prosecute those responsible.

I acutely understand the impact that poaching and acquisitive crime can have on those who earn a living off the land, and I'm passionate about tackling it head on. I am a strong believer in the words of Sir Robert Peel, who said: 'The police are the public and the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen.' In that vein, I'm always happy to hear from anyone on my patch. Where I can't take your call, I encourage anyone to leave a message or drop me an email.



PC Will Butcher

A police officer for over 16 years, it is fair to say that I have had a varied career in uniformed and plain clothed roles. Consequently I have a good understanding of the way that different departments operate and work together to provide our policing service to you.

I am a trained response and 4x4 driver and have previously been trained in the use of trackable assets, in a number of surveillance skills, as a hunt liaison officer, as a police trainer and as a sexual offences investigator. I completed the National Wildlife Crime Officers course in 2014 and have been with the team since then. I currently the

In the last issue, we featured some of the Country Watch team – here is the second instalment.

cover Basingstoke district but have also recently been looking after Test Valley. I was born into a farming family and brought up to appreciate the beautiful British countryside and wildlife. There really isn't anything else like it in the world.

I have served the rural community as a response officer for many years and am acutely aware how isolated and misunderstood people often feel when experiencing crime and anti-social behaviour. I see it as my responsibility to get to know our rural communities and better understand what is most important to them. I have a particular interest in targeting hare coursers and other poachers, having been successful in every prosecution I have raised thus far.

I am proud of the work the Country Watch team does to make our rural communities safer and to make Hampshire and the Isle of Wight a hostile place for those who seek to exploit the countryside for their own gain. We have adapted over time to become more proactive, brought on board new officers with valuable skills and experience, new Police Staff Investigators and purpose-built equipment and vehicles to make our work safer, more efficient and ultimately more successful.



PC Ian Bassett

I am the newest member of the Country Watch team, covering the East Hampshire district. I have been a police officer for nearly 18 years, after spending the majority of my life farming – following in my family's footsteps. This included being a partner in an agricultural contracting business in Devon, involvement in a large scale commercial farm enterprise in Oxfordshire and working on a large shooting estate.

Fulfilling my dream of joining the police, I spent my first 10 years as a Southampton response officer (big culture shock!) and the last eight years I have been attached to the Roads Policing Unit. When the opportunity arose to join Country Watch I felt the time was right to go back to my roots. I had missed rural life and was keen to combine all the skills learned from the two careers that I love. I am now smiling again! I am extremely passionate about helping those in the rural community and actively targeting those who blight their lives.

During the winter months I target the poachers and hare coursers who impact on farmers and gamekeepers. I feel this is where my farming and policing skills really work well together and I enjoy engaging with all our partners on a knowledgeable level.



PC Nick Massey

Based at Ventnor, my main role is as a Neighbourhood Officer in the 'Bay Area' (south of the Island) covering Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor. I have also been a Wildlife Crime Officer (WCO) for more than 15 years. In this time I have successfully headed a number of prosecutions for a whole range of wildlife crimes. The Island is served particularly well by the busy Yarmouth Country Watch team (PC Tim Company / PCSO Justin Keefe / PCSO Cat Quinn) and I am happy to assist this team whenever I am needed. I was born and bred on the Island, love the location and wildlife that resides here, and it's important for me to help keep it that way.

In addition to prosecutions, I believe a WCO's core role is being a source of advice. Parts of the legislation change regularly and I am constantly learning. Forging links with partners is key.

I'm eager to deliver a good service, whether it relates to CITES regulations, bats, badgers, planning issues or simply crime prevention and reassurance to keep rural communities safe.



Special Inspector Iain Tunstell

I have 22 years' service as a Special constable, the vast majority as a village constable. I joined Country Watch as Special sergeant as soon as the opening arose. I am a rural dweller and live on the family farm. In my full time job I have a background in road transport, but for the last 12 years I have been employed training new police recruits. Quite recently I began working for Thames Valley Police as their training centre is much nearer home for me. I am passionate about rural life and fighting crime in our community.



Special Constable Joe Earley

I have been with Hampshire Constabulary for seven years and have mainly worked in the neighbourhood areas of Eastleigh, engaging with the public about their concerns. I previously worked in rural areas for my day job and enjoyed the environment. I have a wide range of experience to bring to the team, having studied woodland and land management at Sparsholt College, as well as my many years in search and rescue. I am based out of Bishop's Waltham police station and cover the Meon Valley area.

