

RURAL TIMES

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight



Foreword from ACC Maggie Blyth

ISSUE 2 – Spring 2021



Welcome to the Spring edition of Rural Times.

I appreciate that it has been a while since we last updated you on all things rural; and with the recent Health Protection Regulations beginning to ease further, we are sure to see more and more people visiting rural and countryside areas.

As such, it is vitally important for me at this time to reiterate that we are always looking to engage with the communities we serve in rural and urban conurbations.

We want to work with each and every one of you to reduce crime and the possibility of you being a victim of crime, and bringing offenders to justice.

We have recently published our Rural Crime Strategy which sets out how the Constabulary intends to tackle rural crime and anti-social behaviour in our local rural communities. In developing this key document, we have recognised some of the unique challenges faced by our rural communities and the fact that many feel isolated and vulnerable. We will be working hard, alongside our core partner agencies in the coming weeks, months and years to ensure that rural communities continue to feel safe.

In order to respond to ongoing community issues, our teams require residents to report any suspicious incidents or suspected illegal activity in rural areas to us. Every call you make to us is logged and helps us build a bigger picture about what might be happening in your community. This allows us to take action and prevent your neighbourhoods from harm.

You can report this to us via the [Hampshire Constabulary website](#) or calling 101. As always if a crime is in progress, please dial 999 immediately.

On a final note from me, we will be endeavouring to provide you regular updates on issues affecting our rural communities every six weeks and always welcome ideas from you as to how best we keep in touch.

We look forward to continuing to work with you during 2021 as we move into the summer months and the government restrictions are lifted. We are well prepared for what this entails for us as we continue to tackle crime across all our communities and will be working closely with our local authority partners, rural networks and voluntary and community groups to continue to keep you safe.

ACC Maggie Blyth

**COUNTRY
WATCH**





Countryside Code re-launched following refresh by Natural England



The Countryside Code regulations, which provides advice to visitors about how to enjoy a visit to the countryside safely and responsibly, have been overhauled for the first time in over a decade.

Key changes to the Countryside Code include, amongst others:

- New advice for people to 'be nice, say hello, share the space' as well as 'enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory'

- A reminder not to feed livestock, horses or wild animals
- To stay on marked footpaths, even if they are muddy, to protect crops and wildlife

Mark Bridgeman, President of the CLA (Country Land and Business Association) which represents rural business owners and farmers across Hampshire, Isle of Wight and beyond, said: "With more people expected to explore rural areas it's imperative that the Code is well-read, respected and followed. Although there have not been significant changes to the Code, the messaging is clear – Respect, Protect and Enjoy the outdoors.



For more details about the revised code and what has changed, please visit the [Countryside Code pages](#) on the Gov.uk website.

New Police Crime Commissioner elected for Hampshire



Our Rural Crime and CountryWatch teams would like to congratulate Donna Jones on becoming the new Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hampshire.

We look forward to working closely with her over the coming months; building upon our commitment to protect and safeguard rural communities across Hampshire from harm.

PCC Donna Jones has set out her vision for tackling rural crime, telling Hampshire Constabulary: "Crime in the countryside is real and it's increasing, and we need to invest in new technologies to tackle these organised crimes. I look forward to working with CountryWatch officers and communities to find the right solutions. Having looked at what works in other forces, I am particularly looking to strengthen 'Equine Rangers' and enable these volunteer horse riders to act as the eyes and ears of the police in the less populated parts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight."



COVID; easing out of restrictions to enjoy rural areas and the countryside

As the easing of Government restrictions continue, we appreciate that this will be a very positive time for most of our local residents - with many now wishing to visit friends and family.

However, this brings its own challenges to rural communities. We expect to see an increased footfall within our rural areas and countryside in the coming weeks and months, especially as we move into the summer months.

While the Health Protection Regulations are slowly easing, allowing more freedom, our officers will continue to focus our attention on blatant breaches. Our officers will be concentrating their patrols on hot-spot areas – which you as a community, can influence when reporting crime to us.

