RURAL TIMES

PROTECTING OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT

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HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT CONSTABULARY

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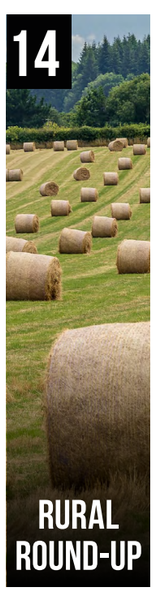


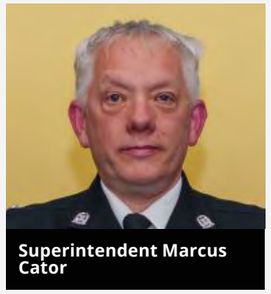












Superintendent Marcus Cator

WELCOME TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF RURAL TIMES

Hello, I'm Superintendent Marcus Cator and I am the Isle of Wight Area Commander.

When most people think about the Isle of Wight, they picture rolling countryside, working farms, stunning coastline, ancient woodland, and close-knit rural communities. They may not realise that the Isle of Wight is one of the most unique rural policing environments in the country.

Covering around 147 square miles and home to approximately 142,000 residents, the Island combines rural, coastal, environmental, and tourism-related challenges within a relatively small geographical area. Protecting these communities requires strong partnerships, local knowledge, visible policing, and communities working alongside us.

Rural crime affects livelihoods, businesses, families, and communities. During 2026, rural crime reports on the Island have included livestock worrying, wildlife offences, badger persecution, habitat damage, heritage crime, infrastructure offences, and thefts. Whilst the overall numbers remain comparatively low, the impact on victims can be significant.

Our approach is not simply about enforcement. It is about prevention, problem-solving, and building resilience within our rural communities. This means targeted patrols across rural villages, farmland, beauty spots, and coastal locations, working closely with farmers, landowners, parish councils, partner agencies and residents to identify concerns early and prevent issues escalating.

To strengthen this work further, I am delighted to introduce Sergeant Laura Turner as the Isle of Wight's Rural Crime Lead. Laura will work closely with neighbourhood policing teams, rural businesses, partner agencies and community groups to coordinate our response to rural crime whilst improving engagement with those who live and work across our countryside. Her focus will be on prevention, intelligence gathering, visibility and ensuring rural communities have a clear voice within local policing.

The Isle of Wight has a proud rural heritage and a strong sense of community. I want rural communities to know that their concerns matter. We will continue to invest in visibility, community engagement, volunteer schemes, partnership working and innovative approaches to rural crime prevention, whilst supporting our officers, PCSOs and volunteers who work tirelessly across the Island. We will continue encouraging residents to play their part through initiatives such as EyesOn.

Together, we make the Isle of Wight one of the safest rural communities in the country.



Donna Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner

USING TECH TO FIGHT RURAL CRIME GANGS AN UPDATE FROM PCC DONNA JONES

I recently gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of its inquiry into the impact on rural areas of serious and organised crime. I highlighted how police forces need to exploit technology in the fight against criminal gangs; and I spoke about the new pilot scheme for Rural Community Drones in Hampshire which I helped to fund and launch. These link aerial footage direct to the control room, enabling better and faster responses to rural crimes. I look forward to seeing this project roll out further across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Our rural crime digital reporting app, EyesOn, now has almost 500 members. More than 150 incidents have been reported here, with CCTV and other information about crime. Intel like this is vital to policing rural areas.

Since I launched our Rural Crime Task Force last June, more than £650,000 of stolen plant and machinery has been recovered. The dedicated unit has made several arrests at the start of this hare coursing season, and are cracking down on poaching activity too.

Finally, it was fantastic to see so many people at the country shows this summer. My team and I discussed rural policing issues with farmers, landowners, and countryside residents who are all a vitally important part of life here in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.



SUSPECTED HARE COURSERS ARRESTED IN HAMPSHIRE

Efforts to tackle hare coursers in the county continue, and four people were recently arrested in the north of Hampshire for their suspected involvement in hare coursing.



We were called at 11pm on Friday 4 September to a report that a Honda CR-V was being driven around a field near Hayley Lane, Long Sutton.

It was reported that the people inside the vehicle were shining a lamp and it was believed they were hare coursing in the field.