COUNTRY WATCH

Meet the team



Special Sergeant Phil McCabe

I have been a Special with Hampshire Constabulary for more than seven years and on the Country Watch team for almost three years. I grew up fishing and shooting on my grandfather's farm so have an understanding of the rural way of life and some of the associated issues. During the week I work in the construction and engineering sector, driving a desk in the office or on site. This is a real contrast to driving around Hampshire's beautiful countryside. My favourite part of the role is the engagement with farming and rural communities, showing them that we have specialist teams who can respond to their particular concerns and issues.



Special Sergeant Phil Keeling

I grew up in a rural setting near Alton in the north of the county. Having a keen interest in horses from an early age fostered by the livery yard and riding school next door, I went on to study farriery and horse management in Hereford. I have now achieved more than 22 years' service with Hampshire Special Constabulary since joining in June 1996, where I started at Alton police station on Response and Patrol. Since then I have served at Petersfield, Whitehill and Alton in the Neighbourhood Policing Teams, and headquarters in senior management, before moving to Tadley and now

Lyndhurst on the Country Watch team. The Country Watch Specials are trained co-responders working alongside South Central Ambulance Service to provide that extra bit of medical cover for our local rural communities. I am also part of the Special Constabulary search team that specialises in missing person searches.



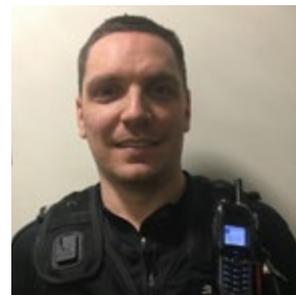
Special Constable Vicky Spearpoint

I have been a Special for the past 10 years, and a member of the Country Watch team for the last three years. I specialise and work closely with the equine community. Separate to my role as a Special, I work in the police control room and have been doing so for 18 years.



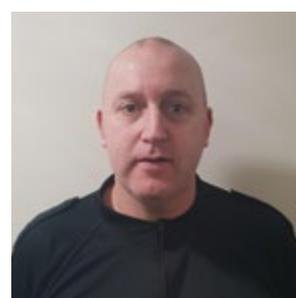
Special Constable Kevin Saunders

I've been with the Constabulary for just over six years, starting at a city station before joining the Country Watch team three years ago. As well as patrolling rural Hampshire working mainly from Alresford, I am also heavily involved with our ground-breaking search team. This utilises previous experience and skills to deploy throughout the county searching for high risk missing people.



Special Constable Shane Phillips

I am just approaching nine years of service with Hampshire Special Constabulary with many more to come. Since joining I have held many roles, starting at Alton on the neighbourhood team, before moving to our Roads Policing Unit covering the west of the county and I now serve on the Country Watch team. At first I was based out of Lyndhurst and am now at Meon Valley. I really enjoy the role in the Country Watch team as it gives me the opportunity to meet local landowners and gamekeepers and build up a rapport. As with other members of our team, I am trained as a medical co-responders.



Special Constable Jaime Campbell

I have been in the Special Constabulary for 11 years. In that time, I have spent six years in Southampton working in and around the city centre. I then spent five years in the Roads Policing Unit, which was a very varied and interesting role. I have recently moved to rural Hampshire and decided to join Country Watch, so this role is very new to me.

By day I drive freight trains, which is a very interesting job but miles away from policing the rural community. I will be going on courses shortly and learning all aspects of rural policing.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE CRIME CONFERENCE



The start of December saw the 30th National Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference held in York.

The conference was attended by 140 delegates from police forces across the country and partners including the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), Defra, UK Border Force, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Angling Trust, RSPB, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Born Free Foundation and the League Against Cruel Sports.



Hampshire Constabulary was represented by Inspector Korine Bishop and Sergeant Andy Williams. The annual conference is where law enforcers, statutory agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) gather to hear the latest views, approaches, successes and challenges around combating wildlife crime in the UK. Chief Inspector Louise Hubble, Head of the NWCU, gave an update on the six Priority Delivery Groups. Each group has a national prevention lead and representatives from police forces across the UK, partners and other NGOs.

Each lead then gave a presentation on: badger persecution; bat persecution; poaching; raptor persecution; freshwater pearl mussels; and CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), including the European eel, illegal trade in raptors, ivory, medicinal and health products, reptiles, rhino horn and timber.

