



Wednesday, 25 September 2013

The Postmill Centre · South Normanton · Derbyshire

Report



Foreword

For too long our county has been subjected to wildlife and rural crime. It has caused considerable harm, distress and cost to our farmers, local businesses and people further afield as well as to wild animals, birds and our environment.

Some of these criminal acts are unspeakably cruel. Others cause a range of problems to farmers and rural communities, including theft and damage. We also know that this type of criminality is linked with serious and organised crime and I urge everyone, most strongly, to report crimes and indeed suspicions of crime, to the police.

By your very presence here today I know that you, who represent all corners of the rural community, share my concerns and those of the law-abiding people of Derbyshire. Coming together to discuss these issues will, I am sure, be an important step towards making a stronger, concerted effort in tackling them. By working together with the police and our partners, I feel sure we can find the answers we need to protect our heritage and our rural communities.

My commitment to reducing wildlife crime is a key area of focus within my first Police and Crime Plan. And there are added benefits to protecting Derbyshire's rare species of wildlife and outstanding natural landscape, as they make a valuable contribution to the local economy thanks to the tourists who flock to our county every year. But this issue is not limited to Derbyshire. I believe that this type of crime and its far-reaching effects should be of national priority.

As part of my pledge to protect the Derbyshire landscape for future generations, I have been gathering information with a view to this Summit looking at the options available for enhancing the investigation of wildlife crime. Let's now get down to work, pool our ideas and experience and protect our rural communities from further harm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Alan Charles

Police and Crime Commissioner
for Derbyshire



Rural and Wildlife Summit 2013

Over 70 delegates attended the Summit including representatives from the police, partnership organisations and those affected by rural and wildlife crime. A number of presentations were delivered and there were breakout sessions facilitated by the speakers which gave an opportunity for delegates to discuss the issues, network with likeminded colleagues and to share ideas about how the objective to reduce rural and wildlife crime can be taken forward.

Here follows an outline summary of each presentation and a note of the key issues discussed in the breakout sessions as well as some of the comments received as feedback from delegates about the event.

1

Wildlife crime partnership working and intelligence gathering

Detective Inspector Nevin Hunter, National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU)



Summary

- Introduced PAW (Partnership for Action against Wildlife crime); group of agencies involved in tackling wildlife crime.
- NWCU: police unit covering the whole of the UK that can be used as a free resource by the police. Provide intelligence, analysis and operational support to deliver the UK Wildlife Crime Priorities. Coordination from local to national level as well as communication with and between law enforcement agencies. Helps publicise cases, breaking news also displayed on www.nwcu.police.uk.
- Consider intelligence to be key - use National Intelligence Model and monitor intelligence information from forces across the UK. Up to date intelligence circulated fortnightly, and intelligence submission and sharing, both within and between the police and non-governmental organisations is promoted.



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- NWCU are Involved in operational planning and activity, and provide partnership support to Police Wildlife Crime Officers (PWCOs) for duration of investigations, including court appearances.
- Wildlife crime is still a crime, and those individuals involved in committing crime are just as large a problem as those involved in other crimes. There are links between wildlife crime and serious and organised crime, so tackling wildlife crime can often lead to intelligence to help tackle serious and organised crime.
- Health implications also an issue - link to the illegal import of diseased exotic animals, such as the Palm Civet from China to which the SARS virus was traced, and imported cattle infected with Foot and Mouth disease. We can't afford to ignore wildlife crime.



‘Good to know that so many people/organisations are involved in rural/wildlife crime.’



2

Establishing a rural and wildlife crime network

Nick Payne, Rural Services Network (RSN)



Summary

- RSN aim to represent the case for better service provision, to exchange information and to develop and share best practice.
- Rural crime network needed to build partnerships, improve information and best practice sharing, improve engagement with rural communities and build resilience with those communities. Should be applied in a local context.
- Regional comparisons of techniques and outcomes to develop best practice.
- On a national level, can facilitate discussion amongst relevant partnership organisations and act as a forum on effective Community Safety initiatives. Possible link to All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services.
- Need a multi-sectoral and multi-agency network that has strong links to policy and decision makers in order to work strategically and refine policy and practice. Can sit outside of yet be complimentary to objectives of PCCs and ACPO. PCCs could provide more of a link between RCN and police.
- Potential pitfalls identified as relating to funding concerns for rural policing, and rural crime not being an issue for all PCCs. Resourcing the network may also be difficult.
- Next steps: to establish a steering group, draft terms of reference, identify a chair and key partners and agree an initial work programme.