Officers attended the scene and located the vehicle. Three lurcher-type dogs, as well as a number of lamps, were found inside the car. The dogs were taken to kennels and the vehicle was seized.

A 46-year-old man from Shepperton, Surrey, a 31-year-old man from Maidstone, Kent and a 22-year-old man from Tonbridge, Kent were all arrested on suspicion of participating in a hare coursing event, entering land as a trespasser at night with poaching equipment and drink driving.

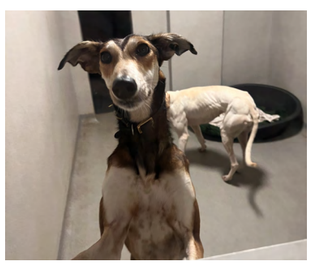
In addition, a 15-year-old boy from Maidstone, Kent, was arrested on suspicion of participating in a hare coursing event and entering land as a trespasser at night with poaching equipment.

They were all bailed with conditions whilst further enquiries are conducted.

Later that month, police responded to reports of hare coursing in the Upham, Lovedean and Clanfield areas.

Officers also deployed to a field in the Stratfield Saye area where a 4x4 vehicle had been dumped and set on fire.

Separately in the east of the county, a member of the public located an abandoned lurcher which was in poor condition – the animal will receive professional care before efforts are made to rehome the dog.



No arrests were made on these occasions, however we will continue to follow up enquiries and develop the intelligence picture around any people or vehicles involved in this offending.

Please keep reporting incidents of hare coursing and suspicious activity, including abandoned or burnt out vehicles on farmland, to police.

If a hare coursing incident is in progress, dial 999.

You can provide information to the police via our website or by calling 101.

You can also talk to the independent charity Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111, and via their anonymous online form at crimestoppers-uk.org

If you have a business connection to the rural environment in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, you can also download the EyesOn app which enables you to provide information directly to police, and also stay up to date on rural policing issues through news alerts: https://eyesonapp.com/download/

CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE

Darker evenings are coming - review your security measures



As we hit autumn and the darker nights begin to draw in, we are reminding farmers, landowners and rural businesses to review their security measures.

Rural locations can become attractive targets for thieves seeking machinery, tools, fuel, trailers and livestock.

Please consider the following crime prevention advice:

- Secure sheds, outbuildings and workshops with quality locks.
- Remove keys from machinery and vehicles when not in use.
- Install and maintain CCTV, security lighting and alarm systems where possible.
- Check fuel tanks regularly and consider additional security measures.
- Mark and record valuable equipment, including serial numbers and photographs.
- Secure gateways and access points to reduce unauthorised vehicle access.
- Challenge unknown persons on your land if it is safe to do so and report suspicious behaviour promptly.
- Share information with neighbouring farms and rural communities.

For more information on rural security visit the Secured by Design website.

Please consider using trail/wildlife cameras if CCTV is not possible in some areas.

If you wish to pop up some of the Country Watch 'WATCHING YOU' signs, please contact your local bobby who should be able to drop some off to you - find yours here: https://www.hampshirealert.co.uk/Content/LocalLookup

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Animals in the road



Pannage is currently underway in the New Forest. Running from Monday 14 September to Sunday 29 November 2026, this ancient practice sees pigs released into the Forest to feed on fallen acorns, beechmast, chestnuts and other nuts. Green acorns in particular are poisonous to the ponies and cattle which roam the forest the majority of the year.

The pigs are not the only free-roaming animals in the Forest, however, as this area of the county is home to animals such as horses, donkeys, sheep and cows - they are owned by the Commoners and roam freely.

We urge people to be alert to animals in the road, particularly as the nights draw in.

In the event of a collision, it's important to stop your vehicle, check on the animal if safe to do so, identify your location and report to the police. It is worth downloading the What3Words app on your phone to help you identify exactly where you are – this information can then be passed to a police call handler to help track you down.

Police will then make contact with an agister.

It is an offence to fail to report a collision with an animal under Section 170 (8) of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The animals captured within this piece of legislation are horse, cattle, donkey, mule, sheep, pig, goat and dog.

We are also into the rutting season, which means you can expect to see more deer than usual on the roads in Hampshire.



