



Northamptonshire Rural Matters

Winter 2019 / Spring 2020



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Rural Crime - let's beat it together

Message from Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold



Welcome to the Winter edition of Rural Matters, the magazine that aims to keep you in touch with how a range of partners are working together in countryside communities.

Reflecting on the past year, I am pleased with the initiatives we have been able to put in place in our rural areas. We held a number of barn events to give rural residents the opportunity to meet with officers and talk about crime and crime prevention, distributing hundreds of useful rural crime packs to help people feel confident and safe.

We followed that up with the launch of the rural Crimestoppers campaign this Autumn, to provide a quick, confidential channel that people can

use to pass on information about crime and criminals.

All of this activity – and the production of the newsletter you are reading now – has been brought together by our new Rural Crime Co-ordinator. This is a post that I have funded to try to improve the way we communicate with rural communities and co-ordinate the work of all the agencies who are supporting life in the countryside.

Rural crime in Northamptonshire really hit the headlines this year following the spate of stock thefts and butchery. It certainly gave me cause to reflect on the effects of rural crime and I was pleased to be able to provide extra resources to support the police investigation that

resulted in a number of men being arrested and charged.

I am continuing to speak to the Chief Constable about how we can increase the resources available for rural policing. I will certainly be making sure that rural areas receive their fair share of the new officers that the Force is currently recruiting – 83 extra police officers funded from our own local council tax increase and potentially more, depending on the new Government's plans.

I'll keep you informed about all these new developments and I hope you enjoy finding out more in this magazine.

Grants available for projects in your community

Are you part of a community, voluntary or charitable organisation? Are you looking for funding to support a project?

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold makes a number of grant funds available for groups to carry out community projects and is especially keen to hear from groups in the more rural parts of the county.

Making Northamptonshire Safer Fund gives grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 for initiatives that support the aims of the Police and Crime Plan.

Northamptonshire Road Safety Community Fund gives grants of between £500 and £5,000 for initiatives that support the Strategic Road Safety Plan.

Tackling Hate Crime Fund has a total of £8,000 available and will consider bids of between £1,000 and £8,000 for initiatives that support the Hate Crime Delivery Group priorities.

Small Grants Scheme offers between £500 and £3000 to allow groups to carry out smaller projects.

You can find out more at northantspfcc.org.uk or email funding@northantspfcc.pnn.gov.uk



Three men charged over illegal sheep slaughter offences

A series of illegal sheep butchery offences around Northamptonshire and surrounding counties in 2019 made headlines across the UK.

From late June, Northamptonshire Police received 12 reports of illegal butchery, with more than 145 sheep and lambs killed and illegally butchered across the county.

In response, the Force launched Operation Stock to investigate offences and work with rural communities to try to prevent further incidents.

Officers from the Rural Crime Team, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, CID, Operations, Roads, Specials, ANPR, Response, crime prevention, intelligence and more were involved in Operation Stock, alongside partners including the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC), the National Farmers' Union and Trading Standards.

As well as holding community meetings, giving out OPFCC funded warning signs, and carrying out many miles of rural patrols by foot, car, bicycle and drone, the Force worked with Warwickshire and Leicestershire police forces, which also saw similar illegal butchery reports during this period.

In October the work of Operation Stock paid off when three men were arrested, charged and appeared in court in relation to the Northamptonshire crimes, before being remanded in custody to await the progress of the case at Crown Court.

Inspector Tracy Moore, who leads on rural crime for Northamptonshire Police, said: "We know these crimes caused a great deal of upset and anger to both the owners of the animals and to rural communities.

"The charging and remand of three people in relation to Operation Stock represents a huge amount of teamwork within our force and our neighbouring forces, and I'd like to thank our farming and rural communities again for the support they have offered throughout the investigation."

Robert Jordan, aged 23, Florin Nutu, aged 35, and Voirel Manu, aged 38, all from Birmingham, are charged with conspiracy to steal in relation to the slaughter and illegal butchery of sheep and lambs between June 22, 2019, and October 7, 2019.

For updates on the ongoing court case visit www.northants.police.uk

Operation Stock in numbers

- 12 illegal butchery offences between June and October
- More than 145 sheep and lambs killed and butchered
- 8 reported thefts of sheep and lambs, totalling 258 animals
- 150 OPFCC-funded warning signs distributed to farmers and rural residents

App helps police save lives

Northamptonshire Police is encouraging people to download a smartphone app that's helping to save lives by quickly identifying even the most remote of locations with pinpoint accuracy.