The purpose of a UK Priority Delivery Group is to progress prevention, intelligence and enforcement, including:

- Setting of SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely)
- Awareness raising (across law enforcement agencies, partners, stakeholder communities and the public)
- Raising the profile via media exposure
- Increase in information sharing
- Co-ordination of enforcement activity

Part of the conference involved working groups for all the delegates around badger persecution, organised crime groups, a poaching case study from the CPS and intelligence from the Fisheries Enforcement Support Service.

Pin badges were sold at the conference and £500 was raised and donated to the forensics analysis fund set up through the PAW (Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime) Forensic Working Group. This helps cover the forensic analysis work around wildlife crime investigation.

Deputy Chief Constable Craig Naylor, National Police Chiefs' Council lead for rural affairs and wildlife crime, chaired the conference. He said: "I don't think any of us will deny that, in the current climate, developing our approach in the six priority areas presents a real challenge.

"Partnership collaboration, working with NGOs and government departments, is key to tackling wildlife and rural crime. Working together, we can contribute significantly to tackling wildlife crime."





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DECREASE IN FLY-TIPPING INCIDENTS

A national report has shown that local authorities dealt with fewer fly-tipping incidents in 2017/18 than in the previous year.

Commenting on the release of this data by Defra in November, Councillor Rob Humby, Executive Member for Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council, said: *"I'm pleased to see that the trend of the amount of fly-tipped waste on public land in Hampshire continues to go down, and the number of successful prosecutions remains strong. We're sending out a clear message in Hampshire that fly-tipping will not be tolerated here. We've joined forces with all our partners including the police, all of the district and borough councils across Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils, neighbouring local authorities, the Environment Agency and rural associations to protect our countryside."*

"One of the ways we've been tackling this is by increasing awareness among Hampshire residents to help them understand they have a part to play. They can do this by checking any individual or company employed to take away waste from homes and businesses is legally registered to do so by asking to see their Waste Carrier Licence issued by the Environment Agency. Small businesses, as well as householders, can now use the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in Hampshire, offering a legal, safe and convenient way to dispose of household waste."

National statistics show the most common size category for fly-tipping

incidents during this period was equivalent to a 'small van load', with fly-tipped waste of this size accounting for 33 per cent of total incidents. Public highways remain the most common land type for fly-tipping, accounting for almost half of all incidents in 2017/18.

Councillor Humby continued: *"One of the strands of the work with our partners is to make sure it's easier for people to report fly-tipping. These new figures show that there have been 23,000 reports in Hampshire of fly-tipping during the 2017/18 financial year. We would continue to encourage people to report fly-tipping on public land to their local council, but please don't touch it as it could be hazardous. If anyone sees fly-tipping taking place, please call the police."*

Further to this, Gareth Roberts, the county's Fly-Tipping and Project Officer, hosted a partnership meeting on 4 December at the Hampshire County Council offices. All local authorities, Hampshire Constabulary, NFU, CLA, Forestry Commission, Hildon Water, Hampshire Association of Local Councils, Project Integra, Hampshire County Council Countryside Services, Environment Agency, Hampshire Horsewatch and Keep Britain Tidy were in attendance to celebrate the success of the partnership to date.

The excellent partnership with the Country Watch team was a main focus and, together with the impact Operation Wolf has been having across the county, the partnership is looking forward to continuing with joint operations throughout 2019. The CLA and NFU welcomed the partnership's continued commitment to work with private landowners to help support them in reducing fly-tipping on their land.

If a fly-tip has happened on their land, they are encouraged to report it to their local council so that the incident data is recorded. If there is clear evidence within the fly-tip, it is essential that this is left as it is until it has been seen by the local authority enforcement team to seize as evidence. Local authorities will look to secure compensation where possible when taking forward cases to court.

Find out more about how to stop fly-tipping in Hampshire: www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/flytipping. Read the full report on national fly-tipping statistics from Defra: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756306/FlyTipping_201718_Statistical_Release_rev.pdf



(From left to right) Nigel Oliver, Environment Agency; Inspector Korine Bishop; Cllr Rob Humby, Executive Member for Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council; Debbie Jones, Executive Director of Hildon Natural Water and Isobel Bretherton, NFU South East Communications Adviser.



