



Issue 44 | May 2024

 @RuralCrimeNfk

# Operation Randall

tackling rural crime  
Newsletter

## Introduction

Here we are again, another month has gone by. I am sat here at the Euston Game and Country Fair looking out into a very heavy shower. I think that's been the story this month sadly, 'April Showers', although some have been a little more than a shower! It is fair to say it has been a pretty cold month too. It has been another busy month with lots going on and we have attended a number of engagement events including the Game and Country Fair.

Yesterday (the Saturday) was a reasonable day and the crowds came in it was great to see some new and familiar faces.

The team, as you will see, have been involved in the wide and varied jobs in the rural crime world. As a big Community Safety Team, we were all involved from a drone point of view, to provide live pictures to commanders in our control room for the Norwich v Ipswich game which worked incredibly well!

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or comments on any issues raised throughout this newsletter, please do contact us via email [operationrandall@norfolk.police.uk](mailto:operationrandall@norfolk.police.uk)

## Engagement Events

As I started the newsletter this weekend (27th and 28th) we have been at the Euston Game and Country Fair.

Saturday was a reasonable day if very unseasonably cool. Sadly, the Sunday was very damp but still people braved the day and was great to see so many people. Many conversations were had from crime prevention, wildlife crime, firearms and so much more. This is all organised by the Special Constabulary and we support them with this, they did a fantastic job. We were, as always, joined by the Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Team too.

We have attended a few other events, often just popping in for an hour or two, to be available to the rural community to talk to us about anything they wish. We have attended an RSPB residents meeting on the north Norfolk coast to discuss the conservation work they are doing this spring in relation to ground nesting birds. I have also popped into a couple of local annual parish council meetings to provide small presentations around the work we do as a team. PC Alex Lovelock and I popped into the Fakenham Point to Point race day for an hour again, to make ourselves available, before the days events got underway for anyone wishing to discuss anything with us.

Planning is obviously well underway for the Royal Norfolk Show and we will be at several other events over the summer which we will promote on our social media channels so do come and see us.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

PC Chris Shelley | [christopher.shelley@norfolk.police.uk](mailto:christopher.shelley@norfolk.police.uk) | 07900 407106

### Wildlife Crime Update

As touched on in a previous month, we picked up two birds of prey (buzzard and sparrowhawk) from the Winterton area. It has been confirmed that these birds have not been shot and have no obvious signs of trauma. Due to the state of decay, we were unable to submit them for further work. They will go down as unexplained deaths, potentially natural causes, as no further investigation will be made. Obviously should further information come to light, we can obviously look at these again.

This month we have picked up a Red Kite from the Terrington area, again we have had the bird x-rayed and it has not been shot. Due to the unusual circumstances the bird was found in, it has been referred to the WIIS scheme (<https://www.fera.co.uk/chemical-regulation/post-market-stewardship/wildlife-incident-unit>). We have no update on the two barn owls yet.

This month has followed similar trends of last month with several complaints around nesting birds being disturbed with hedge work, building work and maintenance. It is essential that nesting birds are left alone, no matter where they nest, all nests are protected when being built and in use. This is quite topical as I have just been notified that one of our new police cars, waiting to be fully kitted out by workshops, has had to be put to the back of the queue as a bird has taken up residency in the wheel arch!

Two other investigations have come to a close this

month. A male has been issued a caution for kicking a sea gull in the Yarmouth area. Also, a homeowner has been issued with a conditional caution after destroying a bat roost, within a barn, as part of a development. This conditional caution had a financial condition, to an equivalent monetary sum of what was agreed to have been the likely amount saved, by not doing the work under licence. This sum of money (couple thousand+) was donated to a local bat conservation project which is already being put towards a project, at a vital bat site in Norfolk, which is in urgent need of some maintenance.

### ASB in Churches

Sadly, this month has seen several crimes involving our churches. These buildings obviously have a huge amount of history within them, and they are hugely important to local communities. We have seen unnecessary damage caused within the buildings and within their grounds with windows that are almost impossible to replace to same standard and other minor issues.

These are all ultimately not acceptable. A couple of arrests have been made around these in the Yarmouth area. I would encourage anyone with information or witness to any such incidents contacts us immediately.

### WhatsApp Group

The Operation Randall WhatsApp group is expanding. At present the group mainly consists of partner agencies, key landowners and administrators of other social media rural groups. I am currently looking at increasing the size of this group so if you meet one or more of the above criteria – work for a partner agency, key landowner or you administer another rural group on social media - or if you think you would benefit or be able to contribute in any way, I want to hear from you. You can contact me on email at [christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

### Daniel Lingham Sentencing for Illegal Egg Collecting

An egg collector who illegally hoarded thousands of wild birds' eggs has today been sentenced.

Daniel Lingham, 71, of Newton St Faith, Norfolk, was captured on a wildlife trap camera on 9 June 2023 stealing two eggs from a Nightjar nest in Holt Lowes.

