

RURAL TIMES

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PROTECTING
OUR RURAL
COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND
THE ISLE OF WIGHT



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Korine Bishop
Strategic Rural Policing
Inspector
Hampshire Constabulary



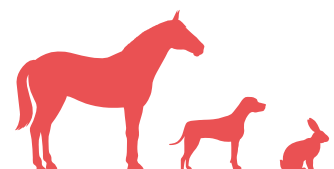
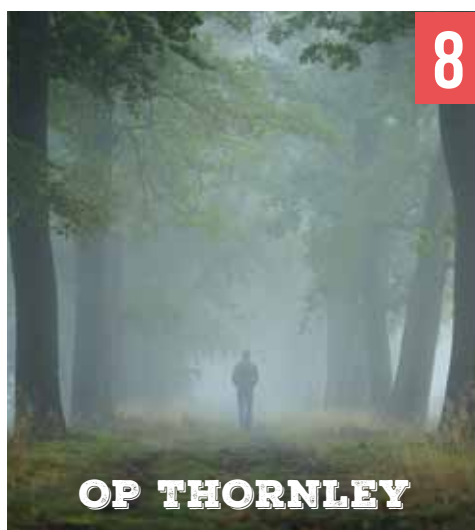
Andy Williams
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Ged Armitage
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WEBSITE

Hampshire Alert
www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk





Assistant Chief Constable, Scott Chilton
Hampshire Constabulary, Rural Policing Lead

The Hampshire Constabulary Country Watch team has continued to focus its efforts on a series of burglaries in the rural communities of Hart and surrounding areas. During much of August our teams visited various rural estates and landowners to give **advice on crime prevention** and how we together can effectively tackle those criminals who take advantage of the large rural expanse much of community lives and works in.

Despite an incredibly busy summer, the demands on policing never reduce. We are entering a crucial time in terms in determining what policing services we can deliver with the funding we receive. You will no doubt

WELCOME ALL TO THE LATEST EDITION OF RURAL TIMES

Our police teams have been really busy over the last few months working closely with many members of **our rural communities**.

be aware of the pressures on public funding and the challenges we face in ensuring all of our communities are protected from those who cause most harm. As we have an overall reduced number of police officers than previous years, we must ensure that we use what we have wisely and work fully joined up with the public and our professional partners.

My commitment is clear: together we will make our rural community **an uncomfortable place for criminals to operate** and we will be strong on enforcement of the law. To do this we need the 'eyes and ears' of the public and the advice and support of you all who live and work in those communities. Over the coming weeks I will be undertaking a stocktake of our approach and seeing how we can

even further improve our collective response.

I would like to thank **Inspector Lou Hubble OBE** for all her hard work in developing Hampshire Constabulary's approach to rural policing. Lou is due to start her three year secondment as the head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit on temporary promotion to Chief Inspector. I would like to wish Lou the best of luck and look forward to hearing about her new role and the challenges ahead. I am therefore incredibly pleased to welcome **Inspector Korine Bishop** as our new Strategic Rural Policing Inspector. I am looking forward to working with Korine.

Wishing you all a safe and happy season.



Michael Lane
Police and Crime Commissioner

And no wonder when it blights our beautiful countryside and has a significant financial impact for landowners.

Fly-tipping is a very visible offence keeping it in the forefront of our minds, but there are more subtle crimes that we need to be aware of and on our guard against. For example **mandate fraud** can be difficult to immediately identify and can have devastating impacts for those affected.

There are some really useful examples and good advice given in this edition of Rural Times to help you avoid falling

From fly-tipping to mandate fraud - helping to keep you safer

I am particularly pleased to see in this edition of the Rural Times (page 11) an article on how Hampshire County Council has put in place a dedicated resource to build a stronger collaborative approach and collective responsibility for tackling **fly-tipping**. When talking to rural residents, fly-tipping is often raised as a key concern.

victim to these fraudsters (see pages 6 and 7).

