

# RURAL TIMES

ISSUE 18 • SPRING 2024

PROTECTING  
OUR RURAL  
COMMUNITIES

HAMPSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT



# CONTENTS

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FRONT COVER  
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## WELCOME TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF RURAL TIMES



Over a year has passed since I returned to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to take up the role of your Chief Constable.

I have had the privilege of spending a great deal of time on the ground with police teams across the two counties to see first-hand what they are doing to listen to your concerns and keep you safe.

We are lucky to live and work here. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight – which I have strong family connections to – have some of the most beautiful outdoor spaces that this country has to offer.

Prior to being the Chief Constable of this force I was the Chief Constable of Dorset, and before that worked in Hampshire for many years. I personally oversaw our rural policing commitments and approach.

Fortunate as we are, our rural spaces are vast and I am not complacent to the challenge that presents for not only us in policing but for you, in the community, to feel that you are being heard, supported and protected.

I have set out three very clear priorities to for my officers and staff: putting victims first, relentlessly pursuing criminals, and delivering exceptional local

policing. With that, there has come some practical change to how we police. I recognise that historically the relationship between police and communities has not been as effective as it needs to be.

As a police service we have re-modelled so that our teams are more closely aligned to the geographical areas they police, we have introduced local bobbies in the heart of communities and bolstered our response with the introduction of new Area Crime Teams – collectively these officers and staff members will know exactly what their neighbourhoods need and what crimes matter most to them.

I am determined to provide visibility and officers back to our communities through more accessible police stations and a targeted approach to criminals who must be brought to justice.

That's why it's so important to re-model and strengthen the communication between police and public. We want you to work with us and tell us exactly what you need, and the police response needs to be reflected across all arms of the Constabulary.

The Country Watch team do a terrific job in tracking seasonal crime trends in rural areas and relentlessly targeting the most active and transient organised criminals who habitually cause harm to communities.

They cannot do it alone however. The team have been proactive in drawing on the skills from other police teams, other police forces, and other partner agencies to bring the fight to criminals, and there are examples of these collective efforts later in this edition of Rural Times.

I am very keen for this Constabulary to get back to more traditional policing but using the latest technology and tools available to us.

Sergeant Stu Ross in Country Watch has been a particular driving force in introducing new tech and innovation. Country Watch have a number of resources at their disposal such as mobile ANPR cameras for deployment in rural crime hotspots, and drone technology.

I have ensured my officers and staff will be undertaking many more targeted operations, disrupting transient criminals who steal farm vehicles and plant machinery.

We will be having more officers on the frontline but also making sure we work with other agencies to stop anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and crimes specific to rural communities.

By the police being more community focused and working with you, we can ensure Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is safe for everyone.





**COUNTRY WATCH**  
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary

**KEEP ALL DOGS ON A LEAD**

**If you allow your dog to worry livestock, you may be prosecuted or fined and ordered to pay compensation**  
Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953

**All suspicious people and vehicles MUST be reported directly to the police**

**DOGS USED IN OFFENCES MAY BE SEIZED**

For crime and community information: [www.hampshireat1.co.uk](http://www.hampshireat1.co.uk)  
www.hampshire.police.uk  
Deaf? Non-Emergency text 18001

Logos: NFI Mutual, disc, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary, Hampshire Alert, 101

# OPERATION RECALL: UK POLICE & PARTNERS CALL ON EVERYONE TO PROTECT LIVESTOCK AND DOGS

We often hear of the devastation of loose dogs attacking sheep in the British countryside, and we receive regular reports of livestock worrying involving dogs off leads in Hampshire & the Isle of Wight.

Last year, Operation Recall was born, with national animal welfare charities, including Naturewatch Foundation and RSPCA, joining forces with police and the National Rural Crime Unit (NRCU) to raise awareness and help tackle the issue.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary is adopting Op Recall to ensure we are doing all we can to keep our family pets safe, as well as livestock.

Livestock worrying is when a dog attacks or chases livestock on agricultural land or is at large in a field with livestock, which can result in significant injury or suffering and in the worst cases, death of the animals involved. This also has devastating consequences for livestock keepers, causing personal distress as well as significant financial costs.

Under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, it is a criminal offence for a dog to actively worry livestock and dog owners risk prosecution.

We recognise that the majority of dog owners walk their dogs in a responsible manner, but unfortunately there are a small minority whose recklessness puts the welfare of other animals at risk.

Some key points to bear in mind this time of year to help with the welfare of livestock and your dog can be found in the Crime Prevention section on page 5.

