



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime

Issue 14 | 1st of August 2021

[@RuralCrimeNfk](https://twitter.com/RuralCrimeNfk) 

Here we are again! Another month passes by and we move well into the second half of the year. Summer is finally upon us with some soaring temperatures over the last few weeks. This has ripened the crops in the fields at last, generally speaking a couple weeks later than usual.

This past month has seen a positive and funny spin on the realities of farming and the reliance on the weather courtesy of the TV programme, Clarkson's Farm. Clearly some of the programme is set up to entertain the audience, it's also important that programmes like this exist to connect people to the realities of our rural communities. The programme highlights the issues around the weather and just why farmers are always talking about it! It also highlights the issues around rural social isolation, the amount of paperwork involved in running a farm, the return on time and money and

This month has seen us continue our Op Seabird patrols around vulnerable wildlife sites on our coastline. We are also now in the planning phase to tackle hare coursing. Only this week, myself and PC Lovelock attended a national conference on this matter - more on that later.

We have included a few new features in the newsletter this month to try to make it yours and update you on all things, and not just criminality. While that remains at the core of our duties as a Rural Crime Team, we are lucky to be involved in so much of the community, alongside learning from other forces and organisations, and I am keen to pass that on to anyone who is interested.

We have also adjusted the layout again this month. This should make it easier for people to convert the email into a PDF for parish council boards, round robin newsletters, etc.

also the incredibly hard work of those involved in farming.



As always, if you feel there is something you would like us to include or change, please get in contact.



YANA

Rural mental health support

Helpline: 0300 323 0400

helpline@yanahelp.org

OP Randall WhatsApp Group



The OP Randall team currently run a WhatsApp Group with the idea of sharing quick and instant messages to businesses, farmers and landowners, parish council reps and other key stakeholders.

We want to expand the group slightly to be able to get messages out to the community quickly, so we're looking for those who can then share the messages further. It's important the group isn't used to report crime - this still needs to be done via the correct channels (999, 101 or Norfolk Police website) - as the group is not managed by police 24/7.

New users have to sign an agreement and the group is carefully managed to make sure information is handled in the correct way. As a team, we recognise the benefits of WhatsApp and are keen to expand its use and believe it can be used to complement our other key channels: Twitter and this very newsletter.

If you believe the WhatsApp group would be useful to yourself or your organisation, please get in contact with me to discuss further here: Christopher.Shelley@norfolk.police.uk

Dont Forget To Follow Us On Twitter!

Don't forget to join us on Twitter! Our page is designed to let you know what we are up to as a team as much as possible as well as share info about crime prevention and engagement events and anything else we think might be useful. Click the logo below to visit our page.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Reports of Criminal Damage

Each season brings its own challenges with regards to the types of crimes we see and summer is no different. We have already seen reports of criminal damage most can be described as 'low level' but all involve a victim. Recent damage has included to churches, farm equipment, allotments, community centres, heritage sites, play parks and also around our waterways.

If you see anyone causing damage or anything that looks suspicious, please get in touch with us. If a crime is in progress, always call 999.

We have also seen the continued trend of power tools being stolen from sheds and insecure gardens, so please consider where you're leaving your tools: is it secure enough? Also, consider marking your equipment and making it obvious you have marked it as this makes it less attractive to thieves and easier to identify as stolen later down the line. Also keep a note of all serial numbers as these can be really important.



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.police.uk

Wildlife Matters

I'm pleased to report that we haven't seen any major wildlife type issues reported to police this month. As the crops start to be cut and we move towards September, we will likely see an increase in hare coursing/deer poaching. Our approach remains the same: please make sure you report all incidents via 999 as they happen please.

Myself and PC Alex Lovelock, the West Rural Beat Manager, attended the national Hare Coursing Conference hosted by Lincolnshire Constabulary. It was a great opportunity to share best practice from other forces and look at the very best ways of tackling this sort of criminality that has a huge impact on our rural communities. With 24 forces signed up to work together alongside the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) in tackling hare coursing, we are taking positive step forward and have never seen such collaboration. We were also joined by DEFRA and RSPCA at the conference, and we will attend another meeting with our seven

neighbouring forces in the middle of August to discuss a singular joined-up approach to continuing to crack down on this sort of activity and the harm it causes.

