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***Royston Rural Watch, September 2021***

PC Mark Ellwood 371 & PCSO 6531 Penny Tomsett, PCSO Chris Brabrook 6522

Sgt Jon Vine 1841

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

**On the Beat** –

**Seven police forces become borderless in the fight against hare coursing**

The borders between the seven forces have been removed, making apprehending and prosecuting offenders easier.

This move supports the ongoing national initiative - Operation Galileo.

If you witness hare coursing taking place, please dial 999 straightaway.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has teamed up with six other police forces in the Eastern Region in an effort to tackle hare coursing.

The borders between the forces, which include Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent, have been removed when using certain tactics, making apprehending and prosecuting offenders easier.

The agreement, which has been completed with the support of the Crown Prosecution Service, means the forces become one when using certain powers. This will assist with the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), the seizure of dogs and the sharing of all interactions and movements of people suspected to be involved in hare coursing.

This move supports the ongoing national initiative - Operation Galileo – which aims to tackle hare coursing.

Sergeant Ryan Hemmings from Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Rural Operational Support Team (ROST) said: “I’m delighted we’ve been able to reach this agreement. It’s an important step forward in our ongoing efforts to tackle hare coursing and rid our rural areas of this cruel blood sport

“The agreement effectively means that anyone caught committing anti-social behaviour (ASB) related to coursing, say in Norfolk, would be seen as also committing this in Hertfordshire.

“If the same person were to carry on their behaviour in Hertfordshire, proactive measures can take place using the ASB legislation, and if that same person was to continue for a third time, in say Bedfordshire, a prosecution can commence – alongside any other action as a result of earlier behaviour.

“It means that if someone is involved in three incidents of ASB linked to hare coursing they will be prosecuted, irrespective of which area they commit the offences in.

“The subsequent prosecution would then allow officers to apply for court orders following conviction. These can include driving disqualifications, Criminal Behaviour Orders, the forfeiture of assets - for example dogs and vehicles.”

Hare coursing traditionally begins in September when the fields have been harvested and ploughed, making them the perfect ground for the illegal blood sport. Hare coursing causes damage to crops, harms animal welfare and threatens the rural community. It can result in intimidation and even violence.

Landowners are urged to consider blocking entrances to their fields with ditches, fencing or trees or even barriers like barrels filled with concrete.

Anyone who sees hare coursing taking place is asked to contact police immediately on 999 and provide officers with a description of the people involved, any registration numbers, vehicle descriptions and the location and direction of travel. Its important people don’t confront hare coursers or put themselves at risk.

If you have information about hare coursing and it’s not currently happening, or have been a victim of the crime, you can report information online, speak to an operator in our Force Communications Room via our online web chat or call the non-emergency number 101.

**You lose it if you leave it open**

Local officers appeal to motorists to keep their cars and belongings secure

Opportunist thieves continue to target insecure cars for rich pickings

'Lock it when you leave it' is the message from Royston Rural Neighbourhood Team.

Opportunist thieves who target unlocked vehicles were in action again in the villages recently. A number of cars had items removed as offenders cruised the streets trying door handles and hoping for a good return.

“Sadly, this is an ongoing problem around the villages and local towns,” explained Neighbourhood Inspector Patrick McPeake..

“We are receiving reports of thefts from vehicles, where personal belongings have been left within the vehicle, almost every day. And there is no secret method that these thieves are using. They are simply trying car doors and finding those that are unlocked and stealing whatever they can.

“People always ask us what we are doing about these thefts, but my question to local residents is - what are you doing about it? If you’re not locking your car doors and removing valuables, then you are inviting this type of activity and you increase your chances of being a victim of crime.

“People also ask us - why don’t you investigate these crimes and arrest the offenders? Well, we do and we have. Over the last year we have arrested and charged offenders for these types of offences. However, when they are convicted at court, they are often released with a fine. That means they are back out on the street trying your car door handles, stealing your bank cards and spending your hard- earned money.

“We can patrol these areas as much as we like, but we need help from the public, who also need to take ownership of this problem. We’re not seeing cars being broken in to or special devices being used to unlock them - this is simply down to negligence and criminals will take advantage of it. So, my message to you is clear - lock your car doors and remove any valuables.”