We know that residents will be thinking that we are near to the finish line, but that isn't quite the case just yet. There is still so much to do in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

We would urge residents to ensure they are au fait with the new regulations put in place by the Government and ask them to abide by these. Thank you to all of those who have done so thus far and throughout the pandemic.

As always, if you see anything suspicious, please do report it to us either online using our [online portal](#) or by dialling 101. If a crime is in progress, please dial 999 immediately.

Crime prevention advice following rise in Land Rover thefts

We have seen an increase in thefts of Land Rover Defender vehicles recently.



As such, we are asking the public to remain vigilant, ensuring your vehicle remains as secure as possible to deter would-be thieves.

In order to secure your vehicle, there are a number of mechanisms you can put in place in order to secure your vehicle, which include using wheel locks, fitting a tracker to the vehicle, utilising a detachable steering wheel as well as a motion-sensored dash-cam.

While we would also suggested parking other vehicles in front and behind the vehicle or make use of fence lines and buildings if possible. You can also make your vehicle by etching the registration into the window panes.

If a crime is in progress, please dial 999. Otherwise, any suspicious activity can be reported to us via 101 or our [online reporting tool](#) on the Hampshire Constabulary website.



‘Dog thefts’ – pet owners asked to remain vigilant after local concerns, but figures suggest social media ‘hype’ adding to fears

We have become aware in recent months of an increase in concerns posted on social media in relation dog thefts in Hampshire.

We want to reassure you that we are not seeing this reported to us to the extent that is being discussed and suggested.

Of course, even just one dog theft is one too many and we understand why pet owners are concerned about what they might be reading online or hearing about dog thefts.

Our Rural Countrywatch team have developed some simple crime prevention advice for local residents to follow;

- Ensure your dog is microchipped and has up-to-date contact details
- Fit your dog with a collar; the tag on the collar should have a contact number and your name, not the name of the dog
- Make sure you take pictures of your dog (include pre/post grooming, distinctive markings or features)
- Always keep your dog in sight on walks and in your garden
- Never leave a dog tied-up unattended or left alone in a car

- Pets are easily stolen from a garden when left unattended, even if for just a few minutes. Check your boundary and fences are secure
- Fit a bell to front gates or gate alarms to any rear or side gates. The gates should be secured with British Standard locks, locking bolts or closed shackle padlocks
- Vary the times and routes you take when walking your dog

Any incident reported to us is fully investigated, including those incidents where you may feel someone is acting in a suspicious manner.

It is important that any reports of suspicious activity includes vehicle registration numbers and a description of any people you see. This allows local officers to make enquiries.



‘Protect, mark and park your car securely’ - the rise of catalytic converter thefts

Catalytic converter theft is on the rise. It is closely linked to prices of Rhodium and Palladium which are contained within the converters.

The prices of these metals have increased recently and this is what we believe has contributed to the number of theft; especially in hybrid and 4x4 vehicles.

Catalytic converters can be stolen within a few minutes by using just a few basic tools, but there are ways you can protect your vehicle if, like many people, you don't have access to a garage.

- Find out where your cat converter is located on your car; if it's at the front of your car, park with the bonnet towards a wall if possible
- If it's at the back, park it with your exhaust to the wall
- Avoid parking your vehicle half on the pavement and half on the road, as this may make it easier for get under your car
- If your catalytic converter is bolted on, you can ask for your local garage to weld the bolts to make it more difficult to remove
- Etch a serial number on the converter so that if it is stolen and then recovered, we can get your car converter back to you
- You can purchase a 'cage clamp' which is a cage device that locks in around the converter to make it more difficult to remove
- Speak to your dealership or garage about the possibility of adding a tilt sensor that will activate the alarm should any thief try to jack the vehicle up to steal the converter

If you see someone acting suspiciously under a vehicle, report it. Obtain as much information as possible, including any vehicle registrations.

In the event your cat converter is stolen, please report online via our website <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> and include any markings so that we can identify your converter if it's recovered.

