



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Issue 37 | September 2023

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Introduction

Well, that is August done, and meteorologically speaking summer completed. It think it's fair to say it's been a frustrating summer for many in the rural community with the weather not really playing ball for anyone at times.

This month we said goodbye to PC Sue Matthews, the South Norfolk Rural Crime Beat Manager, as she has moved onto a new job. We wish her well in her new job. As for the rest of the team it's been as chaotic as ever, we have had several engagement events this month as is traditional in the warmer months, alongside the day work and supporting drone deployments across the county in various ways. We have also done a lot of joint work with partner agencies this month too which I will touch on later.

I hope as always the newsletter gives you a little flavour of some of the things, we get ourselves involved in across the county. Obviously, this is just a small amount as not everything we can't always put out publicly straight away for obvious reasons.

Tractors in the Countryside

This past month PC Chris Shelley and PC Chris Holmes met with NFU County Advisor Flora Archer to discuss ongoing crime trends and ways we can work better together to get messages to the rural community. We have also started the planning for a future barn meet event and we will keep you posted on this.

PC Chris Shelley also met with the Norfolk and Suffolk HPR Field Trial Club for an afternoon after their training session to deliver some bespoke wildlife crime input particularly focusing on things they may come across whilst out walking dogs etc. They were a really engaging group asking lots of really good questions with a fair few ol' stories thrown in for good measure!

To round off this month's events, PC Chris Holmes and PC Alex Lovelock attended the RSPCA East Winch Wildlife Centre Open Day with our wildlife crime displays and drone, again they reported a very busy and well attended day which is great.

Looking forward to this month PC Chris Shelley and PC Alex Lovelock will be at NORMAC Cultivation Event on Wednesday 6th of September and then at Sandringham Game and Country Fair on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th of September where we will be joined by the EA Fisheries Enforcement Team. If you are attending either event, please do come and see us.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Rogue Trader Warning

Businesses are reminded to be vigilant as police receive reports of suspected rogue traders operating across South Norfolk.

Police were contacted on Wednesday 17 August 2023 regarding an incident in which a call was received from an unknown number, asking if the victim wanted a road maintenance service. An unknown group of men then arrived at the business address and commenced work briefly before leaving. A further call was received demanding a large sum of money for the work, threatening the victim if they did not pay.

This appears to be the latest incident in a series of reports from businesses across south Norfolk, all with similar circumstances: a group of people will contact the victim anonymously offering a service gravelling or tarmacking on the premises. Once the work is complete, the group claims the victim owes thousands more than the either free or reduced price previously agreed upon. This results in phone calls being made to the victims with threats of violence, blackmail, and criminal damage towards their businesses.

Doorstep rogue traders will pretend to be skilled tradespeople such as builders, gardeners, or handymen and offer services which often turn out to be unnecessary or of poor quality. This can result in costs that can rise far beyond an agreed quote.

If you are looking for a tradesperson, make sure you get contact details from reliable sources such as Norfolk County Council's Trusted Traders website: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader> or ask for recommendations from family and friends that you trust.

Officers are reminding residents of the following advice, to help them stay safe against rogue traders: Never give cold callers access to your property or

garden.

Don't agree to have work done by someone who is 'just passing' or has 'just noticed' an issue with your home. While many people are genuine and want to help you, there are others who will try to take advantage of you.

Do not be bullied. Always remember in the case of cold calling, it is your home and you don't have to agree to anything.

Only criminals will try to rush you, take your time when making decisions.

Never pay for work before it is completed.

If you feel threatened or in danger, go inside, stay inside, and call 999.

If cold callers are currently at your home or will be coming back, you can contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 for advice, or Norfolk Police on 101.

If you feel you may have been a victim of rogue trading or a scam, report it to Action Fraud. You can visit their website: www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

JCB Theft

We are currently investigating the theft of two JCB's from a farm in Roudham near East Harling on the 12th of August 2023. We believe the JCB's were driven from the farm and onto the A11 (south bound/ Thetford bound) in the evening. If you have any information or dashcam footage in relation to this incident, please get in contact.

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

Damage to Churches

Sadly, this month we have seen a number of churches have been damaged by various means across the county. We have seen stained glass windows broken, items inside the church itself thrown and broken and even food and drink stolen from kitchen areas.

Some of this damage will be incredibly hard to impossible to replace these buildings are hundreds of years old and a huge part of our history. Many of the amazing stained glass windows are one of kind in each church to see these getting broken for no reason is really sad.

Many churches also struggle to pay for the repairs as they must fund the repair themselves on top of very expensive ongoing maintenance to keep these buildings in good order. Many now have very small congregations and struggle to afford the additional costs.

If you see anyone involved in damage or ASB in or around churches please do contact us and if anyone has any information in relation to damage caused to churches in the following places in the past month please get in contact:

(Please note these churches have all received various levels of damage)

Diss, Thetford, Castle Acre, Norwich, Breckles, Brundall, Loddon, Chedgrave, Wells, and Costessey.

Engagement Events

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Women charged with stealing lambs

Three women have been charged with multiple theft and animal welfare offences.

It follows reports that three lambs had been stolen from a field in West Newton, Norfolk, in May.

Sarah Foy, 23, of North Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire, Rose Patterson, 34, of Homerton High Street, London, and Rosa Sharkey, 23, of Mayville Estate, London, have today (Monday 21 August) each been charged with:

- One count of stealing three lambs from a farm in West Newton between 24 and 25 May 2023.
- Three counts of causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal between 24 and 25 May 2023.
- Three counts of failing to record movement of an animal on 24 May 2023.