In a previous newsletter we mentioned the story of the seal which was rescued and taken to the RSPCA East Winch with a 7cm infected wound around its neck due to a plastic ring. It was a real reminder to take our rubbish home and not leave it to cause serious harm. There were real concerns at the time about whether the seal would make a recovery or not – I'm pleased to tell you she has since recovered and has been released back into the wild after so much expert care.

Photo by PA WIRE/JOE GIDDENS



I thought you may like to read this interesting result from the NWCU and Derbyshire Police that proves the vital role of a central organisation developing and assisting local forces with such specialisms. 'CITES' is quite a complex piece of national law but is vital to protect our endangered species around the world:

Russell Oxley (52yrs) a professional taxidermist from Ilkeston, Derbyshire appeared at Nottingham Crown Court on 4th May 2021 where he pleaded guilty to offences relating to the prohibited purchase and offering for sale of the skull and horns of six Gaur Bison, also known as an Indian Bison (Annex 'A' species). Oxley was fined £1,000 and £1,100 costs, all the skulls and horns were forfeited. Two further charges of purchasing and keeping for sale remained on file.

In August 2018, officers from the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit were alerted to various items being advertised on an internet site trading in taxidermy items, these included adverts for three Bison skull and horns.

The commercial use of Annex 'A' species and any parts or derivatives is strictly controlled and can only be purchased or sold if there is an exemption certificate in force, commonly known as an Article 10 Certificate. Antique taxidermy specimens that were worked prior to 1947 are

exempt from the requirement for a permit, although this would not apply to an un-worked skull. The seller of the Gaur Bison skull and horns would have required an Article 10 Certificate irrespective of its age. Officers were able to identify Oxley as the seller. On 3rd September 2018 officers from NWCU, Derbyshire Police and an APHA Wildlife Inspector executed a search warrant at Oxley's home address and seized various items, including six Gaur Bison skull and horns. When interviewed, Oxley admitted purchasing the six skulls and listing three of them for sale. He said that he had made a mistake and believed that they did not require A10's as they were not an Annex A listed species. Checks carried out with APHA confirmed that OXLEY had not applied for or had been issued with any A10's enabling him to commercially trade in these items. These checks and information gained during the investigation showed clearly that Oxley regularly traded in CITES listed species and had a good understanding of both the identification of species and their requirements under the relevant legislation.

Ian Guildford from the National Wildlife Crime Unit said: "Mr Oxley was obviously a trader in these items and had an excellent knowledge of both species identification and the legislation put in place to protect them. The reason the legislation and controls are in place is to protect and conserve some of the world's most endangered species and compliance is not an option but essential to ensure their survival, anybody trading in these species must understand these requirements and comply with them."

The NWCU would like to thank Derbyshire police and APHA for their assistance in the case.
<https://news.mailshot.norfolk.police.uk/6CE1328EDDFFDB7630442ED09B38554F212C7B09DC8EE5BACCB32E8ED7488AF6/80FC98A0EC25609352A296F473047620/LE35>



Phone Scams

We have seen reports of scams where fraudsters try to con people out of large sums of money, including using the tactic of claiming to be police officers. The message remains the same: police officers will never ever ask for you to send money via any means, including gift cards. We have also seen suspects claiming to be from the bank or another Government agency, and once again it's important to remember: no organisation of this sort will phone you randomly and ask you to send money or move money. If you have any doubts about who is calling or they make you feel suspicious, put the phone down and ring your bank or the agency they're claiming to be from to verify it is legitimate.

Further advice includes:

- Your bank or the police will NEVER ask for your PIN, bank card or bank account details over the phone – never give these details to anybody.
- Neither the police nor the banks will send a courier to collect money from you.
- Always request Photo ID and if unsure call the police.
- If you're asked to telephone a bank, then always do it on a different phone to the one you were contacted on.
- Fraudsters will keep the line open and have been known to play ringtones, hold music and a recorded message down the phone so the victim believes they are making a call to a legitimate number. Ensure you can hear a dialling tone before calling police or use a friend or neighbour's telephone instead.
- Do not rush into complying to the scammers demands / requests.
- If you have already given your bank details over the phone or handed your card details to a courier, call you bank straight away to cancel the card.

If anyone has received a similar type of telephone call or has any information about these incidents, please contact Norfolk Police on 101 quoting Operation Radium.

Alternatively, contact the independent charity Crimestoppers 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111.

If you believe a crime is in progress, always call 999.

Also, don't forget we have this small sticker which can be printed off and stuck on your phone or that of a loved one or neighbour to try and prevent them from being caught out.