ONLINE FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES LICENSING

Hampshire Constabulary recently joined the Single Online Home (SOH), which is a national policing website and platform that enables us to offer a range of online services to our customers.

Firearms licensing is one of the areas where this service is being developed. Hampshire has been chosen as one of three licensing departments to trial online firearms and explosives licensing, alongside Thames Valley and the Metropolitan Police. The service has been developed in partnership with police forces nationally, as well as the Home Office and

members of various shooting organisations and Independent Advisory Groups.

We are now pleased to provide the submission of grant and renewal applications online, with the ability to upload photographs and make online payments in one process. In addition to providing essential advice and information, you can also use the online facility to request other services, such as gun transfers, variations and changes of address. As this is a pilot service, there will be some things you can't yet do online. However we expect a more comprehensive service to follow soon after the pilot period ends in the spring. Please go to www.hampshire.police.uk to find out more and start using this exciting new online service.

COLD CALLING

Loft insulation spray foam

Companies are actively cold calling on elderly residents, often using scare tactics to pressure them to sign up for a loft insulation spray foam. This foam is totally unnecessary for homes and the owner will be charged thousands for it. They are not being advised of a cooling off period or their consumer rights once they have signed up and often the contractors will turn up the very next day to do the work.

Once the foam sets (like concrete)

it traps moisture so the wood in the roof starts to rot, meaning the foam needs to be removed. The homeowner will have paid thousands for the unnecessary work, and will have to pay thousands to remove the foam to then have expensive repairs done.

These companies have websites and are registered on Companies House, but this is by no means a confirmation that they are reputable. Trading Standards are currently investigating these companies, and have seen directors jailed in the past. For more information please contact your local Trading Standards team.



Equine safety and security event

We are working with the British Horse Society to put on an event to educate horse owners, riders and carers about equine crime prevention and road safety. **This will take place from 6.30pm -10pm on Thursday 4 April at Lyndhurst Community Centre.**

WORKING FOR A HEALTHY GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND ROMA RELATIONSHIP

Even in today's enlightened society, it's a fact there is a large ethnic group still experiencing widespread racism and discrimination: Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GRT) communities. So, what is our local police force doing to help?

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has set a three-pronged local policing objective to enhance engagement with GRT communities by: encouraging a common and consistent approach to unauthorised encampments across forces; increasing representation within the workforce; and building confidence with communities to report incidents of hate crime.

Working group

Hampshire Constabulary's GRT Working Group (GRTWG) was established two years ago and works to address identified gaps in fulfilling this objective. Led by Chief Inspector Rob Mitchell, the group aims to ensure that the constabulary develops and maintains a healthy relationship with GRT communities in the way the policing service is provided, as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010. The Act states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The GRTWG focuses on four areas: neighbourhood engagement; unauthorised encampments; workforce representation; and building confidence to encourage the reporting of hate crime/incidents by GRT communities.

So, the group is not only outward looking. It also examines how the constabulary recruits and look after its own staff who belong to, or identify with, the GRT communities. Best practice and learning from around the country is incorporated into the training and operational deployment of staff, and the group aims to ensure that Hampshire Constabulary is a fully inclusive police service.

Obstacle

Traveller-related issues regularly make the news across the country, often because of unauthorised encampments being set up in particular areas. Unauthorised encampments can prove to be the single most challenging obstacle to settled and nomadic communities developing better relations.

Hampshire Constabulary has an established and effective procedure in place that sets out expectations and standards to provide a level of consistency around decision making by officers when attending unauthorised encampments. Several factors have to be considered on whether the criteria for police powers of removal are appropriate, legal and proportionate when considering the welfare needs of all parties.

In cases where police powers of removal are not proportionate, local officers will work with land owners to provide

reassurance and monitor any changes to the original assessment. Any alleged reported crime and anti-social behaviour will still be recorded and dealt with under appropriate legislation and powers.

Operation Quebec, as the procedure is known, is compliant with the recently published NPCC advice on dealing with unauthorised encampments. While considering how to manage an unauthorised encampment, it is worth bearing in mind that a lack of suitable accommodation nationally and locally is a major factor.

Key issue

The key issue in respect of unauthorised GRT encampments is the lack of accommodation for the travelling communities. More permanent sites are required across the county and there are currently no allocated transit sites within Hampshire to accommodate nomadic GRT communities.

