

RURAL TIMES

PROTECTING
OUR RURAL
COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT

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CONTENTS

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4
TACKLING FISH POACHERS



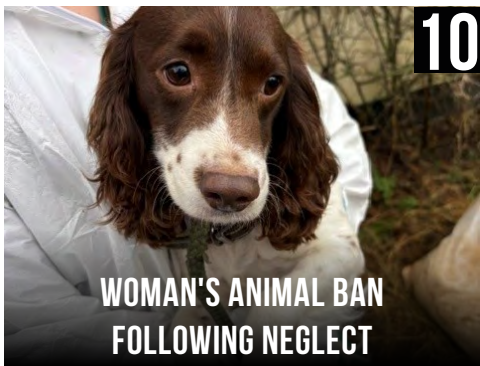
5
CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE



6
COURSERS ACTIVE THROUGH SUMMER



9
FARM ANIMAL KILLER SENTENCED



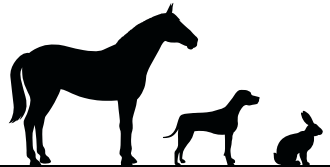
10
WOMAN'S ANIMAL BAN FOLLOWING NEGLECT



13
BIRD OF PREY CRIME TRAINING



14
RURAL ROUND-UP



WELCOME TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF RURAL TIMES



Chief Inspector Clare Denyer
Hello, I'm Chief Inspector Clare Denyer and I have recently taken up the role of District Commander for Test Valley.

It is a privilege to lead the policing response in such a beautiful area of the county, renowned for its stunning countryside and the River Test, which is one of the finest chalk stream rivers in the world.

Whilst this part of the county is a draw for visitors, it sadly is also attractive to criminals who blight the river networks with anti-social behaviour and fish poaching.

Police officers and key partners in Test Valley have been very proactive in addressing this, and you will read more in this edition of Rural Times about recent patrol activity along the Test and Itchen rivers,

in addition to action taken against offenders.

Like the rivers, the countryside and agricultural land also draw in those looking to make the lives of innocent people a misery.

I have made rural crime – in particular poaching and hare coursing – a priority for my police teams. Early harvests this summer have been exploited by hare coursers with reports coming in across the county, particularly in the north of Hampshire including Test Valley. Coursers cause significant damage to land and crops to the value of multiple thousands of pounds, which has a catastrophic impact on the farming industry.

Illegal gambling is usually associated with hare coursing, and it is often organised by criminal gangs travelling long distances to make large sums of money. There is also a strong link between hare coursing and serious organised acquisitive crime such as farm machinery and

plant vehicle thefts, which increases the risk to landowners who are subject to such activity.

We know that autumn and winter are seasons where this offending is particularly rife, so we anticipate seeing these reports increase in the coming months.

Patrol activity in rural areas is already underway, and I am committed to ensuring this continues in order to provide a visible presence and robust response in affected areas.

If you have information about criminal or suspicious activity, please report it. You can call police on 101, or report online via www.hampshire.police.uk

Dial 999 if a crime is in progress.

If you have a business connection to the rural environment in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, you can also download the [EyesOn app](#) to receive rural policing updates and to provide information to police.

MEETING RURAL COMMUNITIES THIS SUMMER AN UPDATE FROM PCC DONNA JONES



Donna Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner
I have enjoyed meeting with many people from our rural communities over the summer months.

During my visit to the New Forest Show, I had time to speak with the Vice President of the National Farmers Union who told me how impressed she has been with EyesOn, our rural crime reporting app, since I launched it in

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight earlier this year.

The Hampshire rural community on EyesOn now has almost 450 members and has seen more than 100 crimes reported, with the NFU saying they would be keen to see the app rolled out nationwide.

EyesOn provides a platform for the swift reporting of crimes or suspicious activity, easy upload of images and precise locations, which all enables a quicker, better response from police.

I will be encouraging other areas in the UK to adopt this as part of their rural crime fighting plans as it has already proven to be cost effective here since its launch, offering greater engagement between police and members of our countryside communities.

You can find out more information about the free membership (subject to approval) at www.eyesonapp.com and I look forward to seeing many more of you joining our rural crime fighting community.



