

Rural Matters

Rural policing in Kent – a magazine for residents and businesses

Summer 2020



In this issue:



**Kent
Police**



Policing coasts and
countryside



Working as a team



Protecting fishing sites

Plus the latest news on rural and environmental policing in Kent

Welcome to Rural Matters

Welcome to Rural Matters. See inside for the latest on the Kent Police Rural Task Force. There are now more officers countywide dedicated to tackling and preventing crime in the countryside. We've the latest news on how these officers, partners and colleagues are working to protect and support Kent's rural communities. Email rural.task.force@kent.police.uk

Team Leader

Inspector
Dave Smith
07800 675376

Rural Sergeant

Sergeant
Darren Walshaw
07870 252185

North Division – 07528 989095

- PC Paul Williams
- PC Adrian Goodsall
- PC Nathan Southern
- PC Marc Pennicott

West Division – 07580 236308

- PC Luke Jorden
- PC Tom Smith
- PC Nick Lingham
- PC Anna Verrall

East Division – 07980 978202

- PC Dan Perry
- PC Matt Lehman
- PC Harry Callaghan
- PC Michael Sutton

Rural Crime Co-ordinator

Doug Robertson
07972 004578



More rural contact information, see back page.

Report non-urgent crime online



Go to www.kent.police.uk/report



Report a crime, incident or non-injury collision in minutes



Receive your confirmation email and reference number immediately

To remain anonymous contact Kent Crimestoppers online or call **0800 555 111**.



Your rural PCs are also on Twitter!

The rural team regularly Tweets updates on what they've been doing and any live incidents.

Follow [@kentpolicerural](https://twitter.com/kentpolicerural) for the latest news and information.



Latest news

Fighting crime in the countryside – Rural Crime Strategy 2020-23

The Rural Task Force is a dedicated team of specialist police officers who work in countryside communities and deal with rural, wildlife, environmental and heritage crime.

The Kent Police Rural Policing Strategy 2020-23 sets out the aims and objectives of policing rural areas across Kent for the next three years. Rural Task Force Inspector Dave Smith said: 'We've successfully worked alongside rural communities and will continue to do so to ensure they and their businesses are protected from harm and anti-social behaviour. The team has been supported to grow so we have even more officers out and about acting on information, supporting local people and working to keep communities safe.'

'Through good communication and working with residents, farmers, businesses, partners and heritage sites we intend to enhance our relationships in order to protect the public, tackle rural criminality and encourage communities to flourish.'

The strategy recognises certain types of crime/incidents are more common in rural areas and some offences, such as the theft of agricultural machinery, are almost uniquely rural. It also acknowledges that the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour on victims and communities can be greater in rural areas where people can feel more isolated or vulnerable.

Insp Smith added: 'We recognise that the fear of crime is very real and has a detrimental impact on residents and



'Needs and issues of rural communities, businesses and the environment are different and our priorities reflect this'

Specific target areas

- Working to deter and detect fly tipping, hunting with dogs, hare coursing, equine crime, environmental, agricultural, wildlife and heritage crime and working with colleagues against other rural impact offences such as arson and organised criminality.
- Effective use of appropriate technology such as drones; marine capability; effective partnership working; innovative problem solving and an intelligence-led approach that puts victims first will help deliver effective, accessible and visible policing.

businesses within rural communities and Kent Police has a responsibility to respond to these concerns. We will continue to engage with those living and working in rural areas to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and

to detect and disrupt criminality. The needs and issues of rural communities, businesses and the environment are different and our priorities reflect this. We look forward to our continued work and engagement to support this.'

Rural Crime Strategy 2020-23 – key aims

- reduce the volume of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) committed in rural areas
- continue to bring offenders to justice
- visible and accessible policing
- maintain a police and volunteer presence in rural areas
- engage with communities to mitigate the impact of fear of crime caused by isolation
- address road safety and speeding
- work with businesses around theft (of vehicles and equipment) and its impact

Rural Kent factfile

- 85 per cent of land in Kent is rural, consisting of 234,700ha of farmland and 50,000ha of woodland and forestry.
- Kent has a land area of 1,368 square miles and just over 350 miles of coastline.
- 457,310 residents live in rural Kent (source: Kent County Council Strategic Commissioning Statistical Bulletin 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates, October 2019.)