The rutting season typically runs between September and November. Whilst it's important to remain DEER AWARE at all times of year, we encourage people during the rut in particular to familiarise themselves with what to do in the event of a collision with a deer in the road.

Our website article has useful information on how to be DEER AWARE, and includes a video we have made with the British Deer Society with some advice.



© OPCC

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT CONSTABULARY PIONEER COMMUNITY DRONE PROJECT TO TACKLE RURAL CRIME

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary has launched a pioneering community drone project as part of our ongoing commitment to tackling rural crime.

Believed to be the first of its kind in the country, the project sees community volunteers – who have been fully trained and have passed a bespoke drone operators' course – providing support to live police incidents.

In practice, volunteers can be notified of an incident in progress by the police control room through a platform called GoodSAM. The volunteers can then accept the notification in the GoodSAM app before choosing to support the incident. The volunteers can provide useful support to ongoing crime in rural Hampshire – such as hare coursing, poaching, and non-dwelling burglaries –through information sharing between the police and rural communities along with providing evidence-gathering opportunities.

At present, we have five volunteers as we pilot the project, with ambitions to expand and recruit more volunteers in the future.

The project has been made possible with funding from Test Valley Borough Council, North Wessex Downs National Landscapes (NWDNL) Farming in Protected Landscapes, and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones.

Inspector Stu Ross, who has been leading the project, said: "Rural criminals cause continued misery to farmers, landowners, gamekeepers and estate owners across the county, and indeed across the country. It's crucial that we all come together as a police service, as a partnership and as a community to tackle this.

"That's why we have introduced this innovative project which enables us to bring the community into the heart of rural policing.

"I am incredibly grateful for the volunteers we have recruited so far, who are lending their skills to pilot drones and assist officers on the ground dealing with crimes in action, and also to our key partners including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Test Valley Borough Council, North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, and the Country Land & Business Association (CLA).

"These skills will complement the existing technology we have in our arsenal to combat rural crime such as police drones, mobile ANPR cameras and trail cameras, in addition to the expertise we have in our Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force which is made up of officers and staff with specialist qualifications and knowledge in matters including the identification of stolen plant, heritage crime and wildlife crime."

Donna Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, said: "Rural crime is a blight on business & rural communities across our two counties.

"I am pleased to fund this drone pilot, which will help rural communities, landowners, farmers and the police work together to prevent crime.

"The drones are a great asset for rural communities.



© OPCC

"They offer a sustainable and proactive approach to battling rural crime, which is often linked to organised crime.

"This pilot will improve the intelligence police receive and, in turn, the police response to reported incidents. If successful I will roll it out across the whole police force area.

"It is an important step to strengthen our policing of rural areas in addition to two other initiatives I launched; the Rural Crime Task Force and the EyesOn digital crime reporting app."

Test Valley Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for community led projects, Councillor Stewart MacDonald said: "We're proud to support this innovative project, which brings together local volunteers, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary and partner organisations in a new way.

"Strong communities are built on people working together, and this initiative shows how local knowledge, technology and community spirit can combine to support our rural areas. The volunteers taking part are making a valuable contribution, helping to strengthen links between residents and the police while supporting efforts to protect and preserve our countryside.

"Investing in projects like this helps build safer, more connected communities and demonstrates what can be achieved when organisations and local people work towards a shared goal."

Richard Clarke, chair of the NWDNL Farming in Protected Landscapes panel, said: "Farming in Protected Landscapes is about enabling farmers to thrive while protecting the special places they manage.

"This innovative project empowers local communities to support farming by helping tackle rural and wildlife crime and anti-social behaviour, creating a safer environment for farmers, the local community and wildlife."

Watch our YouTube video to see how the project works in practice.



PATROLS, ARRESTS AND CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS IN HAMPSHIRE DURING RURAL CRIME ACTION WEEK

Hampshire officers were busy during this year's Rural Crime Action Week in early September, with police teams actively patrolling the county's rural spaces, making arrests, stop checking vehicles, and supporting communities.

Criminals often operate under the cover of darkness and travel long distances to commit crimes in remote areas including hare coursing, poaching, burglary and theft of vehicles, plant and agricultural machinery.

The Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force joined forces with other teams during the week including neighbourhood officers and units from our neighbours in Wiltshire Police, Dorset Police and Thames Valley Police to carry out cross border operations.