FISH POACHERS DEALT WITH BY POLICE AND PARTNERS AS SUMMER PATROLS CONTINUE ALONG THE COUNTY'S RIVERS

Every summer we receive reports of illegal fishing, and sadly riverkeepers in Hampshire have in the past been subjected to violence, threats and intimidation.

Criminals have shot riverkeepers with ball bearings, vandalised their cars and home addresses, and killed wild animals as a means to intimidate.

Under Operation Traverse, we have been actively patrolling the river networks throughout summer in order to deal with anyone involved in ASB, illegal fishing or any other identified offences.

Commonly known as fish poaching, theft of fishing rights is a criminal offence under the Theft Act 1968. Financially, it impacts local fisheries, and the aggressive and anti-social behaviour displayed by some poachers risks driving away legitimate customers.

On Saturday 4 July, neighbourhood officers teamed up with the Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force, police drone operators, and our partners from the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust to patrol the River Test through Stockbridge, Longparish, Whitchurch, Wherwell, Chilbolton, Mottisfont and Romsey.



This provided the teams an opportunity to engage positively with legitimate anglers in the area, and also conduct checks at hotspot locations for poaching.

Patrols continued throughout July, with instances of illegal fishing being identified and dealt with.

On 13 July, police were contacted by the Environment Agency who witnessed a man and woman fishing illegally and without a rod licence on the River Test near Longparish. Police attended and both individuals initially denied it, despite the evidence against them.

After a conversation with one of our Rural Crime Task Force officers, the 24-year-old man and 19-year-old woman, both from the Witney area, accepted wrongdoing and forfeited their rod and bait. They were dealt with by means of Community Resolution and agreed to pay costs to the riverkeeper.

The previous day officers spoke with three teenagers fishing at a private fishery near Whitchurch. From enquiries at the scene, the group were simply given words of advice and moved on from the area.

On Saturday 11 July, a 15-year-old boy was dealt with by means of

Community Resolution for a fish poaching offence near Romsey. The same day, a District Policing Team (DPT) officer attended an incident whereby two boys and a man were seen illegally fishing on the River Itchen near Highbridge.

Upon seeing police, all three discarded their fishing rods in the water and left behind two dead rainbow trout, including one found discarded on a bench.



The following Saturday, officers responded to reports of four men illegally fishing on a private stretch of the River Test near Stockbridge.

A Rural Crime Task Force officer spoke to the four men, who initially claimed they were unaware the area was private, before claiming they had been given permission to fish.

This was untrue. They were all dealt with by means of Community Resolution with a requirement to each pay £250 to the riverkeeper.

CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE



Fly-tipping

Following recent reports of serious fly-tipping incidents in the Thames Valley area where offenders used angle grinders to remove padlocks or targeted accessible land, we are sharing the following advice to landowners around fly-tipping:

SECURE LAND AND CHECK IT REGULARLY

1. Report Every Incident
 - Less than 20 tonnes: Local Council /FixMyStreet.com (photos can be uploaded)
 - Over 20 tonnes or industrial-scale dumping: Environment Agency Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60
 - Offenders on scene: Police 999
2. Secure Vehicle Access
 - Lockable galvanised gates, anti-lift hinges and heavy-duty padlocks.
 - Concrete blocks, sturdy barriers or tractor-placed boulders for unused entrances.
 - Use hinge-side locks, anti-lift devices and tamper-proof padlocks.
3. Increase Visibility
 - Trim hedges near entrances.
 - Consider lighting where

feasible.

4. Use Deterrent Signage
 - Place signs at entrances and known hot spots.
 - Include warnings about prosecution, vehicle seizure and CCTV monitoring.
5. Install CCTV
 - Ensure cameras face entrances and capture number plates at night.
 - Systems do not need to be expensive.
6. Regular Inspections
 - Check empty land regularly.
7. Work With Neighbours
 - Criminals often test multiple fields in an area.
 - Coordinate signage and access control, so the whole lane appears high-risk to offenders.
 - Consider a whatsapp group to share information.

Op Forestguard

Police and partners in the New Forest have been running Op Forestguard this summer – a campaign of awareness to prevent bike theft and theft from motor vehicles.

During the New Forest peak visitor season we see an increase in this kind of offending, as higher numbers of tourists and outdoor activities can create additional opportunities for offenders.