**PROTECT YOUR
CATALYTIC
CONVERTER.**



**Thieves are
targeting
valuable metals
under your car.**



The local neighbourhood policing teams in your area are monitoring reports and would like to ask people to report any suspicious activity.

Protect, mark and park your car securely to reduce the risk.



Supporting rural areas with proactive drone patrols

Police officers from Hampshire Constabulary's Country Watch team have been assisting local communities in rural areas in recent months through the deployment of drones – which are operated by specialist officers – following reports of ASB, livestock worrying as well as missing people.

There were a number of incidents in the East Hants area in recent months, in particular the South Downs, whereby owners have been walking with dogs off lead and not under close control. They have subsequently chased or attacked livestock and wild animals.



In addition to increased routine patrols in rural and countryside areas across Hampshire in the coming months, our officers will also be seeking to utilise the use of drones in areas where we have seen incidents occurring previously. This will enable our officers to manage any ongoing issues around livestock worrying or animals being attacked by dogs.

While our officers had a slightly different request to contend with recently, as English Heritage approached us to obtain imagery of Hurst Castle, following the main structure collapsing. It demonstrated good partnership working with English Heritage, allowing us to capture iconic building pictures at the same time, but also means we could take proactive preventative action. It meant that we could quickly alert local communities to the issue and help prevent further destruction of the site.

Finally, our Country Watch officers are often asked to assist in the search for high-risk missing / vulnerable people in rural areas through the use of a drone. Their local knowledge and landowner contacts really come to the fore in instances like this, allowing them to very quickly adapt to changing and difficult situations and scenarios. The fact that through the use of drones, our specialist officers can alert those on the ground to possible sightings in real-time is very valuable.

As always, if you see anything suspicious please dial 101, or report it to us via our [online reporting tool](#) on the Hampshire Constabulary. If a crime is taking place please dial 999.

For more information about the countryside code, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>.

Cyber Resilience Centre launched 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/>



Rural round-up

Officers confirmed in post!

We welcome two new officers who have recently joined the team; Nick Atkins in Stockbridge and Amy Giraudet in Bordon.

They will be providing additional support across the New Forest covering Waterside, Test Valley and Bishop's Waltham.



Court date set for two men charged with hunting offences

A trial is set to take place on 12 October at Southampton Magistrates Court.

It comes after two men were charged with two counts of hunting wild mammal with dogs in September 2020 on the Bisterne Estate.



Sentencing date set after trio plead guilty to hunting offences

Three men will appear at Basingstoke Magistrates court on 9 June after for sentencing.

They pleaded guilty to hunting a wild mammal with dogs in November 2020 in the Overton area.

Man fined at court for air weapon offence

PC Ian Bassett located a man on Sailors Lane in Corhampton in November 2020 and was found to be in possession of an air weapon.

He was summoned to Southampton Magistrates Courts on 4 May for possession of a loaded / unloaded air weapon in a public place. He was ordered to pay a £440 fine, plus costs.

Trial set for hunting offences in Whitchurch

Four men are set to face trial on 28 May after they were summoned for daytime trespassing in pursuit of game.

It comes after their dog was seen chasing a deer, on private fields in Whitchurch in June 2020. Officers seized the dog because of the offences.

Assisting counterparts in Surrey with plant theft

Our Countrywatch officers have been also been assisting our counterparts over at Surrey Police with an investigation into plant theft back in 2019. Approximately £2million worth of plant machinery had been stolen.

Enquiries are ongoing at this time.





Dumper truck and tools recovered

On 20 February, officers responded to a report of a one tonne dumper truck and work tools from a construction site at Southampton General Hospital.

Sgt Shane Phillips, with the help of a third-party tracking company, were able to locate an active tracker on the dumper truck within a short distance of Nursling industrial estate.

A white Mercedes sprinter van was located on false plates and the dumper in the rear; with PC Lane of the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS) confirming that both vehicles were stolen.