The shortage of suitable sites for GRT families to live on and access as they move around the country leads to groups setting up unauthorised encampments (and increasingly unauthorised developments where people buy land lawfully and develop it without planning permission) – thus creating the biggest single source of conflict between the travelling and settled communities.

Ultimate aim

The GRTWG is working to address all these areas and reduce incidents of racism and discrimination against the GRT communities.

It won't happen overnight and the GRTWG is making good progress.

RURAL ROUND-UP

REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF THE RURAL POLICING SERVICE

Ringwood landowner Hallam Mills has provided his reflections on the service offered by the police to rural communities.

It's always when something is under budgetary challenge that its value is most clearly defined. Country Watch and all its variations has a unique strength: it multiplies the effectiveness of the local police by asking gamekeepers, concerned and watchful residents, farmers and rural

workers to become the first-line observers on the watch for criminality.

If the police do indeed need to make budgetary cuts, the worst thing they could do is weaken the support to that army of unpaid observers who save them so much time and effort. Day and night, unpaid, they act as the police's eyes and ears, tirelessly reporting suspicious activities, confronting (from a safe distance) often dangerous criminals, confining their activities, and co-ordinating the attempts to make arrests by the police. Rural workers must triple the strength of the police, so it would be folly to make further cuts in support by rural policing.

MEETING YOUNG FARMERS

In November, the Country Watch team engaged with young farmers to show how we target rural and wildlife crime. Sergeant Andy Williams and PC Ian Bassett were delighted to have been invited by the chairman of the Stockbridge Young Farmers Club to give a brief input on the team's work.

They explained what the priorities are for the team, as well as explaining how the National Wildlife Crime Unit directs and influences what regional police forces do.

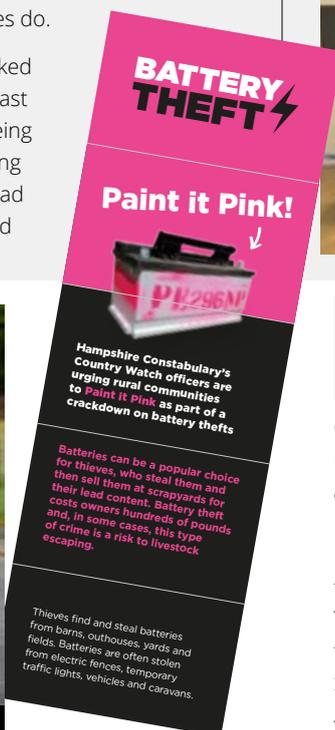
They also showed how we have worked with rural communities during the past year and some of the results. Ian, being an ex-farmer, was well versed in giving an input on nuisance vehicles, off road laws and what the community should look out for – including how they

should report all crime and suspicious incidents to us. The audience numbered around 25 and they were really engaging, asking lots of questions on all sorts of rural topics and some non-rural!

Andy and Ian both really enjoyed explaining how their team fits into policing and how we can have a real influence on making rural communities safer. They were really impressed by how keen the young farmers were to learn about our team.



Sergeant Andy Williams and PSI Melody Manning



PAINT IT PINK CAMPAIGN TO DETER BATTERY THIEVES

Country Watch officers are urging rural communities to Paint it Pink as part of a crackdown on battery thefts. A new flyer gives advice about etching your unique postcode onto any high-value batteries and painting them pink. Batteries such as those used in vehicles and for electric fences can be a popular choice for thieves, who sell them at scrapyards for their lead content. The team is writing to scrap metal merchants today to ask them to reject and report any pink batteries offered to them. Police Staff Investigator (PSI) Melody Manning said: "Batteries are often stolen from barns, outhouses, yards and fields, as well as electric fences, temporary traffic lights, vehicles and caravans. Battery theft costs owners hundreds

of pounds and, in some cases, can lead to livestock escaping. We're urging people to paint their batteries pink to help tackle this crime."



WHATSAPP GROUPS

We would love to be part of any WhatsApp groups for landowners and gamekeepers. If you have a group, please contact your local Country Watch officer (see page 16). This will help us keep in touch with the issues you are facing locally.

RURAL ROUND-UP

MAN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH QUAD BIKE THEFT

We are investigating a burglary which happened in Newnham Lane, Basingstoke, overnight on 21 November. A quad bike was reported stolen from an out-building.

A 32-year-old man has been arrested in connection with this incident. He has been released from custody but remains under investigation.