In the column to the right are some key things to consider when making a summer visit to the New Forest.

Stay Safe This Summer

We want residents and visitors to continue enjoying the New Forest with confidence. Thieves will take any opportunity, so stay vigilant and report anything suspicious.

Love It? Lock It.

Protect your bike by securing it with a quality D-lock and attaching it to a solid, fixed structure. [Registering your bike](#) also makes it easier to recover if stolen and harder for thieves to sell on.

Take It With You

When visiting beauty spots, attractions or events, never leave valuables in your vehicle. Take belongings with you whenever possible and always check doors and windows are secure before leaving your vehicle.

Don't Make It Easy for Thieves

Many thefts occur when vehicles are left unlocked or valuable items are visible. Park in well-lit, busy locations or in car parks accredited under the Park Mark scheme, remove valuables and always lock your vehicle.

See It? Report It.

The public plays an important role in preventing crime. If you see suspicious behaviour or activity that doesn't look right, report it. Your information could help prevent crime and protect others.





HARE COURSERS REACT TO EARLY HARVESTS, FOLLOWING TREND SEEN IN RECENT YEARS

The harvest started early again this year, and so did the hare coursing...

Hare coursing is not a harmless countryside activity. It is an illegal practice where dogs, often lurchers or greyhounds, are used to chase hares across fields. Modern hare coursing is frequently linked to organised criminal groups who travel across county boundaries, cause damage to crops and land, intimidate landowners, and engage in other criminal activity.

Police forces across the country tackle this issue through Operation Galileo, a national initiative focused on disrupting hare coursing and associated rural crime.

As many farmers and landowners will unfortunately know from experience, the coursing season peaks in autumn and winter when the fields are bare.

However in recent years – and this year being no exception – we have seen the coursing season begin in summer due to weather conditions impacting

the harvest.

We had a report of a coursing incident on 11 June on farmland in northern rural Basingstoke, on the Hampshire and Berkshire border. The offenders left behind two lurcher dogs which were subsequently taken to kennels for rehoming.

Reports began to climb as we passed through July with areas in the north of the county particularly impacted such as rural Basingstoke and Winchester, but with reports cropping up elsewhere including in East Hampshire.

The Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force has committed itself to increasing its patrols and presence in affected areas, and under Operation Galileo our control room will deploy units to any hare coursing reports that come in.

Reports from you are crucial in helping us understand the full scale of the problem, and where

to target our resources and any proactive operational activity.

You can provide information to us by calling 101, or using the reporting tool on our [website](#).

You can also contact Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111, or via their anonymous online form at [crimestoppers-uk.org](#)

Dial 999 if a crime is in progress.

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

If you are a landowner or farmer and you would like to request some of our hare coursing signage, you can email us at countrywatch@hampshire.police.uk



Why Harvested Fields Are Targeted

Freshly harvested fields provide open ground, making it easier for offenders to spot hares and release dogs to chase them. Criminals often arrive in groups, using 4x4 vehicles and travelling significant distances to take part in illegal coursing events. Many incidents involve trespassing, criminal damage, dangerous driving and confrontations with farmers or rural residents.

As fields across Hampshire & the Isle of Wight are harvested, rural communities are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

What Should You Look Out For?

While seeing people walking dogs in the countryside is usually completely legitimate, some signs may indicate potential hare coursing activity:

Groups of people gathering near cropped or recently harvested fields.

Vehicles parked in gateways, field entrances, tracks or secluded rural locations.

Multiple 4x4s, pick-up trucks or vehicles arriving together.

Individuals carrying binoculars, radios or thermal imaging equipment.

People with lurchers, greyhounds or other sight hounds near open farmland.

Dogs being released into fields to chase wildlife.

Suspicious activity taking place early in the morning or late in the evening.

Aggressive or intimidating behaviour towards landowners, farmers or members of the public.

If safe to do so, note:

Vehicle registrations.

Vehicle make, model and colour, and any identifiable damage/signage/features on the vehicle.

Number of occupants.

Descriptions of individuals and dogs.

Precise location, including nearby landmarks or [What3Words](#) references.





OPERATION WOLF: BRINGING TOGETHER POLICE AND PARTNERS IN RESPONSE TO NEW FOREST WASTE CRIME

Teams in the New Forest have been undertaking dedicated Op Wolf work with partners to tackle issues of fly-tipping, vehicle crime and road safety.

