



March 2020

# Warwickshire Rural Crime Team Newsletter



POLICE NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER 101  
Only call 999 in an emergency, when a crime is in progress or life is in danger.



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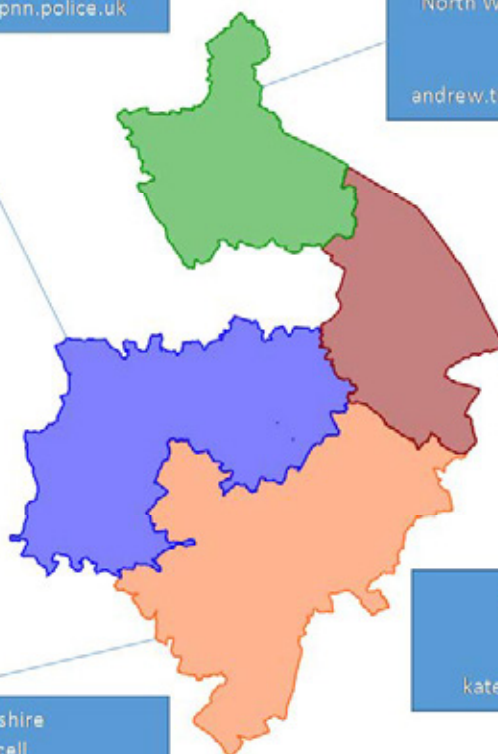


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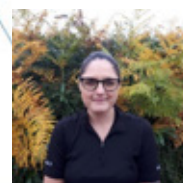
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# **OPERATION HILLMAN**

## **ILLEGAL SHEEP SLAUGHTER AND THEFT**

### **Warrant executed, items seized and male reported for offence in new sheep slaughter & theft investigation**

Over the last twelve months Warwickshire Police have been working in partnership with neighbouring Forces to investigate a series of sheep butchery and theft offences across the Midlands. There were a total of 22 incidents recorded in 2019 by Warwickshire Police alone under the Operation name Hillman.

We formed a working partnership with surrounding Forces to share information and three males were arrested and remanded in prison by Northamptonshire Police on suspicion of being involved in offences during 2019. They are still in prison awaiting trial, which is currently set for mid-March.

There was a dramatic decrease in this type of offence across the Midlands since these arrests but on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020 we received a report of a theft of two sheep from a field near to Willoughby, Rugby. On attending this report it became apparent that the sheep were likely to have been killed at the scene before being stolen.



As part of our investigation Rural Crime Officer Carol Cotterill worked with Northamptonshire Police and a potential suspect was identified. PC Kate Taylor prepared an application to be heard at Leamington Spa Magistrates' court with a view to obtaining an urgent warrant to search a property in Daventry

The application was successful and with the help of two Patrol Officers and local Daventry Police we executed the warrant. During a search of the target address a number of items relevant to the offence (such as that pictured) were seized and a suspect was identified.

**A 32 year old man from Daventry has been interviewed and reported for a theft offence**

### **Future Operation Hillman Work**

As a follow-up to this work PC's Kate Taylor and Andy Timmins visited restaurants in Rugby and Atherstone alongside Environmental Health Officer Henry Biddington. Kate and Andy have been planning a number of tactical options with a view to reducing the offences we saw last year. Restaurants were visited where lamb traceability was checked and education was given with regards to the consequences of handling stolen meat. It was made clear to the retailers that illegally slaughtered lamb is a big issue and if traders / retailers purchase the meat they would face investigation by a number of agencies as well as the Police.

It was reassuring to see that the retailers we visited had their books in order and were receptive to the advice we gave. The more word spreads around the industry the more difficult it will be to sell illegal lamb. Working in a multi-agency capacity and creating good working relationships is a priority for the Rural Crime Team. We will continue to visit butchers, restaurants and takeaways to gather intelligence, educate and if required conduct enforcement.





