

RURAL TIMES



PROTECTING OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT



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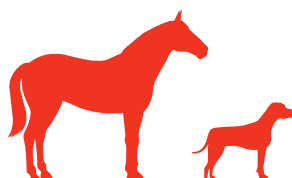
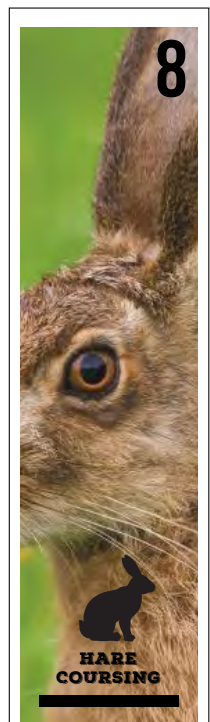
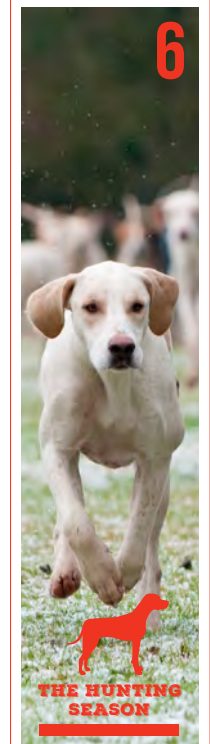
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WEBSITE

Hampshire Alert

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ACC Sara Glen
Local Policing Lead

Over the last six months I have been engaging with officers working in rural areas, as well as getting out and about meeting members of our rural communities. Inspector Lou Hubble and Mr Hugh Oliver-Bellasis have taken it as their personal challenge to ensure I am fully sighted on all rural matters.

This summer I have attended several events and have recently held three rural roadshows. These have all provided an opportunity for me to listen to the concerns of people living and working in rural areas, and to ensure that our rural strategy and tactical plan remains fit for purpose. My background in policing is predominately major and serious crime so I have utilised these skills to ensure we have a rural crime problem profile identifying the victims,

MEET THE TEAM

locations and offenders who need our focus. I hold each of our district chief inspectors, Country Watch and rural teams to account through our Rural Policing Board. You will see a shift in emphasis to focused prevention, greater use of technology and targeting Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). But I realise it's not all about crime fighting. Community reassurance, public engagement, education, and intelligence gathering are also vital if we are to increase the confidence that rural communities have in local policing.

Throughout my meetings with rural communities I have been transparent about the austerity challenges Hampshire Constabulary is currently facing. By December 2015 we will find out the impact of the next round of government cuts and will be faced with some very difficult decisions in relation to the future of policing. In 2010 we had 6,500 officers; by 2020 we estimate we will operate with 3,800 to 4,000, dependent on the central funding cut. Our Chief Constable Andy Marsh has been fighting hard for a fair deal in our funding allocation; you may

have responded to the government consultation regarding our funding formula and if you have then thank you, it is appreciated. Hampshire is the fifth most cost effective police force and we can no longer continue to police in the way we have previously. We need to be clear about what we can deliver, and we need to focus our reduced resources in the areas where they can have the highest impact.

With fewer police officers and staff, it is absolutely crucial that we engage, increase volunteers, improve information like the work we are doing with Hampshire Alert and we galvanise communities to get more involved in making our communities safe by assisting in a range of activities including an initiative with gamekeepers regarding rings of steel on rural estates.

We are committed to our partnerships and will always adopt a problem solving approach. I look forward to working with you to ensure that despite the challenges, we keep our communities safe and create a hostile environment for criminals.



Simon Hayes,
*Police and Crime Commissioner
for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*

As I write this piece most of the harvest seems to have finally been finished – a relief all round I should imagine – just a bit of baling to do and then the cultivators and ploughs can get going. Which is a timely reminder that those who take their 'sport' by illegally coursing hares or deer will already be out there somewhere in the county running their dogs. The police are fully committed to

apprehending these criminals but rely on reports coming in from local communities so that they can respond in a prompt manner before the perpetrators vanish into the night. We have seen some stiff financial penalties handed out to those who are caught and brought before the magistrates, which is testament to the excellent collaborative work of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Rural Crime Partnership Group.