Neighbourhoods Inspector Hannah Luchesa said:

"Our neighbourhood teams in rural areas work closely with their communities and the Country Watch team to prevent and combat rural crime.

"As we talk to rural householders and businesses, we emphasise how crucial it is for them to report every crime to the police.

"Using this information, we can analyse where crime happens and tackle the organised gangs that target isolated properties and land."

BUSINESS OWNER FINED FOR WILDLIFE OFFENCES

A business owner has been fined for the second time for damaging the habitat of a protected species.

John De Benham-Crosswell, aged 83, of South Hay Lane, Bordon pleaded guilty at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court, on 4 December to damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt.

The offence took place between 24 September 2016 and 30 November 2017 at the Selborne Brickworks site in Honey Lane, Alton, which is owned by De Benham-Crosswell. Work on any site containing a protected species would

need to be carried out in accordance with a licence from Natural England. There was no valid licence in place when the work on this land was carried out.

De Benham-Crosswell was fined £1,200, and ordered to pay £85 costs and a victim surcharge of £120. He was fined in October 2016 for similar offences.

Hampshire Constabulary's Country Watch team worked closely with Natural England, the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, Hampshire County Council and specialist prosecutors to bring this case to court.

Country Watch officer PC Lynn Owen said: *"This case shows that we will work with our partners to take action against anyone contravening wildlife regulations.*

"These safeguards are in place to protect specific species and it is so important that land owners and businesses check the regulations before carrying out any work."

Jim Foster, Conservation Director at the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, said:

"Sadly we are losing great crested newt populations across the country through habitat damage, even though this is illegal.

"It is good to see the law being upheld in this case thanks to the determined action of Hampshire Constabulary."



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APPEAL AFTER THEFT OF HORSES

We are appealing for witnesses or information relating to the theft of two horses stolen from a paddock in Bishop's Waltham.

The theft is believed to have occurred from a field in The Lakes, New Road between 11.30am and 3pm on 19 November.

The horses are described as a Piebald (black and white) cob gelding called Barney and a black cob gelding with white socks and a white blaze called Toby. They were both present in a paddock that was secured with electric fencing that morning but when the same person returned at 3pm, Barney and Toby were missing and a section from the electric fencing was on the ground.

Kathryn Golightly, the long term carer of the animals, said that her children are devastated and are desperate to have the horses back.

A further incident of attempted theft of a horse from a paddock in Hill Rise, Meonstoke, has also been reported to police.

The owner reported that someone had broken into the paddock overnight by causing damage to electric fencing. She had attended to the 14-year-old Piebald cob horse at 5.30pm on 21 November. When she returned at 7am the following morning, the horse was wearing a head collar that had been placed on it since she had last seen the animal.

The collar had been stored within a shelter in the field. The owner believes the suspect(s) had damaged the fence with the intention of leading her horse away but potentially were distracted and made off empty handed. We are linking the incidents.

If you have any information about this, please ring 101 quoting reference 44180434698.

Animal owners are advised to ensure their livestock is identifiable. Horses in particular should be microchipped. Please ensure as far as practicable that fields have secure fencing, gates, padlocks and security lighting.



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OFFICERS TAKE PART IN JOINT OPERATION TACKLING RURAL CRIME

Officers tackling rural crime took part in a joint operation to disrupt criminals coming into the north of the county. On 6 December, more than 40 officers from Hampshire, Thames Valley and Surrey took part in the dedicated cross-border operation. It forms part of our ongoing Operation Rebate work, which was launched to reduce rural crime such as non-dwelling burglaries.

During the night of action more than 20 vehicles were stopped, with one seized. Three people were arrested for driving offences. Hampshire saw officers from Tadley and Yateley's neighbourhood teams taking part, as well as those from Country Watch, the Dog Unit and the Roads Policing Unit.

Neighbourhoods Inspector Olga Venner said: "No offences were reported in relation to Operation Rebate, so we are pleased that our action is making a difference."

"Operations like this are important to show criminals that rural areas in Hampshire are not a soft target. We know rural crime has a significant impact on those targeted and we are dedicated to do whatever we can to bring those responsible to justice. Together with our colleagues from neighbouring police forces, we will continue to work hard to ensure our communities are safer for all."