### DEVELOPING INFORMATION TO EFFECT RURAL SEARCH, SEIZURE AND ARRESTS

Working with [www.cantrack.com](http://www.cantrack.com) PC's Craig Purcell & Kate Taylor searched an area of **Shipston on Stour** and located a mini digger that had been stolen from the **Nuneaton** area. During the search they were able to identify a stolen hydraulic breaker, Ford Transit Dropside Lorry, diesel bowser and Swift Caravan. All were seized along with a Ford Transit suspected to be involved in the thefts.

As the search was conducted two males were being arrested in Cambridgeshire on suspicion of plant machinery theft and fraud. One was also wanted for failing to appear at court for other matters. This male was detained to court for the warrant and both are now subject of a multi-force investigation into rural theft.



### CROSSING BORDERS TO SEIZE VEHICLES USED IN RURAL CRIME

During patrols in February the pictured Subaru with no rear registration plate failed to stop when directed near **Temple Grafton**. The Driver was able to evade Officers but through research we found that a vehicle matching the description was active across West Mercia in theft offences. Rather than wait for the vehicle to stray back into Warwickshire we conducted pro-active work to track it down. This was successful when two days later PC's Craig Purcell and Andy King located the vehicle just over the Warwickshire border in **Cleeve Prior**.

It was seized and we liaised with West Mercia Police to provide information about other vehicles and items nearby. They subsequently sent Officers who seized over 30 solar panels suspected to be stolen and two other vehicles that were suspected to be used in rural crime as part of an ongoing investigation.



## Rural Policing Operations in North and South Warwickshire



During February we were involved in two Operations in the **North and South of Warwickshire**. The Operations were conducted with Highways England, Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency, Datatag ID Limited ([www.datatag.co.uk](http://www.datatag.co.uk)), the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service and our very own OPU Warwickshire.

Our Rural Crime Team focus was towards vehicles towing trailers, horseboxes, quads and farming machinery. We also made use of direct contacts with Partners who weren't on the ground with us such as The Equipment Register ([www.ter-europe.org](http://www.ter-europe.org)), Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the Central Registration & Identification Scheme for caravans ([www.cris.co.uk](http://www.cris.co.uk)) to help search vehicle, equipment and Driver records.

Amongst the many vehicles stopped, examined and searched we found a Mitsubishi L200 with trailer and mini digger being towed. The 61 year old Driver had numerous previous imprisonments for various offences including burglary, theft and driving while disqualified. Although his last driving disqualification period had ended he was still uninsured and had only ever held a provisional licence that was now expired.

The vehicle was seized and enquiries are ongoing to try and find the true identity of the resprayed mini digger. With 6 points already in his expired provisional licence the Driver is looking at a possible 7th driving disqualification.

## Liaising directly with the farming community brings us results



When a farmer reported the pictured vehicle acting suspiciously on his land he reported details along with the registration. Through research we were able to determine that the vehicle had been seen in similar suspicious circumstances **throughout Warwickshire** and West Mercia. We placed a digital marker to the registration and as a result the vehicle was stopped near Nuneaton by Local Officers within a few days. The Driver was known for rural offences and found to have no insurance, MOT or tax on the vehicle.

The vehicle was seized, driver reported for the offences and each person who had reported the vehicle was updated with our actions.





During a lunch break after Rural Patrols of **South Warwickshire** PC's Craig Purcell and Andy King saw the Vauxhall Corsa (pictured) with two young males on board and recognised the Driver as an associate of one of our rural Organised Crime Group targets.

The Driver was spoken to and found to have no insurance and a revoked driving licence due to previous insurance offences. The car was seized and the Driver reported for the offences. With 6 points already on his licence a disqualification from driving is likely.

The passenger was on bail by another Force area for robbery and burglary offences. He also took the time to tell us about a small room the Organised Crime Group have where they sit and drink. On the wall of the room is a picture of PC Purcell with a few darts in it. It's nice when your efforts are recognised by the public 😊

### **SELECTION OF OTHER GENERAL SEIZURES DURING RURAL WORK**



# RURAL ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



On 18<sup>th</sup> February, our Rural Crime Officer Carol Cotterill organised a farmers meeting in partnership with the NFU for farmers, horse owners and rural businesses at **Broadstreet Rugby Football Club, Binley Woods**.