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting out and about at rural shows throughout the summer and meeting lots of folk, not only from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, but also from further afield. It is often quite informative to hear what other Commissioners and Chief Constables are doing to help keep their rural communities safe. We are not shy

about adopting "best practice" from other areas if what they are doing works and is affordable. Which brings me on to the next topic – police funding. Hopefully many of you also participated in the recent public consultation by the Home Office on how the central funding grant should be calculated. You may have used the information that I sent out to you about how I planned to respond, or you may have made up your own minds having read the consultation document.

Either way I am grateful for your interest and support. We now await the outcome of the overall review and I am hopeful that this will be announced in November. I shall share the results with you and what they mean for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.



Hugh Oliver-Bellasis is chair of the Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG) and acts as a critical friend to the force.

HUGH'S VIEWS

Here we are in October after a wonderful spell of sunny weather leading into Autumn. Our force has implemented its new structure. You will find that it is different and it will help considerably if you connect with your police officers on the ground and help them. If you feel it is not working tell the police. We have a new Assistant Chief Constable responsible for Rural, ACC Sara Glen. Her background is crime. She has been very open in saying rural is not one of her expertise areas. Let us help her in her new role by feeding back issues and seeking solutions. The last few months have seen some notable rural successes, which is encouraging.

The Rural Crime Partnership bringing the various players in the rural together has been very fruitful and that success has enabled an amalgamation with the Rural Policing Board. This will cut out a meeting and enable one conversation. It is clear evidence of the police seeking help and trusting its partners to seek solutions - a really good evolution.

I must update you on the funding issues. The Home Office consulted on the funding formula which fixes the amounts of money given to forces. Many of you will have responded and if you did 'thank you'. Despite this consultation the force has been warned that it will likely have to find another £40m to £65m (25% - 40%) of cuts as part of the Government Spending Review. This can only guarantee further reductions in capability for a force already well stretched.

We are very fortunate to have an excellent police force as illustrated by the most recent HMIC inspection, which graded the force outstanding for its short and long term planning.

Why on earth do the Home Office not use these inspection results to guide their strategy for force funding? These inspections, the OFSTED of police, are rigorous, time consuming, and very frequent. Yet the government does not use them in any practical way.

Lastly, I hope you have a very good sporting winter; may I wish you a very Happy Christmas - please stay alert, report incidents to help our force succeed.



Everyone has a responsibility to keep our rural communities safe; please ensure you play your part.





SHOOTING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The wonderful countryside we see around us is heavily influenced and managed by man, it has been since Neolithic times. Shooting plays a major role in shaping the countryside, being involved in the management of two thirds of all rural land in the UK. One of the major benefits of managing land for shooting is conservation, with shoots investing over £250million and 3.9 million work days each year on conservation projects. Undoubtedly, this investment enhances the environment for other users of the countryside to enjoy, and plays a part in attracting visitors to rural areas for walking, cycling, horse rides, picnics and more. Shoots encourage responsible recreational access, and make provision for other users accessing their land on designated rights of way.

It is important that rights of access are respected and that designated rights of way are kept to. A trusty OS map, smartphone

app or indeed an online map programme will show you where such routes are. Shooters take account of locations of access such as footpaths, bridleways and permissive access routes so that they can ensure safety of other users is not compromised. At worst, straying from rights of way could put you in harm's way, if nothing else your unpermitted access could impact on other users who do have a legitimate legal right to be present.

A significant bugbear for landowners and shoots are dogs which are not kept on a lead or under close control by their owners. Wayward dogs can cause significant financial losses through chasing and attacking livestock or game birds. There are also all too frequent reports of deer being injured by dogs which owners have failed to control until it is too late. Other wildlife can be more significantly impacted by disturbance, particularly breeding birds. No doubt the dog will be having a wonderful time running

through cover crops, woodland and the like, chasing every bird which flutters away in its path. However, for the birds trying to incubate eggs or feed their young, such disturbances could cause broods to fail. For ground nesting species like grey partridge and lapwing, which are in decline, such disturbance can have a serious impact on species survival locally.

Shooters enjoy meeting other users of the countryside, and such interactions provide for a richer experience in our rural areas. There is plenty of land for everyone to enjoy, so long as we respect each other's lawful rights of access and are responsible in our actions.

Dan Reynolds,
South East Director BASC



Working in partnership with BASC



HUNTING SEASON



IN 2004 THE HUNTING ACT WAS INTRODUCED, AND CAME INTO OPERATION IN FEBRUARY 2005. THIS MADE IT AN OFFENCE TO INTENTIONALLY HUNT A WILD MAMMAL WITH A DOG.



