



# Warwickshire POLICE



Philip Seccombe  
Police and Crime  
Commissioner  
for Warwickshire

## Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy



**Warwickshire Rural Watch**  
*closing the gate on rural crime*

2019-2021

## Foreword

**E**ffective neighbourhood policing relies upon working in partnership with other agencies and service providers. It is pivotal to Warwickshire Police's vision of protecting people from harm, by preventing offending and by helping to disrupt and deter serious and organised crime.

The county of Warwickshire has a diverse mix of communities, covering both rural and urban areas, and we recognise that the delivery of policing services into these rural areas needs to be given equal focus as part of a tailored operational approach.

A lot of positive progress has already been made, with dedicated members of staff employed in rural roles by both Warwickshire Police and local authorities. This ensures we provide expert focus and bespoke crime prevention advice, delivering a number of key initiatives, and rural engagement events across the county, such as the Rural Watch and Supported Villages schemes, which continue to go from strength to strength.

However we recognise there is more to do. Improvements will be made to the consistency and breadth of our communication, and investment into a Rural Crime Policing Team will provide access to dedicated experts who understand the specific needs of rural communities and can provide practical help to solve problems facing communities. We will continue to strengthen relationships with neighbouring forces, partners and

regional and national agencies to effectively understand, prevent and respond to criminality in rural areas.

Rural areas can have a strong sense of community and Warwickshire Police needs to be part of this. This Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy is an important step towards providing reassurance to our rural communities that Warwickshire Police is committed to understanding local needs, engaging in regular dialogue and working together to solve problems.

We recognise that the impact of incidents or crimes can be higher in rural communities, and that people may feel vulnerable because of their isolated location. This makes it particularly important that we meet the aims of this strategy which run in parallel with both the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner and those of the National Rural Affairs Strategy.

By implementing this strategy, we will demonstrate our drive and commitment to protect people from harm across all rural communities within Warwickshire.



**Alex Franklin-Smith**

Assistant Chief Constable,  
Warwickshire Police

# Introduction from the Police and Crime Commissioner

Warwickshire is a diverse county, with a mix of small urban populations surrounded by large rural areas, complete with rolling hillsides, agricultural businesses, internationally-acclaimed tourist hot spots, areas of outstanding beauty and also geographically isolated communities. It's also generally a very safe place to live, work and invest in, with lower levels of crime than many other parts of the country.

That does not mean that our rural communities have no issues of concern. The effect of crime on rural communities can be immense, with cost of theft of livestock, farm machinery and plant equipment having a devastating impact on agricultural businesses. This can also lead to an increased feeling of vulnerability, something which cannot ever be overlooked.

The scale of our rural landscape also means it can be more difficult to police, with large areas to patrol and a perception in rural communities that they don't receive their fair share of resources.

During my term of office as Police and Crime Commissioner, I have met with members of the public from across all parts of Warwickshire and I have been struck that there is often a common thread to the feedback they give me, regardless of whether they come from a rural community or one of our towns. Fundamentally, they want the reassurance that police will be there when they need them, arriving in a reasonable time and with the right level of equipment and expertise to help resolve the situation.

Equally, they want the police to be visible in their local communities to give them reassurance and confidence that their issues really are being addressed. They also want them to work hard to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and that communities are not exploited by serious and organised crime.

While these concerns may not necessarily be unique, the work that is undertaken to address

them in our rural areas needs to be. That's why this new strategy from Warwickshire Police is so important. It sets out a new and clear vision for tackling crime and supporting victims, while also seeking to ensure that crime is prevented from happening in our rural communities in the first place.

For my part, I will continue to support Warwickshire Police in giving rural crime the priority it deserves, ensuring the right resources are in place to make a real difference. The introduction of the new Rural Crime Team is an excellent recent example of how the additional investment taxpayers have made possible is being directly used to improve the focus given to this important area of policing. Equally, I have always been keen to ensure that the grants and commissioned services I provide are beneficial and accessible to all parts of the county.

As a member of the National Rural Crime Network, I also work with other Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales to highlight some of the challenges rural crime poses and campaign at national level for a fairer share of funding. I also continue to work to strengthen relationships with neighbouring police areas, regional and national agencies and communities themselves, in order to respond to the threats rural crime presents.



I look forward to seeing the positive impact that this combined work will have for communities across Warwickshire in the coming years.

**Philip Seccombe TD**  
Warwickshire Police and  
Crime Commissioner

## Overview

The county of Warwickshire is largely rural in nature, and a significant percentage of our communities live and work in this setting. The challenge for the police has always been to deliver a consistent policing service across all areas, in the face of high demands that are brought about by the more densely populated urban areas. Crime in rural areas has changed from opportunistic thieves to organised criminal gangs that target and exploit rural communities across a range of crime types, from organised theft of agricultural machinery to large numbers of livestock destined for illegal meat markets. Combined with the increase in media attention, this has led to a heightened fear of crime within rural communities. Policing these large areas comes with its own unique challenges and achieving blanket police coverage at all times and in all areas of the county is sadly unachievable. However, it is acknowledged that more can be done to address the concerns of rural communities who feel particularly vulnerable.



That data is drawn from only one insurer's statistics, but it is acknowledged that the cost is representative of the impact rural crime is having not only financially, but emotionally on the people living and working in these areas.

Warwickshire Police is committed to tackling rural crime and to understanding, listening and reacting to the concerns of the community. This includes the prevention, disruption and prosecution of criminal activity across all rural areas of the county. The new Rural Crime Team will be leading on the themes outlined in this Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams will continue to be the face of policing to communities, but there are many other aspects to Warwickshire Police that support the provision of policing services within rural Warwickshire. These include response officers, Special Constables and officers that are dedicated to patrolling the road network.

*'For the second year in succession, rural crime has risen dramatically. In 2018 rural crime cost the UK £49.9m... this is an increase of 12%'*

Source - (NFU Rural Crime Report, 2019).



# Aims

**In line with the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan our approach will be to:**

- Engage with, understand and empower our rural communities
- Build strong partnerships
- Prevent and reduce crime
- Put victims first

**In support of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Rural Affairs Strategy 2018 – 2021, we will seek to achieve our aims by:**

- Building safer rural communities
- Enhancing public engagement
- Increasing public confidence in the police
- Empowering our communities
- Developing stronger partnership working
- Embedding rural crime as 'business as usual'
- Raising the profile of rural affairs



# Priorities

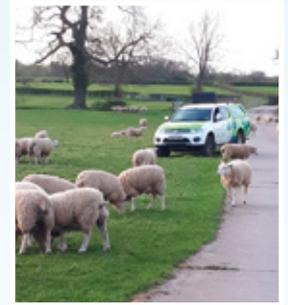
In achieving these aims, one of the main challenges is defining what rural crime is, which is commonly acknowledged across police forces nationally as:

*Any crime or anti-social behaviour that takes place in a rural location\**

\*Rural locations are defined by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) output areas (excluding market towns), but including hamlets, isolated dwellings and village output areas.

In having such a broad definition, it is important to have designated thematic areas, developed from police analysis and work with key partners, for the Rural Crime Team to focus on. This allows the team

to prioritise the type of offences they are involved with, concentrating on those causing significant harm to rural communities, farms and businesses.



## Rural & Wildlife Crime Strategy

Delivering the NPCC priorities in conjunction with the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan.

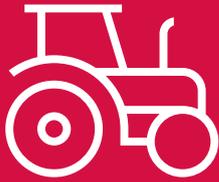
### OUR AIMS

- To engage with, understand and empower our rural communities
  - To build strong partnerships
  - To prevent and reduce crime
  - To put victims first

### AREAS OF WILDLIFE AND RURAL CRIME FOCUS

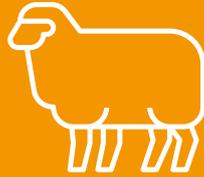
<b>BADGER PERSECUTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve recording of incidents, crimes and quality of intelligence.</li> <li>• Improve investigation process.</li> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> </ul>	<b>BAT PERSECUTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> <li>• Improve quality of intelligence and investigation process.</li> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> </ul>	<b>CITES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase disruption activities and detection.</li> <li>• Increase quality of intelligence. Improve analytical assessments.</li> <li>• Increase investigation and enforcement outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>RAPTOR PERSECUTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> <li>• Increase enforcement activity.</li> </ul>	<b>POACHING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> <li>• Build trust and relationships with partners/communities.</li> <li>• Increase intelligence/enforcement.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> </ul>	<b>FARM MACHINERY, PLANT AND VEHICLE THEFT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce theft.</li> <li>• Share intelligence and best practice.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> </ul>	<b>LIVESTOCK OFFENCES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce theft/worrying.</li> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> </ul>	<b>FUEL THEFT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce theft.</li> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> </ul>	<b>EQUINE CRIME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce crime.</li> <li>• Improve cross border collaboration.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> </ul>	<b>FLY-TIPPING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<b>HERITAGE CRIME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness.</li> <li>• Promote crime prevention.</li> <li>• Work with stakeholders.</li> </ul>
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## Thematic areas of focus:



**Farm Machinery, Plant and Vehicle Theft** – including quad bikes and all-terrain vehicles, vintage tractors, caravans, tools and equipment.

**Objective** – to reduce incidents of theft, share intelligence and best practice, promote crime prevention.



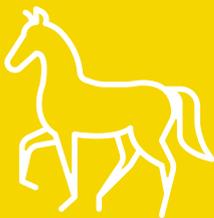
**Livestock Offences** – livestock theft, illegal slaughter, worrying and welfare.

**Objective** – to reduce incidents of theft, illegal slaughter and worrying, increase public awareness and share intelligence with other forces and partners.



**Fuel Theft** – including heating oil, diesel and petrol from storage tanks, vehicles and plant.

**Objective** – to reduce incidents of theft in rural and business locations, increase awareness and improve crime prevention.



**Equine** – Horse, tack, trailers and horse boxes, equipment, welfare and fly grazing issues.

**Objective** – to reduce crime, raise awareness, promote crime prevention and work with other forces and partners.



**Fly-tipping/Waste Disposal** – household, commercial waste and organised criminality.

**Objective** – to raise awareness, collaborate with stake holders, share intelligence.



**Heritage Crime** – offences causing theft or loss to heritage assets, including buildings, monuments, sites, landscapes and objects.

**Objective** – to raise awareness, collaborate with stakeholders and share intelligence.

# Delivery Plan



## Prevention

In partnership with key stakeholders we will raise the profile of the rural community and the issues faced by it. We will do this by:

- Empowering local businesses and communities to protect themselves through advice and guidance on crime prevention.
- Ensuring victims are offered the opportunity to be referred to specially trained rural crime officers to reduce the chance of repeat victimisation and preventing further harm.
- Developing the specialist knowledge and skills of the rural crime team, ensuring they have the right equipment to do the job.
- Using social media and police websites to get key messages on emerging threats or issues disseminated to the rural community in a timely manner.
- Supporting effective watch schemes and key initiatives.
- Working with Community Safety Partnerships to engage with rural communities and supporting crime reduction.
- Continuing investment in the Supported Villages Scheme.
- Delivering effective community engagement.



## Intelligence

Listening to and acting on the concerns of the rural community is at the very heart of the rural crime team. We will continue to improve on the way we share intelligence with other forces, our partners and key individuals, to help us understand problems and assist in the detection and disruption of criminal activity. We will do this by:

- Improving our cross-border sharing of intelligence to better understand and target organised criminal gangs.
- Improving on the way we communicate and share information with key individuals and partners.
- Encouraging the reporting of crimes and incidents to the police.
- Identifying those that are causing the most harm to rural communities and ensure all opportunities are seized in capturing intelligence.
- Having appropriate processes in place to recognise and capture rural crime intelligence at first point of contact.
- Ensuring golden hour principles of evidence capture are maximised in rural crimes and seize all available forensic opportunities.



## Enforcement

We will target offenders who cause the most harm and the areas affected by them. We will do this by:

- Ensuring an effective police response to reports of rural and wildlife crime.
- Routinely carrying out operations with partners, neighbouring police forces and other organisations targeting rural crime.
- Developing new ways of working with rural communities and watch schemes to jointly tackle crime trends and hot spot areas.
- Providing an effective Rural Crime Team with expertise on rural crime themes, that can provide advice and support to investigating officers.
- In matters of serious, complex or repeat victims of rural crime, the Rural Crime Team will take ownership to provide an effective police response.



## Reassurance

We will work with communities, ensuring that people living and working in rural areas feel safe and are confident in the ways they can communicate with the police. We will do this by:

- Supporting effective watch schemes to help improve the way we communicate with rural communities.
- Providing rural communities with timely updates on current trends, activities and emerging threats, plus good news on arrests and operations.
- Providing an input with all newly trained officers on the principles of the rural crime strategy.
- Actively seeking feedback from rural communities on how effective we are at delivering the aims and objectives of this strategy.
- Engaging fully with all relevant rural and wildlife organisations and agencies.
- Making the police more visible in rural areas through public engagement events.

**The support of the public is a critical factor in the success of tackling rural criminality. Making rural communities even safer places to live, work and visit relies on engagement, partnership working and the confidence of local people to report suspicious activity. Warwickshire Police remains committed to this approach and will build on this making further improvements that rural communities want to see.**

# Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy



Warwickshire  
**POLICE**

[www.warwickshire.police.uk](http://www.warwickshire.police.uk)

[www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk](http://www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk)

 [WarwickshireRuralCrimeTeam](#)

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