Geoff Edmond, national wildlife co-ordinator at the RSPCA, said: "Whilst the vast majority of dog owners take care as a matter of course, sadly accidents can happen and even the most docile and obedient dogs can get distracted and excited by grazing animals.

"Being chased by a dog causes the animals stress and anxiety, this can lead to pregnancy loss in livestock, and in some extreme cases, severe attacks can happen which have a devastating effect on the livestock, resulting in injury and even death. This also has an adverse impact on the farmers themselves, both in terms of their livelihood and the emotional toll of seeing their animals suffer.

"Some actions in life, we can't avoid. This one we can."

Kate Salmon, Operation Recall lead for Naturewatch Foundation, said: "The consequences of livestock attacks for all animals involved, including the dogs, can be devastating. Some people go out for a walk with their dog, or unknowingly allow their dog to escape their property and return home without their family pet. With more awareness and self-responsibility people can enjoy their pets, whilst keeping them and livestock safe. We're calling for everyone to protect their dog and protect livestock."

Police Staff Investigator Andrew Williams, from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary's Country Watch team said: "Sadly we do receive regular reports in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight of livestock worrying, including incidents of sheep and lambs being killed and seriously injured.

"Shepherds report that they get a mixed response from dog owners when challenged, some are apologetic but others can be hostile.

"With the weather warming up, we know people will be making the most of the open spaces our counties have to offer. I would like to remind dog owners that they must be mindful of livestock – even if they can't see them – when out enjoying the countryside. I would also like to encourage all dog owners to ensure they have control over their dogs at all times and to seek training wherever possible.

"Remember – protect your dog and protect livestock. It is your responsibility as an owner to keep your dog safe and keep your dog on a lead."

For more information on Operation Recall, visit: <https://naturewatch.org/campaigns/operation-recall/>

## CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE



### Livestock Worrying

In Hampshire & the Isle of Wight we receive regular reports of livestock worrying involving dogs off leads.

You can find out more information on livestock worrying, and what police and partners are doing both nationally and locally to address the issue on page 4 of this edition of Rural Times.

Some key points to bear in mind this time of year to help with the welfare of livestock and your dog:

- If you come across a sheep on its back, try to roll it over and raise the alarm with the farmer if this is possible.
- It is so important to keep dogs either on leads or under close control around livestock.
- If you are walking your dog in a field and there is no livestock, please keep the dog in sight at all times, be aware of what it is doing, and be confident it will return to you promptly on command. If you cannot be confident of this, the dog should not be off the lead.
- Ensure the dog does not stray off the path or area where you have right of access.
- It is a criminal offence for a dog to actively worry livestock. We want owners to be aware that in such instances, the owner or person in control of the dog can be prosecuted, and the dog can be shot by the farmer to end an attack as a last resort.

### Battery Theft – Paint it Pink!

Opportunistic thieves are known to target rural batteries. Batteries have a number of uses in rural areas including for electric fencing, vehicles, farming, camping and solar panels.

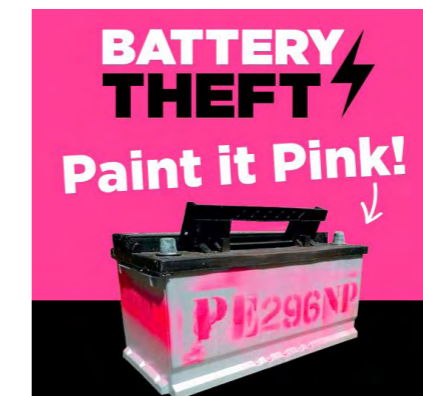
Deter criminals by etching your postcode onto any high value batteries before painting them pink!

Thieves sell stolen batteries at scrapyards for their lead content. Battery theft not only puts owners at a financial loss but also, in some cases, this type of crime is a risk to livestock escaping.

Ensure thieves don't want your batteries by painting them pink to make them unmissable!

Marking them in this way deters thieves from stealing them as there's a better chance of detection.

Read [our flyer here](#) for more details.



### Machinery Security

#### Keys and locks

- No vehicles should be left in a visible place when not in use.
- Lock vehicles/plant equipment & secure keys in your possession or in a locked key safe.
- Consider the use of hitch locks, wheel clamps or ground anchors.

- You may require a combination of the above to meet insurance requirements.

#### Security markings & tracking

- All property & vehicles should be uniquely marked, photographed and recorded somewhere safe. This should include serial/chassis/model numbers.
- Include your postcode and property name or number in a non-obvious place.
- Popular options include stamping, etching, UV marking and DNA products.
- Consider fitting a tracking device or a data tagging chip - your insurance company can provide advice on suitable products.