Autumn and winter is a busy time for a specialist team of rural police officers throughout Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Between September and March each year, Hunt Liaison Officers are active across the two counties.

In 2004 the Hunting Act was introduced, and came into operation in February 2005. This made it an offence to intentionally hunt a wild mammal with a dog. This meant that traditional English hunting, where a pack of scent hounds (usually Foxhounds) pursued a fox, or a pack of beagles pursued a hare, was no longer lawful.

The Hunting Act does not mean that hunts can no longer go out. It means that traditional hunts have had to change the way they operate and are now required to lay a scent trail, rather than chase live quarry.

The traditional roles of Huntsman (looks after the hounds), Hunt Master (overall authority), Field Master (looks after the mounted riders), the Field (mounted riders), and the Whippers-In (assist the Huntsman in keeping the hounds under control) have been retained.



The majority of hunts are keen to continue to operate in a traditional manner and many have retained their Pinks (red hunting jackets), whilst others have moved across to tweed.

To comply with legislation, hunts should lay a scent trail, usually by a runner, horseback rider or quad biker. The hounds will then follow the trail through various terrains, and the Field will follow the hounds. As long as no live quarry is intentionally hunted, this activity remains lawful.

Hunt Liaison Officers engage with pro-hunt supporters and anti-hunt supporters to ensure that both sides are operating within the law. The view of Hampshire Constabulary in relation to hunting remains impartial. The duty of a police officer is to uphold the law regardless of opinion.

Attendance at hunt meets is an opportunity for rural officers to engage with rural land owners, farmers and those involved in country sports. It provides a forum for intelligence gathering, community reassurance and an opportunity to provide crime prevention advice.



Photo courtesy of New Forest Hounds





HARE COURSING

Hare coursing is a serious and ongoing problem. Affected farmers feel powerless to stop the coursers – sometimes numbering up to 50 people – from trespassing on their land at night in isolated locations. Besides chasing and killing brown hares illegally, coursers will drive over crops, damage hedges, fencing and gates. They are prepared to use violence and intimidation against farmers if challenged. Farmers are usually pretty desperate by the time they report the crime.

Coursers are extremely unwelcome visitors. The very thought of this criminal element being out on our members' farms at night is disturbing. Who knows what other criminal activities they may be involved in? Many NFU members take steps to protect their land from these intruders. Coursers usually arrive after harvest, during the autumn and winter, when they can spot hares in stubble fields or among low growing crops. A survey by the NFU in East Anglia revealed more than half of farmers affected by coursing had been threatened or attacked by hare coursers. We know of a Hampshire farmer who has created banks or ditches around certain fields on open downland to prevent coursers driving onto his land in the first place. Many are proud to have brown hares on their farms but daren't mention the 'h' word to a journalist or on social media for fear of attracting coursers.

In this era of austerity, the NFU recognises that the police must work smarter and with fewer resources. Rural dwellers must also play their part in tackling crime.

That's why we invited officers from Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Hayes to explain to Hampshire NFU members the current financial situation, outlining the Rural Policing Strategy and the work of the Rural Policing Board.

Rural crime is a strange beast – it's not always easy to recognise – and there's a whole raft of legislation that relates to poaching and the pursuit of game, for example. That's why we've welcomed the training programme to help frontline police officers identify and understand rural crime, along with the training of 400 police call centre staff. It's great they can use stop and search powers and the introduction of dog seizures is a real bonus. It's appropriate that poachers should be landed with both fines and the compensation costs of kennelling seized dogs. Forfeited dogs are often rehomed.

Coursing can be dramatically reduced where there is concerted action by farmers, the police, prosecutors and the courts. This includes penalties that reflect the seriousness of the crime. We consistently urge NFU members to report crime and suspicious activities to the police so that we can crack rural crime. The new forcewide structure for Country Watch should help, as will intelligence sharing about hare coursers with neighbouring police forces.

Sandra Nichol, NFU County Adviser



Working in partnership with NFU



CAUGHT AND CONVICTED

In May 2015 Hampshire Constabulary received information from ramblers that a rural estate were keeping caged corvids as decoy birds in conditions that were considered unsuitable.