By having a large visible police presence in areas that are typically targeted by criminals, we hope to deter offenders from committing crime in the first place, but also have resources available to deal with any crimes in action.

Proactive stop checks on vehicles also enable us to disrupt offenders who are active in our rural communities.

A snapshot of what police teams were able to achieve:

•Two men were arrested in Old Basing after a car failed to stop for police and attempted to make a getaway via a rural bridleway and farmland. Officers located the vehicle and seized a number of nitrous oxide canisters and balloons.

•Two men were arrested in a rural part of East Hampshire after officers found suspected stolen cooking oil in their van, as well as a knife. They were both bailed while our enquiries continue.

•Our rural crime taskforce located a stolen trailer in Liss, which was recovered and the owner was notified before he had even noticed it was missing.



•On Sunday 6 September, Hampshire officers supported Dorset Police with a hare coursing operation.

•On Tuesday 8 September, Hampshire officers supported Wiltshire Police with rural crime patrols along our county borders.

•On Thursday 9 September, our Country Watch Rural Crime Taskforce led an operation along Hampshire's northern and western borders, with support from local neighbourhoods teams, as well as Wiltshire Police and Thames Valley Police. Patrols and vehicle checks were conducted in vast rural areas. One person was arrested for suspected drug driving.

Our rural patrols and cross border operations will continue.

We urge our rural communities to report information about crime and suspicious activity to police by calling 101, or online.

If an incident is in progress, dial 999.

If you have a business connection to the rural environment in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, you can also download the EyesOn app

The Eyeson app enables its users to provide information directly to the police, and also to stay up to date with rural policing issues across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight through regular news alerts.



COAST AND COUNTRY - POLICING THE RURAL SPACES AND RESPONDING TO WILDLIFE CRIMES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Since the start of 2026, there have been approximately 30 rural and wildlife related crimes reported to police on the Isle of Wight.

The largest proportion of these relate to badger persecution, with livestock worrying coming in at a close second.

East Wight NPT recently secured a conviction for a horrendous badger-related offence, in which a teenager goaded his two dogs into violently attacking a badger on the Island. 18-year-old Max O'Neill, who filmed the attack, pleaded guilty to wilfully attempting to kill a badger at Isle of Wight Youth Court, and was banned from keeping dogs for 3 years as a result. Separate to the badger offence, O'Neill was also sentenced to 16 months for a series of violent offences.



In August, police in the West received a report that a dog had killed close to 200 partridges in a field in Porchfield. The birds that survived then became loose from the field. The dog's owner, a woman in her 50s, was spoken to by police and she accepted responsibility for allowing the dog to be dangerously out of control. In consultation with all parties, it was agreed that the matter would be dealt with by means of community resolution, whereby the dog will be subject to a Dog Behaviour Contract.

On **page 15** of this edition of Rural Times, you can read on about recent incidents of livestock worrying that have affected sheep on farmland near to Carisbrooke Castle.

One of the most successful developments for the Isle of Wight this year has been the continued growth of our Mounted Rural Patrol volunteer scheme.

The patrols conducted by these volunteers demonstrate the value of policing and communities working side-by-side. Mounted patrols offer a unique way of engaging with residents, landowners, dog walkers, equestrian groups and visitors. They provide high visibility, access to areas that can often be difficult to patrol, and opportunities to build relationships with those who may otherwise rarely interact with the police.

Most importantly, they help us create trusted conversations with the people who know our countryside best.

If you are a Facebook user, check out our online video which features input from IOW neighbourhood officers, our Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force, and our superb Island volunteer riders Kathy, Jo, Monique and Paulette, who give their time to support engagement and visibility across our rural communities.

Isle of Wight teams have also been patrolling rural villages, remote beauty spots and coastal locations to deter any criminality and anti-social behaviour, and also working with partners such as the local authority, National Landscapes, farming networks and community groups to address issues such as fly-tipping, habitat damage and offences against wildlife.


© Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation

EAGLE CHICKS BORN IN ENGLAND FOR FOURTH YEAR RUNNING

FORESTRY ENGLAND & THE ROY DENNIS WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

White-tailed eagle chicks have successfully fledged from wild nests in England for the fourth consecutive year. The eaglets were reared this summer by white-tailed eagles released in a ground-breaking conservation project by Forestry England and the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation to return this lost species to England.

