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***Royston Rural Watch, February 2021***

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

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

**On the Beat** –

Warning as more residents lose money to scam police calls

Hertfordshire residents have lost more than £80,000 during January to fraudsters posing as police officers.

The victims were contacted by callers posing as police officers, from either a landline or a mobile number. They were told that there has been fraudulent activity on their bank account. The bogus police officer then asked them to withdraw cash, or in some cases to buy expensive items, to hand over to a courier who attended their address to collect it.

Some fraudsters also asked people to assist in the “investigation” by disclosing their bank details, such as their account and PIN numbers.

The fraudsters use different stories to convince people they are genuine.

**The important thing to remember is that police officers or bank staff would never ask for your bank details, your PIN, or to hand over your cash. You should never give your bank details to anyone.**

Usually the intended victim realises the call is a scam and refuses to part with their details or cash. However, fraudsters can be very persuasive and insistent, which has resulted in some people falling victim to this scam and subsequently losing thousands of pounds.

If you receive a call you’re not expecting, you should be suspicious. The vital things to remember are that your bank and the police would:

• NEVER ask for your bank account details or PIN number over the phone, so do not disclose these to anyone, no matter who they claim to be.

• NEVER ask you to withdraw money and send it to them via a courier, taxi or by any other means.

• NEVER ask you to send your bank cards, or any other personal property, to them via courier, taxi or by any other means. If you have concerns about your bank account, visit your local branch.

• Please share this information with your older relatives and friends: this crime has a devastating effect on people and we need to raise awareness to prevent further people becoming victims.

• Report any calls you believe are suspicious to the police on 101. Please remember to wait at least five minutes before calling police or use a mobile or neighbour’s phone.

Join Neighbourhood Watch, a great way to keep your home and your community safe, as well as help us reduce crime. You can join more than 160,000+ households in Hertfordshire and receive our alerts and advice.

If you join Neighbourhood Watch you will receive regular local policing updates and alerts from your local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team via email, or by telephone if preferred, using Hertfordshire’s award-winning Online Watch Link (OWL) communication system. The messages will give crime prevention tips, fraud and scam advice and information about how you can help us, for example by looking out for stolen property or helping find missing

**Keeping dogs under control around livestock**

• Dog owners are being reminded to keep their dogs under control.

• There has been an increase in animals being attacked across Hertfordshire.

• Anyone in charge of a dog could be found guilty of an offence.

As lambing season approaches, Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Rural Operational Support Team (ROST) is calling on dog owners to ensure their pets are kept under control at all times while out walking.

“Sadly, the number of dog attacks on livestock across the county have increased over the past few weeks,” said PC Tim Armstrong from the ROST.

“It is crucial that you keep your dog on a short lead around livestock, even if you can usually trust it to come when called. If you live in or near an agricultural area, you must also make sure that your dog cannot escape from your property as it may find its way onto land containing livestock.”

Under the Protection of Livestock Act 1953, if a dog worries sheep on agricultural land, the person in charge of the dog is guilty of an offence.

The act considers ‘sheep worrying’ to include attacking sheep, chasing them in a way that may cause injury, suffering, abortion or loss of produce, or being at large (i.e. not on a lead or otherwise under close control) in a field or enclosure in which there are sheep. The Act does not require livestock to be killed for this offence to be committed.

Dog owners can also be convicted for ‘allowing their dog to be dangerously out of control’ and in some cases owners have been cautioned or summonsed to court.

PC Armstrong continued: “I’d also like to remind people to please be respectful of farm land and crops while out walking, to help protect the livelihood of our local farmers who are working hard to keep the nation fed.”

If you see an incident of sheep worrying in progress you should call 999.

If the incident has already happened and is no longer in progress 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.

Alternatively, you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via their untraceableNew window online form.

**Police warn motorists not to use mobile phones while driving**

• Using a mobile phone while driving is a leading cause of collisions

• Hertfordshire Constabulary is urging all motorists to put their mobile phones away

The dangers of using a mobile phone while driving will be highlighted this month as part of a national road safety campaign

Using a mobile phone while driving is a leading cause of collisions and many of those result in serious injury or death. Last year, over a quarter of all collisions in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire that involved a motorist who was using their mobile phone, ended in fatality or serious injury.

For this reason, Hertfordshire Constabulary is urging all motorists to put their mobile phones away and avoid unnecessary distractions.

Chief Inspector Stephen O’Keeffe, Head of the tri-force Roads Policing Unit, said: “You might think glancing down at your phone is ok but not looking where you are driving is incredibly dangerous. At that moment you are not aware of what is happening around you. It only takes a second for circumstances to change and for you to be involved in a collision, either with another road user or a pedestrian.

“At a time when emergency services are under unprecedented strain, we must do everything in our power to look after ourselves and those around us. That includes not putting lives at risk by driving dangerously.”

It is recommended that drivers put their phones on silent or better still, turn them off, and place them in the glove compartment before setting off.

Motorists who use their phone while driving face a minimum £200 fine and six points on their license. These figures can be much higher if a case goes to court. Offenders who passed their test within two years will be automatically disqualified from driving and will need to take their DVLA test again.

Chief Inspector Simon Tabert said: “There is no excuse for using your phone whilst driving. Even just taking your eyes off the road for a split second, for something as trivial as changing a song or switching radio stations, could have life-changing consequences – not just for you, but for other innocent road users or pedestrians too. It is never, ever worth the risk.”

**Local Crime Information**

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

No Reported

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

**Nuthampstead**

**Criminal damage – High Street, Barkway** – On the 1st January a victim reported that two tyres were slashed whilst parked outside the home address. 41/112/21 refers.

**Criminal damage – High Street, Barkway** – On the 1st January a victim reported that four tyres were slashed whilst parked outside the home address. 41/129/21 refers.

**Criminal damage – High Street, Barkway** – On the 13th January a vehicle was parked at a home address in High Street, Barkway. The offender has approached the vehicle and has smashed a back window and front passenger side window. 41/2905/21 refers

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

**Attempted Theft – Redhill Rushden, Sandon** – On the 9th January a victim found a male loading metal kept on his property into the back of his van. When challenged the male returned the items and left the property. 41/1972/21 refers

**Dogs worrying livestock – Warren Lane, Clothall** - On the 10th January a witnessed called Police and reported that two Staffordshire terrier cross Labrador dogs were on farmland chasing sheep. 41/2346/21 refers

**Fraud – Rushden Road, Sandon** – On the 27th January a victim informed the Police that he had received 2 phone calls that day from an aggressive male demanding money. The victim bank transferred £400, 41/4357/21

**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**