

Rural Matters



Rural policing in Kent – a magazine for residents and businesses

Autumn 2019



In this issue:



**Kent
Police**



Fighting organised crime



Jailed for artefact theft



Illegal fishing action

Plus the latest news on rural and environmental policing in Kent

Welcome to Rural Matters

Welcome to Rural Matters. See inside for the latest on the Kent Police rural team. There are now more officers countywide dedicated to tackling and preventing crime in the countryside. We've the latest news on the Rural Task Force – officers there to protect and support Kent's rural communities.

Team Leader



Inspector
Dave Smith
07800 675376

Rural Sergeant



Sergeant
Darren Walshaw
07870 252185



North Division – 07528 989095

- PC Darren Reed
- PC Paul Williams
- PC Adrian Goodsall
- PC Nathan Southern

East Division – 07980 978202

- PC Dan Perry
- PC Tim Moody
- PC Harry Callaghan
- PC Michael Sutton

West Division – 07580 236308

- PC Marc Pennicott
- PC Tom Smith
- PC Nick Lingham
- PC Anna Verrall

Rural Crime Co-ordinator



Doug Robertson
07972 004578

More rural contact information, see back page.

Report non-urgent crime online



Go to www.kent.police.uk/report



Report a crime, incident or non-injury collision in minutes



Receive your confirmation email and reference number immediately

To remain anonymous contact Kent Crimestoppers online or call **0800 555 111**.

Your rural PCs are also on Twitter!

The rural team regularly Tweets updates on what they've been doing and any live incidents.

Follow [@kentpolicerural](https://twitter.com/kentpolicerural) for the latest news and information.



Latest news

Hare coursing action under national operation

Harvest season is when the Rural Task Force prepares for an increase in reports of hare coursing in rural communities countywide. The team run specific planned days of dedicated patrols to counter the issue – which is not only damaging to the countryside and crops, it is also frequently linked to other crimes including threats of violence towards landowners.

Since the start of 2019 there has been a national drive to co-ordinate work with all police forces affected by this ongoing rural problem. Kent Police has now adopted the national operation name **'Op Galileo.'** Anyone reporting suspected hare coursing activity please quote this operation name.

Rural Task Force Inspector Dave Smith said: **'Op Galileo'** is a national operation to deal with the seasonal issue of hare coursing which affects counties like Kent which have large rural areas. Police forces with similar landscapes are responding and allocating resources to reflect the level of reports of this activity. 'Legislation such as the Hunting Act 2004 and Game Act are used to deal with offences. In Kent working with communities to act on information about suspicious activity and secure sufficient evidence is key to success in bringing offenders to court.'

In Kent there have been prosecutions (see below right) and since last year



Hare coursing update:

- East Division Rural Task Force PCs Harry Callaghan and Michael Sutton were called to Ancient Highway, Deal, to a report of a man with two lurchers hare coursing in a field between Sandwich and Deal. Witnesses spotted dogs being set on a hare and captured video evidence which is being reviewed.
- East Division PC Tim Moody received a call about five hares dumped near the A20 at Charing. He found an untaxed and uninsured Honda parked in a nearby pub car park with a blood stained interior and evidence of dog hair.

officers have been using Criminal Behaviour Orders to act against poachers and hare coursers. Offenders face jail if they breach the terms of the order. Last autumn two men, fined over £1,000 between them for poaching, were also subject to CBOs applied for by the Rural Task Force. It means if they are seen trespassing on land with dogs anywhere in the county police don't have to prove they are hare coursing and can take immediate action.

Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'This illegal activity can be linked with organised criminality and

those involved damage property and livestock and can behave threateningly to farmers and landowners who challenge them. We continue to work closely with local communities to get suspicious vehicles and people identified and stopped. Local people will know if something isn't right and should report to us so we can take action. Please take note of any suspicious or unfamiliar vehicles at the side of the road, or in gateways, lamps shining across fields, lurcher breed dogs running free across fields and vehicles being driven across them.'