What3Words has divided the world into a grid of 3m by 3m squares and given each one a unique three-word address. If someone is lost or cannot describe their location they can use the service to get a three-word combination that can be passed directly to the emergency services.

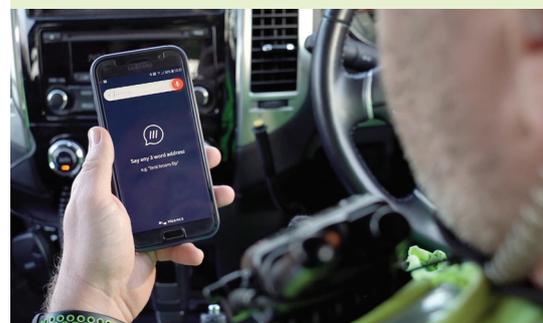
Northamptonshire Police is now using the mapping system when taking emergency calls, joining 72 other emergency services across the UK.

It has already helped the Force Control Room to send officers straight to the scene of road traffic collisions, a violent assault, fuel theft, an abandoned vehicle and even an unexploded mortar.

Alison Morris, Resource and Systems Manager in the Force Control Room, said: "Instead of relying on vague descriptions of a person's location, What3Words can immediately provide them with a unique three-word address, allowing us to pinpoint their exact location much quicker.

"It has been used successfully on a number of occasions in the control room and has saved valuable time locating incidents. We encourage the public to download this simple app as one day, it could help you in an emergency."

What3Words is free to use and is available as an app and on the What3Words website.





Police seize vehicle used in hare coursing

Officers have seized a vehicle believed to have been used for illegal hare coursing in Irchester and Wollaston.

The red Suzuki Vitara was recovered in Irchester using powers under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act, and was also found to have no insurance.

It had come to the attention of rural crime officers at Northamptonshire Police after reports that it had been seen being used in the illegal pursuit of hares using dogs.

Rural crime officer PC Paul Mitchinson said: "Thanks to the vigilance of the people who reported this vehicle being used to hunt hares

to us, we were able to use legal powers to seize it and prevent it from being used in any further illegal activity.

"After it was recovered we had a lot of messages from people saying they had seen it being used this way, but they hadn't reported it to us.

"If we don't know something is happening, we can't act, so I'd urge anyone who sees or knows about something like hare coursing taking place to let the police know by calling 999 if it's happening at the time, or reporting it via 101 or online after the event so we can take action.

"This seizure shows that we do investigate such reports. The vital details we need are the vehicle registration, make and model, as well as where the activity is taking place – the What3Words app is really useful for pinpointing exact rural locations. Information about the number of people and dogs involved, and their descriptions, is also really helpful."



Items recovered by police and back with rightful owners

During June 2019, Northamptonshire Police received information from a member of the public about a trailer and quad bikes that had turned up in an odd location.

This information was verified by the Rural Crime Team and an Emergency

Theft Act Warrant was obtained. Joint working with the Rural Crime Team, Neighbourhood Police and Proactive Teams led to the recovery of two quads and an Ifor Williams horse trailer - the trailer had been stolen the day before.

While on the site, an Ifor Williams flatbed trailer was checked and found to be stolen from a farm in Northamptonshire in April 2019.

All items were returned to the grateful owners.

How to prevent hare coursing

By the NFU

Hare coursing is a banned blood sport and is an illegal activity.

The Hunting Act 2004 made hare coursing illegal with up to a fine of £5,000 if convicted by a Magistrates' Court.

To help prevent this happening on your land consider the following steps:

- Consider methods of restricting access to your land, such as blockades in entrance ways, strategic ditch digging and padlocking gates.
- Consult your local rights of way access officer for guidance where public access may be affected. Check your ditches or other obstacles do not affect your cross-compliance requirements.
- Always report incidences no matter how minor so that the police have an accurate reflection of the extent of the issue.