The women have been released on police bail to appear at King's Lynn Magistrates' Court on 28 September 2023.

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

STOP...
this is a scam!

THE
TRAP



Wildlife Crime Update

Our reports of hare coursing remain extremely low thankfully this past month, but unfortunately, we can expect them to increase as we move into Autumn and Winter.

You may previously remember an incident which occurred in Bradenham in February last year whereby 4 males were stopped having believed to be hare coursing. All 4 have now appeared in court for their first appearance so we can now inform you that all 4 were charged with going equipped to hare course one of the new offences which came into effect in August 2022. The 4 have all pleaded not guilty and are due back in court for trial on 16th of November 2023.

As a team we have been very busy picking up fresh jobs, slowly dealing with old matters and also resolving complaints before they reach frontline officers.

This month has seen PC Alex Lovelock and PC Chris Holmes deal with a bat disturbance job reported to us which thankfully hasn't resulted in any criminal offences being committed and also carried out some crime prevention work around a badger sett. It had been reported that the sett has expanded into the field with concerns the farmer would plough or cultivate through it. Suitable advice has been given, under the Protection of Badgers Act you cannot do anything to an active badger sett they are highly protected.

PC Chris Shelley is currently looking into another bat roost destruction/disturbance within a barn which has been developed. It remains essential if you believe you have bats present you must get it checked by an expert either way, the mistake not too can become a very costly in many ways. It's important to remember all bat roosts are protected whether in use or not.

We are also looking into an incident whereby a seal was taken into a vehicle after being told by specialists to leave alone. Most wildlife is best left alone unless you

are told by an expert to do something, they often require very specialist care and human interference can cause them a huge amount of distress and shock.

Last week also saw PC Chris Shelley and PC Alex Lovelock joining a local borough council on an enforcement visit to a dog breeder who was not licenced and was failing on animal welfare standards, this case is ongoing, and we will be following up on a number of concerns to make sure standards have been improved urgently. If you planned to buy a puppy from a seller, make sure they are a fully licenced breeder, these breeders are inspected and meet a high standard of care in rearing puppies.

Use of Rodenticides this Autumn

Just a really quick reminder if you plan to use any form of 'rat poison' this autumn as the mice etc. start trying to find warmer spots please do so lawfully.

First make sure the product you plan to use is still legal to use, if it's been in the back of the shed for the last 10 years a quick internet search will verify.

Also make sure the bait is laid correctly to prevent untargeted species being harmed, you must also clear up any carcasses as soon as possible to stop any secondary poison (ie cats/birds eating the dead animal).

Obviously if you can deal with the problem in other ways use of humane traps or restricting access in first place are far less risky.

YANA

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Helpline

0300 323 0400

helpline@yanahelp.org

In The Countryside in September

So as August comes to a close, I think most of our farmers have finally finished harvest their might still be the odd field of beans left standing but most of our cereals are now safely in the sheds. I think its fair to say it's been a very frustrating harvest which has been stop start and sadly I noticed several fields of wheat starting to 'lay'. This is where the plant goes over flat often during windy wet conditions where the straw cannot bear its own weight anymore. Once it does this it often starts to reduce the quality of the grain as unfortunately it is a lot harder to get dry as natural air cannot get around it and also mould becomes a problem.

Now that harvest is largely behind the farmers the field work starts to put next years crops in the ground, unlike last year farmers are not worrying about the ground being too dry for the seed to germinate in fact current drilling conditions are almost perfect – but no farmer will tell you that because we all love to moan about the weather! Several fields of stubble will have been cultivated over to stubble turnips a fast-growing turnip fed to mainly sheep over the winter months providing essential good quality feed in the cold months. This will be alongside next years oil seed rape and winter barley/ wheat.

Livestock farmers will be starting to think about whether they can get one last cut of silage before the warmth leaves us, preserving essential energy in a feed product for winter. Many sheep will start to come off the marshes too and back to their homesteads. Weaning will be well under way to give the ewes a well earned break before the tup goes back in generally around November (for April lambs). The lambs born in the spring are nearly completely independent having learnt so much from the elders in the flock over the summer and the bond between mother and lamb naturally lowers and unlikely to be providing any worthwhile milk for their lambs.

Many of our summer bird visitors will be heading to warmer climates, it still amazes me the journeys some of these birds make every spring and autumn just to breed on out shores. Our native species will be enjoying hedgerows full of berries and seeds which are in abundance this time of year, and we

can all enjoy a blackberry or two! Compared to last year in the incredibly dry summer we had our trees are still looking very green make the most of that as they will start turning into the full autumnal colours soon.

Another thing to be aware of is September marks the start of the rutting season in deer, this often means we sadly see more road traffic collisions involving deer so please drive carefully in areas where deer are abundant (most of the county to be fair!). Where you see one deer run across a road be prepared for many more as our native species like Roe (who tend to rut earlier than others) and red deer tend to stay in groups, unlike Chinese water deer or the muntjac who tend to be solitarily to some degree.

Final Words

Thank you again for taking the time to read. Please do get in touch with any concerns or issues.

Don't forget we are at Normac this Wednesday coming and Sandringham Game and Country Fair at the weekend do come and say hi!

PC Chris Shelley

