



## Introduction to ACC Maggie Blyth



I am writing to you as the new Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) for local policing and public protection. My responsibilities include oversight of all response policing for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, our neighbourhood police officers and staff - and those who deal with vulnerable individuals through our public protection teams.

Hampshire Constabulary is a varied force to police with so many communities living across our cities and towns, including the Isle of Wight - and of course the vast rural districts that include so many countryside areas.

It is vitally important to me that in our approach of dealing with high harm crime, we protect the most vulnerable in our communities and we maintain the trust and confidence of the public we serve – and that means those of you living in rural areas as well as our urban conurbations.

Going out with our Country Watch team, I have been really impressed by how well our frontline officers and staff are working with you, with key stakeholders and with farmers, estates and the many individuals making up our rural communities.

Firstly, we are reliant on those relationships to keep our information and intelligence flowing and, secondly, it is those partnerships that will truly protect and keep strong all that we value across Hampshire.

Rural crime across the county is diverse and requires specialist knowledge from our officers, which the Country Watch team provides. It also needs robust and considered tasking from our different neighbourhood teams, who understand their local communities and are able to harness the right support – whether it is linked to local problem solving or helping tackle the most serious and organised crime that tends to affect our force area and knows no boundaries.

I am keen for Hampshire Constabulary to continue to build and reinforce relationships that enable us to keep people safer. We will strengthen the trust of all our communities through our delivery of fair, thorough, transparent and unbiased policing.

I do hope you enjoy this digital edition of the Rural Times and I look forward to meeting with some of you over the next few months - albeit whilst we acknowledge social distancing!

*ACC Maggie Blyth*



## Follow the Countryside Code

With more people using the countryside this year as an alternative to foreign holidays, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) is urging people to follow the Countryside Code during their visit.

The [Countryside Code](#) aims to help everyone respect other people, protect the natural environment and enjoy the outdoors.

It is there to ensure visitors enjoy the countryside safely by planning ahead of their visit, maintaining social distancing, keeping dogs away from livestock, leaving gates as they find them, taking litter home and avoiding having barbecues in public spaces.

The CLA, which represents 30,000 farmers, landowners and rural businesses across England and Wales, sees this period as a real opportunity for visitors to make the most of the beautiful countryside.

CLA President Mark Bridgeman (pictured) said:

*“Our message is clear. People are hugely welcome in the countryside, and we want to help them to enjoy it safely and responsibly.”*

*“We believe this is a fantastic opportunity both for our regular visitors and for the many first-timers. We know the countryside can do wonders for people’s mental and physical health, and it can also help them understand the natural environment, including how food is produced in Britain.”*



The CLA has produced an array of graphics which capture some of the key rules to follow in the countryside. Download them via <https://www.cla.org.uk/question-access>

Mike Sims, CLA

## Coronavirus: an impact on the countryside

From the very start of an unprecedented country-wide lockdown, the subsequent closure of public parks and play areas saw an influx of people using rights of way in the countryside for exercise.

With school closures and many people furloughed or working from home, the number of walkers and visitors to rural areas swelled further.

Many farmers and rural dwellers reported more walkers and visitors using public footpaths and, whilst most welcome legal and responsible access, sadly many walkers have failed abysmally to follow any of the Countryside Code.

Alarming reports of trespass, intimidation, littering (including human excrement) and, on many occasions, wanton destruction of fencing, crops and conservation strips in the pursuit of picnic and sunbathing spots have resulted in farmers and producers, along with their families, experiencing very real distress.



Trespass in particular has caused massive concern and anguish for a multitude of reasons: the potential spread of Covid-19 by contamination of gates and fences; the release of livestock potentially risking injury or death; the destruction of wildlife habitats and conservation sites; the use of disposable barbecues causing fires and intimidation towards landowners, their families and staff.



Litter, of course, is not only a visual blight, but can be devastating for livestock, wildlife and the countryside alike. Cattle can readily eat discarded litter and will either suffocate or eventual gut compaction leads to a slow and agonising death.

Similarly, many wildlife species are destined to a miserable existence and excruciating death: often just by becoming caught up in, or trapped inside, discarded waste, no longer able to feed or drink.