What to do if hare coursing is happening on your land:

- If it is a 'live' incident always dial 999, otherwise dial 101.
- Make sure you clearly state 'hare coursing' to ensure that the incident is recorded correctly.
- Have field grid references ready – these will ensure police can locate you quickly. What3Words app can assist.
- If possible provide a description of the person including notable features, and also descriptions of any vehicles including number plates and any distinguishing features.
- Be discreet when collecting evidence. Approaching hare coursers whilst holding a camera may be inflammatory. If you use a dashcam you may want to pass any footage to the police as evidence.
- Ensure that you receive and make note of your crime reference number.



Introducing... Paul Harper

Paul Harper is newly appointed to Environmental Health at Daventry District Council.

Paul said: "I joined Daventry District Council as an Environmental Protection Officer (crime) in August 2019, prior to which I served 20 years with Northamptonshire Police. I investigate and prosecute offenders for fly tipping/littering in the district and follow up on clean-up operations from the waste that blights our rural landscape in particular; gateways, farmer's fields and country roads and footpaths/bridleways.

"The Let's S.C.R.A.P Fly-Tipping campaign launched in May plays an important role in combatting waste being deposited in our countryside. I am keen to work with the public and partner agencies to rid our countryside of litter/fly tips and I work closely with Daventry NORSE, a company that manage grounds maintenance, trade waste and street cleansing services. To date I have issued 10 penalty notices for littering/fly tipping which have been paid by the offenders."

Tips for preventing fly-tipping:

- Suspect all waste carriers
- Check their waste carrier's registration details – to check call the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.
- Refuse unsolicited offers to have any rubbish taken away
- Ask what exactly is going to happen to your rubbish
- Paperwork should be obtained

Northamptonshire Police backs new rural Crimestoppers campaign

The Rural Crimestoppers campaign was launched on the 10 October 2019. The campaign will provide an opportunity for those in rural communities, who act as eyes and ears in the countryside, to submit intelligence anonymously.

The campaign is focusing on reporting on the following areas:

Burglary of businesses and barns – rural properties in often isolated areas, are vulnerable to be targeted for break-in.

Hare coursing – the pursuit of hares with dogs, often for the purposes of betting and takes place on flat, open land. It is illegal under the Hunting Act. It has other impacts eg fences and gates are damaged by vehicles

forcing entry to the land.

Plant and vehicle theft – farm machinery is often expensive and farms are dependent on it. Often these items are stolen to order and sent abroad.

Inspector Tracy Moore said "We hope that by working with Crimestoppers to promote their new campaign we can encourage rural residents to share what they know however they feel most comfortable – either direct to us or by calling Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111."

To find out more about the campaign visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org/campaigns-media/campaigns/northamptonshire-rural-crime

Online Rural Crime Hub launched

The Hub is a one-stop shop for farmers to get information about the best prevention measures, how to report crime, including who to call, and exclusive business advice for NFU members.

The launch comes during the National Police Chief Council's Rural Crime Week. The Hub provides advice on:

- **Access:** includes activism, illegal encampment, trespass and fly-grazing
- **Fly-Tipping:** includes large scale and hazardous waste
- **Hare coursing:** includes poaching
- **Livestock worrying:** includes dog attacks and illegal sheep butchery
- **Theft:** includes machinery, fuel, metal and livestock

The NFU Deputy President Guy Smith said: "I know first-hand that rural crime remains one of the most pressing issues for farmers, with incidents continuing to rise with seemingly no let-up. The continued spate of illegal sheep butchering across the Midlands this year just shows the organised nature of many of these crimes and the devastating

effect rural crime can have on farm businesses.

"That's why it is absolutely crucial that as farmers we take as many measures as possible to prevent crime from happening and then ensure we report any incidents of crime to the police so it is recorded properly and investigated. This hub gives farmers and rural communities the tools to do that.



NFU Deputy President Guy Smith

"We are aware that some crimes can leave victims nervous about reporting to the authorities, especially when that crime has involved violence, intimidation and threatening behaviour. Our partnership with the independent charity Crimestoppers enables us to continue to run the Rural Crime Hotline, a service that gives people a route to give information 100% anonymously about rural crime and I would encourage



everyone to spread the word about this service to their fellow farmers and their community.

"The more information we can give the better chance the investigators have of finding and prosecuting those responsible for rural crime.

"It is crucial that the Government's recent announcement to increase funding for the police includes fairer funding for rural areas and we are making that case to the highest levels of Government."