Farm Watch WhatsApp expanding

An online messaging system – Farm Watch WhatsApp – is going from strength to strength as numbers in the groups increase.

The scheme is not for reporting crime, but is a tool to share information directly with the Kent Police Rural Task Force. Users have reported the benefits during a trial in East Kent and it's now being introduced countywide.

If you want to learn more about joining, contact the rural team (see phone numbers opposite). Find out more about Farm Watch WhatsApp action on **page 4**.



Poaching court result

A call about a suspicious vehicle driving through a farm in Saint Nicholas-at-Wade last November alerted police to possible hare coursing.

The offender was seen by witnesses with two dogs running free over fields and when Rural Task Force PCs Darren Reed and Nathan Southern arrived they found a dead hare.

Their investigation led to a man appearing at Maidstone Magistrates earlier this year where he pleaded guilty to Hunting a Wild Mammal with Dogs under the Hunting Act 2004 and was fined £624, ordered to pay £85 costs and a £85 victim surcharge.



Search advisors honoured at Leeds Castle

Leeds Castle, which is celebrating its 900th anniversary year, was the setting for an awards ceremony recognising police officers and staff who support searches for vulnerable missing people.

The event on 22 July honoured the Police Search Advisors who volunteer outside their normal roles to assist partners such as Kent Search & Rescue (KSAR), South East 4x4, and Kent Fire Rescue Service (KFRS) with specialist advice. Head of Leeds Castle Security, Kelvin Wood, said: 'The work they do

is vital to a community, which the castle sits very much at the heart of. We are pleased to have been able to play a small part in saying thank you to these dedicated officers.'

In a recent incident Rural Task Force officer PC Dan Perry was flagged down by a member of the public about a high risk missing person. He said his mother-in-law, who has dementia, had been missing for an hour. An extensive search was carried out with a police helicopter and search and rescue volunteers and the missing woman was found in some woods.



Catapults seized from boys



Catapults were seized from two 11-year-old boys by officers in Canterbury.

The 11-year-olds were stopped in Godwin Road, after they were spotted with the sling-shots. An officer later spoke to their parents to let them know the boys were found with the catapults and warned them of the dangers of using them. Police Community Support Office Tom Chapman said: 'Unfortunately we have recently had an issue with people shooting and killing ducks with catapults in the Canterbury area and I felt it important to speak to these boys and their parents about the potential consequences of carrying such weapons.'

'Though they may seem like a harmless bit of fun, catapults can cause a huge amount of damage and unfortunately there have been cases where people have been hurt and animals killed.'

Since police intervened there have been no further reports of animals being targeted locally.

Farm Watch WhatsApp – sharing information to beat crime

Community involvement is the key to the success of the recently introduced online messaging system – Farm Watch WhatsApp.

Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'This scheme allows the fast time sharing of information between the team and the community. Its increasing success is only possible with community support and we are encouraged that a trial in the East of the county has seen the number of members growing daily.'

Latest news from Farm Watch WhatsApp:

- A local farm manager with a tractor and chainsaw helped recover a white Bedford dumper truck, valued at over £2,000, after it was found hidden in woods off a Chilham byway. Thanks to Farm Watch WhatsApp the team were able to contact the owner and confirm it was stolen overnight from a Canterbury building site a few days before.
- Following information received from Farm Watch WhatsApp, a vehicle reported acting suspiciously around farms in Kent was flagged up to police, located and seized in Slough. It was found with a tank full of red diesel with a further one at the back.
- As a result of information to Farm Watch WhatsApp officers attended a farm in Swingfield to meet a farmer where overnight four sheep had been killed and another three injured. A witness saw the dog run off from the scene and further enquiries will be carried out, with DNA swabs taken from the dead animals. (Livestock attacks increase, see page 8)
- A suspicious white van was seen after a break-in at Westwell where a garage door was ripped open and several unique bikes stolen. Photos of the van and bikes were quickly circulated via Farm Watch WhatsApp.