ADVICE TO 4X4 OWNERS

We would like to urge owners of 4x4 vehicles to take some simple crime prevention measures:

- Lock up your gates
- Don't leave the keys in your vehicles
- Fit an additional steering lock and pedal box
- Park in secure or well-lit areas

PONY FOUND SHOT

We received a report from the Forestry Commission on 12 December that a New Forest pony had been found dead at the junction of Tethering Drove and Hale Road at Hale.

The four-year-old filly had wounds likely to have been caused by shotgun pellets. We are investigating the circumstances of the animal's death.

Anyone with information about this incident, which we believe took place in the early hours of 12 December, should call 101 quoting 44180462950.

APPEAL AFTER ANIMALS SPRAYED WITH PAINT

We are investigating a criminal damage incident involving farm animals.

Between 11.30am and 4.30pm on 18 November, nine animals including goats and sheep were covered in purple spray.

The incident took place in fields adjacent to Everton Road in Hordle. Trees and a barn were also vandalised with the purple spray.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101, quoting 44180433037.

APPEAL AFTER PROTECTED BIRDS FOUND WITH INJURIES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Officers from the Isle of Wight's Country Watch team are investigating two incidents where protected birds have been injured, possibly by traps. We are working with the RSPB to establish what happened after the birds were found in the Bridesford area, both with severed legs. On 14 March the body of a buzzard was found in woodland near to Littletown with one of its legs severed.

On 23 September a hobby was found alive with one leg severed. This bird was taken to the RSPCA and humanely put down. PC Tim Campany from the Country Watch team said: "We are working closely with our colleagues from the RSPB to establish what happened. One line of enquiry is that the birds may have been caught and held in a spring-type trap."

"This is illegal and is a barbaric method of trapping, it leaves the bird once freed from the trap unable to land and feed and it will eventually die of starvation. All wild birds are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which makes it an offence to intentionally harm them."

Anyone found to have done so faces an unlimited fine and/or up to six months in jail. Raptor persecution is a priority for the National Wildlife Crime Unit and will not be tolerated. I would urge anyone with information on suspicious vehicles, persons, or traps located in the Bridesford area to call us on 101."

Anyone with information about these incidents should call 101 quoting 44180374840.

IN OTHER NEWS...

Country Watch Specials have been supporting the safer roads campaign in New Forest. In November and December, 25 tickets were given out on high risk animal death routes. Warnings were issued.

Three men had their vehicle seized in connection with poaching offences in Corhampton in November.

A man was jailed for four months after being caught by Country Watch officers stealing large quantities of scrap metal from a farm in Martin, near Fordingbridge, in October.

Three men were stopped on suspicion of poaching in Nether Wallop in October and had their vehicle seized.

Country Watch officers were involved with an investigation into the theft of scrap metal in Southampton in November. Two men were arrested.

We helped the Environment Agency with an incident involving the theft of fish at Broadlands Lakes in August. Those involved received hefty fines in November.

COUNTRY WATCH

Meet the team

Contact numbers and locations for our Country Watch officers are shown here, should you need to contact them about your concerns and issues. Please note that these phone numbers should not be used to report crimes. You should call **101** if you think an offence has been or is about to be committed, or call **999** in an emergency. Although our officers are based in the locations stated, they have a countywide responsibility and can help you with any issue.



Insp Korine Bishop
07880 056657



Sgt Andy Williams
07392 314299



PC Vince Lane
07970 145389

**Special Inspector
Iain Tunstell**



PC Will Butcher
07775 542982



**Police Staff Investigator
Hannah Levy**
07469 562472

**Special Sergeant
Phil McCabe**

Tadley

Aldershot



**Police Staff Investigator
Melody Manning**
07469 562444



PC Steve Rogerson
07554 775468

Andover

Alresford



PC Lynn Owen
07901 102344

**Special Sergeant
Phil Keeling**
07392 289634

Bishop's Waltham

**Special Constable
Vicky Spearpoint**

Lyndhurst

**Special Constable
Kev Saunders**

**Special Constable
Joe Earley**

Yarmouth

**Special Constable
Shane Phillips**



PC Matt Thelwell
07392 314410

**Special Constable
Jaime Campbell**



**Police Staff Investigator
Anna Presswell**
07469 562221

**PCSO
Cat Quinn**



PC Scott Graham
07554 775488



PC Ian Bassett
07775 537382

**PCSO
Justin Keefe**



PC Tim Campany
07901 102393



Temporary Sgt Justin Pringle
07901 102300



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