



South Buckinghamshire Rural Crime Spring – Winter Feb 24 Newsletter

Dear Country Watch Member,

Thames Valley Police is promoting the use of Whats App to assist in the fight against rural crime. The Chiltern Community Group's Whats App Group is now up and running. If you would like to sign up please e-mail Nicole at clerk@pennparishcouncil.gov.uk. For the Land Watch Whats App group for South Bucks contact Tabish at Beaconsfield Parish Council; call 01494 675173 or e-mail Projectsupport@beaconsfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk. This February Neighbourhood officers will be out and about promoting Whats App and Thames Valley Alerts.

It is important to report all crimes. We need information to target resources and develop intelligence. Tell us if you think an offence has or is about to be committed. If it is happening now, ring 999. If you have, information that does not require an immediate response report it to Thames Valley Police [online](#) or by [calling 101](#). You can report or pass information about rural crime anonymously to the Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or [online](#).

Country Watch

Sign up to Thames Valley Alerts to receive crime and policing updates directly from your local Neighbourhood Team as well as more crime and policing issues. Sign up to the service online at: www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk or speak with one of your Neighbourhood Policing Team.



What have we been doing?

In October we took part in a joint operation with neighbouring forces, targeting the road network into Thames Valley from London. This resulted in: 68 people being arrested (7 in TVP), 66 incidents where drugs were found, 26 incidents where weapons were found and 51 vehicles were seized (8 in TVP).

In Winchbottom Lane, Little Marlow on 22/11/2023 two suspects were witnessed to be in possession of an air rifle on private land, where pheasants are reared, when challenged by the game keeper, they said that they were there for pheasants and made off. They were found nearby, arrested for daytime trespass in pursuit of game, and later cautioned. Two stolen cars were recovered. A cloned vehicle identified. Two people were arrested for drink driving, and one for criminal damage driving on fields. Officers also assisted in closing an illegal rave. A male was arrested for possession of drugs and three people dealt with for drug offences.

This January a joint forces operation resulted in: 121 people being arrested (12 in TVP), 71 incidents where drugs were found, 19 incidents where weapons were found and 92 vehicles were seized (13 in TVP) in total almost £50,000 of cash was seized from criminals.

This February, we worked more locally with officers from Hertfordshire, Aylesbury, Roads Policing and Rural Taskforce on, our Greenbelt Operation. This resulted in: the arrests of 9 people, 3 people being reported, 4 stolen vehicles recovered, 5 vehicles seized and £25,000 and drugs recovered.

Playing your part in helping us catch offenders

A huge problem for investigators is being able to identify stolen property. Following an investigation by our Rural Crime Taskforce and partners, a £17,000 digger stolen from Milton Keynes was recovered from Bulgaria. The hired Kubota excavator was stolen from an address in The Hide sometime between 14 Feb and 1 Mar 2023. Fortunately, the plant machinery had been fitted with a tracking chip and forensic markings so it could be traced to Bulgaria. Interpol collected it and arranged for its return.. Rural Crime Taskforce lead, Insp Hutchings, said: "The use of trackers and forensic markings made all the difference in recovering this stolen digger. "Partnership working was also crucial as we worked effectively with the NRCT, Interpol and HSS Hire Ltd, which rented out the machinery in the first place, to ensure the digger was not lost. "While we were unable to identify who stole the digger, I believe getting it back safely in one piece is a success as the cost of plant theft on companies cannot be underestimated, which is why it is one of the taskforce's top priorities." The theft has now been filed pending further information coming to light. Anyone with further information should call 101 or make a report on our website, quoting reference number 43230093494. Alternatively, provide information anonymously to independent charity Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111 or via its website.

In another investigation, two stolen GPS systems were returned to their owner after being listed on eBay.

This highlights the need for recording serial numbers and property marking, which includes Data Tag for larger items, Cremark, Smartwater or engraving your house

number and postcode, and the advantage in recording property on the National Property Register (www.immobilise.com).

Crime Reduction Advice: To defeat criminals we need to work together with the most important partner - you! Please ensure that your site has set security procedures i.e.:

- Site access – Is it secure? Are your gates locked?
- Challenge stranger protocol: Does your team challenge strangers?
- Could the police identify your farm in an emergency? Is there a visible name sign? Have you recorded What3Words location markers for your fields to assist call handlers?
- Serial numbers: Have you recorded the serial numbers of tools and plant? You can register, free at www.immobilise.com. Have postcodes been etched on tools? This is essential for police to identify stolen property, as it is likely to be moved around the country.
- Key security: Could an intruder easily access keys and steal your plant machinery?
- Quad bikes: These are highly wanted by criminals. Keep out of sight and store in a locked location. Could items be blocked in or double locked?
- Country Watch Signs: Available from the police if signed up to Countrywatch. Let people know that you do take your security seriously.

The above are basic, but effective, security procedures that should not cost you the earth and could save you a small packet.

Crime and Trends:

Nationally: The NFU reports that the cost of rural crime shot up 22% to an estimated £49.5m. Common themes: the cost of GPS systems being stolen doubled, quad bike thefts rose 34% and whilst Land Rover Defender thefts fell. Fuel theft doubled, livestock thefts rose by almost 9% and an estimated £1.8m worth of livestock were killed or injured by dogs.

[Rural Crime Report 2023 - Download Free Report | NFU Mutual](#)

Locally: A review of incidents show there has been 187 incidents for the first 6 months. This included 4 arsons, 19 business burglaries, 12 residential burglaries, 21 criminal damages, 8 dog incidents, 5 public order incidents and 31 theft incidents. In the business burglaries, power tools are mostly what criminals targeted. Also taken were; diggers, tractors, fuel, vehicles in storage, wood, feed, tractor sat navs, cabling and even an honesty box.

Common crimes include criminal damage, with fences and gates being targeted by hare coursers and drivers of off-road vehicles. There were a number of complaints of hunting and concerns for wildlife being affected by building or garden developments. There were eight rural dog attacks on livestock.

Reviewing figures from last year, we are also doing more work around hare coursing and working with farmers and landowners who have been targeted.

Loose horses have presented officers with a serious problem in South Buckinghamshire LPA for some time. There has been over 24 incidents since November resulting in police attendance on 15 occasions.

Horses look to escape from their environment for a number of reasons, but mainly due to lack of grazing or water, or because the fencing is inadequate or damaged. Some will be "Fly Grazing" where they have been dumped to graze illegally. Landowners have the option of serving a notice to remove the offending animals after 96 hours and dispose of them under the Control of Horses Act. This does not happen often because the landowner has to bear the costs, and certain horse owners may be intimidating and threaten the owners so they don't take action.

SBLPA has decided to try to solve this problem by identifying owners of stray animals and issuing them with community protection warning (CPW) which can lead to a community protection notice (CPN). If a CPN is breached, a £100 fine, can be issued or the owner ordered to carry out remedial work or taken to court where the prosecuting agency could ask for a remedial or forfeiture order to be issued. BLPA will also ask owners to register their details so that they can be contacted if their animals escape.

This action should encourage horse owners to take responsibility for their animals and their welfare.

The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023; came into force on 18th November 2023. The Act prohibits the sale and advertising of activities abroad which involve low standards of welfare for animals, such as those where animals are kept in captivity or confinement and/or are subjected to unnecessary suffering or low-animal welfare practices that would not be permitted in England or Northern Ireland under relevant domestic animal welfare legislation.

This will be my last Country Watch newsletter as I will be changing roles and heading to the more urban area of High Wycombe.

Stay safe and keep those eyes peeled.

Yours sincerely,

PS 3675 Darren Walsh, Buckinghamshire Neighbourhood Policing Team