Farm Watch WhatsApp is a tool to share information directly with the team and not to be used to report crime. Any crimes should be reported in the usual way; 999 if a crime is in progress or 101 and online if non-urgent and don't forget the Country Eye App.



Information on Farm Watch WhatsApp helped recover this stolen dumper truck

Jail for man who handled stolen ancient artefacts

Irreplaceable archaeological artefacts including Roman hairpins and Anglo-Saxon combs were among items stolen from the Canterbury Archaeological Trust last year.

Rural Task Force officers working with the Canterbury Community Policing Team to investigate the theft were able to recover some of the 2,000 stolen items.

And on 26 July, Raymond Roberts, 37, was jailed for five months at Canterbury Crown Court after admitting handling stolen goods and theft of metal cladding.

Officers had stopped and arrested him after he was spotted nearby when they were called to an alarm activation at a local business in Canterbury on 18 March.

An investigation revealed he had a collection of artefacts – 31 items, including Roman bone hairpins and fragments of Anglo-Saxon combs, as well as educational replica items confirmed stolen from the Canterbury Archaeological Trust in January 2018.

Investigating officer, PC



Kieran Doble, said: 'These important items provide us with a rare insight into the past and were the result of many, many careful hours' work.'

'Raymond Roberts was found with some of the stolen items, but without the context of the correct archive and cataloguing, I understand it will be hard for the trust to

determine what each recovered item is and which age it originates from.'

'Some of the stolen items remain outstanding, including a number of coins, and we ask that anyone who believes they might have information about their whereabouts, contact Kent Police on 01843 222289 quoting 46/ZY/4200/18.'

News in brief

Rural team at NFU meeting

Rural Task Force PCs Nathan Southern and Adrian Goodsall attended a National Farmers Union meeting in Meopham. They gave a presentation about the team's expansion and its role working with partner agencies to protect rural communities. Crime prevention advice included protecting plant, machinery and vehicles and the importance of marking and fitting trackers to property and having it registered.

Officers step in to help poorly jogger

When Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw and PCs Paul Williams and Nick Lingham were at Tankerton sea front to meet with Historic England's Mark Harrison to receive new sets of binoculars and night vision cameras they were made aware of a jogger who'd become unwell on the sea front walkway. The officers gave First Aid until paramedics arrived and stayed with them to help carry the woman up the steep sea front bank.

'LEAF' Open Farm Sunday

The Rural Task Force took part in the 'LEAF' Open Farm Sunday at Hartley Bottom.

The large scale events weekend involves 11 farms across the county opening their doors to the public to see how they operate, explore machinery and learn about animals alongside stall holders from local business and producers.





Rural Task Force – taking action against organised crime in the countryside



'The good news is security technology is developing fast and we're already clearly seeing that thieves avoid tractors fitted with good security kit and sheep that have been marked with microdots'

NFU Mutual

The way rural crime can be defined is changing – as incidents of farm machinery and vehicle theft, historic artefact looting and produce or livestock offences are increasingly linked to organised crime.

Insurance Company NFU Mutual's recently published 2019 Rural Crime Survey revealed the cost to farmers and landowners was on the rise – up 13 per cent from 2017.

Much of this is driven by farm vehicle, high value tractor, machinery and tool thefts – with gangs targeting rural areas because of their isolated locations.

Produce and livestock can also be targeted. In one recently reported case a

farmer in Northamptonshire found sheep butchered in a field to steal prime cuts of meat to sell on. It was one of five incidents reported in a fortnight in the area.

In Kent rural officers have dealt with targeted thefts of fish stocks, soft fruit, historic assets such as valuable statues or looted maritime artefacts, high value farm machinery, vehicles and quad bikes and in one case unlawful commercial shellfish harvesting of native stocks along the East Coast.