Farmers and growers are urged to ensure they report rural crimes to the Police, or to give information 100% anonymously to the dedicated Rural Crime Hotline run by Crimestoppers, in partnership with the NFU and Police.

Visit online at www.ruralcrimeline.co.uk

Advice given by NFU and Northamptonshire Police

Stuart Cross, agent for leading rural Insurer, NFU Mutual and PC John Hutchings from the Rural Crime Team work together with joint visits post loss.

The visits are to progress insurance claims and offer prevention advice following a number of large tool and all-terrain vehicle thefts and following an Operation Stock sheep butchery incident.

PC Hutchings described protecting the target area as considering peeling back the layers of an onion to get

to the core by initially looking at perimeter security:

- Block unused gateways
- Consider poacher blocks or similar deterrents on usable entrances
- The next level offering more physical security and potentially early warning/recording devices

Stuart said: "NFU Mutual would consider that any positive additional security features could reduce

insurance premiums and this is certainly the case with vehicle security, for example fitting of security devices such as CESAR Datatag or approved TRACKER devices, qualifying for premium discounts.

The visits were well received by the victims but we would far rather be visiting to offer advice to prevent the loss happening in the first place."

If anyone is interested, please call Stuart's PA, Emma Cox, to arrange a visit on 01604 883726.



Game or rabbit poaching ...what to do if it happens on your land

Poaching of game or rabbits on any land is illegal. These crimes are usually committed during the night and poachers often trespass on private land to commit the crimes. We have to factor in the cruelty to animals hunted and also look at the food preparation hygiene when these animals are taken for human consumption.

The NFU works with the British Association for Shooting & Conservation (BASC) on poaching issues and BASC offer useful advice on what to do if you have poachers on your land:

- Call 999 if you see or are aware of poachers on your land
- Call 999 if a crime is in progress or 101 to report a crime after it has taken place
- Give the call taker as much information as you have, such as vehicles used, how many offenders, do they have firearms, etc
- Give as good a location as you can, especially at night
- Obtain an incident or log number for what you are reporting
- You might be told that there is nobody to send immediately but insist on the incident/log number

- Ask for the incident to be forwarded to the Wildlife and Rural Crime Team or local Neighbourhood officer

The NFU supports Project Poacher, an initiative that includes advice and support for law enforcers and a free, easy-to-use app for reporting poaching incidents (including hare coursing). The app is available for iPhone, Android and Windows phones and can be downloaded at www.projectpoacher.com.

The aims of Project Poacher are to coordinate action across England and Wales through:

- Prevention – offering best advice to farmers, landowners, gamekeepers, shooting and land management organisations regarding measures to put in place to prevent poaching and disruption mechanisms
- Intelligence – to allow the police to target offenders
- Enforcement – with good intelligence the police can target poachers through the various rural and poaching based operations run throughout England and Wales
- Reassurance – by working together and by publicising resulting actions such as activity, arrests, seizures and convictions

Rural crime figures from the NFU

The latest rural crime figures from the NFU Mutual show an increase of 12% on the previous year.

In 2018 rural crime cost the UK nearly £50m.

The report says the sharp rise was driven mainly by the theft of tractors, quad bikes and other farm vehicles.

A 26% rise in claims for stolen farm vehicles, such as tractors and quad-bikes, to £7.4m in 2018 was behind the overall increase. Animal theft claims rose 3.7% to £2.5m in 2018.

Tim Price, from the NFU Mutual, said: “Farmers and people living in rural communities are suffering from high levels of anxiety due to repeated thefts by gangs who take advantage of farms’ isolated locations to steal machinery, raid tool stores and even butcher sheep in the fields.

“In a single generation, we have rural crime change from the opportunist theft of a single lamb, to brazen heists of tractors worth over £100,000 and rustlers stealing hundreds of sheep,” Mr Price added.

Reporting of crime is encouraged through the Police or Crimestoppers.



Esp was found to be very underweight but has since recovered in the RSPCA's care

Successful sentence after horses neglected

A woman who neglected two horses so badly police had to seize them was successfully prosecuted by the RSPCA earlier this year.

Officers from the Northamptonshire Police Rural Crime Team assisted the charity's inspectors to remove a Thoroughbred mare called Esp and a Welsh pony called Ruby from a field near Brackley.

Esp was found to be seriously underweight, while Ruby had overgrown hooves and untreated laminitis. Both have since recovered in the RSPCA's care.