Operation Wolf combines the powers and expertise of partner agencies to detect offences, disrupt criminal activity and deter those responsible.

In addition to tackling waste-related offences, Operation Wolf provides opportunities to identify illegal vehicle use, check for stolen tools, trailers and plant machinery, and ensure vehicles using the road network are safe and roadworthy.

On the morning of 1 July, police officers joined forces with New Forest District Council, Forestry England, and the DVSA in Christchurch Road, New Milton where they stop checked 40 vehicles.

By working together, partner agencies are able to make full use of their respective powers. For example, NFDC officers can lawfully inspect commercial vehicles carrying waste, while police officers can identify suspected criminality and vehicle-related offences. The DVSA's involvement also allows comprehensive roadworthiness and compliance checks to be conducted.

During the morning's operation, a number of vehicle offences were identified including multiple vehicles and trailers having defective tyres; overloaded vehicles and insecure loads; vehicle compliance issues and tachograph offences.

A similar multi-agency Op Wolf took place on 23 July at Crockford Clump Inclosure on the B3054 between Beaulieu and Lymington.



On this occasion, 14 vehicles were stopped and checked, and two drivers were issued notices requiring them to produce evidence of a valid Waste Carrier Licence within 14 days.

During today's operation, 14 vehicles were stopped and checked. Two drivers were issued notices requiring them to produce

a valid Waste Carrier Licence within the next 14 days.



We are grateful to the vast majority of motorists who continue to use legal, safe and compliant vehicles. Joint operations such as these will continue to be carried out across the New Forest to help protect our communities and environment.

We encourage people to keep reporting issues relating to fly-tipping so partner agencies can continue to act on this information.

If you discover fly-tipped waste, report this to your local council. If you witness a fly-tipping incident in progress, it is important that you do not approach those responsible - stay safe and dial 999.

MAN WHO KILLED FARM ANIMALS AND DUMPED THEM OUTSIDE NEW FOREST CHURCHES HAS BEEN SENTENCED



A man has been sentenced after the carcasses of dead farm animals were dumped outside churches in the New Forest.

Benjamin Lewis, aged 48 and of Kinross Road in Totton, admitted multiple counts of religiously aggravated public order and theft, totalling 13 crimes in all.

Between February 2025 and July 2025, Lewis killed farm animals, including lambs, and left their bodies or remains at various churches across the district, including St Theresa's Church in Totton, and St Peter's Church in Bramshaw.

On one occasion a lamb was found on a cross on top of a church roof.

On 3 August, he was sentenced to a Hospital Order with Restrictions when he appeared at Southampton Crown Court.

Speaking after sentencing, New Forest District Commander, Chief Inspector Scott Johnson, said: "The sentence in this case reflects many months of complex, investigative work by Neighbourhood Poling Teams and investigation teams.

"This crime series had a particular impact on the victims from the farming community and churchgoers, who were extremely distressed by the crimes under investigation.

"I hope this sentence goes some way to providing some closure for those victims and provides the best opportunity for rehabilitation for the offender and to keep our communities and animals safe moving forward."

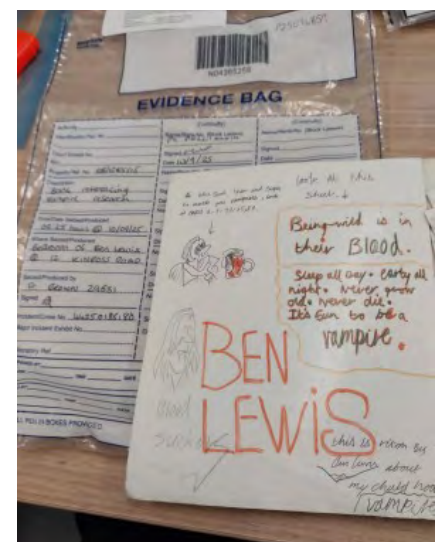
Leading the investigation into the horrific, disturbing and hugely impactful crimes was Local Bobby, PC Jess Surman of Totton Neighbourhood Policing Team.

She said: "These were deeply distressing incidents for all concerned, not least the victims of the original killings, those making the shocking discovery of animal remains when attending churches in our area, and the community as a whole.