Kent Police's Rural Task Force is committed to preventing and detecting crime in the county's rural areas and has successfully brought a number of these offenders to court.

Officers also regularly engage and work with communities, farmers and landowners to deter and target crime.

The team was doubled in size last November and there are now 12 dedicated officers covering North, East and West Divisions. They work closely with partners such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Coastguard, RSPCA and RSPB and local councils.

They also support other Kent Police and cross border colleagues across local policing and serious crime.

Officers have recovered 65 items of stolen plant and machinery with a combined value of over £370,000 since January.

Rural areas are targeted by criminals taking advantage of their isolated location

Rural Task Force Inspector Dave Smith, from Kent Police Tactical Operations said: 'The rural landscape around crime is changing. More often than not what appears a solitary incident can have far reaching links to other criminality. Developing technology and greater awareness of prevention can help boost security.'

'Information sharing is key. We work closely with partners and organise operations based on seasonal patterns of offending. We use an intelligence-led approach to catching offenders and we do this through building trust and confidence in local communities and working with partners such as the NFU to encourage reporting of suspicious activity and using specialist technology and social media to maximise community intelligence and reduce crime.'

George Ashby, an NFU Mutual Senior Agent in Kent, said: 'Our advice to people living and working in the countryside is to regularly evaluate their current security measures – making improvements where necessary, remaining vigilant and reporting any suspicious activity to police and local Farm Watch schemes.'

'The good news is security technology is developing fast and we're already clearly seeing that thieves avoid tractors fitted with good security kit and sheep that



have been marked with microdots. 'Farmers are combining modern technology with physical fortifications to keep one step ahead. Together with digging ditches and putting up earth banks to prevent criminals getting on to farm land, we're seeing electronic devices like infra-red beams which send alerts to mobile phones and geo-fencing, which triggers an alarm if tractors go beyond farm boundaries.'

'These technologies are proving to be effective weapons in the fight against rural crime. This is increasingly important because determined thieves come armed with battery-powered angle grinders to cut through chains and padlocks in seconds to access farm buildings and tool sheds.'

'Innovative use of social media to report criminal activity is also working well and reducing isolation. There's no doubt when police, farmers and other rural organisations tackle rural crime in an organised way they get results.'



2019 Rural Crime Report

- Items most commonly targeted by thieves across the South East over the last 12 months were tools, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), quads, tractors and machinery.
- Marking and tracking devices are the most effective security measures, once basic measures of keeping vehicles – such as quad bikes – out of sight in a building with the machine secured have been addressed.
- Thieves are stealing expensive tractors for export to developed counties and small, older tractors to export to third world countries.
- The cost of livestock theft reported to NFU Mutual increased by 3.7 per cent from £2.4m in 2017 to £2.5m in 2018. Technology – including DNA testing, fleece marking with micro-dots, and electronic chips – offer robust evidence to bring thieves to justice.
- Thefts of large numbers of lambs is raising concern stock is being stolen for unregulated processing to illegally enter the food chain.

Rural Task Force results on one day.....

- Two men reported trying to steal a manhole cover in Rye, East Sussex, were linked to a stolen vehicle and theft of fuel, quad bikes and generators in Kent. They were arrested by Rural Task Force officers despite one trying to escape over a fence.
- Two men were arrested for fraud after local reports of a vulnerable Sevenoaks man paying out £250k for work costing less than £50k. A van was also seized.
- Rural Task Force officers were involved in a pursuit after a vehicle failed to stop. The vehicle was halted on farm land and three people taken into custody, including one known to have links with organised crime.



'The rural landscape around crime is changing. More often than not what appears a solitary incident can have far reaching links to other criminality'

Rural Inspector Dave Smith, from Kent Police Tactical Operations



Autumn walks – keep dogs under control to protect livestock from harm

Attacks on livestock by dogs have continued across the county – with a number of animals killed or having to be put down because of their injuries.

