



Introduction

Well summer does appear to have finally arrived and with the high pressure firmly in place this week the harvest has started at great pace. Although it's a little later than in previous years, it will be a relief to many to get started as it marks the end of another 'year' before the process starts all over again.

This month has been a slightly unusual one, with a week of it spent in court dealing with a case (more on that further down). But elsewhere we have been out and about as a team while also supporting our colleagues at several events.

In this edition as well as covering the usual topics, I've also decided to include a section about safety in the countryside as we often find demand considerably increased during summer months as people taking unnecessary risks.

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

Farm Safety Campaign

Last week (22nd to 26th of July) was Farm Safety Week - a very important initiative to promote safety on farms. It

remains a very stubborn statistic that farming has the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK and Ireland. For advice on farm safety including mental wellbeing please visit <https://www.yellowwellies.org/category/farm-safety-week/> the organisation behind Farm Safety Week.

Rural Road Safety

Rural roads disproportionately account for the number of serious collisions our Roads and Armed Policing Team deals with. Since Norfolk has no motorways, many of our roads are considered rural and with harvests under way we can expect more slow-moving vehicles on them.

Getting stuck behind a tractor pulling several tonnes of grain for a couple of miles is not much different to sitting at a red light for 2 minutes. However some people take unnecessary risks when overtaking slow moving tractors, putting themselves and other users in harm's way. All motorists are advised to pass farm machinery slowly, to give them space and to remember these vehicles are legally entitled to use the road.

One final thing to mention around rural roads is the speed limits. The national speed limit often applies but that does not mean you have to do 60mph. You should always drive according to conditions. You never know what might be around the corner and the question to ask yourself is could you stop if you needed to if you encountered another vehicle or a child on a bike or a family out on a walk?



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Personal Safety Around Farms/Countryside

When out and about on footpaths in or near farms we can all take steps to keep us safe.

- Big, heavy machinery can have many blind spots especially when 'working' as machines are often designed to expand beyond road limits when at work.
- Never walk behind working machinery. If it is necessary to approach always do so from the front.
- Never approach livestock. Cattle can rush towards people to protect their young. If walking through a field of cattle always move calmly and avoid contact if possible. ALWAYS keep dogs on leads no matter how good they are (in fact it is best not to take dogs in areas with livestock at all as this will often spook the larger animals causing them to charge)
- Never climb on straw and haystacks. These can be extremely dangerous often with invisible holes and can collapse quite easily.
- This time of year, there is a huge risk of wildfires. Crops are dry and the grass has often gone to seed meaning a discarded cigarette or glass bottle could cause serious damage to crops, wildlife and potentially even people and property. The use of disposable BBQs in such locations is never a good idea and should be avoided. The post below from our fire colleagues in East Sussex is a quick snapshot of risks.

Water Safety Code by ROSPA

Water may look safe, but it can be dangerous.

Learn to spot and keep away from dangers. You may swim well in a warm indoor pool, but that does not mean that you will be able to swim in cold water.

Stop and think - spot the dangers

- Open water can be very cold.
- There may be hidden currents.
- It can be difficult to get out (steep slippery banks)
- It can be deep and it can be difficult to estimate depth before getting in
- There may be hidden rubbish, e.g. shopping trolleys, broken glass.
- There may be no lifeguards there.
- It may be polluted and may make you ill.

Stay together

- It is always better to go to the water with a friend or family member.
- Children should only go near water with an adult. An adult can point out dangers or help if somebody gets into trouble.

Float

- If you fall into the water unexpectedly – float until you can control your breathing. Then call for help or swim to safety.

Call 999

- You may be able to help yourself and others if you know what to do in an emergency.
- If you see someone in difficulty, tell somebody (preferably a lifeguard if there is one nearby). If there is no one to tell, go to the nearest telephone, dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service (at inland water sites) or the Coastguard (at the beach).

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

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

I am PC 2061 Alex Lovelock based at Downham Market Police Station as the Local Rural and Wildlife Crime Manager. I have a passion and interest for all things rural and that is reflected in my background. In the West Norfolk area we are seeing a high number of shed break-ins (both commercial and residential). The suspects seem to be targeting small handheld items such as chainsaws, strimmers and power tools but on occasions are also going for ride-on lawnmowers and quadbikes. With this in mind I would ask you to take a look at your own security. Perhaps upgrade/improve your own systems and be observant of anyone who you may see in your farmyard/surrounding areas and report suspicious behaviour either on 101 or to your local rural crime officer. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support in tackling Rural and Wildlife Crime in the county of Norfolk.

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07989193846 (please do not report crime on this number)
Downham Market Police Station

Kingy in the South (South Norfolk Rural Crime 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 haven't got 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.

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.

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's 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.

As we get into summer, garden equipment tools such as lawn mowers and strimmers will continue to be the target of thieves, so please secure your property to put off and prevent theft and remain vigilant to any suspicious behaviour.

Thieves make mistakes all the time that can help us identify them. We had such a success recently where a man was charged with the theft of a large amount of tools and equipment in the South Norfolk area.

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, so please report the theft, take serial numbers from your property or security mark them so we can trace the ownership back to you.

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

If we have not met yet, please do get in touch with me, or if you see me out and about, I'm happy to stop and speak to you then.

Have a great Summer.