3

The cost to farming and agricultural crime

Clive Harris, National Farmer's Union (NFU) Mutual



Summary

- Produce Annual Rural Crime Survey statistics, including costs of rural crime and details of items targeted, used to provide intelligence. 2012/13 showed a reduction in total cost of rural crime and agri-crime. Tractor thefts reducing since 2010.
- Partnerships with ACPO Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service, Plant & Agricultural National Intelligence Unit. Dedicated NFU Mutual Agricultural Vehicle Executive challenges agricultural theft.
- Joint operations with police. Intelligence identifies thefts as occurring at a higher rate on county borders, also increase in medium value vehicles being illegally transported to Europe and improvement in quality of forged documents for illegal cross border transportation.
- CESAR - Construction Equipment Security And Registration - datatag to protect farm equipment from theft, supported by HO and ACPO. Discounted rates on CESAR IT! days. Offer discounts on insurance policies where equipment is CESAR and/or tracker fitted. Free glass security etching for NFU Mutual members.
- Encourage local activity, engagement with the community, cross border police work and improved communication of data and intelligence.
- Country Crime Fighters Awards - cash prizes given to help fund initiatives.

4

RSPB: Birdcrime in Derbyshire

Mark Thomas, Senior Investigation Officer

Presentation given by Duncan McNiven,
Senior Investigations Officer, RSPB



Summary

- Problematic downward trend in Goshawk and Peregrine populations in the Dark Peak area, occurring since 1999. Goshawk now extinct and Peregrine in catastrophic decline. Both doing fine in White Peak however.
- ‘Nestwatch’ project attempted to address decline in Derwent Valley since 2001, however evidence of numerous cases of tampering with nests and killing of adult birds mean large drop in nest productivity since 2006 and no successful Goshawk or Peregrine nests since 2008. Two cases of Gamekeeper prosecution (2002, 2010).
- Successful prosecution case discussed as an example.



‘Good to see the full engagement of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Assistant Chief Constable for the day.’



5

RSPCA: Wildlife Crime

Ian Briggs, Chief Inspector, Special Operations Unit



Summary

- RSPCA hotline gets one call every 30 seconds. In 2012, 150,833 complaints investigated and 194,695 animals rescued. Resulted in 4,168 convictions.
- 16 officers cover Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.
- Special Operations Unit gathers and collates intelligence relating to organised animal cruelty in England and Wales.
- In Derbyshire, greatest percentage intelligence relating to wild bird trapping and trade (34.9%), followed by dog hunting (15.9%), dog fighting (11.1%), dog breeding and trade (9.5%), and equine and cock/poultry fighting (both 7.9%).
- Finch trapping highlighted. Adhesive applied to perch to capture the birds for sale as captive songbirds. Wild finches harmed by caging as attempt to fly unrestricted while confined. Injuries to head above beak.
- Problem with badger digging – not only harms badgers but also dogs used for the purpose. When trapped in burrows, badgers often fight back, causing a great deal of injury to lower jaw area of dogs. Those involved do not take dogs to vets due to risk of identification so dogs' conditions continue to worsen with successive badger digging attempts. Often result in flesh torn from lower jaw and permanent disfiguration to jaw.

6

Honeybank Birds of Prey Diversionary Project

James McKay, Honeybank Conservation & Study Centre



Summary

- Works on the concept of animals as social support and facilitators, can act as a symbolic vehicle for expression of emotionally-laden topics and become living instruments for learning new skills and ways of thinking and behaving.
- Honeybank approached by Sgt. Dave Harrison to run a course on falconry (LANTRA) with young people identified as being at risk of committing ASB and crime. The LANTRA (Land Based Training) course could supply the young people with pathways to further learning and/or paid work, involvement in related clubs or societies and generally develop them as responsible members of the community.
- Next steps suggested involved the development of further courses, partnership working to establish more defined exit strategies, and possible development of 'Animal Roadshows.
- Retention on the course was considered to be high, and the project an overall success. Following James McKay's presentation, certificates were presented to three of the boys who had completed the course by the PCC.