Quad bikes and ATV thefts

110 ATVs / quad-bikes have been stolen from rural areas in the last 12 months; but there has been a lot of work ongoing to identify the main offenders.

A series of operations across North Hampshire supported by the rural crime team, roads policing and neighbourhood policing teams have helped to yield some positive results.

Since January 2021, six arrests have been made. A 32-year-old man has been charged with four driving offences, one person was released on conditional bail, three people have been released under investigation and no further action was taken against one person.

Dog walker fined after livestock worrying

Officers received reports of a dog worrying livestock and attacking a sheep on Thursday 18 February 2021 between 5pm and 5.15pm at West Tisted Manor Estate.

A dog walker had lost control of one of their dogs while on a country walk and it had run into a field containing a large quantity of sheep. The dog had been caught, but sadly, not before it had attacked a sheep.



A 61-year-old woman from London took full responsibility and a Community Resolution order was issued with a £500 fine – payable to the victim by means of compensation. She was also ordered to sign a Dog Behaviour Contract requiring them to keep their dog on a lead at all times when in a public place and to write a letter of apology to the victim.

This particular case, unfortunately, is commonplace in rural areas. Livestock Worrying offences can cause significant impact financially to a farmer in order to treat injuries or replace the loss of livestock, while having a detrimental effect on the livestock farming business.



Professional dog walker fined and ordered to pay compensation after admitting livestock worrying charges

A 58-year-old man from Basingstoke has been fined and ordered to pay compensation after admitting to a charge in relation to livestock worrying in Ramsdell, Tadley.

The incident occurred between 1.45pm and 2.30pm on Monday 25 January at Ewhurst Park in Ramsdell.

Basingstoke Magistrates Court heard how a professional dog walker had lost control of one of the dogs that was under his care; which ran over three quarters of a mile to a sheep flock. The dog chased and bit several young lambs; resulting in six deaths.

In a separate incident in late December 2020, the same dog handler had lost control of a dog at Winslade in Basingstoke. The dog chased a number of sheep and injured them, requiring veterinary treatment.

He was summoned to Basingstoke Magistrates Court and was charged with being in charge of a dog worrying livestock. After pleading guilty to the offences in court on Thursday 6 May, he was fined £176, ordered to pay £950 compensation to the victim and pay a £35 victim surcharge alongside £85 in court costs.

In addition, he was required to sign a Dog Behaviour Agreement - requiring him to keep their dog on a lead at all times when in a public place.

These incidents can have a huge impact on the rural farming community and Hampshire Constabulary will always take these reports very seriously and seek to investigate.

If you see anything suspicious or have been a victim of crime, please report it via Hampshire Constabulary's online reporting tool on their website or by calling 101.

Dot Peen marking system helping to recover stolen items



Every year, we recover hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of stolen property from the hands of criminals, but all too often there is no way of identifying the rightful owners.

Being able to trace the ownership of the property not only helps people get their property back, but it can also provide evidence that is vital in securing convictions.

We have been visiting both stables and liverys across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to mark tack for residents as a preventative measure. She has been engraving their postcodes on to their items and recording their details for future reference using the Dot Peen machine.

For more details about how you can prevent yourself from becoming a victim of crime, or information on how to secure your property, please visit www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk.

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 Will Butcher
07775 542982



PC Lee Stanbrook
07392 289466



**Police Staff Investigator
Hannah Levy**
07469 562472



PC Amy Giraudet
07787 004801



PC Nick Atkins

**Special Constable
Phil McCabe**

Tadley

Aldershot

**Special Constable
Phil Keeling**
07392 289634

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Alresford

Bordon



PC Lynn Owen
07901 102344



PC Matt Thelwell
07392 314410

Bishop's Waltham

**Special Constable
Kev Saunders**

Lyndhurst

**Special Constable
Joe Earley**

Yarmouth

**Special Sergeant
Shane Phillips**



PC Ian Bassett
07775 537382

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**PCSO
Karen Allen**

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