"The effects will be long-lasting, with some people telling me they can no longer attend church. One lady even told me she no longer felt comfortable attending her family member's grave.

"I'd like to place on record my thanks to all those who supported us throughout our extensive investigation, ensuring Lewis was ultimately caught, had no option but to plead guilty, and has now been sentenced for his crimes.

"The sentencing also reflects a large and determined police investigation, which uncovered significant evidence, including specific newspaper articles, books and photographs, located during searches of Lewis' property following arrest, as well as poems he'd written, many of which concerned vampires, blood and killings."





HORSE AND DOG BAN FOR WOMAN WHO NEGLECTED ANIMALS

RSPCA

A woman who neglected 27 horses and 33 dogs in her care has been given a seven year ban.

Jean Winn, aged 75, of Ramley Road, Pennington, pleaded guilty to two animal welfare offences, following an investigation and prosecution by the RSPCA.

Concerns were raised about the welfare of animals owned by Mrs Winn and on January 23, 2025 police executed a warrant, accompanied by RSPCA officers.

Animals were discovered in unsuitable and cramped conditions with various health issues.

At an address in Lymington, dogs were found in dirty cages with no food and water throughout rooms at the property.



Horses were also found in stables and fields at the address, with RSPCA

officers noting that there was no evidence of a food source and no evidence that any food had been supplied recently. The ground was heavily poached with hazards, with other patches consisting of mud and faecal matter.



Horses were also removed from two locations in Sway, Lymington.

Alongside the seven year disqualification from owning dogs and equines, which she can not appeal for 12 months, she was also sentenced to a 12 month community order with one requirement – to abide by a curfew from 9pm until 8am every day for six months, and must pay £400 costs. The animals were signed over into the care of the RSPCA for rehoming.

In mitigation, it was highlighted that Mrs Winn had a 60-year history of keeping and breeding animals without issue, even during challenging personal circumstances. She accepted there was too much to handle and was embarrassed to

ask for help, though she did try to seek support. She said she had also struggled with challenges with her property and health.

RSPCA Inspector Hannah Nixon, who investigated for the charity, said after sentencing: "Meeting the needs of animals in your care is an essential component of animal welfare, in this instance the needs of a large number of horses and dogs were sadly not being met for a prolonged period of time. It's important for owners to understand that meeting the needs of animals is essential."

PC Sam Chapman, from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary's Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force said: "I'm pleased that our close partners in the RSPCA have secured this conviction.

"Police supported the RSPCA with warrants in January 2025 as part of their investigation, which resulted in a large number of animals being seized. This is a great example of RSPCA officers and police working together to safeguard animals, which were at the very heart of all of our hard work.

"I'd like to place on record our huge appreciation and thanks for all of those who offered to help, or simply came over to say 'thank you' during the warrants last year."



PORTSMOUTH WASTE SITE SUSPENDED OVER DUST POLLUTION

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Environment Agency has served a notice to suspend the environmental permit for a waste site in Portsmouth.

This means that Emmersons Transport LTD, of Ackworth Road, Hilsea, must not carry out any physical treatment including crushing and screening of waste, until it removes the risk of pollution as set out in the suspension order.

The Environment Agency visited the site on 7 July as part of [Operation Unite](#) – an 18-week nationwide enforcement operation targeting permitted waste sites suspected of being involved in criminal activity.

During the inspection, officers identified a number of issues relating to dust emissions. Emmersons Transport LTD is a waste recycling facility, which also supplies aggregates such as crushed rock, gravel and sand.

The operator is permitted to undertake the physical treatment of non-hazardous waste for recovery, including crushing and screening. The site visit identified that the operator was not taking suitable measures to control and prevent dust pollution.

They found that waste was stored in piles up to 5 meters, significantly more than the 3 meters allowed.

Site surfaces were not being kept clean of dust, and pressure washing was not being used to clean vehicles leaving the site. A crusher had been moved so that the belt no longer discharged into the main building, increasing the risk of spreading dust.

There was a failure to properly dampen materials on site to reduce dust, and the micro netting surrounding the perimeter had gaps, allowing dust to leave the site.

The operation presented a risk of pollution from dust, including inhalable particulates which can be harmful to human health. The site is situated on a busy industrial estate surrounded by other businesses, who may be affected by dust pollution from the site.