Five pairs of eagles released by the project have now formed bonds and become established pairs. This summer two of these pairs successfully bred and raised young with one chick fledging from a nest in Dorset and two chicks in Sussex.

The two chicks from the nest in Sussex are both males and are offspring of white-tailed eagles released by the project on the Isle of Wight in 2020. The parent birds have bred every year since 2023.

A single male chick fledged from the Dorset nest. This is the second successful breeding attempt for the parent birds and made more remarkable by the fact that the male adult bird has only one leg after it lost this five years ago.

This year's successful breeding brings the number of these iconic birds born in the wild through the project to nine.

Roy Dennis OBE from the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation, said:

"This year's breeding success is another important milestone in the return of this lost species to England; it shows what can be achieved by very skilled wildlife managers. This is now the fourth year where these released eagles have raised and fledged chicks. With a further three pairs of eagles also well-established we should see this progress continue in the next few years.

"Restoring a species takes many years and requires the support of a wide range of communities and organisations, in particular landowners and farmers. I would like to thank everyone who is supporting the project and supporting essential nature recovery in this way."


© Forestry England

Steve Egerton-Read, White-Tailed Eagle Project Officer for Forestry England, said:

"It's been another long summer of watching and hoping that the eagles would be successful in breeding and raising young. There is nothing quite like that moment of seeing the chicks hatch and first appear in the nest. It is then a waiting game while we watch their progress. We are delighted that these three chicks made it through and will be closely watching their progress as they begin to explore the landscape.

"The breeding season is a challenging time for the parent birds. It's also a busy time for our team as we closely monitor the nests. This year we were able to monitor every item of food coming into the nests and can see that fish is by far the favoured item for these wetland loving birds."

White-tailed eagles were previously persecuted to extinction in England, with the last pair breeding in southern England in 1780. In 2019, Forestry England and Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation began reintroducing these iconic birds to the English landscape, with the release of 56 birds to date.


© Forestry England


© Environment Agency

NOTORIOUS KIDLINGTON WASTE SITE CLEARED AND SIX PEOPLE ARRESTED AS ENVIRONMENT AGENCY INVESTIGATE

A huge illegal waste site in Kidlington larger than the Wembley Stadium football pitch has been fully cleared and six arrests have been made, the Environment Agency have revealed.

The notorious site, situated on land near the A34, was shut down in October 2025 after it was determined that criminals were dumping waste there.

The clean-up operation, which concluded this summer, saw an estimated 22,105 tonnes of commercial and household waste, including tyres, shredded plastic, and household rubbish, fully dug up and removed from the site.

Concrete blocks have also now been placed at the entrance preventing access, with the main gate now securely padlocked.

Philip Duffy, chief executive of the Environment Agency, said: "We are very pleased that the clearance of this site has now been completed, and the EA has made a number of arrests as we pursue those responsible for this abhorrent offending.

"Dumping like this needs to be stopped in the first place. To do that we are going upstream, removing criminals and corruption from the waste system; improving the exchange of intelligence between agencies, and revoking the permits of those who do not take adequate care.

"During our Operation Unite, we revoked or suspended 17 permits and we have further operations planned throughout the Autumn, making use of new powers and resources the government has provided."

The Environment Agency continues to progress its criminal investigation into the illegal dumping of waste at Kidlington.


© Environment Agency

As part of the Prime Minister's crackdown, the government is also giving the Environment Agency stronger powers to tackle waste crime. Rogue actors who dump waste illegally or fail to treat it correctly are set to face fines of up to £5,000, up from the current maximum of £300. Those responsible for serious offences can already face much tougher sanctions, including prosecution and imprisonment.

This government will ensure that criminals pay for their actions. Under their plans, the Environment Agency's capacity to hunt down and confiscate the cash, cars, houses, and other assets bought with the proceeds of waste crime will grow, and new powers in the Crime and Policing Act 2026 will be used to speed up enforcement of confiscation orders.

Through the Environment Agency's 10 Point Plan on Waste Crime, they will act earlier to address illegal activity and deliver more consistent enforcement action. This includes suspending or revoking permits, making greater use of restriction notices, and naming and shaming illegal waste operators.