A subsequent search of his home revealed he had amassed 2995 eggs most of which (2429) were protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Of those 548 were from native birds on the amber list of birds of conservation concern and a further 546 were of the most serious concern on the red list including Linnet, Green Finch, Yellowhammer, House Sparrow and many more.

A further collection of eggs - which looked much newer - was found behind the bath panel including a box containing a pair of Nightjar eggs with a label 'Nightjar 2, Holt Lowes June 9.'

Officers also found identifying books, binoculars, and an egg blowing kit.

Lingham admitted to five offences at an earlier hearing in February.

Appearing for sentencing at Norwich Magistrates' Court on Friday 3 May he was handed 12 week jail sentences for the taking of wild bird eggs and for two counts of possessing wild bird eggs, eight weeks for possession of equipment, and 12 weeks for breaching a Criminal Behaviour Order.

All were suspended for 18 months to run concurrently.

He was also handed a 12 month mental health requirement, 15 rehabilitation days, and ordered to pay £482 in costs, compensation and victim surcharge. Lingham had previously been convicted of similar offences in 2005 and 2018 and still has four years of a ten year Criminal Behaviour Order left to run. PC Chris Shelley from the Op Randall Rural Crime Team said: "It is disappointing that we were here again for a third time with Lingham again having taken whole clutches of eggs for his personal collection and having a huge negative impact on local wild bird populations.

"Having today been sentenced we hope this is an opportunity for him to reflect on his behaviour and get the help he needs to end his illegal egg collecting. "Although the hobby has largely fallen out of favour we remain alive to the risks and ask the public to be alert too under Operation Owl, a national initiative that asks the public to be our eyes and ears out in the countryside to tackle the taking of wild bird eggs.

"In the UK all wild birds, their nests, and their eggs are protected by law and if you see any suspicious activity please call Norfolk Police on 101."

Tom Grose, RSPB Investigations Officer said: "It's clear Lingham has a blatant disregard for nature and the law, targeting species on the brink regionally.

"It was hoped that the behaviour order, issued in 2018, with its additional tougher penalties would have seen an end to Lingham's offending but sadly that hasn't happened."



### Tool Thefts, Secure Your Tools and Sheds NOW!

We have seen a number of thefts from units, sheds and similar in the last few weeks. The west has been particularly hard hit but nobody should be complacent.

Please make an effort to take prevention action now, a few minutes may prevent a lot of time reporting the crime to us and heading out to replace the item.

First thing to look at, have you marked your value items? Simply mark them with permanent marker (postcode/surname) or use an engraving tool. The other option is to use a forensic marking kit.

Do you know the serial numbers? Keep a small notepad with your serial numbers or unique identifying marks that should the worse happen it can be given to the police and then loaded onto national computer systems.

Make it noisy! Can you install audible alarm or padlock? Chain all your high value items together like chainsaws and similar. It makes it frustrating and noisy. Gravel drives can also help.

Remove, remove, remove! Can you remove a battery or blade and store it separately?

Use of trackers – there are some very affordable tracking solutions out there now which are much smaller than ever before. These trackers can be installed in some very clever positions, and we have seen some success's recently especially around generators.

Motion sensor alarms and lights – lights which are triggered by movement can be very effective as can motion sensor alarms (often called PIR alarms).

They ultimately work on an invisible laser line being broken which sets the alarm off.

Signs – notify people you are taking action to protect your property 'CCTV in action' 'Guard dogs present' 'Dogs loose' etc.

CCTV/Ring doorbells – another solution that is becoming more affordable however remember most of these systems are only useful in POSSIBLY identifying individuals involved rather than preventing the theft in the first place

Challenge and record visitors – genuine visitors to farms and properties will be more than happy to identify themselves and explain why they're present. Always remain polite and avoid confrontation. If you can take photos or record number plates of vehicles that people arrive in.

Always store firearms, shotguns and air weapons appropriately – too often we visit licence holders who have got complacent storing weapons incorrectly, leaving them in vehicles, storing ammunition incorrectly. Please follow the law and store firearms appropriately and ammunition separately too.

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

He's been too busy to write something this month if you see him out and about give him a nudge for next month please ☺

As always he is contactable for those of you in the west:

PC 2061 Alex Lovelock

Alexander.LOVELOCK@norfolk.police.uk

07989193846 (please do not report crime on this number)

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ask you for cash or  
your bank details.

**STOP...**  
this is a scam!

THE  
**TRAP**

### What is happening in the countryside in May

I think it would be nice to suggest that this month should bring us some warmth and drier spells. Our forests have already started to come alive with life of all forms. The birds are in full morning chorus now and many are carpeted by bluebells which make a spectacular site. Now is the time we can start to do our bit for our local bees and other pollinators. Start to let a corner of your garden go a little 'wild', let the grass grow or simply plant some wildflower seed in your garden or in a pot!