The site is also located next to Hilsea Lines local wildlife site, and near the Solent and Dorset Coast Special Protection Area.

Dust deposits could affect the environment of these protected areas.

Area Environment Manager Michael Turner of the Environment Agency said: "Emmersons Transport LTD have failed to limit harmful dust emissions, placing neighbouring businesses and important local habitats at risk. We suspended waste processing activities at this site and will not allow them to resume until the necessary improvements have been made."

The site had been told to carry out corrective actions by 31 July 2026. This included moving the crusher, reducing the height of waste piles, repairing and replacing the micro netting around the site, and putting in place effective mist sprays to dampen dust.

It is an offence to contravene any requirements of the notice. The company were given two months to appeal the decision through the Planning Inspectorate, although the requirements of the notice still need to be carried out.

Under Regulation 37(1) & (5) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, the Environment Agency may suspend an environmental permit if they consider that the manner of operating a regulated facility contravenes an environmental permit condition and contravention involves a risk of pollution.



© JUWC

HOW THE JUWC IS DISMANTLING ORGANISED CRIME IN THE UK

JOINT UNIT FOR WASTE CRIME (JUWC)

Waste crime is a billion-pound criminal enterprise in which organised crime groups exploit the waste industry to launder money, evade tax, undercut legitimate businesses, and pollute communities and the environment, while presenting themselves as lawful operators.

These criminals evolve constantly. So do we. We build new tools, use smarter technology, and work with a growing network of partners to stop them.

That's the work of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC). This is what we achieved in 2025–26:

- Led 23 operations, supported a further 38
- Attended 59 days of action across the country
- Delivered 111 disruptions
- Supported 13 arrests by partners
- Conducted 17 interviews under caution
- Seized 8 vehicles

Each number represents a network disrupted, a community protected, a legitimate business given a fairer chance.

For over a decade, one family ran what looked like a waste business.

It wasn't. It was an unlawful landfill, scrap metal operation, and waste transfer station — a hostile, deeply entrenched site that had defied the Environment Agency for years.

Working with police, HMRC, the Insolvency Service, local councils, and DVSA, 23 heavy goods vehicles were seized and destroyed, the family removed from their home on site, assets recovered — including land transferred between family members to avoid accountability. A £50,000 Bounce Back Loan fraudulently obtained is being recovered. Proceeds of Crime Act proceedings continue.

A prosecution can take years. While courts grind through the process, organised crime groups keep operating and keep profiting. That's why disruption is central to everything we do.



Operation 'B' targeted an organised crime group running illegal waste sites and large-scale dumping. We deregistered their

waste carrier licences, seized vehicles, and worked with police to pursue individuals for other offences. The group's ability to function collapsed. They are now formally recorded as dismantled.

Operation 'C' focused on one individual running permitted waste sites across England while engaged in fraud and money laundering. We secured an account freezing order for £600,000, suspended permits, and removed waste exemptions across multiple sites. That individual is no longer active in the waste industry.

Organised crime groups are becoming harder to spot. They increasingly mimic legitimate waste businesses, making detection harder and harm greater. Demand to target the highest-risk groups has grown every year.

Waste crime is serious crime. It causes serious harm. It deserves a serious response.

If you have information about illegal activity in the waste sector, report it anonymously to Crimestoppers. In England or Scotland, contact the Environment Agency or SEPA incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 - available 24 hours a day.



BASC FUNDS POLICE TRAINING TO TACKLE BIRD OF PREY CRIME

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR SHOOTING AND CONSERVATION (BASC)

The BASC Legacy Fund has donated £20,000 to support the development of specialist police training to tackle crimes against birds of prey.

The funding will support the National Wildlife Crime Unit's (NWCU) Digital Training Academy and the development of a dedicated bird of prey crime course, equipping police officers and enforcement partners with the knowledge and skills needed to investigate offences involving birds of prey.

The investment builds on BASC's previous £40,000 funding contribution for the academy's poaching training programme, reinforcing the commitment to supporting law enforcement in tackling wildlife crime across the UK.

The Digital Training Academy enables officers to access specialist training online, free of charge, overcoming many of the staffing and financial constraints associated with traditional in-person delivery.