#### Tack security

- Secure windows on the inside of tack rooms with solid iron bars (tubular steel can be bent).
- Fit security lights & an intruder alarm.
- Secure all doors with good quality locks. Use bolts not screws on the hinges.
- Property mark tack and display signage to deter thieves.
- Padlock gates with substantial padlocks and heavy duty chains.
- Consider reversing the top hinge on yard gates to prevent them from being lifted off.
- Fit security lights and an intruder alarm.



## SOUTH EAST POLICE FORCES COME TOGETHER TO DISRUPT RURAL CRIMINALS

**Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary teamed up with other police forces in the South East region at the end of February, as part of intensified partnership efforts to tackle rural crime and disrupt active offenders.**

The South East Partnership Against Rural Crime (SEPARC) consists of the Constabulary's dedicated Country Watch team, working alongside the specialist rural crime teams from Thames Valley Police, Sussex Police, Surrey Police, and Kent Police.

Throughout the week Monday 26 February to Friday 1 March, SEPARC undertook a number of localised and co-operative operations tackling wildlife, environmental, heritage and agricultural criminals.

In Hampshire specifically, Country Watch focused on thefts of farm machinery and plant vehicles (FMPV).

Generally speaking, over the last 12 months FMPV reports have seen a steady increase in Hampshire.

This type of crime is often perpetrated by transient offenders, who travel across county borders

to steal and transport stolen goods. These stolen goods are on occasion also later transported overseas.

On Thursday and Friday of the proactive week, Country Watch conducted an operation across Hampshire with a view to stopping thieves in transit. Part of this operation took place in the north of the county, with a second group of officers focusing their efforts at Portsmouth International Port.

The team in the north of the county – made up of Country Watch officers as well as members of our Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Proactive team, Commercial Vehicle Unit, Test Valley Neighbourhoods Policing Team and support from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) – based themselves out of Sutton Scotney off the A34. Those officers conducted patrols and stop checks on vehicles, in particular those transporting

FMPV. This work was conducted along the A34 up to Whitchurch, west on the A303 to Andover, and on the A30 west towards Stockbridge.

Meanwhile, the team at the ferry port in Portsmouth – made up of Country Watch officers, local neighbourhood officers, Thames Valley Police officers and with support from a dedicated NAVCIS vehicle examiner – sought to intercept criminals making attempts to transport stolen goods to the continent.

Over the course of Thursday, more than 100 vehicles were stopped by the teams, comprising of a mix of HGVs, vans, trailers, cars, and vehicles with abnormal loads and carrying plant machinery.

Thorough checks were conducted and fortunately no stolen goods

were identified. Other traffic related offences were identified by teams, however, with 6 prohibition notices being served by the DVSA for vehicles being driven in a dangerous condition.

The team also conducted a slightly more unusual check of a vehicle at the ferry port which was exporting live monkeys.

On Friday the operation was in full swing again in the same locations, with additional support from the Winchester Neighbourhood Enforcement Team, and further efforts also carried out towards Emsworth on the A27 with support from Sussex Police and Thames Valley Police colleagues. Earlier in the week, Country Watch were engaged in proactive patrols with Thames Valley colleagues on the Hampshire and West Berkshire border.

Despite hundreds of vehicles being stop checked over the course of the two days, no stolen goods were identified.

Inspector Cath MacDonald said: "Teams worked tirelessly over the course of the week drawing from the skills and expertise of specialists in their field – whether this be the individual rural crime teams involved, or the RPU Proactive and CVU officers who were policing the road networks.

"The contributions from all teams and Forces each day has proven that SEPARC can work extremely effectively as a partnership to bolster visible police presence in the areas where intelligence tells us transient criminals are operating. I am grateful to the ferry port staff, and everyone involved in the partnership work which helped generate further intelligence for us to act upon.

"The efforts of Country Watch, with support from other local policing teams, of course continue day in and day out to address the full spectrum of criminality affecting our rural areas."

Assistant Chief Constable Lucy Hutson, Rural Policing Lead for Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary, said: "Rural

crime has an enormous impact on those effected, as it often sees local businesses suffer serious financial loss, and can destroy the livelihoods of hardworking farmers.

"We are fortunate to have some of the most beautiful parts of the country on our doorstep in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and it's so important that people can live in, work in and visit our rural spaces without fear of being targeted by criminals.

"Our dedicated Country Watch officers work closely with other policing teams across the two counties all year round to tackle seasonal crime trends, provide support to victims, and relentlessly pursue offenders blighting the countryside.

"This week of action gave us the opportunity to utilise the skills and expertise of specialist policing teams from our neighbouring forces, to bring the fight to criminals who operate across county borders in the south east."



Andy pictured during his time as Country Watch Sergeant

## MEET THE TEAM: POLICE STAFF INVESTIGATOR ANDY WILLIAMS

We want you to get to know the officers and staff working in Country Watch, and are running a regular 'Meet the Team' segment in Rural Times...

This season we're introducing Andy Williams.



Andy currently serves as one of our Police Staff Investigators. Before this, he spent more than 27 years as a uniform police officer – 16 as a sergeant.

During his time in uniform, Andy served 20 years at Southampton Central as a response officer, a neighbourhoods officer and working in custody. He then policed the New Forest and joined the Country Watch team as a Sergeant; following which he took retirement before re-joining the team as a PSI.

Despite spending two decades in a bustling urban environment, Andy's roots are firmly bedded in the countryside.

Andy said: "I grew up in the New Forest and I've always had an interest in anything to do with the water – whether that be boating or sea fishing. I've always loved the outdoors so was drawn to rural policing.

"As a PSI I cover the Isle of Wight, New Forest and Test Valley, but also lead on the Country Watch team's response to issues of livestock worrying across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

"The trends for this type of crime tend to coincide with lambing season - this is predominantly from February onwards. The lambs are most vulnerable when they're in the fields so sadly this is when there is the most risk attached to livestock worrying.

"Of course worrying doesn't just impact sheep, it affects all livestock, however the majority of instances we deal with relate to sheep. We do receive occasional reports of dogs worrying the New Forest livestock, including the free-

roaming animals that are owned by the Commoners."

Since the Covid pandemic, there has been an upsurge in dog ownership across the UK. We know the majority of dog owners are sensible - Andy's plea is for all dog owners to be responsible when walking in the countryside.

"This can happen any time of year but the majority of reports we receive are between February and June", Andy said.

"In terms of tackling this – education is key, and we also work to resolve issues between livestock owners and dog owners involved in worrying. This usually involves a Community Resolution which acts as an agreement between all parties that the person in charge of the dog will pay reparations – whether this be veterinary bills or the costs associated with the loss of stock. If the person in charge of the dog refuses to cooperate, then as a last resort we can prosecute."



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## RURAL CRIME FIGHTERS AND VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED AT SERIES OF AWARDS CEREMONIES

The work of rural police officers, staff and the county's brilliant volunteers has been recognised at recent awards ceremonies in Hampshire.

The annual Police and Crime Commissioner's Awards were held at the Holiday Inn in Winchester on 8 March this year, where the Rural Crime Fighter prize was up for grabs.

Intelligence researcher Naomi Gregory and analyst Heather Cameron were jointly nominated for this award for their invaluable contributions to fighting crime.

The collection, recording and evaluation of data is of paramount importance to policing rural and wildlife crime. Naomi and Heather's efforts have not only assisted district leaders in Hampshire to map rural crime trends and patterns and thus brought rural crime to the forefront of local policing, but has led to Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary becoming a flagship force nationally in the recording of rural crime data.

Sergeant Stu Ross was also nominated for this award, and went on to claim the prize for his efforts leading the operational response to rural and

wildlife crime within the Country Watch team.

Stu has worked tirelessly to bring innovation and technology to the team to target offenders, and recently helped secure funding and progress the introduction of ANPR cameras for Country Watch. These can be used in rural areas to target hotspot offending areas based on analytical data, as well as providing additional investigative tactics to target rural criminals.



A handful of our volunteers were also nominated at the same ceremony in the Police Volunteer of the Year category. As a team, the Mounted Rural Patrol volunteers received a nomination, and all of their horses were also put forward for the Police Animal of the Year award.

The Humane Animal Dispatchers (HAD) were also put forward, as a team, for Police Volunteer of the Year. The HADs

are called out by the police control room 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, after police receive reports of an injured deer involved in a vehicle collision on Hampshire's roads.

The deployment of a HAD ensures an animal does not suffer unnecessarily, and the dispatch is managed as effectively and humanely as possible. All HADs are experts on deer management, which enables police to have the right resource at the right situation, giving confidence to police, animal welfare organisations and the public.

As a result of their efforts, the HAD advisors were awarded at another ceremony last month. The High Sheriff of Hampshire Awards were held on 14 March in Winchester. Hosted by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation, and presented by High Sheriff Amelia Riviere, the awards are a mark of distinction and recognition for those supporting the criminal justice system, and making Hampshire a safer and more socially cohesive place to live.

That may not be all for the volunteers either, with the HADs also nominated for an award at the upcoming Citizens in Policing Awards ceremony.



Curlew Nest  
©Forestry England



Nightjar on Nest  
©Forestry England



©New Forest National  
Park Authority

## STAY ON TRACK TO SUPPORT NEW FOREST WILDLIFE THIS SPRING

### FORESTRY ENGLAND

People are being asked to help rare ground nesting birds survive in the New Forest again by staying on the main tracks and keeping dogs with them here.

Special quiet zones will be set up at the most sensitive breeding locations with [nearby car parks closed](#) and signs in place to highlight the presence of the birds, and help avoid disturbance as they attempt to breed and raise chicks.

The New Forest is a Special Protection Area for Birds. Under pressure in many parts of the UK, helping ground nesting birds breed successfully in the New Forest has a key role to play in their overall survival. Whilst the fortunes of some species of these rare birds have improved in recent years thanks to people's support, others still remain under considerable pressure.

Dartford Warblers, a small bird that nests in gorse or close to the ground, have seen the highest ever numbers recorded in the Forest and nearby locations in 2023, making the area one of the most important UK locations for this species.

Nightjars, which travel all the way from Africa to nest in the New Forest saw their numbers here decline by around 18%. Curlews had some limited success in breeding in the Forest last year but overall numbers still remain critically low.

Unlike most birds, ground nesting birds build nests and raise their young on the ground around woodland edges and on

the open heathland areas of the Forest. This makes it especially important to avoid startling parents causing them to flee their nests and leave eggs and chicks exposed to predators.

Leanne Sargeant, Senior Ecologist for Forestry England, said: "Anyone visiting the New Forest during spring can't help but notice the huge amount of bird song and activity. This really is a special place in the UK for birds, and making sure we continue to see ground nesting birds here in good numbers is key to this continuing. Everyone spending time here has a role to play and it's really simple to help – please stay on the main, gravel tracks and avoid the heathlands and woodland edges to give these birds the space they need."

Orange signs in the Forest indicate areas very close to breeding grounds and can be seen in locations like car parks and main tracks. Red "stop" signs highlight nesting sites in the immediate vicinity and ask the public to avoid these areas.

People are asked to stick to the main gravel tracks and not to venture onto open heathland areas where birds will be nesting. Dog walkers are asked to lend their support by keeping dogs with them on the tracks and where necessary using leads to keep them under close control.

Heather Gould, Chair of New Forest Dog Owners Group, said: "It's really simple for everyone who spends time here to help

protect ground nesting birds by obeying the signs which are put out and avoiding sensitive areas altogether. We'd advise all dog walkers to avoid the protected heathlands if they can walk elsewhere during the nesting season. For more ideas on where to go instead just use Forestry England's [robust tracks map](#)."

Everyone spending time on the Forest whether on foot, wheels or hooves can take part in the campaign. Hannah Marsh, British Horse Society Regional Manager for the South of England, said: "In spring and summer, many birds make their nests on the ground on heaths and open areas of the Forest. Making small adjustments to where we ride during this time can make a big difference to their survival. When you are riding on the Forest please to stick to the main tracks."

Steve Avery, Executive Director at the New Forest National Park Authority, said: "The New Forest National Park contains some of the most important wetlands and the most extensive area of heathland left in Europe - home to rare birds whose survival is under threat. We can all help by checking routes before heading out in the Forest, knowing which car parks are closed and where the quiet breeding zones are so we can avoid them. Always stay on the way-marked cycle routes and avoid veering off across open areas and heathlands where birds – although you might not see them – will be nesting and looking after precious young."

## £1.3M SCHEME TO RESTORE HABITATS & INCREASE WILDLIFE

### NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

The New Forest National Park Authority and five partners are celebrating an award from the Species Survival Fund to help halt species decline and restore habitats in the New Forest.

The New Forest is a world capital for wildlife underpinned by an ancient tradition of free-roaming commoning animals. However, the New Forest is not immune to changes that have seen habitats lost and species decline. The funding will see partner organisations and landowners working together to enhance 250 hectares of land for nature across 25 sites – the equivalent of 350 football pitches.

Improving habitats and re-establishing links between them will help charismatic species such as pine marten, great crested newt, pollinating insects and reptiles such as adder and smooth snake thrive and create the conditions for a host of other species to flourish.

Among the partners, 14 jobs will be created or retained, five interns will develop green skills with the aim of going on to work in the environment sector and 50 new volunteers will be recruited.

The Fund, a partnership between Defra and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, has allocated £1.04m to the scheme which, with additional funding from the partners, represents a total investment into the New Forest of £1.3 million.

The partners are:

[Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)

[Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust](#)

[Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](#)

[New Forest Commoners Defence Association](#)

[Wild New Forest](#)

Partners will be supported by the RSPB and the New Forest Biodiversity Forum.

Conservation work will see an increased abundance of species and improve the connection of the New Forest's protected central core or Crown Lands with the areas around it so species can spread out further. Woodland, boggy mires, heathland, meadow, wetlands and streams will be improved. New ponds, wetlands and meadows will be created. The programme will also help New Forest habitats to become more resilient to climate change.

The new and retained staff, volunteers and interns will help with practical landscape improvements for wildlife as well as carrying out surveys. They will also share ways to improve areas for nature with other landowners and communities through demonstration sites, working with the Forest's community green groups, guided walks, talks and online campaigns.

Nationally the fund will create and improve natural habitats, helping Defra to meet its target to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 (known as '30by30').

New Forest National Park Authority Chair David Bence said: "Over half the National Park is designated for its international importance for nature – a higher proportion than any other UK national park. This combination of habitats is hard to find anywhere else in western Europe. Yet, like elsewhere, nature is under serious threat here and the New Forest is the last stronghold for some species.

"National parks cover 10% of England and are vital in helping Defra meet its 30by30 conservation target. This programme represents a major step forward in the urgent conservation work we and our partners need to do for the New Forest, particularly in and around the National Park boundary."

The Government's Species Survival Fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The Fund has seen grants of up to £3 million awarded across England for habitat creation and restoration projects to run over the next two years, helping to halt and reverse the decline in species abundance by preserving vital habitats.



## FIRST SEAL PUP IN HAMPSHIRE WATERS BORN ON BEAULIEU RIVER

### BUCKLER'S HARD YACHT HARBOUR

A grey seal pup which was recently born on the Beaulieu River is believed to be the first of its kind in Hampshire waters. Conservationists have been keeping a watchful eye to give it every chance of survival.

The Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour team has been safeguarding the pup from disturbance by river users, while working with Natural England, the Seal Alliance, British Divers Marine Life Rescue and Wild New Forest Guided Tours to help protect it.

Harbour Master Wendy Stowe said: "This is very exciting news, as grey seals don't usually breed in these waters and we believe it is the first pup to survive here.

"We would like to thank all of our river users for acting responsibly and helping us to keep the seal pup safe and undisturbed during its all-important first month. We are looking forward to watching it grow and join the grey seal colony on the Beaulieu River."



Seal pups grow at a very quick rate on a diet of high fat and protein milk from their mothers. Pups triple their body weight from 10 to 40kg in their first three weeks, as their white fur is replaced by a shorter patterned coat.

Grey seals are a native wildlife species which has naturally colonised on the Beaulieu River but only recently started to breed locally. Over a third of the world's grey seals live in UK waters, with as many as 88% of those in Scotland.



They are not the only wildlife to make their home on the Beaulieu River, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Its unique habitats provide a lifeline as

a feeding ground for more than 200 species of birdlife. It has remained a special place by the custodianship of the Montagu family for over four centuries and the Beaulieu Estate takes a proactive role in promoting best practice standards.

That commitment is reflected in recent awards, with Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour being highly commended for its sustainability practices in The Yacht Harbour Association's first Sustainable Marina Awards and receiving their International Clean Marina accreditation for helping to protect the UK's oceans and waterways. It is also part of The Green Blue, a joint environmental programme by British Marine and the Royal Yachting Association which promotes sustainable boating for healthier waters.

Wendy Stowe added: "We feel fortunate to share such a wonderful area of the New Forest and have a duty of care to protect that environment and its inhabitants. We ask river users to continue to help us give this new pup the best chance for its future."

For tips on how to watch seals well, visit: <https://www.sealalliance.org/blog/give-seals-space>

© All photos in this article credited to Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour.



## LOOK BUT DO NOT TOUCH!

### THE BRITISH DEER SOCIETY

**Dorothy Ireland, chairman of the Wessex Branch of The British Deer Society, is urging the public to be mindful of the risks of disturbing young deer at this time of year...**

During the months of late April, into May and June, female deer give birth to their young.

Not just ground nesting birds are at risk during these months but young deer are as well.

A mother will leave the young for a few days after birth hidden in bracken or long grass, its only protection being its camouflage colouring, the deer being virtually scentless.

However, mother is never far away, and will come back to feed the youngster several times a day with her milk.

This is where it is of the utmost importance when out walking that if you see a young deer curled up in the undergrowth, please do not attempt to pick it up or even touch it, it is not ABANDONED!

Your scent may put the mother off from coming back and feeding her young.

During this time of year, if you have a dog it would be advisable to have it on a lead or under very strict control.

In our countryside we have six species of deer roaming wild, with the Chinese Water Deer (Water Deer) mainly living in the Fens.

All have names for their young...