The event was well attended and enabled people to get information and advice on a number of areas from the police, partner agencies and subjects such as crime prevention.

Updates were provided on Operation Hillman (sheep incidents) by RCO Carol Cotterill, Sgt

Bob Shaw and PC Kate Taylor gave an overview on the Rural Crime Team, Rugby Borough Council gave information on fly tipping, George Bostock from the NFU gave a short update re ongoing work with the police and Philip Seccombe, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire gave an overview on the force and rural crime.

Inspector Wiggin and Inspector Bunyard Spiers, Officers from the Local Policing Team at Rugby, NFU, Warwickshire County Council, Rugby Borough Council, Fire Service, Trading Standards, Warwickshire Horse Watch, Cyber & Business Crime Advisor and many other supporting organisations were all in attendance providing information and advice on stands for people to go and speak to them on a one to one basis.

The **Warwickshire Horse Watch** committee would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who came to the Horse Watch meeting in February at Police HQ, it was great to see so many people. A special thanks was given to Lisa Draper from The British Horse Society who gave a presentation on the work of the BHS Welfare Officers. RCO Carol Cotterill and PC Craig Purcell from the Rural Crime Team were



there with other members from our Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Teams who support the group and we look forward to the next meeting in April. To keep up to date visit [www.facebook.com/WarksHorseWatch](https://www.facebook.com/WarksHorseWatch).

If you have a meeting coming up and would like to invite the Rural Crime Officer for your area to attend, please contact us. Details for each of our officers and the areas that they cover are on the first page of this newsletter.



# RURAL CRIME TEAM TRAINING



During February three of our Rural Crime Team Officers and two Wildlife Crime Officers from Local Policing joined sixty colleagues from seven other forces in England to be trained as Heritage Crime Officers.

The training covered all aspects of heritage crime including illegal metal detecting, theft of lead and other metals, crimes against monuments, buildings, artefacts and sites of special historic interest, plus much more.

Sergeant Bob Shaw, PC Craig Purcell, Rural Crime Officer Carol Cotterill, PC Rachael Smith and PCSO Ed King are now trained Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Officers. Further training for more officers in the force is being arranged for later in the year with Historic England.



Three members of the Rural Crime Team, plus eight officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams around the county had a great week on the National Wildlife Crime Officers course with inputs on CITES, National Wildlife Crime Unit, RSPB, RSPCA, hunting and poaching amongst others. A lot to take in and much more to learn going forward. Warwickshire Police now have 24 trained wildlife officers around the county in our force.

The ongoing training of our officers is part of the commitment Warwickshire Police has in addressing rural, wildlife and heritage crime within our county.

## Ongoing Rural Crime Information

Our Rural Crime Team Newsletter only provides a snapshot of some of the work we are involved with. If you want to keep up to date with our arrests, property recovery / seizures, crime prevention efforts and be alerted to crime trends across Warwickshire then make use of the following options.



Currently with over 8000 followers our Facebook Page is the main output for our working week.

You do not need to be a Facebook user to view the page. Just visit [www.facebook.com/WarwickshireRuralCrimeTeam](http://www.facebook.com/WarwickshireRuralCrimeTeam)



**Warwickshire Rural Watch**  
*closing the gate on rural crime*

A group set up to help combat & prevent the theft of equines, tack, trailers & boxes.

Please try to pass this onto as many horsey friends, businesses & establishments as you can - you do not have to be in Warwickshire to join.

Visit:

[www.warwickshire-horsecwatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshire-horsecwatch.co.uk)

or

[www.facebook.com/WarksHorseWatch](http://www.facebook.com/WarksHorseWatch)

FREE scheme to help combat rural crime in Warwickshire.

Receive incident alerts and news for your area.

Crime prevention advice and information.

Visit:

[www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk)

or follow **Warwickshire Rural Watch** on Facebook and Twitter

For advice and information visit our websites at  
[www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk)  
[www.warwickshire.police.uk/ruralcrime](http://www.warwickshire.police.uk/ruralcrime)