A man was interviewed under caution at a police station and was given an adult caution for "causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal" under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Hampshire Country Watch takes wildlife and rural crime offences very seriously and will continue to work closely with our communities and partner agencies to reduce rural crime.

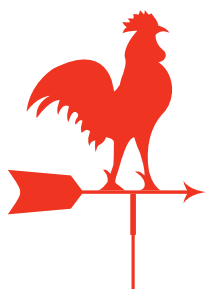
Poaching/Hare Coursing

A man was found guilty at court of hunting with dogs and ordered to pay £2,000 compensation to Hampshire Constabulary for the care of his seized dog which was returned to him.

Miscellaneous

A man is to appear in court after being stop checked by police carrying an air weapon in a public place following reports of shooting of birds on private land without permission.

Three men are to appear in court to answer charges of daytime trespass in pursuit of game on two separate occasions after a report of men with dogs poaching on private land was made to police.



HOT OFF THE PRESS

As part of Operation Falcon, our ongoing commitment to tackle crime in rural communities, we executed two warrants at Paices Hills Travellers Site near Aldermaston on Monday, October 5.

This was part of an investigation into a burglary in Laverstoke overnight on Monday, August 31. A 21-year-old man and a 25-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of burglary and bailed until November

Basingstoke district commander, Chief Inspector Simon Dodds, said: "As well as the warrants being carried out today, this was also an opportunity to engage with residents, provide reassurance, look at the equipment and vehicles on site and check on the welfare of any animals.

These warrants were executed in no small part due to information received from the public so it is vital that if you see suspicious activity in the rural area, please give us a call. We use that information to build a jigsaw and complete a picture of what is happening and allows us to take the action we have here."

If you're reading this electronically, please click here to watch a film about our warrants. <https://www.facebook.com/22018596340/videos/10153618059061341/>

Remember – you know your communities best. If you see something suspicious, report it to us. You can help us make the area a hostile environment for criminals as your information does help us catch and convict those responsible.

On Friday, October 16, a member of the force's Country Watch team was conducting patrols with the keeper of a local estate who had been suffering from incidents of poaching.

They witnessed lamping and with the assistance of other colleagues including the dog unit, they intercepted the vehicle

The occupants of the vehicle were found with items associated with lamping and it's believed this early intervention prevented them from carrying out any activity that evening.

To hear these outcomes as they happen, sign up to www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk



COMMUNITY OBSERVER TEAM

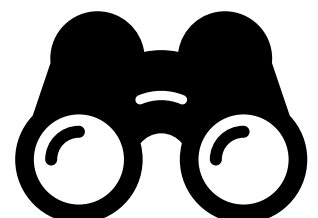


Members of the local community can accompany police officers on patrol as part of the Home Office Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.

Hampshire Constabulary has signed up to the scheme, which allows members of the public to gain an insight into how police officers consider and apply their use of stop and search powers.

The scheme was designed to provide the opportunity for people who are not police officers to experience the challenges of operational policing first hand. It may be of particular relevance for those interested in joining the police or those who feel they would like a better understanding of the stop and search process.

Anyone can apply to participate in the scheme. It is aimed at those aged 18 or over, however district commanders can approve for someone aged 16 or over to attend as long as the child has parental consent.





GET INVOLVED

The scheme builds on the success of the familiarisation days in Portsmouth, which were introduced as part of the community engagement strategy in the city. Members of the community were invited to visit and tour the station, meet and chat with officers and go out on patrol. It helped to build trust and confidence in policing, breaking down barriers and encouraged an interest in joining the extended police family.

ACC Sara Glen, head of local policing, said: "We are committed in Hampshire to ensuring we have an external perspective and community scrutiny of our policing tactics. We police with the consent of the public we serve and the community's view of this tactic is really important to us.

"This scheme gives us a real opportunity for anyone interested in understanding the role of a police officer to go out on patrol and get a first hand insight into the challenges officers face.

"Although it has been set up as part of the Home Office Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, we see it offering something much broader than just seeing the use of these powers as there is no guarantee it will be used by officers while out on patrol.

"We hope it will give a much wider understanding of the role of a police officer and for those interested in learning more about policing in the community, that it will demonstrate first hand that we do not

take our powers lightly and that the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight can have trust and confidence in their local officers."

Anyone interested in taking part in the scheme can apply in writing by visiting www.hampshire.police.uk and searching for Community Observer Scheme. The form can be sent to the address on the form along with photo ID such as a driving licence or passport.