In a recent incident on 1 September seven sheep were killed on land at Thurnham. Two dogs, believed to have accessed the land from a property nearby, were seized by Rural Task Force officers. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'This was a particularly nasty incident, leading to some distressing injuries and ultimately the deaths of a large number of animals.'

This autumn the Rural Task Force and the NFU are urging both dog walkers and dog owners to keep pets on leads where appropriate and make sure they are secure in properties near fields where livestock is kept. Sergeant Walshaw said: 'Sadly the number of attacks by dogs on sheep, and also in one case Alpacas, has continued across the county in recent months. As well as the suffering caused, attacks can lead to huge financial losses for farmers and when a dog has a taste for killing and maiming sheep it often returns. Sheep and lambs can suffer terribly. Pregnant ewes can lose their lambs when chased by dogs of any



Valuable Alpacas have been attacked by dogs

size. It is harrowing to see the often devastating injuries and suffering caused.

'This is why we urge owners to keep pets under control around any livestock. Farmers are within their rights to shoot dogs if deemed to be worrying livestock. As a person in charge of a dog you could be committing an offence if it's proved to be worrying livestock on agricultural land and you could be liable for damages and compensation.' NFU Adviser Georgia Craig said: 'Farmers spend countless hours tending their livestock and helping to care for our grazed countryside. Please avoid potential problems and keep dogs under close control and on a lead around cattle and sheep. Don't be tempted to let your pet run freely in open fields as there may



Sheep suffer terrible injuries in dog attacks and are often killed or have to be put down

be sheep around the corner – even the best behaved dogs have a chase instinct.'

She added: 'The law allows farmers to shoot dogs threatening livestock. Don't put your pet in danger, keep it under control at all times. Owners should check properties are dog proof, to prevent dogs roaming freely.'

Recent livestock attacks:

- Rural Task Force officers attended a location in Cranbrook in relation to a dog attack on two alpacas. The owner of the dogs was identified and has agreed to resolve the matter with the Alpaca owner financially.
- Officers attended a farm in Shottenden to speak with the owner following the killing of one of his sheep by a dog, held at the location by the farmer. Photographs were taken, along with DNA swabs from the dog and dead sheep.
- The team were called to a farm in Headcorn following a sheep attack. The farmer reported that three years previously sheep were killed by the same dog. DNA analysis identified the dog and the owner accepted responsibility, paying the sheep owner in full for the losses.
- A Community Resolution was agreed in relation to sheep killed in Hawkinge and subsequently identified via DNA links to the suspect dog. The dog's owner has paid the victim £1,690 compensation and signed an undertaking the dog will kept on a lead in public.
- A Husky escaped from its home address across fields. One sheep was attacked and had to be put to sleep because of its injuries. A Community Resolution was agreed between the victim and offender, with the dog owner paying £250 for damages and costs.

Follow the NFU's advice to visit the countryside safely with your dog:

- Keep your dog on a lead near sheep and cattle.
- Bag and bin dog waste.
- Follow paths and observe signs.
- Only release your dog if chased by cattle.
- Ensure your dog doesn't wander off paths, into crops (which are being grown for food) or where it may disturb wildlife.

Ordnance Survey maps show public footpaths, byways and wider access. The website for Ordnance Survey, Britain's mapping agency www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk has OS map apps for smart phones and GPS systems for walkers, cyclists and other countryside users. Follow The Countryside Code: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code



Water mapping project to tackle rural and wild fires

Fire teams and farmers are working together to make sure rural fires can be tackled swiftly.

It follows a number of fires during dry weather last year. A local farmer notified Kent Fire and Rescue Service about an adaptor fitting which enables crews to draw water from a farm's bulk water to fight a field fire quickly.

They discovered the vast majority of bulk water supplies on farms across Kent and Medway had the same coupling. Now KFRS has fitted its fire engines with these and is working with farmers to map emergency water supplies on their land.