Bird of prey crime remains a UK wildlife crime priority and can involve offences such as the unlawful killing, taking or disturbance of protected species. Effective investigation of such offences requires specialist knowledge and an understanding of wildlife legislation.

The new training package helps ensure officers have access to consistent, high-quality learning resources that can improve prevention, enforcement and prosecution outcomes.



Glynn Evans, BASC's head of game and wildlife management, said: "Wildlife crime has no place in the countryside and everyone with an interest in conservation has a responsibility to support efforts to tackle it."

"The success of the NWCU's Digital Training Academy has demonstrated the value of making specialist wildlife crime training accessible to officers across the country. We are pleased to build on our previous investment in the poaching syllabus

by supporting the development of this bird of prey crime course.

"Providing officers with the right knowledge and resources is essential if they are to investigate offences effectively and bring offenders to justice. This funding reflects BASC's commitment to partnership working and our determination to support practical measures that deliver real conservation outcomes."

Chief Inspector Kevin Lacks-Kelly, head of the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit, said: "With great thanks to BASC, we have been able to complete our Digital Training Academy and ensure that we continue to train wildlife crime officers across the UK to the highest standards."

"The use of this funding is a great example of how policing and partnerships can flourish with a common aim. BASC is a key partner to UK policing and it is delivering on its commitments to work together in raising the profile of wildlife crime and ensuring our countryside isn't a place for criminals to hide."

The funding forms part of BASC's wider commitment to supporting rural communities, wildlife conservation and effective enforcement against those who commit wildlife crime.

RURAL ROUND-UP

TWO CHARGED AND DUE TO APPEAR IN COURT FOLLOWING SERIOUS ASSAULT IN RURAL HAMPSHIRE

Two people have been charged following an investigation into a serious assault in Hurstbourne Tarrant.

This comes after a man in his 50s was left with serious injuries after being struck by a vehicle on Netherton Road on 24 October 2024.

The man was taken to hospital with life-changing injuries but has since been discharged.

Police have been investigating this incident thoroughly, and as a result of enquiries, two people have now been

charged and are due in court.

James Albert Kempster, 39, of Marchwood Road in Totton, has been charged with causing serious injury by dangerous driving and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Diane Rosemary Kempster, 61, of Marchwood Road in Totton, has been charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

They are both due to appear before Southampton Magistrates Court on 27 August.

SOUND MODERATORS & FLASH SUPPRESSORS NO LONGER CONSIDERED FIREARMS: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

New firearms legislation is now in effect regarding the de-regulation of sound moderators and flash suppressors, under section 44 and Schedule 5 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

Subsection 44(2) adds a new section 2A to the Firearms Act 1968 creating a summary only offence of possessing a relevant accessory without having a valid firearm or shotgun certificate, or without an exemption applying. This ensures that these devices are held lawfully only by those with a legitimate purpose and who have been subject to full suitability checks to possess a firearm. A “relevant accessory” is defined as an accessory to a firearm to which section 1 applies which is designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the firearm. The maximum penalty for the offence is a Level 3 fine.

The offence applies to section 1 firearms only.

Schedule 5 amends the provisions in the 1968 Act and the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 which allow a person to possess a firearm without holding a firearm or shotgun certificate. This will allow a person to possess a relevant accessory as well as a firearm without holding a certificate.

This means:

- There is no need to apply for a variation

to a firearms certificate to cover a sound moderator.

- Any outstanding application for a variation can be discontinued, as sound moderators are no longer classified as a firearm in law, and no longer need to be recorded on a firearms certificate. If you are able to return the fee then you should do so unless there are obviously other variation matters to consider.

- If the variation has already taken place prior to 29 June 2026 then there would be no need to return the fee.

Previously, these items were subject to control by virtue of the fact that they were included in the statutory definition of a firearm, set out in section 57 of the Firearms Act 1968.

Firearms licence holders with a legitimate need for these items were required to apply to the police to include them on their existing firearms licence, at a cost to both the police and the licence holder. Removing them from the legal definition of a firearm will benefit firearm certificate holders who will no longer be required to apply for, and pay for, a variation of their licence each time they acquire or dispose of a sound moderator, and it will also generate savings for Registered Firearms Dealers by removing the need to keep a record of transactions.