The woman was convicted, in August, of three animal welfare offences relating to the two equines, who were found in a bare field with minimal grass, and empty hay troughs and water buckets. She was sentenced to 18 weeks' custody suspended for 18 months, and disqualified from keeping equines for five years. She was also ordered to pay £1,000 costs and a £115 victim surcharge.

PC Chloe Gillies, of the Rural Crime Team, said: "Our police officers work on a range of animal welfare jobs including crimes and welfare investigations, and work closely with

the RSPCA.

"This case is a great example of how we support each other in our investigations, as we were able to use powers under the Animal Welfare Act to seize Esp and Ruby and make sure they got the care and veterinary attention they needed.

"I'm really pleased to hear both have now recovered well, and hope the sentence shows animal welfare offences will be taken seriously and properly dealt with."

RSPCA inspector Susan Haywood, who investigated for the animal welfare charity, added: "Cases like this are very sad as they could so easily be avoided. We hope it is a reminder that caring for horses is a huge responsibility and highlights the importance of ensuring their welfare.

"Providing food and water, alongside regular and routine farriery care is a vital part of owning equines.

"Wherever possible we offer advice and assistance to improve animal welfare, including giving people time to make improvements to their standards of care, however, despite advice from ourselves and vets, the woman continued to fail to provide appropriate care."

What to do if you think you've found a wildlife crime scene

Operation Owl is asking people to follow this advice:

- Don't disturb the scene by walking around it unnecessarily and trampling possible evidence
- Don't move anything
- Don't touch any traps, dead birds, or suspected poison baits. Many poisons (e.g. carbuforan) are extremely dangerous even in very small amounts and can be absorbed through the skin
- Don't approach anyone you suspect of committing crime, as they may become violent or aggressive
- Do take photographs if you can, or make a sketch as soon as possible
- If photographing an object try to use a coin or notebook for scale – providing it won't disturb anything
- Also take photographs of the surroundings and any landmarks to help officers relocate the crime scene
- Note the location as accurately as possible by grid reference, GPS, or what3words
- Note a description of any suspect(s) and any vehicle registrations
- Note the time and date and what happened
- Report what you've found to police – if you think a crime is in progress use 999, or report after the event by calling 101 or online via the local police force's website
- Information can also be shared anonymously with Crimestoppers on 0800 555111, and the RSPB's confidential Raptor Crime Hotline on 0300 999 0101
- Suspected pesticides and poisoning incidents should be reported to the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) hotline on 0800 321600

National campaign protects birds of prey



Rural and wildlife officers at Northamptonshire Police joined forces with Forest England and the RPSCA in the autumn to support a national campaign tackling the illegal persecution of birds of prey.

Operation Owl is raising awareness of how to spot evidence of crimes against wildlife and birds of prey, and encourages people to accurately record what they see and report offences to the police to help bring offenders to justice.

In the UK, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law, and it is illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds without a licence, with offences carrying a prison sentence of up to six months.

PC Chris Bird, a wildlife-trained officer at Northamptonshire Police, said: "Thankfully Northamptonshire has low levels of raptor persecution, but sadly offences do still happen here, such as the fatal shooting of a buzzard in Hargrave in March.

"We're proud to work with our local partners to support Operation Owl and raise awareness of the issue of the persecution of birds of prey, to help protect the beautiful wildlife of our county.

"We're asking people to be our eyes and ears in the countryside and to let us know about suspicious activity and possible wildlife crime, such as the use of poisoned bait and illegal pole traps.

"Our wildlife-trained police officers and PCSOs can then examine reports and scenes to establish if a crime has been committed, gathering evidence and hopefully bringing those responsible to justice."

Supporting the Northamptonshire launch of Operation Owl at Salcey Forest was charity Raptor Rescue, which rehabilitates birds of prey found hurt or injured, as well as representatives from Forest England and the RSPCA.

Daniel Burns, South Northants beat forester at Forest England, said: "As well as providing interest and enjoyment for visitors, our woodlands are home to wildlife that contributes to healthy natural ecosystems.

"Some of our best-loved wildlife, including birds of prey, depends on our careful and sustained land management for its survival, so we're very happy to support Operation Owl to help protect raptors."