Fields and rural open spaces whether they be in pasture, conservation or within a crop rotation, are a working environment and part of someone's home or business. Many footpaths lead through the homes of farmers and their families, and their physical and mental health has to be safeguarded as well.

Currently, the limited resources that support our local communities, farmers, businesses, police and emergency services are all very much under pressure.

*Ruth Harper-Adams MIAgSA*



For a further perspective on the increase in litter during lockdown, please see Michelle Nudds' article on the British Association for Shooting and Conservation website: <https://basc.org.uk/litter-lockdown-training/>





## Rural crime strategy

Public confidence in the policing service provided to our rural communities is something we are always looking to improve. To help us deliver a service that supports our communities as best we can with the finite resources available to us, we focused during the summer on developing our rural crime strategy to ensure we are targeting those areas which present the greatest threat, risk and harm.

With the help of our specialist Country Watch rural policing team, guided by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and national rural and wildlife policing initiatives, we have set out the six areas we will focus upon:

- Agricultural and business crime
- Rural isolation
- Game sports and wildlife crime
- Serious and organised crime
- Environmental and heritage crime
- Rural community crime and road safety



We will unpack each of these and provide you with the finer detail in the coming months, along with actual examples from across the two counties of the strategy in action.

To help us get this right, we have already set up a Rural Crime Tactical Board within East Hampshire, which is police-led. It is attended and supported by officers from Country Watch, local neighbourhood policing teams and, critically, by members of the rural community as well. They are best-placed to help us shape our crime prevention and detection messages so that the operations we carry out have maximum effect.

The initial signs from the Board in East Hants are so positive that we are looking to adopt a similar model across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight - by expanding and setting up a total of four Rural Policing Tactical Groups across the east, west and north of Hampshire and also on the Isle of Wight.

All will follow that similar approach of taking advice and feedback from those best placed to give it and those people are therefore able to hold us to account - so we don't just talk a good game, we deliver as well. We look forward to sharing with you some of the updates and work from those groups.

Key to improving our policing offer to our rural communities is having that clarity of vision through the Rural Crime Strategy - so we know, and you know, what it is we are trying to achieve.

This strategy is informed at a local level by the Tactical Groups who have knowledge of local problems and context. Tactics can therefore be delivered by us continuing to work closely in partnership with other agencies and organisations.

*Chief Inspector Alex Reading*



## Warning – organised crime groups are targeting quad bikes and other machinery and equipment. Take action now!

Since March, we have seen an increase in the numbers of quad bikes being stolen within Hampshire. The most affected districts are Test Valley, Hart and Rushmoor, Basingstoke Rural and East Hants. Other districts within the force have seen pockets of incidents involving the same types of property being stolen, however not in as significant numbers.

From March to September 2020, northern Hampshire saw in excess of 60 quad bikes or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) stolen along with other farming machinery, vehicles and power tools. Unfortunately, these thefts are continuing so we are asking landowners, farmers and others to continue to be on their guard.

We believe many of these thefts are connected to organised crime groups. One stolen quad bike was confirmed as having travelled to Germany. Another item was found within an HGV en route to Bulgaria. This shows a level of planning by the criminals, so being aware and reporting suspicious vehicles and people is really important.

Rural crime is a priority for us and we will continue to relentlessly pursue suspects and prevent them from using the road networks. If you see any suspicious vehicles or people, please let us know by ringing 101. As far as possible, keep high value items such as quad bikes, plant machinery or power tools secured and locked at all times or out of sight. Consider installing CCTV, tracker devices, automatic security lights and intruder alarm systems.

You can now report crime or suspicious activity online by visiting our website [www.hampshire.police.uk](http://www.hampshire.police.uk) or clicking on this link: <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/>

The community are our eyes and ears and we encourage you to report all incidents as soon as you are able to. And if it's happening there and then, always call 999.

More crime prevention tips:

- Keep good records of your quad bikes or ATVs. Take colour photographs from the side, front and behind.
- Photos should include serial/chassis numbers, model numbers and distinguishing features
- All quads should be security marked with your postcode, followed by letters of your property name or number
- Register your quad at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)
- Park as close to your premises as possible, ideally in a locked outbuilding with CCTV and security lighting, preferably out of sight from nearby roads.
- Secure with wheel clamps and/or locking posts, and store in a secure building. Consider using ground anchor plates and chains for extra security
- Consider investing in a bespoke quad security device (look for those approved by Secured by Design and Sold Secure)
- Fit a GPS tracking device
- Remove keys when not in use and do not leave them near the quad



## How have we been tackling these thefts?

A significant amount of work has been ongoing across the northern part of Hampshire by Country Watch, neighbourhood policing, response and patrol, roads policing, and helicopter and dog units. Our colleagues in investigations have also been working hard to solve crimes and bring offenders to justice.

