



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE



Rural & Wildlife Crime Unit Autumn/Winter 2020 update

Welcome!

Well, what a strange unsettled year it has been – and it looks like the issues aren't ending just yet, unfortunately. I think we are all as fed up as each other!

We would just like to confirm to everyone that all through the pandemic, your officers on the rural crime team are working and patrolling in the rural communities as normal - or as normally as we can, anyway - just with more social distancing in place and a distinct lack of the usual rural events we would have attended throughout the summer months.

We also want to reassure you that the Police are still working to keep everyone safe and that includes you, our rural communities, both residents and businesses. We want to encourage people to still call in with any reports of suspicious incidents, suspicious vehicles or suspicious people in the rural and isolated areas. Poaching, hare coursing and all wildlife crime will still be taken seriously and officers despatched to these calls as priority incidents, especially if they are reported as happening now.

We work closely with our neighbouring colleagues including West Mercia, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Cheshire to swap intelligence and we carry out joint force operations as well.

Please have a read to see what we have been up to in recent weeks and months and look after each other and **stay safe**.



Hare coursing and poaching

Over recent weeks, the incidents of both poaching and hare coursing seem to have increased. The offenders don't stay in any one area for very long and move on to other villages and isolated areas. Setting up Rural Watch schemes where communities liaise with



each other by phone, text message or another means, are a good idea. Whilst the residents/businesses can keep an eye out for the offenders and pass what they have seen to each other, someone can be calling us (999 if a crime in progress, 101 if suspicious activity) and getting it reported and patrols on the way. Explain how many vehicles are there - inc make model and reg if possible, number of people, number and type of dogs and whether any firearms seen or heard. **Do not put yourself at any risk.**

Exciting news for Staffordshire Horsewatch

Staffordshire Horsewatch have been working closely with the British Horse Society (Staffordshire) to try and make the roads a safer place to ride our horses. We are, as always, running the '**Slow, Dead Slow**' campaign with them. With this we encourage anybody who has a road traffic collision involving a horse, to click on the link on The British Horse Society website, shown below and report it to them.

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/dead-slow>



We are also very excited to announce that we have two new Staffordshire Horsewatch Ambassadors coming on board to join the Paralympian Dressage rider we already have, to help increase awareness of both equine and rural crime. Both are well known and doing well in their chosen equine discipline and they are both from agricultural backgrounds which will help our fight against rural crime.

Joe Davison operates the show jumping team at Davison Equestrian in Uttoxeter which spans between Europe and USA, producing, competing and coaching for and at the most prestigious competitions on the circuit. This includes the Global Champions Tour and Nations Cup teams.



Abigail Boulton has an amazing achievement of completing her first CCI4* at The Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials in 2015. Debuting at just 20yrs old, Abi was the youngest to compete that year and best under 25 and same applied for 2016.



Peregrines protected for second year

This summer has seen a joint operation, for the second year running, to protect the nesting site of a pair of Peregrine Falcons. In the 'peregrine watch' group were our Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers, Forestry England, West Midlands Bird Ringing group and British Trust of Ornithology (BTO) volunteers.

All visited the site at every opportunity to keep an eye on the nesting pair and their brood. Smartwater, based in Telford, supplied covert cameras and live 24hr streams were sent to those people in the watch group. As a result, for the second year running, the chicks hatched and fledged successfully.



Last year, in May 2019, a male was seen carrying a firearm in the vicinity and 2 Ravens were found shot nearby. RSPB Investigations were contacted to make them aware. Whilst liaising with RSPB, 2 dead juvenile Peregrines from 2018 were mentioned. RSPB arranged for these birds, which had been kept frozen, to undergo a post mortem which confirmed they had both fed shortly before they died.

Toxicology tests, funded by RSPB, confirmed that poisoning by the banned substance Carbofuran had been the cause of death.

RSPB's Guy Shorrocks said: "Despite being banned in 2001, Carbofuran is the most regularly abused product for illegal poisoning of birds of prey and use of it in this area is a worrying development".



Keep your outbuildings safe

Make time to check the state of the locks on your outbuildings.

We have had reports of thefts of power tools and gardening equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, chain saws etc. out of outbuildings or from gardens/farm yards.

Please consider disc lock padlocks, alarms and security motion sensor lights.



Follow your rural crime team on Social media

The rural and wildlife crime team are on social media! Give us a follow on the below accounts;



Facebook;
Staffordshire Rural Wildlife Crime



Twitter;
@StaffsPoliceRWC -
Follow the work all the Rural & Wildlife Crime Officers are doing throughout the County.

