



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE



Rural & Wildlife Crime Unit Spring 2022 update

Staffordshire Police involved in a week of action, W/C Monday 14 March

From Monday 14th March for the week, Staffordshire Police took part in a week of action around rural and wildlife crime. During the week the Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers took the opportunity to visit their more isolated and rural patches. They regularly patrol the areas at different hours of the day and night, however farms, businesses and churches were all visited during the week.

Look out for your local Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers and let them know if there is anything going on that you feel they need to know about. To find out who is your local rural crime officer, check out the Staffordshire Police website, call 101 or use Facebook Messenger to connect with a call taker and ask them.

Seized ponies

In January, Staffordshire Horsewatch Coordinator, PCSO Lucy Hadfield, accompanied officers from the RSPCA, along with officers from World Horse Welfare, attended an address in Burntwood where five ponies unfortunately had to be seized due to their condition, health and some ongoing concern for their welfare. The ponies went to an unknown location to start their rehabilitation.



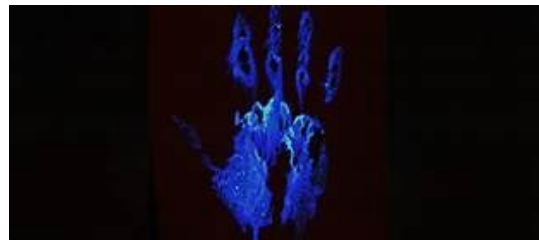
Thefts of York Stone

There have been 2 arrests jointly with Cheshire for the theft of some York stone in Staffordshire Moorlands. Enquiries are ongoing, however it seems to be impacting on neighbouring counties, including Derbyshire and Lancashire.

Please be vigilant when visiting or walking around your local churches or any other historical buildings or monuments and if you suspect anything, please call 101 and ask to speak to your local officers.

Forensic marking

Forensic property markers and sprays contain a unique DNA code. These codes allow police to identify property and link criminals to the crime. The two most well known systems are SelectaDNA and SmartWater.



Both have registers which conform to the highest global security and quality standards, ensuring clients' data is kept safe at all times.

Police from around the world have access to the databases, allowing 24/7/365 searches when property is recovered or perpetrators apprehended.

Forensic property markers contain thousands of microdots which allow Police to identify property at the scene in a matter of seconds. Thieves can no longer get away with possessing stolen property when confronted by Police.

UV tracers are incorporated in SelectaDNA and SmartWater to make it easy for Police to find thieves who have been sprayed with them and property that has been marked. Kits can be bought for homes, businesses and farms.

Livestock worrying and attacks

In recent weeks there has been an increase in the amount of livestock (mainly sheep) that have been attacked or disturbed by dogs being walked off leads.



Please remember to always have your dog on a lead if near any farmland with sheep, even if it is a field nearby as sometimes dogs will find a way through hedges or fences. Even friendly dogs will see a sheep and think it's a game to chase them.

Worse case is that dogs can legally be shot by farmers if in amongst sheep and lambs, causing them stress. If ewes are pregnant the stress of a dog amongst them and chasing them, can cause them to abort and lose their lambs.



Nesting season

With us now being in the first part of the bird nesting season, we would like to remind everyone that **all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law.**

It is an offence (with one or two certain exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird, where it is in use or being built.

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird while it is nest building or is in, on or near a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Garden hedges provide important nesting habitats for breeding birds and the RSPB recommends that hedge cutting and tree cutting, pruning or felling should be avoided between March and August, when birds are nesting.



Staffordshire Smart Alert

Staffordshire Smart Alert is a community messaging platform which is used to communicate targeted information to communities with a view to them working with us and being extra eyes and ears.

We have a Rural Watch community Smart Alert platform where we put out messages around any crime that has been committed in the rural areas of each patch and we also share good news stories and inform communities about when we are holding drop in surgeries or other events.

If you would like to sign up to the scheme, please contact your local officer.



Land Rover thefts

Over recent months there has been a rise in the theft of Land Rovers. Usually it is Discoveries or older style Defenders that are being stolen.

Please consider investing in any of the following:

- steering wheel locks (full covers that lock with a key)
- a tracker (hidden)
- park in a garage out of sight
- a 'clutch claw' (clamps the brake and clutch pedals together)
- pedal lock - a steel box that completely encases all three pedals



Operation Galileo, joint operation tackling organised wildlife crime

Staffordshire Police has signed up to Operation Galileo, to tackle hare coursing and poaching. We are one of about 23 forces to do so.



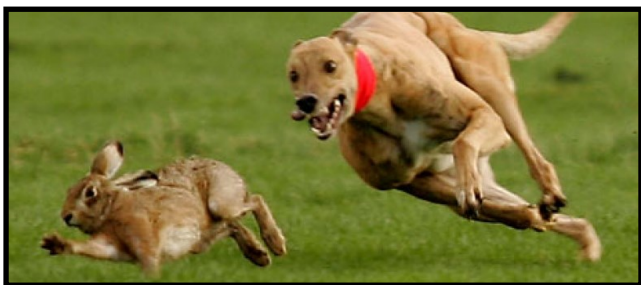
Hare coursing is the illegal activity of using dogs, acting on sight to chase hares.

Whilst the activity is classed as a hobby or 'sport' to those involved, large sums of money can be bet and exchanged on the dogs used. Those taking part will often record and live-stream the activity on phones or other smart devices and people from all over the world could be watching and betting on those dogs, who wear different colour collars for ease of identifying whilst being recorded.

Sometimes there will be several offenders who will spread out and walk across a field, trying to locate and bolt hares, when they will then release the dogs. Sometimes there may be fewer people and they will drive their vehicles around the field, releasing the dogs from the moving vehicles. They frequently commit damage, not only to the soil or crops but also gates, hedges and fencing. Farmers and land owners have been threatened when they confront the offenders.

The offenders for these crimes are also often linked to other serious crime.

As soon as you suspect poachers or hare coursers on your land (or a neighbours land), please call 999 as this is a **crime in progress**. Explain exactly what you are seeing and hearing and try and include as much information as possible; make and/or model of vehicle, registration number if you can see it, or approximate age, number of occupants in vehicle and number of dogs, also obviously, if you have seen or heard firearms.



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 - find and like us at:
Staffordshire Rural & Wildlife Crime



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