Kent NFU chairman Toby Williams, said: 'This fantastic idea could save valuable time in the initial fire-fighting phase by ensuring sufficient water is immediately available before fires spread out of control.' Kent NFU is asking farmers to support the project by mapping their on-farm water supplies through the Country Eye app, www.countryeye.co.uk

Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'We have investigated reports of



The new coupling fits directly to most bulk water supplies



Officers were contacted by a farmer in the Barham area in July after Kent Fire and Rescue Service was called to a hay stack fire. The blaze was revealed as arson, with burned newspaper found stuffed between the bales.

fires caused by arson in rural areas in the past, which can have a serious impact on land and property. We had a couple of barn fires last year along with field fires and a silage stack this year. It is

important that landowners remain vigilant reporting any suspicious activity to the police. Wherever possible security measures such as CCTV and alarms should be considered.'

Rural Task Force team at Ryarsh Primary School

Rural Task Force officers met the community and explained their role at a packed open event at Ryarsh Primary School. It is the second time the team have attended the event.



News in brief

Lambs stolen

Two lambs were reported stolen overnight from a field in Chartham Hatch. Fencing was damaged where the Texel Cross lambs were taken in Denstead Lane. There were no signs suggesting an animal attack. Anyone with information call Kent Police and quote reference 46/162040/19 or call Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.

Rural Police Forum

Rural Crime Co-ordinator Doug Robertson gave a presentation on 11 July at a Rural Police Forum at Tenterden Town Hall to parish councillors from the 19 neighbouring parishes. Three new members were registered.

Trackers help trace stolen items

Rural Task Force officers were able to trace £5,000 of tools stolen from a nursery because some had trackers fitted. They were traced to a vehicle in Chatham and all the stolen items recovered. In another incident a member of the public flagged down police to report his car stolen. As it had a tracker fitted it was traced and recovered in the same area.

UXB alert on extension site

East Rural Task Force officers evacuated neighbouring properties after being called about a UXB found by workmen building an extension to a property in Lymbridge Green, Stowting. The officers put up road closures to protect the public. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) staff from Shornecliffe Barracks and confirmed the item was a WW2 device, likely to be a smoke grenade, which was safely disposed of.



Wildlife news in brief

Bat habitat fears

Concerns for protected bats at a development site in the Maidstone area are being investigated. Flying bats were reported around the development site of an old industrial building where external openings and open access spaces had been covered with fixed netting. Officers are liaising with the Bat Conservation Trust.

Nesting bird complaint

North Division PC Nathan Southern responded to a report that trees where birds were nesting in Faversham have been cut down. Inquiries are continuing into the incident. Felling was stopped when it was revealed a council order was in place for no tree cutting until the end of August 2019.

Taxidermy bat sale

East Division PC Michael Sutton visited an auction company in relation to an online crime report of the sale of a taxidermy Kuhl's Pipistrelle bat, which is an offence to offer for sale under the Habitat and Species Regulations 2017. Following advice from the Bat Conservation Trust the owner, who said he believed the bat wasn't protected, was given words of advice and the buyer advised the item can't be re-sold.

Pheasant pen damage

Rural Task Force officers are investigating around £20,000 of damage to pheasant pens in Frittenden, believed to have been committed by animal rights activists. The victim reported information on Facebook by a group claiming responsibility for the damage.

Buzzards suspected of being shot or poisoned

Flying high above the countryside once rarely seen buzzards are a delight for bird watchers who spot their graceful flight and hear their distinctive cry.

But Rural Task Force officers are continuing to receive reports of dead birds, suspected of being shot or poisoned, despite their protected raptor status.

Officers responded to a call from the Royal Mail in Ashford who reported finding a dead buzzard in their car park. The bird was seized for examination to identify the likely cause of death.

North Division Rural Task Force PC Paul Williams was also called to a location in Upchurch after a man recovered a dead buzzard from woods. He reported finding another five found dead during 2018 and suspected they are being targeted. The RSPCA will examine the carcass to establish how the bird died.

Earlier this year Rural Task Force Officers had collected two dead buzzards from different parts of the county and recorded their location in case further birds are reported dead. Local landowners were advised that the birds are protected. All the Rural Task Force team are fully trained Wildlife Crime Officers. Raptor persecution is one of the National Wildlife



priorities and all incidents are investigated. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'Buzzards are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is not only sad that anyone would target these birds of prey, which are recovering in numbers after once being hunted extensively, but if they are being targeted and illegally killed this is breaking the law as they are protected.'

Buzzards were rarely seen in the South East up until the 1990s. They feed on small mammals such as mice and voles and sometimes carrion.

Fishing offences focus of joint operation

A joint operation was carried out by the Kent Police Rural Task Force, Environment Agency and Angling Trust with over 150 anglers checked to ensure they were fishing legally.

Officers visited a number of fisheries on 9 June, including sites in Paddock Wood and Marden on the lookout for poachers and people fishing without a licence.

Kent Police is part of national campaign Operation Traverse – a partnership effort between police forces and the Angling Trust to actively target those who fish illegally and the crimes often associated with the offence.

The officers reported a total of 16 fishing offences, with action taken against those without a licence. They also gave a cannabis warning to a



woman found in possession of a small amount of the drug and a wanted man was dealt with regarding an outstanding warrant. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'Poaching fresh water fish is a worrying crime for rural communities. Businesses can be devastated by the effects within a relatively short space of time. Fishing clubs are concerned about the destruction of fish stocks and

the wider range of criminality offenders are often linked to. We often get reports of drug and alcohol abuse around the lakes which can present a serious danger given the close proximity of very deep waters. 'This action formed part of our ongoing commitment to tackle the issue of poaching and support our local fisheries. We will be running similar enforcement days throughout the coming months.'

Rural Task Force out and about at big events

The popular Kent Police Open Days event was held from 28-30 June at Kent Police College.

The Rural Task Force shared a marquee with colleagues from Citizens in Policing with support from the RSPCA, Maidstone Borough Council, Canterbury Archaeological

Trust and the Angling Trust. The event showcased how the team works in partnership to deal with rural, wildlife, environmental and heritage Crime. Around 7,500 visitors attended the public open day on 30 June.

The Rural Task Force was also at the Kent County Show

at Detling for all three days supporting Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott's stand.

With four members of the team there each day they attracted a lot of interest and were able to promote their work supporting the rural community to other exhibitors.



Fly tipping crackdown continues

Rural Task Force Officers regularly work with local authorities and councils to target fly tipping.

Recently while searching for a stolen vehicle Rural Task Force PCs Nathan Southern and Adrian Goodsall found suspected large scale fly tipping at the rear of a site in Sittingbourne.

While they were there a tipper arrived and deposited a large amount of soil. The driver claimed he had been given permission by a man later identified as a known fly tipper who had previously been prosecuted. Swale Borough Council is investigating with a view to court action.

The Rural Task Force was recently joined by community policing teams and special constables in a joint partnership operation alongside Environmental Enforcement Officers from all five boroughs in East Kent.

A number of offences were reported, including having no Waster Carriers Licence, and traffic offence and fixed penalty notices issued.

A suspected stolen wood chipper was seized when the identification marks were found removed. Forensic tests confirmed it was stolen in 2016. The victim has been updated.



Cadets community work experience challenge

A beach clean, litter picking and charity fundraising saw Kent Police volunteer cadets working hard to deliver community projects in their areas.

From 15-19 July the cadets worked among officers at police stations around Kent and rose to the challenge of developing a community project in their neighbourhood including a beach clean on the Isle of Sheppey, targeting plastic, and a litter pick at Riverside Country Park, Rainham. They also recently helped cyclists at a security bike marking event in Ashford. Security marked bikes can be registered on a national database, making it harder for thieves to operate.

Cadet Scheme Ambassador, Charlotte Evans said: 'The cadets' programme has been growing since its launch in 2016. We've already seen 14 cadets go on to join Kent Special Constabulary or become a regular officer.'

Learn about the cadet scheme, www.kent.police.uk/cadets

Waste offence update:

- Following a Kent wide operation in June a man was prosecuted for failing to produce a Waste Carriers Certificate or Waste Transfer notes. He had failed to attend court previously and was fined £360 for each offence, ordered to pay £205 costs and to pay a £36 victim surcharge.
- Fly tipping was reported to Rural Task Force officers via Farm Watch WhatsApp in Eastry where sofas were deposited over a farmer's gate. The vehicle involved was identified from dash camera footage and as a result Dover District Council investigated and a £400 fixed penalty notice was issued.
- A drone was used after waste dumping was reported in Reculver. A farmer helped block access from the location and Rural Task Force officers found a suspect vehicle, although the occupants had left. The vehicle was seized and investigations continue.



Partnerships

Rural team working with partners to protect rural communities



Remember to
follow the team on Twitter:
@KentPoliceRural



The team use their expertise to support Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams, PCSOs or core response officers. The team are all fully trained Wildlife Crime Officers.



Kent Police – rural [@kentpolicerural](https://twitter.com/kentpolicerural)

A Moheda trailer similar to that shown below (stock image) was stolen from the Pembury area, West Kent between 15-19 June. If you have any information which could assist our investigation call 101.



PCs Nick Lingham and Anna Verrall followed up a report of a trailer stolen from Tonbridge. The stolen equipment was a Moheda seven tonne forestry trailer worth £4,500. It was stolen over a weekend from woods where it was kept behind fencing and was padlocked.

Key partners working with Kent Police to keep rural communities safe

CRAG – Crime Rural Advisory Group

CRAG, formed in 2012, brings together main rural stakeholders, including the National Farmers Union and Country Land & Business Association – representing a large percentage of land occupancy countywide. They bring their own insights to CRAG to help keep Kent Police informed on ever-changing issues in rural Kent.

www.btfpartnership.co.uk email: michael.bax@btfpartnership.co.uk phone: **Michael Bax 01233 740077**

Kent Association of Local Councils

KALC is a not for profit membership organisation serving member parish and town councils and parish meetings in Kent and Medway. It offers training, advice and services to member councils. KALC works with rural officers to disseminate information on their behalf, and to gather crime information from towns and parishes.

www.kentalc.gov.uk email: kalc@kentalc.gov.uk phone: **01304 820173**

National Farmers Union

The NFU champions British farming and provides professional representation and services to its farmer and grower members. Around 70 per cent of full time farmers are NFU members. They aim to support Kent Police to engage with members' extensive local knowledge, working in partnership with CRAG and other stake holder organisations.

www.nfonline.com email: isobel.bretherton@nfu.org.uk phone: **01730 711950**

Kent Fire and Rescue Service

Kent Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for delivering fire and rescue services to more than 1.7 million people. Each year fire officers deal with around 16,500 incidents including road crashes, house and barn fires and more than 2,400 non-fire rescues. KFRS works with the Kent Police, NFU, and CRAG to provide safety and risk reduction advice to support the agricultural business community.

www.kent.fire-uk.org email: enquiries@kentfire-uk.org phone: **01622 692121**

Historic England

Historic England is a public body which looks after England's historic environment. There are over 400,000 protected sites and buildings in England and Historic England works across a range of partnership to prevent the loss and damage to our shared cultural heritage. Former Kent police officer Mark Harrison advises the organisation and works closely with rural officers and CRAG.

www.historicengland.org.uk email: southeast@HistoricEngland.org.uk phone: **01483 252020**