Operation Owl was originally launched by North Yorkshire Police after the county recorded high levels of crimes against birds of prey.

Backed by the National Police Chief's Council, it has now been rolled out across the country, with more than 25 forces signed up for the weekend of action.

Find out more at
www.operationowl.com

Spot the signs of raptor persecution:

- Dead birds of prey lying next to dead pigeons, rabbits, pheasants, or other poisoned bait. If you find dead animals, do not touch them
- Live birds of prey caught in any trap
- Any spring traps set out in the open that are not within a cage tunnel or other enclosed tunnel structure
- Any pole traps – these are spring traps set out on top of a post, and are used to catch birds which are later killed



Volunteers on Horseback Scheme

By Jean Mears, Northamptonshire Police

The scheme has been running since 2014 and currently has around 50 active Volunteers on Horseback (VOH). These volunteers make a difference in rural areas by engaging with their communities and assisting in public reassurance. VOH gather information that is passed to them by members of the public or land owners which is then passed to their local Neighbourhood Teams for intelligence gathering.

Jean Mears, Project Officer for the scheme, said "VOH also attend events and are popular with the public who want to chat to them and meet their horses. Some of the events they have attended during 2019 are the Working Weekend in Brixworth, the Emergency Services Fun day in Daventry run by Daventry District Council, Lamport Country Fair, Blakesley Show and Flore Family Show.

"VOH can be asked to assist with vulnerable missing people as they cover off road areas much easier whilst mounted and have the advantage of being able to view over hedges and walls. Some riders have been trained by the Environment Agency for recognising possible floods in the area and a few signed up to be flood wardens for their villages too. As they are predominantly in rural areas they do find lots of fly tipping which is reported to the council for removal."

The assessment for suitability to become a VOH includes horse, tack and rider equipment being in good condition and safe. They are also assessed on riding skills in a ménage or on open land followed by showing correct, safe procedures on the highway. The role is very rewarding with some of the volunteers receiving awards from the Chief

Constable last year for outstanding commitment. These included welfare checks on people in a car, alerting and assisting the Fire Service with fires they found in remote areas and locating and assisting in the recovery of valuable stolen property.

Occasionally they receive requests to show a presence in a new area, for example Rushden Lakes, and another rode around new estate Harlestone Manor. VOH get involved in police operations such as Close Pass with the Safer Road Team, this involved working with two volunteers on duty and two police vehicles advising some drivers on the safe way to pass horse riders and other vulnerable road users.

If you have any queries and would like to know more please contact jean.mears@northants.pnn.police.uk

The Good Neighbour Scheme

By Daventry District Council and Northants ACRE

Daventry District Council is working with Northamptonshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) to develop Good Neighbour Schemes across the district. The aim is to support local residents to maintain a good quality of life; remain independent in their own homes if they wish to; and reduce their reliance on statutory health and care support systems.

Live schemes have already been established in Crick, Moulton, Welton and Byfield, with a number of other

villages in the District and other parts of the county also in the process of setting up. They have collectively helped 160 residents, provided 88 volunteers, and have set up referral links with local GP Surgeries. They really are making a difference and helping older people to make friends and feel part of the community.

Community groups can access a grant of up to £1,000 to set up a Good Neighbour scheme in their village, as well as access advice and support from us and our partners

at Northamptonshire ACRE. The scheme is endorsed by The Prince's Countryside Fund who has published The Village Survival Guide which features an article on the schemes.

For further information please contact Daventry District Council on 01327 871100 or visit www.daventrydc.gov.uk/goodneighbours

To find out more for your area contact Northamptonshire ACRE on 01604 765888 or visit www.northantsacre.org.uk

Neighbourhood Watch tours rural communities

By Nick King, Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch led a tour of ten rural communities across three districts in Northamptonshire to coincide with the national Rural and Wildlife Crime Week of Action. This was a large scale initiative over three days and was a first for the county Neighbourhood Watch group.

It involved the hire of an outreach vehicle, branded with Neighbourhood Watch insignia.

The vehicle was parked in communities and provided the

opportunity to engage with residents and passers-by. The key purposes were to visit a range of rural locations providing visibility and accessibility of information on crime prevention.

The activities included promoting sign-up to the Neighbourhood Alert system of local Police messages, encouraging vigilance, hearing views on crime and policing, and building the value and membership of Neighbourhood Watch in rural areas.