OPERATION GALILEO

ILLEGAL HARE COURISING

Apple Snails - Back in the Aquarium Trade!

This topic comes up every now and again and recently I was asked about 'Apple Snails' sometimes known as Mystery Snails or by their scientific name *Pomacea*. Anyone that knows me will know I have a large collection of aquariums and I am a very keen hobbyist. Invasive species can cause issues to our native species and cause real harm, so it is appropriate they are legislated correctly. With any pet/animal keeping, we all have a responsibility to not only provide high welfare standards for our pets but also not to release any of these animals into our wildlife intentionally or unintentionally. Please do not flush fish, etc, down toilets as this is not only incredibly cruel but also these fish should not be in our waterways.

Going back to the Mystery Snails, they were previously considered an invasive species under EU law after an incident in Spain in 2012 when they got out of hand in the wild and destroyed native wildlife. Due to the lower temperatures seen in the UK and because they would struggle to survive in our native waters, DEFRA has decided to remove them from the list of regulated pests. Therefore, it is likely in the coming months that we will see them returning to our pet shops/online trade fully legally. These snails should not be released into our waterways and should be kept to aquariums. It is also worth noting that it remains illegal to sell them into Northern Ireland due to them being covered by EU laws in regard to invasive species.





What is happening in the countryside in August?

I thought it would be good idea to start a new feature within the newsletter to give everyone from all walks of life an idea what is happening in the countryside and on our farms.

So many farmers will, at this time of year, be working very long hours to bring in the ripening crops in our fields. They will by now have brought in most of the winter barley (weather dependant) which was planted last autumn. The highest quality will go for malting to produce beer and other spirits with the remainder going for animal feed. The straw will often be baled up and stored for livestock bedding. Barley straw is often preferred to wheat straw as it is softer.

Once the first barley has been brought in, the farmers will move on to the oil seed rape crop which was the fields of yellow we saw over the later spring months. The tiny black seeds from this crop are collected and the oil processed from these seeds will be used in a whole variety of things, the straw/stalks of this crop are generally chopped by a combine harvester and cultivated back into the field to provide nutrients for the next crop. You will occasionally see it baled up and this is used to burn in electricity stations. This will then naturally progress into the spring barley and wheat crops as the month progresses as the weather continues.

On livestock farms, the later summer months often provide a quieter time, with most sheep having been sheared and all animals generally out on pastures or turned out on to the marshes. By law, livestock must be checked daily wherever they are kept and no doubt there will always be the ones that will need extra care and attention... so it's never a day off for a livestock farmer. Many farms nowadays are not solely livestock and many will be working hard on the harvest too.

Looking to wildlife, the Swifts' brief summer visit starts to come to an end as the month of August begins. They are only in the UK for a very brief period to breed before they return to the warmer climate of Africa. Towards the end of the month, the Swallows and House Martins will be following. Some of our native species like the Woodpigeon, Blackbirds, Sparrows and some other commonly seen birds will be attempting to rear possibly their second or even third clutch of chicks. While food is generally plentiful at this time of year, providing a water bath/table for birds is a great thing to do in your garden and quietly watch as they play and bathe and drink the water. Also, if you're lucky enough to see a Robin this time of year, the red breast they are famed for should be much brighter now as they have moulted.

Elsewhere the wild berries in our hedgerows start to ripen which again provides another rich source of food for our wildlife, including badgers and other small mammals alongside birds.

The sunnier days also provide perfect conditions for our dragonflies to be around ponds and rivers. Also, with flowers still in full bloom the bees will be busy collecting the pollen to turn into the honey, such an amazing tiny creature. Whilst it's never too late to place a flower in your garden this year what about planning for next year? Could you turn a small part of your garden over into a wild flower mix which is bee-friendly? Bee populations remain under serious threat and there have been many campaigns recently encouraging us to all do our small bit...now is the time to start thinking what you can do next year. It's never too late to get involved in this national conservation project and make a real difference, no matter how small. For more information visit

<https://news.mailshot.norfolk.police.uk/9DC0843C1B5BF2EE8183B281E4C99E4B25960AF1A036E4D86242794FF92DB50A/80FC98A0EC25609352A296F473047620/LE35>



Along Our Coastline

As expected, the coast has been particularly busy over the past month and will continue with the school summer holidays now upon us. The message remains the same: enjoy, protect and respect - we are so lucky to have such an amazing coastline on our doorstep here in Norfolk and we all have a duty to do our bit to protect it.