- Roe are called Kids and can have a twin
- Red and Sika usually raise one, which is called a Calf
- Fallow are called Fawns, and like the Red and Sika there is usually one
- Muntjac breed all year round and raise Fawns
- Water Deer can have a twin or even triplets in May/June - also known as Fawns.



©Deb Heath

The Roe kid in the photograph, provided with the kind permission of Deb Heath - one of our Wessex members and a very keen wildlife photographer - shows a Roe kid up and running.

So, once again please think twice if you see a young deer in the undergrowth, we all want them to grow up and enjoy life like the one in the photograph.

The British Deer Society is a charity solely dedicated to building a strong future for wild deer in the United Kingdom.

The BDS works to make a difference for deer in the UK through education, awareness raising, campaigning, advocacy, monitoring, best practice management training, and science and research. Our mission is to educate and inspire everyone about deer in their environment, and to advocate for deer welfare.

To find out more about The British Deer Society, visit: <https://bds.org.uk>

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Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary has recently published local data on Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVC) across the county, along with BDS advice on how motorists can stay 'deer aware' to avoid a collision from occurring.

Visit our website [here](https://bds.org.uk).

# RURAL ROUND-UP

## MAN ARRESTED AFTER DEAD ANIMALS ARE DUMPED OUTSIDE SHOP IN BROUGHTON VILLAGE

A man's been arrested after the bodies of around 50 dead hares, as well as a kestrel and a barn owl, were found outside Broughton Community Shop on the morning of Friday 15 March.

The 37-year-old - who was arrested on suspicion of wildlife offences, criminal damage and a firearms offence - has been bailed until 28 June while the investigation continues.

A 27-year-old man has also been interviewed under caution by police as part of our enquiries.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call 101, quoting 44240111410, or visit our [website](#).

Country Watch Sergeant Stuart Ross said: "We are grateful for the help we have received from the local community and we'd like to thank them for their patience while we investigate what happened.

"There may be some people with information who have not yet come forward, and if so, we would urge them to do so as soon as possible."

## OP WOLF: SPECIAL CONSTABULARY LEAD POLICE AND PARTNER OPERATION IN COLDEN COMMON

On 9 March, officers from our Special Constabulary took part in Operation Wolf in Colden Common.



Operation Wolf is an initiative launched by Country Watch to combat plant & agricultural machinery theft, metal theft, fly-tipping, waste carrier license issues, burglary and general theft offences.

Led by Country Watch Special Constables, we were joined by partners from the Environment Agency and Datatag ID Limited targeting vehicles suspected to be involved in the above named offences.



Utilising ANPR technology, over 60 vehicles were stopped with multiple follow-ups being conducted by the Environment Agency for lack of waste carrier licenses.

Other offences identified and dealt with by police included driving without insurance, MOT, and tax, and defective tyres.

A man from Luton was also arrested following a stop check on a Ford Transit van. With help from Datatag, this vehicle was confirmed as stolen and displaying false ID/Plates. The vehicle was seized pending further police enquiries.



## FLY-TIP OP UNEARTH'S RAFT OF ROAD CRIMES

Forestry England led a targeted operation on 18 March to tackle fly-tipping in the New Forest.

This work was supported by local neighbourhood police officers, Country Watch, the Roads Policing Unit and other local partners.

51 vehicles were stopped in Lyndhurst, with a raft of road-related offences identified. 12 prohibition notices were served on drivers, and officers also issued 15 tickets for issues including driving with vehicle defects, insecure loads, and driving without insurance.

One motorist was also arrested for drug driving.

## STOLEN GOODS RECOVERED BY POLICE

A quadbike and a trailer stolen from a farm in Awbridge were recovered by police in March.

The Honda Quad and trailer were found by patrolling officers, who also disturbed suspected offenders in an unknown Audi.

The individuals subsequently made off from police.

The quad and trailer were recovered for forensic examination to try and identify offenders and for the vehicles to be reunited with the owner.

Separately, at the start of March, police were contacted by a farmer in the Tadley area who had located a number of power tools which had seemingly been dumped on their land.

The items, which included chainsaws and strimmers, were secured by police while enquiries continue to identify the owner.

# RURAL ROUND-UP

## OPERATION EASTER: 27 YEARS OF STOPPING EGG THIEVES

The national enforcement campaign to protect our nesting wild birds is underway for 2024. The taking of wild bird eggs is a serious crime yet it remains an illicit hobby for some.

Whole clutches of eggs can be taken from some of the UK's rarest birds and stored in secret collections. New risks to wild birds have also emerged in recent years with criminals taking eggs or chicks from bird of prey nests and trading them illegally across the world.

Detective Inspector Mark Harrison from the National Wildlife Crime Unit said: "Thankfully, egg collecting as a hobby has declined over recent years due to effective law enforcement and a change in attitude, particularly as younger generations realise the negative impact that this crime has on our wild birds and biodiversity. But, the problem still persists and new related risks have also emerged, including the increase in wild taken birds of prey, chicks and eggs that are being illegally laundered into the legitimate falconry industry.

"Operation Easter is one of the NWCU's longest standing operations for the protection of wild birds and at this crucial time of year when the birds are breeding we need to ensure that we are alive to the risks and ready to respond."

If you see suspicious activity around nesting birds, or have any information on egg thieves or those who disturb rare nesting birds without a license, contact police by dialling 101, [Online](#), or via DISC quoting 'Operation Easter' and ask for it to be passed to the Country Watch Team.

Get a description/photo and vehicle registration if safe to do so.

Information can also be passed in confidence to Crimestoppers via 0800 555 111.



## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR FIREARMS CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

Within the Firearms Licensing Department our primary responsibility is to prevent foreseeable and avoidable harm with a licensed firearm. If certain standards of behaviour aren't met, your certificate could be revoked.

There are currently over 24,000 live firearm, shotgun and explosives certificates in existence across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Their uses include clay or game shooting, pest control, deer management, target shooting and historical re-enactment.

Before anyone is granted a certificate for the first time they are subject to a number of strict vetting checks to ensure they are suitable to possess a firearm. Every single one of our certificate holders is subject to constant review 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The certificate holder, their address and any other address they are linked to, as well as anyone else living at the address is flagged on our police systems with a firearms warning marker. This means that if they, or their address, are involved in any incident that comes to notice of the police, the Firearms Licensing Department automatically receive notification. This is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The standards of behaviour expected of a certificate holder are far higher than those expected of the general public. The Firearms Licensing Department operate on the balance of probability, and not the criminal standard expected by a Court. If it is decided that continued possession of firearms poses a risk to public safety or to the peace we will consider removing them. If someone is arrested but not charged with an offence, it does not automatically mean that firearms will be returned.

Some recent examples of behaviours we have seen that have resulted in certificates being revoked:

A road rage incident | Domestic Abuse | Disqualified driving as a result of speeding | Drink driving | Failing to store firearms securely, therefore breaching the conditions of the certificate | Assault following a parking dispute

All of the above factors are included in the Home Office Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers of Police which we're obliged to consider in every aspect of our decision making.

Our primary consideration should always be whether the applicant can be permitted to possess a lethal barrelled weapon without danger to public safety or to the peace.

## WANT TO STAY INFORMED? REGISTER FOR HAMPSHIRE ALERTS

As a local resident, you can play a key role in helping us to prevent and detect crime in rural areas.

Improving the flow of information between the local community and the police is vital to achieving our aim to work together to deter criminals.

By signing up to Hampshire Alerts, you will receive timely updates covering

crime prevention advice, crime alerts and witness appeals for incidents.

It is your way of being kept informed of what we're doing in the community, allowing us to keep the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safe.

[Click here to sign up to receive regular Hampshire Alerts](#)



# COUNTRY WATCH

## Meet the team

Contact numbers and locations for our Country Watch officers are shown here, should you need to contact them about your concerns and issues. Please note that these phone numbers should not be used to report crimes. You should call **101** if you think an offence has been or is about to be committed, or call **999** in an emergency.

Although our officers are based in the locations stated, they have a countywide responsibility and can help you with any issue.



**Insp Cath MacDonald**  
07909 770242



**Sgt Stuart Ross**  
07970 145099



**PC Will Butcher**  
07775 542982



**PC Lee Stanbrook**  
07775 543719



**PC Matt Thelwell**  
07392 314410



**PC Nick Atkins**  
07554 775466

**Special Constable Alex Corbishley**

**Tadley**



**Police Staff Investigator Hannah Levy**  
07469 562472



**Hazel Cross**  
**Country Watch Coordinator**  
07799 587691

**Stockbridge**

**Special Constable Simon Galliar**

**Bishop's Waltham**

**Special Sergeant Phillips**  
07795 476662

**Lyndhurst**



**PC Dianne Read**  
07717 665673

**Isle of Wight**



**Special Constable Phil Keeling**  
07392 289634

**PCSO Kevin Cooke**

**PCSO Karen Allen**

**PCSO Justin Keeffe**

**Portsmouth**



**PC Mark Webb**  
07392 314427



**Police Staff Investigator Toni Harris**  
07554 112779

Receive **FREE** crime and community information about where you live

Register at [www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk](http://www.hampshirecountrywatch.co.uk)



HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT

**CONSTABULARY**