7

Serious and Organised Crime

Assistant Chief Constable Karl Smethem,
Derbyshire Constabulary



Summary

- Importance of gathering information and intelligence on Rural, Wildlife and Heritage crime
- An effective process is required to facilitate the assessment of risk and threat relating to Wildlife and Rural Crime both now and in the future. This assessment needs to be shared with partner agencies
- Development of a strategy and options to address the issue of wildlife, rural and heritage crime within Derbyshire
- These types of crime are under reported and an improved level of knowledge is required
- This process requires joined up thinking and the appropriate allocation of resources
- The force is looking to formalise the role of Wildlife, Rural and Heritage (WRH) Officers within the three policing divisions of Derbyshire
- Development of a Gold, Silver and Bronze governance structure
- The roll out of the Farm Watch scheme across Derbyshire
- Promotion of the recruitment of WRH Special Constables and Volunteers and consideration of training opportunities
- This Summit is an excellent opportunity to inform the progression of the above initiatives in coordination and partnership with key agencies



Summary

- Problem with perception in some areas that wildlife crime does not matter yet it is still a valid crime. Many rural and wildlife crime criminals commit other offences too, link to ASB, theft, firearms, environmental and animal welfare criminality in the countryside. Often have a history of offending and ASB in other areas too.
- Some aspects are already dealt with and responded to effectively, however there is room for improvement. Making links and analysing intelligence will help police to gain a clearer picture.
- Patchy or non-existent intelligence a big problem with rural crime and likely also wildlife crime. Leads to a perception that wildlife crime is less of a problem than it is, results in lack of police focus and little in the way of resources being diverted towards wildlife crime. Vital that intelligence and information sharing is improved amongst police, partnership agencies and public. Can then make an informed assessment of the scale of rural and wildlife crime and where the problems lie.
- Overview of governance structure for Rural Crime and Heritage Boards within police shown - Gold, Silver and Bronze levels with regular meetings.
- Intelligence strategy: review of incident and intelligence management processes; develop problem profiles for rural, wildlife and heritage crime; support NWCU tactical assessment; raise awareness of issues across organisation to help response; work

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with NWCUC on SOPs to introduce Minimum Standards of Investigation, thus improving confidence; review and develop current incident reporting processes and provide awareness training for call centre staff.

- Communications strategy: review Force Internet and Intranet pages to improve web communication; encourage information sharing and incident reporting by working with and supporting partners; engage communities through Wildlife Crime Officer Network.
- Aim to expand Farm Watch to be county wide.
- Wildlife Crime Officers: 29 volunteer officers across Force (aim to formally recognise role). Linked to Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Response Policing. Meetings to be implemented. Plan to recruit Special Constables from existing officers to bolster network, as well as Community Volunteers.



‘An excellent platform with a wide reaching audience - well done.’



Breakout sessions

1 **How to raise awareness of and minimise wildlife crime?**

- Statistics represent a significant challenge – wildlife crimes aren't required to be recorded as such – makes it difficult to quantify levels of criminal activity.
- Levels of criminal intelligence need to be investigated.
- Having enough evidence to build a case is also a problem.
- Social media is used to 'brag' about crimes against wildlife – questions were raised as to whether these individuals can be tracked and identified.
- “The Dark Web” – communication of highly organised criminality/ personal messaging.
- Trade issues can be picked up through EBay and YouTube – research is being carried out on International Wildlife Crime.
- A multi-agency countrywide working group with a focus/effort to increase public awareness would be effective – setting priorities for the county and relating these to the national picture.
- Duty on partners with wider networks to raise public awareness of issues/incidents that are happening locally and nationally – high profile TV programmes such as Country File and Spring/Autumn Watch could have a role in raising the profile of issues publicly.
- RSPCA produce an Annual Prosecutions Report – opportunity to raise public awareness – guidance to the public, what to look for, how to respond, who to contact.
- Work needs to be done in mapping the level of reporting for wildlife crime – Police, RSPB, RSPCA etc.



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- Derbyshire Alert - awareness messages (crime in particular areas) - two way system which can segregate information and target groups/areas - network is widened with cooperation of Neighbourhood Watch and other organisations.
- Raising public awareness - empty shops in high streets (window spaces, leaflets), phone technology, Derby University (promotion in schools, science clubs etc), Crimestoppers Call centres (promote messages/campaigns). Operation Fearless is an initiative for young people introduced recently by Crimestoppers
- Questions raised regarding illegal fox hunting (RSPCA case) - should the police have dealt with this case?
- Hunting communities - good relationship with police around enforcement.
- Gamekeepers can be a good source of intelligence.
- Caution needs to be exercised to avoid breach of data protection - eg using pictures of number plates as evidence etc
- Strategy for Derbyshire - to encompass prevention, education, intelligence sharing, raising awareness.