Alternatively you may complete the application form and email this, along with a copy of your photo ID, to street.powers@hampshire.pnn.police.uk





WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL TACKLES FLY TIPPERS

Winchester City Council works in partnership with Hampshire Constabulary to tackle a variety of issues across its large, mostly rural, area. Anti social behaviour, rough sleepers, and fly tipping are just three of the issues tackled on a regular basis via the Community Safety Partnership.

Fly tipping is not only a visual blight upon the Hampshire countryside but it also imposes a financial burden upon private landowners and local authorities alike. Removal and clear-up costs amount to many thousands of pounds each year. Items such as tyres, fridges and asbestos can prove especially costly to remove.

Fly tippers are rarely caught in the act as their activities are frequently undertaken during the hours of darkness. The quiet rural lanes of the Hampshire countryside provide secluded and hidden places screened from view that are ideal for fly tippers to operate in without being seen. Members of the public, especially those living in rural communities, are encouraged to report any fly tipping activity, especially if they have dates, times, descriptions or vehicle registration numbers.

Winchester City Council has recently taken a far more robust approach to tackling offenders. The Neighbourhood Services team within the council



now has an officer with specific responsibility for enforcement whose remit covers fly tip investigation. All reported fly tips are assessed prior to being removed and those with incriminating evidence are investigated with a view to taking action against those responsible. WCC officers work closely with both the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the Country Watch team to identify perpetrators and gather evidence.



All photos courtesy of Winchester City Council

Since January 2013 Winchester City Council has investigated more than 60 incidents of fly tipping. Thirteen perpetrators have been issued with official warnings, five have received police cautions, one was dealt with by way of a Community Resolution and another was issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice by the police. Two fly tippers were successfully prosecuted and were ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £2,000 and £3,500 respectively. This sends a strong message to the rural communities that fly tippers are not welcome in the Winchester district.

Councillor Frank Pearson, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing commented: "Winchester City Council, in partnership with Hampshire Constabulary, is committed to identifying and bringing to task those who continue to blight our countryside with illegal waste disposal."

Members of the public are encouraged to report all incidents of fly tipping to Winchester City Council, either via the WCC web site <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/report> or by downloading the free "Your Winchester" app which is available for smart phones from app stores. Reports can also be made via the Hampshire Constabulary non emergency number – 101.



Winchester
City Council

Working in partnership with Winchester City Council



OP FALCON

TEST VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

Rural criminals have been issued with a stark warning following a successful policing operation in the Test Valley district. The initiative, which is part of the force's rural crime crackdown Op Falcon, saw a 20 per cent reduction in the number of reported non-dwelling burglaries during the operation period.

Officers from the Test Valley Neighbourhood Policing Team targeted criminals operating in the rural areas and delivered crime prevention messages to residents to help keep their property and vehicles secure.

With much of the Test Valley district area being rural, the area presents unique policing challenges, and being able to prevent and detect crime is often harder with fewer witnesses to criminal activity coupled with greater opportunities for criminals to target isolated properties and businesses.



As part of the operation, the Neighbourhood Policing Teams undertook:

- Increased patrols in the area.
- Investigated trends to identify hotspot areas.
- Worked with youth clubs and colleges to engage with teenagers in the local area.
- Provided crime prevention leaflets to residents in the local area.
- Worked with local retailers to identify stolen items.
- Reinforced the use of stop and search powers in the area.
- Highlighted measures like CCTV, etc, in hotspot areas.

Sergeant Russell Hodges said: "We have seen some fantastic results from Operation Falcon that have led to a significant reduction in the number of reported non-dwelling burglaries across the Test Valley district in particular.

"We have worked hard to prevent and disrupt further crimes through pro-active patrols, the use of intelligence and extra targeted patrols. This, along with education and providing crime prevention advice, has been key to tackling this problem.

"Being the victim of a burglary is extremely distressing and while we've worked hard to get offenders off the streets we can't be complacent. These people bring misery to their own communities

and by working together we can continue to make sure our communities are safe places to live. But the public are our eyes and ears and information from them can make all the difference.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP AND INPUT
TO TARGET THE RIGHT PLACES.**

"Anyone coming here to commit crime will be pursued and prosecuted and by working with the local community and partner agencies we can be really effective in make our rural communities a hostile environment for anyone coming here to commit crime."

JOIN
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