“This style of outreach is new to

us - we haven't done this before,” says Nick King of Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch. “It was great to have partnership with the police, local Neighbourhood Watch leaders and local councillors who joined us on parts of the tour.

Across the 10 venues, we engaged with more than 800 people and many weren't aware of the Alert Police messages and how they can join this network. Simply building awareness was a success.”

Check out your local Alert messages, written by the Police, Neighbourhood Watch and other authorities, by signing up at www.northantsnhw.co.uk. There are already plans to build on the success of this initiative. If you are a Neighbourhood Watch leader or a parish/town councillor and you feel this style of outreach can help you build a safer community, please get in touch with the county Neighbourhood Watch team: contact details can be found on the above website.



Crime and Fire prevention tips

- Leave a light on inside your house. Use a timer switch, changing the times to simulate an occupied home
- Ensure your front door is well lit. Use dusk to dawn lighting that automatically comes on as it gets dark
- Ensure you keep your doors, windows, garages and outbuildings locked at all times
- Visible burglar alarms and CCTV are a deterrent
- If you're not expecting a visitor, look through a spy hole or window to see who the caller is, if you are not sure then don't open the door
- Never leave a spare key outside your house, burglars will know all the usual hiding places
- Check you have locked the back door and taken the key out
- Make sure your home is visible from the street by keeping bushes and fences less than one metre high at the front of your property
- Work with neighbours to keep an eye on each other's security. Neighbourhood Watch groups are good for this www.ourwatch.org.uk
- Ensure your chimney is swept regularly to prevent fires. The frequency of sweeping should be according to the type of fuel being used (smokeless fuels - at least once a year, bituminous coal - at least twice a year, wood - quarterly when in use, oil - once a year, gas - once a year and refer to Gas Safety Register)



- Keep portable heaters well away from curtains and furniture. Never use them for drying clothes
- Never smoke in bed, and make sure all lighters and matches are kept well away from children
- Make sure you, and anyone else who lives with you, know how to escape the property safely if a fire breaks out
- Make sure smoke alarms are fitted on every floor of your home and test them at least once a month to make sure they are working - smoke alarms save lives



Officers out and about for week of action

Rural and wildlife officers carried out a range of activities across the county as Northamptonshire Police backed a national rural and wildlife crime awareness week in October.

Activities included farmers' breakfasts, rural community visits in an outreach vehicle, tack marking sessions, farm visits, hare coursing patrols, sharing advice on preventing persecution of birds of prey, and checks at scrap metal dealers.

During the week the Force was led by Chief Constable Nick Adderley in backing the Brampton Grange launch of a new rural crime campaign by the charity Crimestoppers, encouraging people to pass on information about countryside crime and those committing it.

Inspector Tracy Moore, the rural crime lead at Northamptonshire Police, said: "The activities our

officers and partners carried out during the week were typical of our ongoing work to prevent and detect rural crime.

"It's also an ideal opportunity for us to gather rural intelligence from the communities who act as our eyes and ears in the countryside.

"Alongside our partners we have been making the most of opportunities to speak to rural residents and provide them with expert prevention advice to help them reduce their risk of being a victim of crime, as well as listening to and discussing the policing issues that concern them.

Partners in the rural crime week's activities include the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, the NFU, Neighbourhood Watch, local councils, the CLA, and the Environment Agency.

Wildlife crime in numbers

Between 1 May 2019 and 31 December 2019 Northamptonshire Police received the following wildlife crime reports:

44

Wildlife related

155

Other animal related

45

Hare coursing and poaching



Upcoming events

Tack marking event - 19th January, 11am - 2.30pm, Welland Valley Feeds, Market Harborough

Financial and debt management - 22nd January, 9.30am - 12noon, New Street Cafe, Daventry

View recovered/seized tools - 25th January, 11am - 1pm, Brackley Town Hall

Bike marking event - 25th January, 11am - 2pm, Braunston Village Hall

East Northants Neighbourhood Officers - 1st February, 9am - 1pm, Thrapston Farmers' Market

How to date safely advice - 14th February, 10am - 12noon, New Street Cafe, Daventry



If you have any feedback regarding this newsletter or you have an article, crime or subject you would like to feature in the next edition, please email CountyRural&Wildlife@northants.pnn.police.uk