Water quality sampling has been regularly taken at the site to check for any potential significant impact. However, there has been no evidence of impacts to the local environment.

The Environment Agency urges anyone with information that may assist the Kidlington investigation to call the 24-hour hotline on 0800 807060. Alternatively, the public can report it anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or their website.



THE HIDDEN TOLL OF HARE COURSING

COUNTRY LAND AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Country Land and Business Association recently surveyed its members as part of efforts to understand the true impact of hare coursing.

Nine out of ten people experienced this on their own land.

Below, the CLA highlight the findings of their survey.

Earlier this year we asked CLA members to take part in a research survey about the impact that illegal hare coursing had on their businesses; these survey results fed into a podcast series for Radio 4. In this blog we delve into the full story that we uncovered with this work.

Unsurprisingly 96% of the survey respondents were aware of illegal hare coursing taking place in their local area, while 89% of the respondents had personal experience of illegal hare coursing activity affecting their own farm or rural business. This amounted to each respondent being targeted on average 26 times over the last five years – some had not been a victim in recent years, but many had been plagued with more than 100 incidents over the same period. Some stated in their response that there were too many to quantify.

Things got worse still when we asked how many of the respondents had received a threat of violence or any other form of threat or warning from illegal hare coursers. 54% of our respondents had received such threats. When asked if they were aware of friends and neighbours in their area being threatened by illegal hare coursers this percentage figure shot up to 72%.

70% of the respondents reported dead animals being left on or around the land. This is a tactic used to intimidate rural business owners. After all this sends a clear message that poachers can do what they want, when they want. These serious, organised criminals are not messing around.



One question that was optional to answer by respondents portrayed a countryside under siege – 24 respondents reported verbal abuse and threats; 11 had received threats to their premises including threats of committing arson; 6 had been the victims of vehicle ramming; a further 5 had experienced physical violence; 4 had been shot at with catapults, 3 had suffered actual damage to premises and 2 had their family pets threatened.

Despite the level of violence experienced only 52% of the respondents had reported incidents to the police. 80% of the respondents had spent money on farm security and crime prevention measures to protect their business from hare coursers. 51% of the respondents had spent between £1000-5000 on such measures; a further 23% had spent between £5000-10000 and 3% had spent more than £10,000.

Taken together, these findings tell the story of a countryside under siege. For too many rural businesses, illegal hare coursing is more than trespass or wildlife crime; it is a sustained campaign of intimidation carried out by organised criminals. The resilience of those affected is remarkable, but resilience should not be mistaken for acceptance. Rural communities deserve better, and the evidence from our members demonstrates why tackling hare coursing must remain a priority.



CIVILIAN VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED FOR CONTRIBUTION TO RURAL POLICING AND ROAD SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE

We are very fortunate to have a number of civilian volunteers who work tirelessly to offer their skills and time to support our rural policing priorities.

Some of these volunteers were recently nominated for awards at our annual Citizens in Policing Awards ceremony.

First up, our Humane Animal Dispatch (HAD) advisors were nominated in the Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering category.

The HAD advisors were recognised not only for the support they give to policing when dealing with the dispatch of injured deer at the roadside following collisions, but also for the valuable contribution they make behind the scenes through recruitment, training and assessment of our HAD volunteers.

You can read more about the HAD scheme and the impact it is having on **page 15** of this edition of Rural Times.

Next up is Dr Emma Moore who is one of our Mounted Rural Patrol volunteers (MRP).

Dr Moore was nominated in the same category as our HAD advisors.

In particular, her road safety work and dedication to improving safety for vulnerable road users such as horse riders and children was recognised.

Through her patrols, Dr Moore has been able to identify and report unsafe driving behaviours such as close passes and dangerous overtakes of horses in the road.

In collaboration with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office and the British Horse Society, she worked to install horse warning signs in her local area following a two-year campaign.

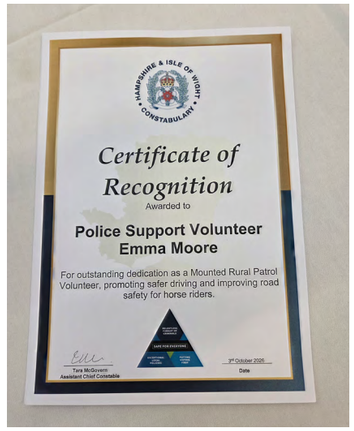
In addition to this, she has also supported police on Close Pass operations which has led to safer passing distances, reduced vehicle speeds, increased horse rider confidence and improved road safety within her local community.