2 How to raise awareness of and minimise rural crime?

- Clarification of the offences which are included in 'rural crime' was provided by reference to the ACPO definition – 'any crime or ASB that takes place in a rural location or is identified as such by the victim'.
- It was recognised that there are hotspot crime areas in rural communities, just as there are in urban ones.
- Existing mechanisms for awareness were identified early on in the session – Derbyshire Alert, CSPs, local strategic partnerships, RSN, ECINS, NFU, mobile and local libraries and Crimestoppers.
- Awareness campaigns should identify the nature of rural crime – educate people on the links between what they might see, and criminality, inform where/how offences are happening, and highlight how the offenders protect themselves and their property. Leaflets could be given which include general information and contact numbers.
- People are more likely to report if they feel that they are making a difference and so we need to provide feedback and publicise positive results.
- Media stream was discussed – CPS concerned that it is difficult to use as evidence in court, and for people who are not computer literate.
- Safer Neighbourhood Teams/Parish Councils are valuable – could be used for feedback and awareness training.
- Some people were of the opinion that local farming and rural communities don't want visits from the police – they are busy with work, and an issue of distrust is involved – but they need to be aware of who they can contact if they have any problems.
- Target younger farmers – more likely to use social networks/technology.



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- NFU could distribute leaflets – explanation is required regarding resource management as it is hard to justify if nothing is reported.
- Police need training in rural and wildlife crime – to allow for more effective response to communities.
- Use of mobile networks to spread intelligence has shown success – but mobile coverage is patchy in some areas.
- Tractor tracking devices can minimise crime and aid recovery – NFU offer discounts on the CESAR device but low take-up from farmers led to a push to get manufacturers to fit them as standard. Eg. JCB have fitted the devices since 2008, resulting in a greatly increased recovery rate.
- Joint operations on force borders are a good idea – regional partners should look at borders for each district to improve effectiveness.
- Breaking down theft statistics by manufacturer type helps to identify patterns – owners can be advised on crime prevention – this has been successful when applied to vehicles in the past.

3

How to improve the reporting and recording of rural and wildlife crime intelligence

- Need to clarify what the public are being asked to report on – ensure the public understand the significance of what they may witness.
- 3rd party reporting centres are used for sensitive crimes – possibility for rural/wildlife crime (potentially use similar techniques for child exploitation) – training needs to be delivered regarding intelligence gathering.
- Could be preferable for NGO to run governance board as shouldn't be police led and managed – it might be better if rural/wildlife crime boards are separate.

- Look at organisations involved in PAW at a local level – helps with collating information, share it amongst organisations and report back to the police.
- Small informal group in Bolsover is already successful – public needs to be informed that similar things are being dealt with.
- Potential comparison to animal welfare systems in place, could indicate structures and types of groups involved.
- Community Safety Partnerships could perhaps lead at a strategic level, but need people on the ground.
- Ways to access the general public – campaign for awareness, television programmes (Countryfile, Spring Watch etc), visitor centres – what to report and how/relevant, feedback.
- Perception is that rural crime is less important in comparison to what is happening in the city – need to challenge this.
- Behaviours such as harming animals can be early indicators of psychological and sociopathic tendencies.
- Need to address barriers with 101 and the reporting process – call handlers in 101 may require training in wildlife and rural crime issues – success in Thames Valley where they had 3 month training from partner agencies – if people are reporting to call handlers who understand, then they are more likely to report again.
- May be benefits in a co-ordinating post within police, link between police intelligence and national wildlife groups – discussions are on going regarding possible funding.
- Use rural car parks within the Peak District for publicity– previous campaigns show success



4 How to establish a Rural and Wildlife Crime Network for Derbyshire

- Nick Payne opened the session asking the attendees to consider important areas of crime that hadn't been covered within the summit – a few members pointed out that there was an issue of concern in relation to tackling arson within rural areas.
- Sergeant Belfield – current statistical evidence in relation to hotspot areas was based on the national data and so quite vague.
- This data has not always been strong because of the types of crimes which are recorded.
- Requirement for a needs analysis to identify priority locations and types of crime – a network may be able to support this and raise awareness of different types of crime. This may improve intelligence gathering about specific types of crime to support the police.
- Community Safety Partnerships – 9 CSPs across Derbyshire within Local Authorities. It was highlighted that these could be a vehicle to support a Wildlife Crime Network.
- Although it was pointed out that CSP's priorities are set by reference to statistical data and risks, so it may be difficult to justify prioritising Wildlife Crime.