The psychological harm caused to rural communities is fully recognised, given the significant value of property stolen and the damage it does to livelihoods.

Our investigations have involved joining forces with other neighbouring forces including Thames Valley, Wiltshire, Dorset and Surrey.

There have been a number of arrests and further arrests are planned. Unfortunately, we cannot give you too much detail at the moment as legal proceedings are active but please see some of the updates below:

- One suspect arrested and a stolen quad bike recovered on behalf of Surrey Police following a tracker activation
- One suspect arrested after an HGV bound for Bulgaria was stopped and searched
- One stolen quad bike and touring caravan worth £20,000 recovered following execution of a warrant in Bramley
- Five men arrested in joint Operation with Thames Valley and stolen quad bike recovered from a Basingstoke rural burglary
- One stolen quad bike recovered in Marchwood following a burglary in Test Valley
- One stolen quad bike recovered off the A31 following a burglary in Test Valley

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## Help deter theft and aid recovery of agriculture equipment with CESAR

The CESAR scheme was designed by police officers working in partnership with the construction and agricultural industries to provide police with a quick and effective way to identify all manners of machinery and equipment. CESAR can be fitted to all types of self-propelled and trailer mounted construction and agricultural equipment.

The registration database is accessible 24/7 to provide support to officers who are making enquiries at the roadside about equipment stopped in suspicious circumstances with persons they suspect may have stolen it.

CESAR uses Datatag ID technology, with both visible and covert markings, making it a real deterrent and an invaluable aid to recovery. Many insurance companies offer discounts of up to 20 per cent on premiums and reduced excesses for cover on CESAR-marked machines. For more information visit: [www.cesarscheme.org](http://www.cesarscheme.org).



## Cyber Resilience Centre launches across south east to help businesses

The South East Cyber Resilience Centre (SECRC) is part of a network of centres being established across the country to provide businesses and organisations with an affordable way to access cyber security services and advice.

The SECRC offers a range a membership options depending on what level of support businesses need. The Core Membership is free and provides businesses with access to a range of resources and tools to help them identify their risks and vulnerabilities, as well as providing guidance on the steps they can take to increase their levels of protection.

For more information visit <https://www.secrc.co.uk/>



### Be vigilant

Vigilance is the today's watchword, we must all keep alert. The criminals are taking advantage of Covid-19 regulations and are out and about.

Look out for strange vehicles moving about; take photos and report it to the police.

Make contact and speak to your local officers. See the contacts page for details of the Country Watch team.

*Hugh Oliver-Bellasis*

### Two new officers

Exciting news! The Country Watch team is gaining two new officers.

The extra officers will be based in the New Forest and covering Waterside, Test Valley and Bishop's Waltham.

### Drone pilots

Congratulations go out to Sergeant Stuart Ross (pictured, background), PC Lee Stanbrook (pictured, foreground) and Police Staff Investigator Hannah Levy.

They have all passed their drone pilot course.

We now have three extra drone pilots in the team to support local operations.







## Rural round-up

### Operation to tackle modern slavery

In the middle of June, drone operators from Country Watch supported neighbourhood teams from Fareham along with officers from the GLAA (Gang-masters and Labour Abuse Authority) with an early morning operation aimed at the illegal harvesting of cockles and other shellfish. The aim was to target highly organised crime gangs. These gangs exploit vulnerable people into modern slavery. As a result, 42 people were located and spoken to by the GLAA.

### Stolen caravans

On 7 August, PC Ian Bassett and others from the Country Watch team attended a site in Durley.

They were supported by Winchester City Council planning and enforcement officers and PC Vince Lane from the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS). As a result of this visit, two stolen caravans were recovered.



### ANPR

Two of our vehicles have now been fitted with ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) - one in the New Forest and the other in the East Hampshire area.