Looking ahead and with a focus on **meeting key people**, I am very much looking forward to listening to the views of rural landowners from across the force area next month; to discuss with them my proposed rural strategy and to find ways to work even closer together to address community safety.

A highlight will be attending the **Verderers' Court** next month to listen to local issues. This follows on from my recent meeting with the Official Verderer for the New Forest, Lord Manners, where

I confirmed our commitment to working together to minimise animal fatalities in this area.

A series of **short training films** has been produced for operational staff to better equip them in dealing with rural related issues that they might not encounter every day. Please see page 12 for details.

The work of Country Watch is part of my commitment to ensuring an effective police service.





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

HUGH'S VIEWS

Hampshire Constabulary's commitment to rural policing is enshrined in its force strategy. Its desire to deliver fine rural policing should not be questioned, but that requires resources which are not available.

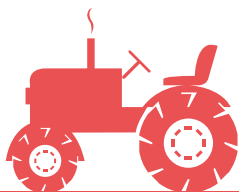
The force is severely challenged by lack of resources - £49.2m today. That is not 'nice to have' money, it is money allocated to Hampshire Constabulary and then taken away by the funding formula which is not fit for purpose and which HM Government seems incapable of improving. When the Government announced the revised formula 22 months ago, the numbers were flawed and it was withdrawn, which was singularly unhelpful. If one assesses the rural crime threat over the last five years, Hampshire Constabulary has performed very well and been bold - confiscating dogs and vehicles where offenders are caught. Lack of intelligence is challenging. The scale of threat, risk and harm in the rural when compared to that of modern crime in Portsmouth, Southampton and Basingstoke is much less acute. Organised crime is evident in all these areas.

Our rural team has evolved and strengthened over the last 10 years, but it is still a very small unit. Andy Williams the Country Watch Sergeant will act as the continuity as the new Inspector, Korine Bishop, settles in. Korine is an experienced Inspector and is already a regular at our rural partnership meetings. Lou Hubble is going to head up the National Wildlife Crime Unit, a tremendous move for her, but we will miss her.

My Great Aunt would have said 'she has been a real brick'. She has kept rural in the force's mind through some very difficult times. Her new post will give her an opportunity to encourage a co-ordinated rural focus across all forces, transferring best practice from force to force and putting her huge experience from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to good use.

However, challenges remain and we can all help. We must be more inquisitive about who and what we see. We must take our own security seriously and target harden. We must encourage all rural dwellers to understand the nature of rural crime and the criminals. We must support our police officers and encourage them by showing our interest and commitment to help. We must increase the numbers signed up for Hampshire Alerts (www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk). When you have read this article encourage a friend to sign up. Please make sure they do, and pass the message to their rural neighbour. I am not a fan of chain letters except this one - there is no cost and it has the reward of better rural policing and more criminals brought to book.

Have a very happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you for your continued support for a very fine but underfunded Constabulary.



ACC Scott Chilton has taken the rural portfolio from DCC Sara Glen and fresh eyes will reveal new things to refresh the rural coverage. DCC Glen has led rural for a long time and has been tremendous. It would have been so easy to let it slip with all the other pressures on her portfolio, but she continued to support and develop rural. We should all be most grateful,

because we clearly have one of the best rural forces in the country. We should also recognise the enormous contribution from Mark Gammon, our Crown Prosecution Service lawyer. He has worked tirelessly to advise and improve our efficacy against rural criminals and that effect has been dramatic, not least since his motto is *'where there is a will, there is a way'*.



HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY TEAMS UP WITH ANGLING TRUST

Hampshire Constabulary has formally pledged support to protecting fish and fisheries by becoming a partner in Operation Traverse – the Angling Trust initiated, multi-agency operation targeting illegal fishing and fish theft.

The announcement was made at the South East Fisheries Enforcement Workshop held in Hungerford on 7 October.

David Wilkins, the Angling Trust's Regional Enforcement Manager for the south east said:

"This is terrific news for responsible and law abiding anglers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We will be signing up more forces in the south east region, to join the majority of forces in England and Wales already committed to working with anglers to make our waterways safer. We very much look forward to working with Hampshire Constabulary."

Angling Trust National Enforcement Manager, Dilip Sarkar MBE said:

"This is another step forward for the vision in action, more support for the Environment Agency locally, and should give anglers greater confidence that their issues are being taken seriously and addressed."



David Wilkins (left) with Sgt Andy Williams

Sergeant Andy Williams from Country Watch said:

"We fully support the Fisheries Enforcement Campaign and appreciate anglers' concerns. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, we are lucky to have some of the finest angling rivers and lakes in the country. We as a force are committed to addressing both rural and wildlife crime, so this very much fits within those objectives. We would urge anglers to report any incidents in progress or information about crime to us - or to the Environment Agency about a fisheries or rod licence offence."

We likewise look forward to working with all our partners to make a difference."

Mike O'Neil, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in Solent and South Downs said:

"We welcome this strengthening of our partnership with Hampshire Constabulary and the Angling Trust. Effective protection of fish stocks often requires a multi-agency approach to tackle determined poachers. This support is essential in tackling illegal fishing."



MANDATE FRAUD —

Mandate fraud and CEO fraud are a growing problem with businesses both large and small, and not many people will have heard of them. They are both actually very simple processes for the fraudster to use, but they have devastating consequences for their victims.

There are primarily three ways in which this can happen, but as fraudsters develop their tactics so quickly, there may be more by the time you get to the end of this article!

Example one – Mandate fraud by email

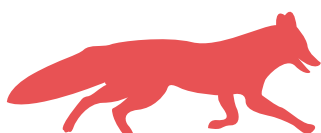
Robert owned a small business fitting wood burners, and like most businesses he invoiced his clients after the work was done. He had recently installed a burner in the home of Mrs A but had not fully finished the work. Mrs A received an email seemingly from Robert demanding payment even though the work had not yet finished. She felt this was odd but paid by online banking as the email instructed.

A week later Robert called Mrs A to schedule the last part of the work, and she asked if he had received her payment. He asked 'what payment?' and she told him about the email.

He said he had not sent anything, and then they both realised they had been a victim of mandate fraud. Robert's emails had been hacked, allowing the fraudster to see who his clients were and to demand payment before Robert had invoiced them.

Example two - CEO fraud (the boss)

Mr C owned a large company and regularly travelled abroad for work. One day a member of the accounts department received an email that appeared to be from him saying he needed money transferred as part of a business deal. The amount was £45,000. The staff member transferred the money and it was not until later that the company realised no email had been sent by the boss (the account had been hacked) and that they had transferred money to an unknown person.





A GROWING PROBLEM

Example three – Mandate fraud by phone call

Jo worked in her company's finance department and dealt with payments to suppliers.

One day she received a telephone call apparently from a regular supplier advising they had a new telephone number and the new number was supplied.

A couple of weeks later, they called again to advise they had changed bank accounts and gave the new details. A friendly rapport had been established and Jo had no reason to doubt the caller. Jo changed the direct debit details and paid the next invoice as usual.

It was discovered a couple of weeks later when the original supplier called to ask if there was a problem with payment. Jo realised she had been duped into setting up a direct debit to a fraudster.

Advice:

- Always shred any paperwork (especially bills) with your company details and also any paperwork from suppliers etc.
- If you are called by someone claiming to be from a company you make a regular payment to (ie a supplier), don't take the person's word that they are calling from the company they claim to be. Don't give any details but say you will call them back. Only use the telephone number you have on file, as the caller may give you a false one. The same advice applies if contact is made through email or a letter. If the info is false make a record of the attempted fraud for all your team to see.
- Check emails are real. Don't click on unknown links. Set up a weekly password which a CEO or boss can use when requesting monies are transferred – don't be afraid to challenge the request to ensure it's genuine by speaking directly with the boss. Ensure the boss knows that you will be checking. Ensure bosses and staff are aware of CEO frauds.
- For the public, they should ensure they are absolutely certain that the bill they are paying is going to the correct person. A simple telephone call can confirm this, but they should make sure they have the correct number and not one given to them, which could be from the fraudster. Small business owners such as Robert can speak to his clients about this when undertaking work. Transfer £1 as a test to start with.
- Use strong passwords and change them regularly.
- Visit Action Fraud, Cyber Aware and getsafeonline.org for more advice on how to prevent fraud.

OP THORNLEY

Country Watch officers are supporting neighbourhood policing teams to target poaching, hare coursing and other rural crimes as part of Operation Thornley.

These damaging illegal activities increase during late autumn following the cutting of crops and as the hours of darkness grow.

Rather than being involved in a harmless, traditional sport, poachers regularly cause damage to gates and fences to gain entry to agricultural land, then drive across freshly sown fields. Farmers and land owners not only have to spend money on preventing access and repairing damage, but crops are also lost for the coming season.

We are asking members of the public to be our eyes and ears by reporting any suspicious incidents. If you see a vehicle parked up in an odd location or see people with lurcher type dogs in unusual

circumstances, please call 101 quoting Operation Thornley or 999 if a crime is in progress. You can also use the Project Poacher app - www.projectpoacher.com - or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

To receive free crime and community information, register for Country Watch alerts at www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk.

Sergeant Andy Williams from the Country Watch team said:

"Illegal activities such as poaching and hare coursing have a knock-on effect for landowners and gamekeepers. Their livelihoods are disrupted and thousands of

pounds are lost from the local economy.

"Poachers aren't the old fashioned 'one for the pot' characters seen in fiction. They are nearly always associated with other criminality, including rural burglaries, thefts and damage to property.

"Tackling poaching, which can include deer, fish and game birds, is one of the National Wildlife Crime Unit's priorities. The Country Watch team is supporting this effort with targeted operations involving our partners in the rural community, and by increasing patrols.

"Our powers include the seizure of dogs, equipment and even vehicles used in poaching and other illegal activity."

In rural parts of Winchester district, PC Lee Skinner has carried out several Operation Thornley activities along with local officers.

PC Scott Graham has teamed up with Fordingbridge officers and local gamekeepers as part of Operation

Bothersome. Together they carried out overt, evening patrol work to disrupt poachers.

Your knowledge of your local area is invaluable to the work we do. If you are interested in getting involved, please visit our website or email us at

communityobserverscheme@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

As part of a seasonal push to raise awareness of poaching, Sergeant Andy Williams and PC Lee Skinner carried out BBC radio interviews to highlight this and other wildlife crime.

Arrests made following Country Watch operation near Basingstoke.

Four people have been arrested following an operation in rural areas around Basingstoke that was led by the Country Watch team.

During the operation, which took place on the evening of Thursday 2 November, officers were called to a report of a break in at a solar farm in Overton.

As they arrived, a Transit-style van was seen to leave the farm. Officers followed the van before stopping it in Monks Way, Eastleigh.

A 54-year-old man from Offenham, Worcestershire, was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit a

burglary other than a dwelling with intent to steal, and failing to stop.

Officers also arrested a 17-year-old boy from Yateley, a 22-year-old man and a 27-year-old man, both from Gloucestershire on Friday 3 November in connection with this incident.

All four people have been released while investigations continue.

The operation was carried out as a response to concerns raised about rural crime, such as theft and poaching. A number of gamekeepers and landowners were spoken to and crime prevention advice given.

As well as Country Watch officers, the operation involved officers from the

Joint Operations Unit, Basingstoke Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Roads Policing Unit.

Sergeant Andy Williams from the Country Watch team, said:

"We know how devastating illegal activities, such as theft and poaching, can be to rural communities, and we regularly carry out operations targeting those who seek to benefit illegally from other people's livelihoods.

"To help us, people in rural communities can report anything suspicious they have seen by calling 101 – or 999 if a crime is in progress. This is vital – if we don't know about an incident or suspicious activity, then we cannot do something about it."

HOW TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS

Here is a cut out and keep guide to reporting suspicious incidents that might be linked to poaching. These are some of the pieces of information that may help us with our investigation.



VEHICLES

Make _____

Model _____

Colour _____

Registration _____

Occupants in vehicle _____

Anything distinguishing about the vehicle (eg dents, marks, stickers, missing lights)

LOCATION

Offenders' location (eg road name, GPS) _____

Your location _____

Nearby landmarks _____

Nearby houses _____

PEOPLE

How many people have you seen? _____

Descriptions (age, height, size, jacket, trousers, hat, hair colour, accent) _____

Did you hear any names used? _____

DAMAGE

What damage have you seen? _____

Has there been damage to fields? _____

DOGS

Have you seen any dogs? _____

What type / can you describe them? _____

What were the dogs doing? _____



REPORTING CRIME

If a crime is in progress, call 999.

For all other information about poaching, call 101 quoting **Operation Thornley** or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

For rural crime prevention advice: www.hampshire.police.uk/advice/protecting-your-business/rural-crime



Chief Inspector Lou Hubble OBE
Head of National Wildlife Crime Unit

IT'S GOODBYE FROM ME...

My rural journey began around 2007 as a Sergeant in Test Valley.

I was invited to a meeting with a number of farmers and gamekeepers who wished to express their dissatisfaction about the way we were dealing with poaching.

I felt like a lone wildebeest, about to enter a crocodile infested river. Following the meeting I submitted a paper to Chief Officers recommending the implementation of a dedicated rural crime team: Country Watch was born.

It remains a dedicated team investigating rural and wildlife crime, supporting other departments across the force and engaging in a significant amount of partnership work.

In 2014 I was successful in securing the role of Strategic Rural Policing Inspector – giving me the rank to

influence the 'grown-ups' across the force. I provided strategic advice to Chief Officers on all things rural, and continued to drive the rural policing agenda. A six month secondment evolved into a full time, permanent post that I carried out for almost four years.

The time has now come for me to hand over the reins. Inspector Korine Bishop has been snapping at my heels for a couple of years now, and I am delighted that she was successful in the recent selection process.

I will take up post as Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit,

providing an opportunity to take my skills, knowledge and experience to the national arena. I have been overwhelmed by the support I have received over the years from all of the people I have worked with, and am excited to continue working with some of you in my new role. I know you will offer Korine the same support that you have shown me over the years, and I will be keeping a watchful eye on Country Watch from across the UK.

Chief Inspector Lou Hubble OBE



AND IT'S HELLO FROM ME...



Inspector Korine Bishop
Strategic Rural Policing Inspector

I am delighted to have been successful in a selection process for the position of the Strategic Rural Policing Inspector.

I have been a police officer for 20 years and have a significant amount of experience spanning different roles in frontline policing.

For the last three years I have worked as a Response and Patrol Inspector covering the New Forest, Winchester and Andover. I have always had a keen interest in rural issues so put myself forward as the lead for my command on the Strategic Rural Crime Partnership Board to facilitate coordinating force wide proactivity.

Part of this role included setting up joint operations with Response and Patrol officers and the Country Watch team. This was under Operation Falcon and

focused on thefts from beauty spot car parks. I recognise the importance of all teams working together to tackle criminality. As a Police Cadet leader I have also encouraged our young people to take part in these operations.

I have already started to meet up with partners and am keen to get out and about to meet as many people as possible over the coming months.

I am looking forward to continuing the great work that my team do by working in partnership to tackle all rural and wildlife crime.

Inspector Korine Bishop

FLY-TIPPING ENFORCEMENT, REPORTING AND EDUCATION

Gareth Roberts is Hampshire County Council's brand new Fly-Tipping Partnership and Project Officer who will be tackling the issue through partnership collaboration, enforcement, reporting and education.

Gareth spent nearly seven years at Hampshire Constabulary as a community beat officer and will be utilising his knowledge and skills of partnership working, intelligence gathering and the law to ensure fly-tipping is reduced across Hampshire.

This is the first time the County Council has put in place a dedicated resource to work exclusively with partners such as district authorities, the Rural Crime Partnership, the Environment Agency, The National Farmers' Union, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Country Land and Business Association, Highways England and the police to reduce fly-tipping through raising awareness, encouraging reporting and helping to increase prosecutions.

Gareth will also be working closely with the County Council's Trading Standards team to crack down on bogus waste disposal companies and rogue traders who are dumping waste on public and private land.

This will include showing people what signs to look out for when using disposal companies, so it's not their rubbish that ends up in a field or a river, for which they – as well as the people who did the fly-tipping – could receive a hefty fine.

Gareth Roberts said: *"This is an exciting and challenging new role. Through collaborative working and by making the most of the resources available at all the different organisations, we could really make a difference."*

One of my challenges is to make online reporting easier so residents, business and land owners know who to report fly-tipping to so it can be cleaned up as quickly as possible. It will also help us get a clear idea of what's being fly-tipped, when and where so we can work with the police and magistrates to get a true picture of the damage it is causing and the real cost to businesses and the community."



NEW FILMS GIVE OFFICERS ADVICE ON RURAL ISSUES

In-house training films have been produced to give a wide range of police officers advice on dealing with four different rural scenarios. The short films were made by David Fogerty, our multi-media producer, and will be available on officers' smart phones. We were pleased that two of our key

partners found time to help us out with narration. Sandra Nichols, the NFU's county adviser for Hampshire, voiced a film showing officers how to deal with hare coursing, while Dan Reynolds, BASC's south east regional director, narrated a film about handling firearms.

Our crime prevention adviser Sarah Cohen provides the voice for a film about red diesel dipping and Superintendent Paul Bartolomeo give tips to officers on farm machinery thefts.

Inspector Lou Hubble OBE said:

"These films are aimed at officers who may not have experience dealing with day to day rural matters.

"They provide practical advice that can be accessed on their smart devices should they encounter particular situations.

"Many thanks to Sandra and Dan for helping out, and to Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, for showing us his gun handling skills in the firearms film."

This short film gives officers without firearms training some basic advice on dealing with rifles and shotguns in rural settings. It looks at gun parts and specifications, checking firearms certificates and making them safe.



This film explains where, when and how hare coursing takes place. It gives information on dealing with hare coursing allegations and advice on seizing dogs and vehicles.



This film shows how to identify plant, agricultural machinery, trailers and horse boxes. It explains how to look out for stolen farm equipment being transported and checks for owner details.



This short film covers the illegal use of red diesel and which road users are exempt. It shows how to dip a fuel tank to test for red diesel and explains what HM Revenue and Customs does next.



KEEP YOUR FERTILISER SAFE

If you store or handle nitrogenous fertiliser, you must secure it to prevent it from being misused in home-made explosives.

The blending, storage, transport and use of ammonium and ammonium nitrate-based fertilisers create opportunities for terrorists to acquire this material.

It is your responsibility to take appropriate security measures and be vigilant - regardless of the amount.

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office advises you to think about:

- restricting access to the fertiliser or the building where it is stored
- ensuring a trespasser would be visible if they carried out a crime
- making the site as resistant as possible to criminal activity

Some simple low-cost measures can be taken, such as storing your fertiliser

in an enclosed secure barn or, if it is in an open-sided barn, covering it with a tarpaulin.

You should also remove or trim hedges or bushes around the barn and keep gates locked.

For further advice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/secure-your-fertiliser/secure-your-fertiliser.



RURAL ROUND-UP

INFORMATION SOUGHT ON BURGLARIES INVOLVING QUAD BIKES

Rural property owners in the Hart area are being urged to contact the police if they hear quad bikes in the early hours of the morning.



This follows a number of burglaries of outbuildings, where we believe quad bikes have been used to get to and from properties.

Gardening power tools, quad bikes and plant machinery have been stolen in burglaries.

Country Watch officers have been supporting the neighbourhood and roads policing teams to tackle this issue.

This has included visiting numerous rural estates and landowners to give out advice on crime prevention, carrying out patrols and stopping suspicious vehicles.

PC Vince Lane from the Country Watch team said:

"As part of our investigation into this series of burglaries, we are looking to gather any piece of information - however small - about suspicious activity in the Hart area.

"Your information may be the vital missing piece of the puzzle.

"If you see or hear something suspicious, including quad bikes on or near your land in the early hours, please contact us on 101 quoting Operation Rebate or 44170031091 - or call 999 if a crime is in progress.

"Property owners are reminded to record details, including serial numbers, of their items. Taking photos of the identification plate using a smart phone is a quicker alternative to writing it down."

Further advice on burglary prevention can be found here:

www.hampshire.police.uk/advice/protecting-your-home-and-belongings/burglary



APPEAL AFTER COLLISION IN BRAMDEAN

Police are appealing for information following a road traffic collision in Bramdean.

At around 4.15pm on Friday 20 October a Ford Transit and a Suzuki Grand Vitara were in collision in Brockwood Bottom. Following the incident, all of the occupants of the Suzuki Grand Vitara ran off from the scene.

The two men travelling in the Ford Transit, one aged in his 30s and one aged in his 60s, did not receive any injuries. PC Lee Skinner from Country Watch said: "We're appealing for information to help locate the people involved in this collision.

"We believe the vehicle was involved in a poaching incident in Bramdean a short time before the collision.

"There was a cyclist who we think witnessed the incident but did not leave their details. If you know this person, or if this was you, please call us.

"Did you witness the incident? Do you know someone who was involved? It is possible that they may have been injured in the collision. I would urge anyone who has any information about the people involved to call 101 quoting reference 44170408679, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."



CHARITIES AND POLICE RESCUE ABANDONED HORSES

The RSPCA is appealing for information after 26 horses were rescued after they were abandoned in Highclere in Hampshire.

Hampshire Constabulary obtained and executed a search warrant on Thursday 12 October after concerns were raised about the welfare of the horses.

RSPCA inspectors worked alongside Hampshire Constabulary Country Watch officers, World Horse Welfare, Redwings Horse Sanctuary and equine vets to remove the horses.

Unfortunately, none of the horses seized were microchipped and at this time it is difficult to prove who was responsible for them so an appeal has been launched to try and find out more. RSPCA Operational Superintendent Lee Hopgood, who praised the police and charities for working together to help the horses, said: "We are keen to hear from anyone who has any information

regarding these horses and urge them to contact the RSPCA through our inspector appeal line on 0300 123 8018.

"These horses had to be removed after a vet sadly confirmed they were all either suffering unnecessarily or their needs were not being met."

"We also urge people to seriously think about the commitment involved in caring for horses as this sadly happens far too often."

"The RSPCA and other equine welfare charities have been picking up the pieces of the ongoing horse crisis for many years, rescuing sick and injured horses who have been left without appropriate care."

From foals suffering neglect to older horses cruelly treated or abandoned, the RSPCA has seen an enormous increase in the number of horses taken in, with 979 horses rescued in 2016 - a 55 percent increase on the year before.

DOG CONTROL ORDER GRANTED AFTER ATTACK ON ALPACAS

Conditions have been placed on a dog after an attack on three alpacas on a farm near Bartley in the New Forest. Following the attack by an unsupervised dog in December 2016, the alpacas all required treatment and one subsequently died. Country Watch officers pursued a civil Dog Control Order and this was granted at Southampton Magistrates' Court on 13 September.

This Order will last for the dog's life and its owner must ensure that it:

- wears a muzzle at all times whilst in public or on any land not owned, occupied or controlled by the dog owner;
- is kept on a suitable lead at all times whilst in public.

Inspector Lou Hubble from the Country Watch team said:

"Because alpacas are not classed as livestock, we were not able to pursue a criminal case."

"However because of the impact this type of attack has, we felt it important to bring about a civil action."

"We will continue to protect our rural communities. This outcome should send a warning to any owners who allow their dogs to be unsupervised or out of control around animals of any description."