Thankfully, reports from the wildlife trusts and RSPB have been largely positive this month with many reporting visitors abiding by the signs of keeping out of certain areas and dogs being kept on leads. These are vital and simple steps and we can all do our bit to protect our ground nesting birds and vulnerable sand dunes (which are not only full of wildlife but also act as natural sea defences). There have been no repeats of the large-scale disturbance we saw

earlier in the year around quad bikes which is brilliant and at this stage the disturbance being reported is simply large numbers visiting areas and pushing the wildlife out or overstepping cordoned off areas. So, please stick to paths, do not walk in cordoned off areas, keep dogs on a lead, please take your litter home with you and enjoy yourselves! Officers will continue to patrol the coast both as a local priority but also with regards to wildlife disturbance under the OP Seabird banner.

Whilst not necessarily affecting wildlife itself, please also be mindful of where you park when visiting the coast: make sure you park in designated areas and roads are kept clear for everyone to get through, including buses and emergency services. North Norfolk District Council is opening some new parking facilities this summer along our coast to provide extra parking facilities. For more details have a look here:

<https://news.mailshot.norfolk.police.uk/5F1F9CDDEFED69236D12B6710D6A1259FE37C1E5FED81C333B4C9D9899238395/80FC98A0EC25609352A296F473047620/LE35>



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

 **Action Fraud**
Report a fraud or scam
www.actionfraud.police.uk



Final Word

Thank you for taking the time to read, as always please let me know if anything could be improved upon or changed? I hope you get an opportunity to enjoy the warmer weather, stay safe and get in touch if you wish to raise any issues in the meantime.

Chris

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



Recent Press Releases

Norfolk's PCC launches his Police and Crime Plan consultation

Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has today launched his Police and Crime Plan consultation asking people across the county to tell him what matters most to them about crime and policing in their area.

Giles Orpen-Smellie was elected as Norfolk's PCC in May, and one of his primary responsibilities is to publish a Police and Crime Plan setting out what the priorities must be for Norfolk Constabulary throughout the course of his term.

During his first few weeks in the role Giles has been meeting with senior police officers and staff, partners and stakeholders to find out more about the work taking place behind the scenes to ensure Norfolk remains a safe place in which to live and work.

Giles has also been meeting with officers around Norfolk to hear about the valuable work they are doing to support their local communities, as well as hear from residents about any policing and crime concerns in their area.

The PCC is legally required to produce and publish their Police and Crime Plan within their first year of office – and today Giles is urging people to take part in his consultation to ensure their voice is heard.

“As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I am responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account for operational policing,” said Giles Orpen-Smellie.

“One of the ways I achieve this is by developing a Police and Crime Plan that takes account of the local policing priorities that matter to you.

“When you take part in my survey I will be able to use your responses, along with information from the Chief Constable and other partner organisations, to inform the development of my Police and Crime Plan.

“This plan will set out the policing objectives for the county for the next three years and will demonstrate how I, as your PCC, will work with other key stakeholders and partners to help keep Norfolk safe.”

Thinking about policing priorities within their local area, Giles is asking people to tell him to what extent they agree or disagree with his six proposed priorities, which are:

- Increase police capability to deliver visible and effective policing
- Tackle high harm crime, particularly domestic abuse, rape, serious sexual offences and drugs (dealing and trafficking)
- Disrupt serious and organised crime causing harm to communities
- Put victims of crime first through the implementation of the new Victims' Code*
- Make Norfolk's roads safer for all who use them
- Work in partnership to prevent and reduce crime

The consultation will run from Monday 26 July until Friday 20 August 2021.

Giles is also inviting those taking part in his four-week consultation to advise if there is anything else they feel he should include in his plan.

“This is your chance to have your say and to make your voice heard about what matters most to you,” added Giles.

“I’m keen to hear from as many people across Norfolk as possible, so please do take the opportunity to share what you believe should be the priorities for our county and for our police service.”

The new Police and Crime Plan for Norfolk will be implemented in April 2022. Until this time, whilst work is ongoing, the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20, and associated priorities, set by former PCC Lorne Green will remain in place.

You can take part in the consultation by visiting the OPCCN website

*The Victims’ Code for England and Wales sets out victims’ rights and the minimum standard of service that organisations like the police must provide to them.

Jubilee House, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0WW

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