NEW POWERS TO SEIZE STOLEN FARM EQUIPMENT

New legislation under section 171 of the Crime and Policing Act was given Royal Assent this year.

This grants police powers to enter premises without a warrant to recover electronically tracked stolen agricultural equipment.

The legislation also gives officers the power to then seize any goods, whilst on the premises, if there are reasonable grounds to believe the goods are stolen; it is necessary to prevent the goods from being concealed, lost, damaged altered or destroyed; or the goods are to be seized as evidence in relation to an offence of theft.

RAISING AWARENESS OF COUNTRYSIDE CRIME

The Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force attended this year's New Forest and Hampshire County Show, engaging with more than 800 visitors and speaking with children, parents, guardians and grandparents about the impact of rural crime, and the important role communities play in preventing it.

Throughout the event, officers and staff provided practical advice on agricultural machinery crime, wildlife offences, fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour.

Visitors were encouraged to learn how to recognise the warning signs of criminal activity, understand when suspicious incidents should be reported, and gain confidence in knowing how and when to contact the police.

Many visitors were surprised to learn about the scale and cost of offences affecting the countryside and appreciated the guidance on simple measures that can help deter criminals and support investigations.

RURAL ROUND-UP

POLICE SUPPORT PEREGRINE MONITORING WORK

In June, an officer from the Rural Crime Task Force joined the Marine Unit and Hampshire Ornithological Society with their work monitoring peregrine falcons at a nest site near the New Forest.



Birds can be susceptible to disturbance during the breeding season if people are not careful, and it is worth knowing that even if your actions aren't deliberate, you could be breaking the law by disturbing a nest.

Peregrine falcons are considered a Schedule 1 bird under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

It is illegal for any person to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturb dependent young of such a bird.

You can read more about birds and the law, including the different Schedules, on the [RSPB website](#).

We would encourage anyone who sees breeding birds or a nest being disturbed to report this to police. If you see a crime in progress dial 999.

If you have any information or concerns about suspicious activity around a nest site, you can speak to police by calling 101, or by making a report on the [Hampshire police website](#).

You can also provide information to Crimestoppers 100% anonymously. Call them on 0800 555 111, or via their anonymous online form at [crimestoppers-uk.org](#)

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILLS WITH POLICE SCHEMES

Want to volunteer with the police to help serve rural communities?

Are you passionate about animals and their welfare?

We are currently recruiting into two of our volunteer schemes.

The first is our Humane Animal Dispatch Scheme (HAD), which is made up of skilled and responsible individuals who deal with the humane roadside dispatch of deer involved in collisions on Hampshire roads, preventing unnecessary suffering of the animals.

As a HAD volunteer you will:

- Contribute directly to animal welfare in your area
- Use your skills and experience in a meaningful and responsible way
- Work as part of a respected and professional network
- Support ethical countryside management and emergency response efforts

To read more about the requirements to join the scheme, and to register your interest if you are eligible, click [this link here](#).

Applications close on 20 September.

The second scheme we are currently recruiting for is our Mounted Rural Patrol (MRP) volunteer scheme.

This rewarding role is a unique opportunity for horse owners to combine their passion for horses with supporting their local community.

Key responsibilities for MRP volunteers include:

- Providing a visible mounted presence in rural areas to reassure residents and deter criminal activity
- Maintain regular contact with our Country Watch Rural Crime Task Force and local neighbourhood police teams, ensuring duty reports and feedback are completed and submitted
- Share relevant information and intelligence with policing teams to support local operations
- Undertake required training and participate in continued professional development
- Support community events and initiatives, helping to raise awareness of the role and rural policing activities.

For more information, and to apply, click [this link here](#).

Applications close on 13 September.

WANT TO STAY INFORMED? REGISTER FOR HAMPSHIRE ALERTS

As a local resident, you can play a key role in helping us to prevent and detect crime in rural areas.

By signing up to Hampshire Alerts, you will receive timely updates covering crime prevention advice, crime alerts and witness appeals for incidents.

[Click here to sign up to receive regular Hampshire Alerts](#)

It is your way of being kept informed of what we're doing in the community, allowing us to keep the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safe.

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

COUNTRYWATCH **RURAL CRIME** **TASK FORCE**



Receive FREE crime and community
information about where you live

Register at
www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk

