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***Royston Rural Watch, March 2020***

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Sgt Lee Jessup 560

***Our Non - Emergency Number 101***

**On the Beat –**

**Protect your vehicle from catalytic converter theft**

• Drivers warned of rise in catalytic converter thefts.

• Free catalytic converter marking offered to drivers.

• Visit www.herts.police.uk/crimeprevention for tips on protecting your vehicle.

Hertfordshire Constabulary is offering drivers and businesses the opportunity to protect their vehicles from thieves targeting catalytic converters.

Following a rise in these kinds of thefts across the country and in Hertfordshire the Constabulary has acquired security marking kits, which can help to deter thieves from stealing the units. There has been a great response so far from drivers wanting to take the chance to make their vehicles secure.

Catalytic converters, which are fitted to vehicle exhaust systems, are targeted by thieves because of the precious metals they contain. Due to where these units are located on the vehicle they are difficult to access and remove.

Inspector Nicola Dean, from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Crime Reduction Unit said: “Thieves have been targeting specific models and we have been offering free security marking to owners of pre 2008 Honda Jazz models, Toyota Prius (2004 to 2016 inclusive) and Toyota Arius (2012 to 2018 inclusive). Anyone who would like to arrange free catalytic convertor marking can contact Crime Prevention Officer Darren Cowell or by calling 01707 354668.

“We urge the public to remain vigilant and report incidents of suspected catalytic converter theft, particularly where people are trying to get under cars in public car parks or on public roads. If you see this happening, please call 999 immediately.”

In order to minimise the chance of becoming a victim of catalytic converter theft we offer the following advice:

• Lock your car in a garage when parked at night.

• When using a garage is not possible, park close to fences, walls or a kerb

with the exhaust being closest to the fence, wall or kerb to make theft difficult.

• Consider fitting CCTV on your home or driveway, to help deter thieves.

• Use PIR or LED security lighting to make your vehicle more visible and this can also act as a deterrent.

• If your catalytic converter is bolted on, consider having the bolts welded to make removal difficult.

• Fit protective coverings on catalytic converters, such as the Toyota manufactured CATLOC device, (these are made for Toyota Prius made between 2004 and 2009) as these can make it much more difficult for thieves.

• Have your catalytic converter etched or forensically marked, and put stickers in the windscreen to say this has been done.

• Look for car parks with a Secured Car Park sign which have recognised levels of security. If you have a garage at home, ensure you use it and lock it properly.

• Noisy gravel on your drive can help deter a would-be thief, as they don't want to alert you to their approach.

**Road Policing Unit support national mobile phone campaign**

Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Road Policing Unit is reminding the public not to use their mobile phones while driving or face a minimum £200 fine and six points on their license.

The warning comes as the NPCC launches its mobile phone campaign this month, which will see officers targeting motorists using handheld devices while behind the wheel.

Chief Inspector Jon Roche, Head of Roads Policing for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire said: “Using a handheld device while driving means taking your concentration and your eyes off the road. That’s incredibly dangerous and puts you and other road users at significant risk. Our message is don’t do it. Wait until you reach your destination or make sure you park safely first.”

Last year more than 1,100 people across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire were caught using their mobile phones while driving. The majority of offenders were men (80%) and over half (59%) were aged between 20 and 39.

534 of these offenders were caught in Hertfordshire.

People who have passed their driving test within the past two years and are caught using their phone will automatically be disqualified from driving and need a re-test with the DVLA. The penalties for using a mobile phone while driving can be higher if a case goes to court

**Local Crime Information**

**G4E - Ashwell, Hinxworth, Bygrave, Newnham and Caldecote**

Theft, Newnham – On 31st January to 3rd February a trailer was stolen from a field in Newnham village. A large amount of hay bails were moved to access the trailer, the trailer was attached to a vehicle and dragged away. 41/10295/20 Refers

Theft, Ashwell - Between 4pm on 1st February to 2nd February a 12-volt battery was stolen from a field which led to 44 sheep lose. 41/9908/20 refers

Outbuilding Burglary, Bygrave – Between 13th and 14th February a shed was targeted in the village. Unknown method of entry and the offenders stole a lawnmower. 41/14410/20 refers

Criminal Damage, Ashwell - Overnight 21st February to 22nd February a car was parked in Walkden, Ashwell. Whilst the car was parked at the location the aerial was snapped off and the car was scratched with a key or similar. 41/16528/20 refers

**G4D – Barley, Barkway, Reed, Therfield, Kelshall and**

**Nuthampstead**

Outbuilding Burglary, Kelshall – Between 6th February to 8th February, the offender has pushed through a hedge that connect the garden to a field at the rear. The offender cut a padlock and removed a lawn mower, hedge trimmer and a chainsaw. 41/11780/20

Outbuilding Burglary, Barley – Between 14th and 19th February a shed was targeted in Cambridge Road. The offender entered the garden via the fields at the rear and hit a shed. Various gardening items were stolen. 41/15315/20

Burglary, Therfield – Between 16th February to 1st March a unoccupied house in the Tuthill area of Therfield was broken into. Nothing taken but damage was caused to the property. 041/18892/20

Outbuilding Burglary, Reed - Between 21st February and 22nd February garden shed and garage was targeted in Crown Lane. The offenders forced the locks to gain entry, Bikes and gardening power tools taken. 41/16489/20

Theft from Motor Vehicle, Reed - Between 23rd to 24th February a car was left unlocked in Crown Lane. The offender has opened the vehicle and removed a sat nav and a rucksack. 41/16883/20

**G3C - Sandon, Wallington, Rushden, Clothall and Weston**

Thefts / Outbuilding Burglaries, Wallington - Between 14th and 20th February Wallington village suffered a spate of crime. The offenders targeted outbuildings and vehicles in the village. The offenders targeted any items of value from gardening power tools to lose change left in vehicles. The outbuilding were opened using bolt cutters or similar on padlocks. The vehicles had no sign of forced entry and may have been unlocked.

41/15139/20

41/15643/20

41/15684/20

41/16700/20

Theft, Halls Green - Overnight between 3rd and 4th February the offender smashed a padlock for a gate to gain access to a field. The offenders have stolen a trailer that was stored at the location. 41/10820/20

Outbuilding Burglaries, Clothall – 23rd to 24th February two properties were burgled in Clothall. The offenders have forced a garage door in Ashanger Lane and stolen a large amount of chainsaws on the same night another shed was burgled at a property near the Church and gardening power tools were stolen. 41/1689/20 – 41/17791/20

***Your local Neighbourhood Police Teams website***

<http://snt.herts.police.uk/Teams.aspx?TeamID=G01>

Useful Links

<http://www.herts.police.uk/>

<http://www.doglost.co.uk/>

<http://www.stolenhorseregister.com/>

**Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team Tel – 01438 757935**