Dr Emma Moore with her horse, Jester

Her dedication, passion and commitment has made a real difference to horse riders and the wider community.

Whilst our brilliant volunteers did not win in the categories for which they were nominated, their outstanding work and contributions were still highlighted, and they were all provided with certificates of recognition.



You can read on about some of the other winners at the awards ceremony in Netley on 3 October on our website: https://www.hampshire.police.uk/news/hampshire/news/news/2026/october/volunteers-recognised-for-outstanding-contribution-to-policing-across-hampshire-and-isle-of-wight/

RURAL ROUND-UP

MAN SENTENCED FOR £16K COPPER CABLE THEFT WHICH LEFT NEW FOREST HOMES WITHOUT BROADBAND

A copper cable thief who knocked out the power supply to more than 100 New Forest homes has been sentenced.

Mitchell Cole., 35, stole approximately £16,000 worth of cable from Winchester, Southampton, Hythe and Milford-on-Sea between March 2024 and January 2025.

The equipment belonged to BT.

One of the thefts, which took place in April 2024, resulted in 130 homes and businesses in a New Forest village losing their broadband and phone lines.

Cole, of no fixed abode, was subsequently charged with six counts of theft.

He pleaded guilty to the charges in June this year.

Following this, he appeared at Southampton Crown Court on 15 September for sentencing.

He was handed a two year Community Order with a requirement to complete 20 Rehabilitation Activity Requirement days.

In addition, Cole was ordered to pay a £114 victim surcharge, and was handed a £240 fine.

POLICE RESPONSE TO HARE COURSING REPORT LEADS TO TWO ARRESTS FOR SUSPECTED PHEASANT KILLINGS

What started out as a 999 call to police with fears of suspected hare coursing activity, led to the arrests of two people on suspicion of game bird poaching.

At around 5pm on 29 September, District Policing Team (DPT) officers were deployed to reports of people trespassing on land in Upton Grey, with concerns that they were hare coursing.

Attending officers located two people in the area sat in a Honda CR-V – a 19-year-old man and a 16-year-old boy, both from Surrey – and upon searching them and the vehicle police seized two catapults and some ball bearings.

They were both arrested on suspicion of possession of an offensive weapon, and daytime trespass in pursuit of game (poaching) due to suspicions that they had been involved in a poaching incident in the same area just two days prior whereby 10 pheasants were killed.

Our investigation into these incidents continues and both teenagers have been bailed with conditions, including not to return to Hampshire, until 29 December while we conduct further enquiries.

Rural crime is a priority for us, and teams including DPT, our rural crime taskforce, and neighbourhoods officers actively work together to patrol rural spaces and respond to calls that come in.

If you see a crime in progress, dial 999. You can report information about rural crime or suspicious people and vehicles to us by calling 101 or reporting via www.hampshire.police.uk

If it's safe to do so, make a note of as much detail as you can including registration numbers and descriptions of vehicles, people, and whether they have dogs or catapults with them, for example.

Our hare coursing poster below details the different ways in which you can report coursing/poaching to police, and when to use 999 or 101.



GALILEO NIGHT PATROLS IN RURAL WINCHESTER

The rural crime taskforce teamed up with rural neighbourhood officers on 30 September to conduct proactive Op Galileo patrols in response to hare coursing.

These particular patrols took place in the rural Winchester area, with officers paying close attention to roads and farmland tracks in remote areas.

No reports of rural crime came in during the night, however officers did encounter vehicles of interest which left the area upon seeing police.

Intelligence gathered during these encounters will assist police investigations and future planning.

HIDDEN WOODCHIPPER SUSPECTED STOLEN



Rural Crime Taskforce officers removed this woodchipper hidden in undergrowth on the Hampshire/ Wiltshire border.

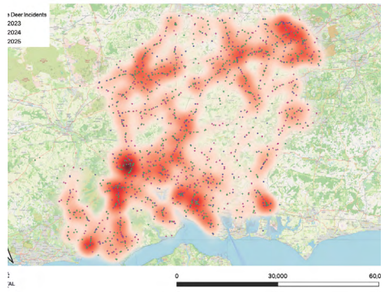
The item appeared almost new and is suspected to have been stolen before being concealed.