One sign that summer really is here is the arrival of the swallows and swifts, a real personal favourite of mine over the summer months, seeing them over the water meadow swooping down and up as they feed well on the midges.

As I have touched on earlier, we have been dealing with multiple reports of nesting birds being disturbed. Birds can have a habit of popping their nests in awkward places however these all remain protected wherever they take up resident. Please be mindful of this when carrying out maintenance. Don't fall foul of the law.

Livestock farms will be looking to some drier and warmer weather to get the livestock out on the grass as it starts to grow and provide some vital quality feed. All will be worrying about the risk of Blue Tongue, a disease which became an issue in the autumn, brought into the country by midges which obviously increase with warmer weather. Sadly, it is a serious disease which can cause a number of issues for livestock farmers and is a notifiable disease. It should be noted there is no risk to human health.

On the arable farms many applications of expensive fertiliser, pesticides and insecticides will be applied to protect the harvest. There will be some very late drilling this season although most should be done. The final one which will be completed this month will be the maize (similar to sweetcorn). In this country we grow very little supermarket quality sweetcorn and most of our maize is in fact used for winter animal feed. You often see a lot of it grown around dairy and cattle farms as it is made into silage.

### Over 200 offences detected during roads policing operation

Norfolk Police stopped over 180 vehicles during an operation targeting drivers of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

Operation Tramline, supported by National Highways, saw

officers provided with an HGV tractor unit by National Highways which allows teams to carry out patrols across the county's strategic road network and focus on offences committed by lorry drivers.

The initiative took place between Saturday 13 April and Saturday 27 April and is the second time it has run in 2024.

The HGV tractor unit - driven by a police officer - provides an ideal vantage point meaning officers can look directly into the cabs of other lorry drivers, whilst also dealing with any offending motorists driving vans or cars. They were looking for drivers failing to wear their seatbelt and behaviour which distracted their attention such as using mobile phones or watching videos. Supporting police officers were then on hand to pull-over any offenders.

A total of 183 vehicles were stopped, including 51 HGVs, 33 LGVs and 99 smaller vehicles. 229 offences were detected and the drivers in question were issued with Traffic Offence Reports (TORs), some having committed more than one offence. A staggering 71 individuals were choosing not to wear a seatbelt which made up 31% of the offences recorded during the operation.

Officers issued 167 Traffic Offence Reports (TORs), arrested three people, and issued words of advice to 13 drivers. Four vehicles were seized and seven drivers were referred to the Traffic Commissioner. Over £6,000 worth of fines were given to drivers throughout the two weeks with the majority being the result of an overweight vehicle. One vehicle was found to be 79.4% overweight.

One driver was stopped for a registration plate offence. Officers found he had previously been stopped for the same offence and failed to appear at court. As a result, a warrant had been issued for his arrest and he was detained as a result.

Another man was stopped for speeding. He was also found to be driving under the influence of drugs and promptly arrested.

Sgt Ade Hales, of the joint Roads and Armed Policing Team, said: "We are seeing a dangerously high number of people who think it is acceptable to not wear a seatbelt this year.

"It is the simplest safety precaution you can take when travelling in a vehicle and ultimately it can save your life.

"It has been the law for drivers to wear a seatbelt for the past 40 years. We should not be having to remind you."



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

Hello!

I am PC 475 James King (Jimmy) and since October 2023 I have been the Rural Crime Beat Manager for the South Norfolk area. I continue to meet and talk with as many farmers, landowners, and gamekeepers as I can, and I'm still looking to speak to anyone else I have not gotten to yet. I talk about crime prevention advice, reporting methods for crime and intelligence, suspicious vehicles/people, and wildlife crime to name just a few topics.

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

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

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

The message I want to get across is, please report these thefts, you're not wasting anyone's time and even if on any one occasion we cannot link a suspect, it is vital we have all the information we need as it could help us link it to another crime or crimes and build the bigger picture for us.

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

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

PC 475 James KING

Poringland Police Station

07989197403 (please do not report crime on this number)

James.king@norfolk.police.uk

### Heritage Crime Update from PC Chris Holmes

The Forestry Commission Heritage Unit reported some criminal damage to a bronze age burial mound known as a Barrow. It appears that a quad bike or similar has done donuts on the mound, ripping up the topsoil, which could contain unique archaeology. I visited the site and thankfully this seems to be reckless rather than intentional.

Thetford Priory which has stood since 1103 has again been targeted by individuals who have damaged the walls, knocking large flints and masonry out of situ. The site which is run by English Heritage has now had to close various bits of the site to try and protect it from these vandals.

St Benet's Abbey has seen further graffiti in the main part of the ruin where individuals have carved their names into the ancient brickwork. There are also signs of masonry being knocked out of the walls, potentially from people trying to climb up inside the ruins.

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