- National forum – suggestions for this to be run as an online forum – to act as a hub to inform groups of current issues and exchange ideas on best practice.
- The network/forum would require a clear purpose and care needs to be taken not to duplicate work of other existing groups/bodies – a network would be useful but it would have to be managed appropriately.
- The most workable network to be formed would be a web based forum that supported the exchange of information amongst current groups of which Wildlife Crime Officers could be made aware. Existing social networking sites could be utilised (eg facebook). However it was unclear who may have the resources to take the lead on this.
- Farmwatch network and Derbyshire Alert service already exist in order to promote awareness of Rural and Wildlife Crime issues within local areas.
- Jonathan Wright explained that the University had a range of expertise and equipment within their Science department and freely offered this to Wildlife and Crime organisations – he emphasised the University had limited knowledge of existing bodies – further opportunity could be students researching topics to support the local community.

Outcomes – So what have we achieved?

Although it was established that a lack of information and dwindling resources present challenges to the force and partners in tackling this type of crime, it was recognised that there are steps which can be taken to address the issues by improving partnership working and



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raising awareness. It was accepted that rural and wildlife crime does have a significant impact on rural communities and the county as a whole and there are links to other areas of criminality which render these issues worthy of closer examination.

Some key outcomes can be identified as follows:

- Derbyshire Constabulary has put in place a structured approach to delivery of this area of policing with formal recognition of, and widening of the scope of, the divisional wildlife officer roles and a clear operational command structure, providing the opportunity for a strategic approach with greater co-ordination and monitoring.
- Provision of greater resource to this area of policing but without additional financial cost - plans have already commenced to recruit a team of committed volunteers to assist with delivery.
- Awareness raised across the Force which will hopefully aid the effective use and sharing of intelligence received of relevant crimes and aid understanding of the links between rural and wildlife crime and serious organised crime. Training is also being planned around rural and wildlife crime issues, especially for those who may be the first point of contact, to ensure they understand the significance of information received and know how and where to direct this.
- After the success of the Farm Watch scheme in the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak areas, the scheme is to be rolled out across Derbyshire. This scheme is a prime example of successful anti-crime partnership working, involving local rural businesses working alongside the police to reduce farm related crime.

- A poster campaign is in the pipeline to raise public awareness and encourage vigilance and reporting of incidents.
- The Commissioner will be involved in a new rural and wildlife crime network for Police and Crime Commissioners which is being organised by the Rural Services Network.
- The Summit enabled key partners to come together and form and strengthen links in this area of work. Every delegate who completed a feedback form said that they had, as a result of the event, made a new contact.

Back row left to right: Clive Harris, Nick Payne

Front Row left to right: Sgt Darren Belfield, James McKay, DPCC Hardyal Dhindsa, PCC Alan Charles, Duncan McNiven, ACC Karl Smethem, PCSO Anthony Boswell, DI Nevin Hunter





A summary from PCC Alan Charles

I was greatly heartened by the commitment of the delegates attending the summit. Representatives from the police, community safety partners and organisations concerned about countryside crime, cruelty and conservation came together to share their experiences and ideas with a view to dealing with problems in Derbyshire and elsewhere. You could actually feel their enthusiasm in the room.

I'm pleased that, as Commissioner, I can put these issues on the local agenda via the Police and Crime Plan. I have done that, not just because it is something close to my own values but because the public have repeatedly said it is a key concern.

I am delighted that as a result of this summit the force has agreed to put more formal structures in place to deal with these problems.

But the force can't work alone. It needs the expertise of different groups and partners to deliver effective solutions. The clear message is that we all need to work together – and we now have to put words into action. This includes running awareness campaigns to let people know what problems to report and to whom.

We need to tell the public what to look for and make it more widely known that there are links between the serious criminal who commits crimes against animals, wildlife and rural crime and other types of serious offences including organised crime. With increased awareness and reporting of these crimes, the police will have the necessary information to tackle them.

What did you find most useful?



‘Networking amongst like minded people and getting the police view on the subject.’

‘It provided excellent networking opportunities plus chance to get involved in decision making process and get across areas of concern.’

‘Attending the conference and meeting the people who are involved in wildlife crime. I have involved for 28 years and never thought we could get to this sort of informal meeting.’

‘Putting names to faces and hearing what the PCC has in mind for Wildlife and Rural crime. Very impressed with that.’





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