We appreciate the vigilance of the public in reporting things that don't seem quite right, and are happy to make enquiries to confirm whether or not a theft has taken place.

Please keep reporting these types of incidents to us via 101, online or EyesOn.

RURAL ROUND-UP

POLICE SCHEME SAVES MONEY AS DEER COLLISIONS RISE



This heatmap, produced for us by Digital Fauna, contains three years' worth of data to highlight hotspot areas in the county for collisions involving deer.

Reports of deer vehicle collisions have increased in Hampshire in this three year period.

For example, in 2023 there were 447 incidents reported. In 2024 this increased by 30% to 643, and the following year saw 791 reports.

In Hampshire, we are fortunate to have a Humane Animal Dispatch (HAD) scheme made up of volunteers who are experts in deer management, and assist with the humane dispatch of animals at the roadside following a collision.

Having these volunteers on board reduces the number of police deployments to incidents where the dispatch of a deer is required. Our scheme has been recognised as national best practice and has the support of industry partners.

In 2023, HAD volunteers deployed on 114 occasions, compared to 43 police firearms officer deployments, saving the Constabulary more than £41,000. Savings of £63,858 were achieved in 2024, and a staggering £72,294 was saved in 2025 as a result of HAD volunteer deployments.

Up to August, we had received 492 reports this year of deer vehicle collisions, with 163 HAD deployments. This number will of course increase, and we anticipate more callouts whilst we are in the midst of the deer rutting season.

You can read more information on **page 5** of this edition of Rural Times around being DEER AWARE on the county's roads.

REPEATED REPORTS OF LIVESTOCK ATTACKS NEAR CARISBROOKE CASTLE

We have had a number of reports of sheep being attacked and injured by dogs in the fields surrounding Carisbrooke Castle over the last year.

Incidents have been reported on 9 August, 3 August, and 30 January this year, and 2 November last year.

Police utilised local media and social media to raise awareness of the issues and encourage reporting. Meanwhile, PCSO Keefe visited the farmer and our rural crime taskforce colleagues loaned out trail cameras to assist in detecting future offences in the area.

No further instances have occurred since this time.

If you witness a livestock worrying incident in progress, dial 999.

We also urge dog owners to make themselves aware of the law and the risks associated with livestock worrying. Livestock worrying is when a dog attacks or chases livestock on agricultural land or is at large in a field with livestock, which can result in significant injury or suffering and in the worst cases, death of the animals involved.

This also has devastating consequences for livestock keepers, causing personal distress as well as significant financial costs.

Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, it is a criminal offence for a dog to actively worry livestock and dog owners risk prosecution.

We recognise that the majority of dog owners walk their dogs in a responsible manner, but unfortunately there are a small minority whose recklessness puts the welfare of other animals at risk.

Some key points to bear in mind to help with the welfare of livestock and your dog:

- It is so important to keep dogs either on leads or under close control around livestock.
- If you are walking your dog in a field and there is no livestock, please keep the dog in sight at all times, be aware of what it is doing, and be confident it will return to you promptly on command. If you cannot be confident of this, the dog should not be off the lead.
- Ensure the dog does not stray off the path or area where you have right of access.
- It is a criminal offence for a dog to actively worry livestock. We want owners to be aware that in such instances, the owner or person in control of the dog can be prosecuted, and as a last resort the dog can be shot by the farmer to end an attack.

WANT TO STAY INFORMED?

Sign up to Hampshire Alerts to receive timely updates covering crime prevention advice, crime alerts and witness appeals for incidents in your local area. Click here to sign up to receive regular Hampshire Alerts

You can also tell us what issues matter most to you by completing our 'Let's Talk' survey here: https://survey.hampshirealert.co.uk/

WANT TO KEEP US INFORMED?

If you have a business connection to the rural environment, download the EyesOn app to provide information directly to the police, and also to stay up to date with rural policing issues across Hampshire & the Isle of Wight.

COUNTRY WATCH

RURAL CRIME TASK FORCE

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT CONSTABULARY

Receive FREE crime and community information about where you live

Register at

www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk

