



Issue 11 | 1st Of May 2021

@RuralCrimeNfk

Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter



Introduction

IMPORTANT—

This will be the last newsletter sent out via the current mailing method. You will need to re-signup to continue to receive future copies of OP Randall Newsletter and other communications you currently get from the force. If you haven't already replied to emails sent to you or signed up please follow this link and re-join. To continue receiving OP Randall Newsletter you must select 'Rural Crime' as an interest.

<http://norfolk.police.uk/newsletter>

So we are a month further into the year and have seen some of the biggest relaxations in Covid restrictions this past month which has been a relief to many.

The weather continues to confuse us with only this morning towards the end of April with a very hard frost for the time of year. Whilst the lovely sunny mornings are very welcome, lets hope the temperatures start to match the visible weather soon.

We are currently working hard on plans for the summer, which will see a big focus on safe and legal use of our countryside and coastal area as the 'big staycation' is expected.

We would like to remind people to follow the revised Countryside Code and Coastal Code; with the key tag

line of both being Enjoy, Respect and Protect.

Enjoy your visit, make a memory, have fun.

Respect be nice, follow local signs and marked paths, do not block access to fields and properties, leave gates as you find them and be considerate to those living and working in the countryside.

Protect the environment, take litter home, do not light fires, always keep dogs under control, dog poo 'bag it bin it', care for nature—do not cause damage or disturbance.



Engagement Events

We have seen some of the usual events we attend as a team cancelled or postponed in recent months, however I am pleased to say currently the Sandringham Game and Country Fair is due to go ahead in September and we are planning to be in attendance. There also seems to be some suggestion that Open Farm Sunday could also be on this summer and is another opportunity that we will look at.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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



Theft Of Bluebells

I touched on this last month when we had a rather large theft of bluebells.

Shortly after last months newsletter more detail were released, the

incident remains under investigation:

Officers attended the wood in the Fakenham area at about 5.45pm on Tuesday 23 March 2021 after receiving a call from a member of the public who reported seeing people acting suspiciously in the wood a short while earlier.

When officers arrived at the scene, they discovered several large sacks and mail bags filled with approximately 8000 bulbs that had recently been uprooted.

Two men aged in their 30s and two women aged in their 20s and all from Lincolnshire have been interviewed in connection with the incident. No arrests were made and officers are continuing with their enquiries.

The landowner is now in the process of replanting the bulbs.

British Bluebells are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act along with all other native wild plants and bulbs. This means it is an offence to intentionally uproot any wild plant unless authorised to do so.



Marine Life Disturbance

Over the last few weeks we have seen an increase in reports of disturbance to wildlife along our coastal areas.

Most notably it is sadly seals—please remember it is important to not approach any seal. Keep your distance and please keep dogs on leads where seals are present.

They are incredibly vulnerable to human disturbance. If you are concerned for the welfare of a seal, please contact Friends Of Horsey Seals (if in Winterton and Horsey) 07706 314514 or RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

Never attempt to assist the animal yourself as you may be causing more harm than good.

A photo released around the beginning of the month served us another timely reminder ahead of the busy summer period to take our litter home with us and dispose of it correctly.



'Mrs Vicar' Photo credit RSPCA

Mrs Vicar as she has been named by the team at RSPCA East Winch was rescued from Horsey beach on Easter Sunday after she was spotted with a plastic ring imbedded in her neck, causing a 7cm deep wound around her neck and is believed to have been around her neck for two and a half years. She was in a lot of pain and has a long recovery ahead of her, but is in the best possible place to do this.

Please remove your rubbish and dispose of it correctly, as we all know plastic pollution has become a huge issue around our coasts and we all need to do our little bit to protect our wildlife.

WhatsApp Group

The Operation Randall WhatsApp group is expanding. At present the group mainly consists of partner agencies, key landowners and administrators of other social media rural groups. I am currently looking at increasing the size of this group so if you meet one or more of the above criteria – work for a partner agency, key landowner or you administer another rural group on social media - or if you think you would benefit or be able to contribute in any way, I want to hear from you. You can contact me on email at christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk



Hare Coursing Roundup 2020/2021

I am pleased to report that the latest season has seen a decrease of well over 50% in relation to calls about hare coursing. Norfolk Constabulary remain one of a very few forces to actively seize all dogs and vehicles involved in this crime and seek a confiscation order at court. This is still seen as one of the biggest ways to disrupt this blight on our rural communities. The hare coursing season is generally seen as running from September 2020 to March 2021. During that period we saw 152 calls around hare coursing with 26 of those in relation to offences 'over the border' in Suffolk, Cambs and Lincs. When we consider the same group of offenders may target more than one area in one day, causing multiple calls at different locations and also multiple witnesses for the same incident, the actual figure is considerably lower. This compares to 315 calls the previous season with 14 of those being 'over the border'.

We seized a total of 37 dogs this season compared to 24 last season. This alongside 36 individuals being charged with various offences of which 31 have been charged either with Trespass in Pursuit of Game or Hunting a Wild Mammal with a Dog.

All of this would not have been possible without the support of landowners and witnesses working with us. I wish to place on record my thanks for their continued support especially in the current climate with long court delays.

I also wish to thank colleagues right across the county on the frontline, OP Moonshot teams, local beat teams and Special Constabulary for all their help, alongside our control room colleagues who are all essential in so many successful prosecutions.

Just a reminder as well as there has been some talk on social media again, we have successfully rehomed all the dogs we have secured confiscation orders on so far and see absolutely no problem in continuing this positive news for the dogs who sadly become involved in this awful crime through no fault of their own.

Wildlife Crimes

It's been a busy couple of weeks in regards to reported wildlife crimes, we sadly reported last week that a Red Kite found in woodland in Cockley Cley appears to have been shot and is believed to be the cause of death. All birds of prey are heavily protected and we will continue to work with the RSPB, RSPCA and other organisations to tackle bird of prey persecution. Big thankyou to RSPCA for their continued support in x-raying the birds we bring in for us.

I have also been requested to visit a Badger Sett after it was suspected that recent agricultural work may have disturbed the sett. Whilst the sett is close to land at this stage the badgers appear safe, we work closely with Norfolk Badger Trust who monitor many active setts.

Myself and a colleague have also been dealing with a bat roost destruction case whereby a person was interviewed for the offence however due to the time elapsed since the destruction occurred and us becoming aware of the destruction, a prosecution is now highly unlikely.

I would encourage anyone who has suspicion that an offence has occurred to get in contact with us in a timely fashion. This can greatly assist in not only gathering the evidence but also making sure prosecutions are taken appropriately.

Another common complaint at this moment in time is nesting birds being disturbed by hedge and tree maintenance. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act all wild birds nests are protected whether being 'sat on' or being built. The problem is it is only active nests which are protected, so old nests from last year can be removed as long as they are not being used again. This is often our biggest problem, proving the nest is active. This all said most of the incidents officers have attended have been work carried out by professionals who have all been aware of their legal obligation. At one incident, on a development site, an ecologist was on site offering ongoing advice to the workforce which is quite normal on building sites.

The police will never...



Contact you to ask for your PIN or bank details



Ask to withdraw cash to hand over to them for safe keeping



Ask you transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons



Send someone to your home to collect cash, PINs, or cards

Ground Nesting Birds

The new Countryside Code which has been relaunched this year is very similar to the previous one with some minor amendments. One of the points remains around keeping dogs under close control and within sight.

This becomes especially important over the coming months due to ground nesting birds on our beaches and fields. On the coast we have some vulnerable birds including Little Terns, Avocets and Ringed Plover all of whom nest within the stoney ridges on our beaches. They nest on the ground with eggs which look just like the pebbles they nest between. They are susceptible to natural predation but also to human and dog disturbance. You will see along our coastline there are several parts of beaches and dunes cordoned off. Please do not ignore these cordons and keep your dogs out of them, strangely these birds are not often disturbed by human noise but us getting close to them is the biggest risk. Most of our seabirds have been in decline for many years and most are in fact listed on Schedule 1 of Wildlife and Countryside Act so are afforded more protection.



Little Tern with eggs (photo courtesy of RSPB)

Not only do we have ground nesting birds on the coast they are inland too. One of which you will often see on a countryside walk. This is a Skylark and you may not see them but you will certainly hear them (probably why they are called Skylark!) also Lapwings can often be seen on farmland (you will often see farmers leave a small patch unseeded in a field for Lapwings). Disturbance is a big problem for our inland birds as much as it is for our coastal birds so please consider where you are walking. Stick to the paths and follow signs. They are generally placed there for your safety or protection of our wildlife.



Final Word

Thank you again for reading. Remember we have moved to a monthly update now so the next Newsletter will be published on or around the 1 of June. Also please remember if you haven't already, you need to sign up to the new Police Connect system to continue to receive the OP Randall Newsletter and other official police communications. More information on how to do this is explained on the first page of the Newsletter. Enjoy the next month—hopefully it is a bit warmer. Any concerns or questions please do get in touch at anytime. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter for regular updates. Chris



@RuralCrimeNfk

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Ask you transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons



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Action Fraud

Witness Appeals

Appeal following serious collision in Gimingham

Police are appealing for witnesses to a serious collision in Gimingham on Monday 26 April 2021.

A silver Nissan Micra and a black Audi Q7 were involved in a collision on Trunch Road, at the junction with Gimingham Road, at approximately 2.45pm.

The female driver of the Nissan was taken to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital with serious injuries where she remains in a critical condition.

The driver and a passenger in the Audi received minor injuries.

Anyone who may have witnessed the collision, the manner of driving of either vehicle prior to the incident, or anyone with dashcam footage, should contact PC Jon Turner-Evans in the Roads and Armed Policing Team on 101 or email jonathan.turner-evans@norfolk.police.uk

Primary school gardens damaged

Police are appealing for information after a wildlife garden at a Great Yarmouth school was damaged during the Easter school holidays.

The incident happened at Southtown Primary School between Friday 26 March and Monday 12 April 2021.

Wooden pallets, a wheel barrow and fishing nets were removed from a shed and thrown into a pond in the wildlife gardens. A plastic picnic table was also smashed and a wooden bench set alight.

Anyone who may have seen any suspicious behaviour in the area between the dates stated, or anyone with information, should contact Op Solve on 101 and quote reference number 36/23658/21.

Appeal following criminal damage in Heacham

Police are appealing for information following incidents of criminal damage in Heacham last week.

Three cars parked in Neville Road were damaged overnight between Thursday 8 April and Friday 9 April 2021. Outside seating and advertisement boards were also damaged.

Police investigating the incidents do believe they are linked and enquiries are ongoing.

Officers are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the incidents or any suspicious activity in the area during the times stated to come forward.

Anyone with information should contact PC Amelia Moreland at Hunstanton Police Station on 101.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111



THE COASTAL CODE

ENJOY

YOUR VISIT AND STAY SAFE

Prepare any relevant maps, guidebooks and other information to take with you

Take account of weather conditions and tide times

Check for up-to-date advice and restrictions, e.g. limits on access in the breeding season

Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return

RESPECT

PEOPLE AND PLACE

Read local updates/information and act on any advice given

Use public transport, walk or cycle

If using the car, please drive and park responsibly

Keep to paths/routes and leave gates as you find them

Use public waste bins or take litter home

Shop locally and use local services

PROTECT

THE AREA AND ITS WILDLIFE

Take care not to disturb wildlife

Keep away from cordoned areas

Ensure you don't harm, destroy or remove any wildlife/plants/rocks

Only light fires and/or BBQs in designated places



www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk www.wnmp.co.uk



Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111

The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

www.gov.uk/countryside-code