For further advice on how to protect your vehicle go to

[www.herts.police.uk/protectyourproperty](http://www.herts.police.uk/protectyourproperty)

**Constabulary colleagues come together for rural conference**

Officers and staff from across the Constabulary attended.

Presentations were given by colleagues and external speakers.

Attendees gained an insight into to devastating effects of rural crime.

Officers and staff from across Hertfordshire Constabulary came together for a conference last week, to learn more about the issues facing the rural community and how they can better support them.

The two-day course was run by the constabulary’s Rural Operational Support Team (ROST) and featured presentations from policing colleagues and external guest speakers, including representatives from the National Farmers’ Union and the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Attendees were able to get an insight into the massive impact that crimes such as hare coursing, sheep worrying and theft can have on farmers, as well as learning about more specialist investigations involving wildlife.

It was also an opportunity for colleagues to share learning, knowledge and expertise which may assist with any future investigations.

ROST Sergeant Ryan Hemmings said: “Many people may not see rural crime as a priority issue, but for those living in these communities, the impact of it can be absolutely devastating. We want to ensure that we are doing all we can to support our rural communities across the county, to make them feel safer, build relationships and to ultimately increase their confidence in us.

“This conference helped to further educate officers on the issues that farmers and those living in remote areas face on a daily basis. It was also a chance for those working within other roles across the constabulary to understand how they could use their expertise to help.

“I’d like to thank all those who attended, the guest speakers who gave such useful and interesting insights and Lucas Lane Sports Club in Hitchin for hosting us.”

You can report information about rural crime online, speak to an operator in our Force Communications Room via our online web chat or call the non-emergency number 101. If a crime is in progress, always dial 999.

Alternatively, you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via their untraceable online form (opens in a new window).

You can use our anonymous community voice platform ‘echo’ to let us know what you think we should be prioritising in your area. Your feedback will help towards shaping our local policing priorities, initiatives and campaigns. Tell us your thoughts.

To receive police messages about a range of topics including burglaries, scams and missing people in your local area, sign up to OWL or download the ‘OWL crime alerts’ app from your app store.

**Local Crime Information**

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

**Attempted Burglary,** St Mary of Magdalene, Caldecote – Overnight on 2nd to 3rd of August the church in Caldecote was targeted. The side door was forced and once inside damage was caused. 41/59432/21

**Theft from Motor Vehicle’s**, Homefield / High Street, Hinxworth – Overnight on 3rd to the 4th August a number of vehicles were targeted in the village. None of the vehicles showed signs of forced entry, some vehicles were confirmed to have been left unlocked. Six separate reports were received in this series.

**Theft of Motor Vehicle**, Kingsland Way, Ashwell– Between 17th and 18th August a Mercedes GLC was stolen from a drive in Kingsland Way, Ashwell. 41/63634/21 Refers

**Attempted Burglary**, High Street, Hinxworth – On 22nd August a resident was alerted to two loud bangs at his property. The resident went to his patio door and saw a male wearing a balaclava attempting to break into his home with a crowbar. On seeing the resident, the male turned and ran, he was followed by two other males. 41/64947/21 Refers

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

**Nuthampstead**

**Theft of Motor Vehicle**, Church End, Barley – On 11th August at 15.43 the victim was in Church Lane, Barley. She pulled up in her Black Ford Kuga and threw the keys on her seat to run into the local shop. At some point during the time the victim was in the shop the offender has got into the vehicle and used the keys to drive away. 41/61766/21 Refers

**Criminal Damage**, Wallington – Overnight between 7th and 8th August. At some point during the stated night a vehicle has driven over farmland and through a fence causing damage. 41/60881/21 Refers

**Criminal Damage**, Wallington – On 25th August at 14.48 two teenage boys were seen standing on the A505 bridge between Wallington and Clothall common. Stones were thrown at a lorry on the A505 damaging the windscreen of the vehicle. 41/65738/21 Refers

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

**Burglary, A507, Clothall** - On 5th July at 10.15 the offenders forced a wooden front door to gain entry. Once inside the offenders targeted cash and jewellery and left via the back door. Please note this vehicle was seen leaving a burglary in east herts just prior this burglary occurring. The vehicle was tracked using ANPR systems and was eventually stopped by Police in Henlow. Two men were arrested for this offence. 41/5100/21

**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**