This great technology allows us to immediately check the index numbers of vehicles known to be involved in rural crime and offences such as fly-tipping.

### Poaching operations

Over the summer months and during the initial restrictions due to COVID 19, officers dealt with a massive increase in reports of poaching (theft of fishing rights) on the River Itchen and River Test.

We tackled this with a number of joint operations involving partner agencies including the Environment Agency, volunteers from the Angling Trust and with the assistance of our Specials, who increased patrols both in vehicles and on bicycles. As a result, numerous offenders received substantial fines and/or community resolutions - which come attached with a fee of around £300 and the surrender of their fishing equipment.

### Hare coursing report

Three dogs have been seized after allegations that they were being used for hare coursing in Morestead, near Winchester.

Officers from the Country Watch team attended a location in Morestead Road after a report from a member of the public on 3 October.

Three people were spoken to and enquiries are ongoing. The dogs, all lurchers, are currently being cared for in a safe location.

### Deer attack

On 14 June, officers responded to a report of a deer being attacked by a dog near the Micheldever Road in Whitchurch. Four men and two dogs were located.





A man was arrested on suspicion of driving while under the influence of drugs. One of the dogs was seized and the four men have been summoned to court for offences under the Game Act 1831.

## Arrests after stolen items recovered

On 10 July, NaVCIS alerted Country Watch officers to a tracker activation near Tadley. A private security company was tracking some items that had been stolen during a burglary in Hungerford the previous night.

Hampshire Constabulary made contact with Thames Valley Police and, together with the security company, located the stolen items.

Five men were arrested in Aldermaston. Officers located the stolen property from the burglary in Hungerford and also recovered a quad bike that had been stolen from a burglary at a horse stud in North Hampshire. Two of the suspects live in North Hampshire and are on bail while the investigation continues.

## Four fined and dogs seized

Four men who admitted night-time poaching and criminal damage in Chilton Candover have been fined a total of £3,500. Four lurcher dogs that were seized when the men were arrested in January have been re-homed.

The men were caught after a report that a lamp was being panned across fields. When officers attended the suspects made off in a vehicle, causing damage to hedges before getting stuck in mud.



They ran from the vehicle but the police helicopter joined in the search and they were found hiding in woodland.



## Quad bike recovered

On 15 July, a search warrant was carried out in Bramley. The site was searched by officers from the Country Watch team, investigations and local neighbourhood teams.

Drone pilots helped the search by providing aerial support and images of the site. One man was arrested at the time of the search and a second man has subsequently been arrested.

We recovered a quad bike, chainsaw and caravan that were suspected to be stolen, along with other items suspected to have been stolen during recent burglaries. The investigation is ongoing.

## Three detained for illegal fishing

On 7 August, we were called by river keepers reporting people illegally fishing in Whitchurch.

Three people from Ashford in Middlesex aged between 16 and 20 years old were detained a short distance away after they ran from the river keeper. All three were issued out of court disposals involving them forfeiting their fishing rods and writing apology letters.



# 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 Stuart Ross**  
07970 145099



**PC Steve Rogerson**  
07554 775468



**PC Will Butcher**  
07775 542982



**PC Lee Stanbrook**  
07392 289466



**Police Staff Investigator  
Hannah Levy**  
07469 562472



**PC Lynn Owen**  
07901 102344



**PC Matt Thelwell**  
07392 314410

**Special Constable  
Phil McCabe**

**Tadley**

**Aldershot**

**Special Constable  
Phil Keeling**  
07392 289634

**Andover**

**Alresford**



**PC Scott Graham**  
07554 775488



**Police Staff Investigator  
Melody Manning**  
07469 562444

**Lyndhurst**

**Bishop's Waltham**

**Special Constable  
Kev Saunders**

**Special Constable  
Joe Earley**

**Yarmouth**

**Special Sergeant  
Shane Phillips**



**PC Ian Bassett**  
07775 537382



**PCSO  
Cat Quinn**

**Ventnor**

**PCSO  
Karen Allen**

**PC Martin Egerton**  
07968 098006

**PCSO  
Justin Keefe**



**PCSO  
Kevin Cooke**

**Sgt Adam Brown**  
07795 051050



**PC Nick Massey**  
07901 102373



**Police Staff Investigator  
Anna Presswell**  
07469 562221



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