Alpaca farm owner Brian Sears said:

"We would like to thank the officers of the Country Watch team for their support and persistence in exploring all the avenues open to them in the 'grey area' of dog attacks on non-agricultural livestock. Hopefully this will mark an end to a year of our farm feeling like it's been 'under siege'."

"In an 'animal loving' country, it's shocking that outdated laws make it so difficult to safeguard against the tiny minority of individuals who have such a contemptuous disregard for the welfare of animals, including their own."



TWO MEN FINED FOR WILDLIFE OFFENCE

Two men have been fined after destroying the breeding site or resting place of protected bats.



The offence took place in February while the men were carrying out building work at a property in Rowlands Castle.

They pleaded guilty to destroying a breeding site or resting place of a wild animal of a European protected species (Pipistrelle bat).

Both appeared at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court on 5 October. They were each fined £200 with a £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs.

Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Sergeant Andy Williams from the Country Watch team said:

"This case shows that the Country Watch team takes all reports of wildlife crime seriously and will take action against anyone found contravening wildlife regulations."

"The legislation is in place for a reason to safeguard protected species. It is crucial that property owners and businesses check the regulations before carrying out any work, ensuring they adhere to the law surrounding any protected species."

"Country Watch officer PC Lynn Owen gathered all the evidence from witnesses, liaised with bat experts and sought advice from the Crown Prosecution Service before proceeding with this case."

"Prosecutions for protected species offences are quite rare. We prefer education before prosecution, but

on some occasions we are left with no choice."

Pete Charleston from the Bat Conservation Trust said:

"The historic decline in bat populations is due in part to the illegal destruction of their roosts. The Bat Conservation Trust regrets the need for any criminal prosecution but is pleased that Hampshire Constabulary has clearly demonstrated that such offending will not be tolerated."

"Householders who host bat roosts can receive free advice and assistance from the Bat Conservation Trust."

More information about the Trust can be found here:
<http://www.bats.org.uk/>.

THEFT OF TELEHANDLER

We are appealing for information after the theft of a Manitou telehandler overnight on Monday 16 October in Bramley.

The vehicle has now been recovered but we'd like to hear from anyone who may have seen it being moved.

If you have any information about this theft, please call 101 quoting 44170404816 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



SPECIAL FOCUS ON REDUCING ANIMAL DEATHS

During the summer months we were present at a number of rural shows, where we were able to provide advice and information face to face with the public.

At the New Forest and Hampshire County Show, Special Constable Shane Phillips made some excellent contacts with the New Forest Animal Accident Reduction Group. Supporting the work of Country Watch officer PC Scott Graham, this partnership approach is key to helping prevent animal deaths and injuries through education and speed enforcement.

COUNTRY WATCH

Meet the team

Contact numbers and locations for our Country Watch officers are shown here, should you need to contact them about your concerns and issues. Please note that these phone numbers should not be used to report crimes. You should call **101** if you think an offence has been or is about to be committed, or call **999** in an emergency. Although our officers are based in the locations stated, they have a countywide responsibility and can help you with any issue.



Insp Korine Bishop
07880 056657



Sgt Andy Williams
07392 314299

**Special Constable
Jeremy Searle**



PC Steve Rogerson
07554 775468



PC Vince Lane
07970 145389

**Special Constable
Phil McCabe**

**Special Inspector
Iain Tunstell**



PC Will Butcher
07775 542982

Tadley

Andover

Alresford



PC Lynn Owen
07901 102344

**Special Constable
Kev Saunders**

**Special Constable
Phil Keeling**

**Special Constable
Vicky Spearpoint**



PC Corinne Irving
07554 775389

**Special Constable
Shane Phillips**

**Special Sergeant
Will Chevis**



PC Scott Graham
07554 775488



Sgt Ged Armitage
07387 096611

**PCSO
Justin Keefe**



PC Tim Campamy
07901 102393

**PCSO
Cat Quinn**



PC Lee Skinner
07901 102401

Lyndhurst

Yarmouth



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