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Two convicted of illegal fox hunting

Two members of a hunt have been convicted of illegal fox hunting following two incidents in Norfolk.

Adam Egginton, 23, of Moor Lane, Necton and Edward Bell, 31 also of Moor Lane, Necton appeared at Great Yarmouth Magistrates' Court on Friday 19 July 2024 following a three-day trial.

They were found guilty of hunting a wild mammal with dogs on 8 February and 20 February 2023 and were handed fines and costs totalling £1,700 each. They had denied the charges and were acquitted of two further charges of causing criminal damage and having dogs dangerously out of control, which they had also denied. Two other men joint huntmasters Andrew Kendall, 67, of Hulver Road, Henstead and Robert Gurney, 55, of Bawdeswell were cleared of all charges.

During the trial the court was shown CCTV video of the West Norfolk Hunt and a pack of 38 hounds in Hingham. The footage, captured by a domestic security camera, shows the fox entering a courtyard area followed by the pack of dogs who "pull it into pieces" and the mess that is left behind. A few moments later an unidentified member of the hunt jumps the fence, removes the fox, and hides it under his coat. Bell and Egginton are then seen and heard making efforts to call the dogs back. They eventually regroup and return to the northern side of the road where they had permission to trail hunt.

The householder said in a Victim Personal Statement that since the incident the family had installed further gates and protection at their home. It described how their property, security and privacy had been violated by the hunt and how they felt 'on edge' when using their patio for fear of uncontrolled hounds.

The statement went on: "Emotionally it is extremely distressing that we had to clean up the aftermath of the hounds ripping apart a poor lonesome fox on our patio. The hunters kindly left us the pleasure of removing the intestines, kidneys, fox fur, and blood from our blood-stained patio.

I had to explain this to my three-year-old. Why should she be exposed to this in her home?"

The court was also told about another earlier incident involving the same hunt group. In this incident on 8 February 2023 in Titteshall, Norfolk, footage handed to Norfolk Police appeared to show dogs on the trail of a live fox. On this day Bell and Egginton were also present and in charge of the dogs.

Although trail hunting is legal - in which dogs and riders follow an artificial scent along an agreed route - it has been illegal to hunt foxes in England for 20 years.

PC Chris Shelly of Norfolk Police's wildlife crime team Operation Randall said: "These two incidents clearly show these dogs intentionally hunting wild mammals in public areas placing other wild mammals, pets, and the wider public at risk because of their behaviour. We presented two cases of illegal hunting which go against the hunting act and we hope offers reassurance that Norfolk Constabulary will always deal robustly with any such illegal activity."



Wildlife Crime Update

A response officer has sadly dealt with a pigeon trapped in a Fenn trap. Thankfully the bird was none the worse for the incident, but the trap had been set illegally. Fenn traps are legal if they are big enough and set in the correct manner targeting allowed species. However they must always be set with the trap in a tunnel/cover to stop untargeted species getting caught. If you spot a Fenn trap like this DO NOT TOUCH IT – instead, please take a photo and record the exact location (ideally using What3Words) and report it to the Police using our online form. Removing or touching the trap could ruin forensic opportunities.

We are also dealing with several reports of crows and pigeons being shot with air weapons in built up areas. It is an offence to kill any wild bird unless exempt under a licence. None of the general licences available will be applicable in these circumstances and therefore these birds have been shot and killed illegally. The latest incident occurred in Attleborough near Sainsbury's and we are appealing to anyone with any information to come forward. As a team we have carried out extra patrols in the area and handed out letters to highlight the issue.

We continue to receive a number of complaints around destruction of bird nests and disturbance offences. Although you may expect most nests to be done with by this time of year, it wouldn't be unusual to see them continue to be used well into September (especially given the colder spring we had). So if you are planning on doing any work on hedges or similar, please do make the relevant checks first.

What is happening in the countryside in August?

As I have already touched on harvest is well underway - including those yellow fields of Oil Seed Rape (OSR). Over the past few years there has been a sharp decline in the amount of OSR being grown in East Anglia for several reasons including issues with pests but also because it hasn't thrived in our very wet autumns. That has driven the price quite high which in turn could make it more attractive to

businesses to look at growing it again so we may see more yellow fields next spring.

Winter barley harvest is also underway - initial reports are positive around yields despite the frustrating growing season.

Straw is also going to be a costly by-product for livestock farmers this summer with prices high after the wet spring where livestock had to be kept indoors for longer than normal. I am sure many of our arable farmers will be hoping for a better few months than we had last year to get the crops back in the ground for next as the new farming year begins again.

As harvest rumbles on our hedgerows burst into colour with fruits, berries and seeds becoming abundant to many of our native birds and wildlife. Many of our native species will be preparing winter stores and our migratory species putting on condition ready for their long journey to their native continents. Some birds may still be nesting with several species such as blackbirds, house martins and even swallows can have 2 clutches some even 3 in a year so please do not remove any nests just yet.

Many of our mammals will also be teaching their young to be independent. Young Stoats will have spent all summer watching their mothers hunt they will now be learning themselves on young rabbits and rodents. Stoats are a really important predator in our natural world with them being a vital natural predator involved in the management of wild rabbits.

Final Word

Thank you again for taking the time to read through.

I hope you have a great safe month and please feel free to contact us with any concerns.

PC Chris Shelley

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

STOP...
this is a scam!

THE
TRAP