Two new members join Rural Task Force team

The Rural Task Force team has two new officers starting work in rural communities.

PC Matt Lehman will be joining colleagues in the East of the county and PC Luke Jorden is due to take up his new role in the West.

Find out more about the latest officers to join the dedicated team, see **page 9**.



This is what we do from land to sea
– Search and Marine Unit’s operational support to keep coast and county safe



'Invicta' is now patrolling coastal areas

‘Having a specialist Search and Marine Unit which provides skills and equipment to enable safe access into a variety of sometimes inaccessible or hazardous environments can offer real benefits in search situations where timing is crucial.’

Search Portfolio Lead, Inspector Dave Smith



Search and Marine Unit officers have completed specialist training such as working at heights or confined spaces

From supporting policing action against rural and marine crime, dealing with coastal incidents or conducting searches in hazardous environments or helping locate vulnerable missing people – the specialist Search and Marine Unit is there to help.

The Kent Police Search and Marine Unit’s officers are trained to safely access hazardous environments such as heights, deep drops, confined spaces, tidal mud flats, inshore rivers and lakes, chemical or other incidents involving non-breathable air.

The unit recently started operating a new rigid-hull inflatable boat, ‘Invicta’, to boost its offshore marine capabilities – patrolling around 350 miles of coastline and tidal estuaries.

The Search and Marine Unit team also work closely in both specialist search and marine incidents with partner agencies including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Border Agency, Port Authorities (London, Medway, and Dover), Environment Agency, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and KSAR (Kent Search and Rescue volunteers), marine groups and coastal communities, neighbouring forces and national partners.

The team’s training gives them the capability to support colleagues at challenging crime scenes or to help with the rescue of people in distress around high structures, natural falls or other dangerous areas.

Kent Police Search Portfolio Lead, Inspector Dave Smith, said: ‘Having a specialist Search and Marine Unit which provides skills and equipment to enable safe access into a variety of environments inaccessible or hazardous to other officers can offer real benefits on land and in the marine environment.’

The officers in the unit have a variety of specialist skills and accreditation, both marine – vessel, navigation and marine advice such as tides and sea conditions – and in a number of search environments, such as mud, embankments, fast water, locks and weirs, evidence gathering and forensic recovery.



Joint briefing on the water

Inspector Smith added: ‘Kent is such a diverse environment to live, work and visit with 75 per cent of its area being classed as rural with over 350 miles of coastline and one of the UK’s busiest ports providing a gateway to Europe. In order to effectively deliver specialist policing to rural areas which include coastal and marine communities Kent Police Search and Marine Unit engage and work closely with various community stakeholders and specialist partners. This work includes providing a specialist search function with the ability to locate vulnerable missing people, gather evidence in major or serious crime investigations and

proactively tackle organised crime and anti-social behaviour.’

Unit Sergeant Neil MacAskill said: ‘We recently took part in a marine exercise to which we supplied two crews and two boats, including ‘Invicta’ which enabled us to show effectively what we are nationally capable of. We were very proud to receive some very positive national recognition and well-deserved praise for the team.

‘We regularly offer safe access (sometimes via partnership joint working) into most otherwise hazardous or inaccessible environments – as well as supporting colleagues countywide.’



The team are trained to work in potentially hazardous environments



Latest news

Equine equipment thefts – keep your property safe

Trailers, carriages, riding tack, saddles and other equipment are being targeted by thieves in rural areas.

In May Kent Police received 23 reports of equipment being stolen at rural locations including Cranbrook, Marden, East Farleigh, Sevenoaks and Paddock Wood.

There were also two offences in Sittingbourne and others in Faversham, Charing and Biddenden.

Six men have been arrested so far on suspicion of burglary and going equipped to steal and an investigation by the Chief Constable's Crime Squad is continuing.

Officers from the Rural Task Force are also working closely with partner agencies, including Kent Horse Watch, to share safety advice and offer to security mark saddles.

Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw, said: 'We do not underestimate the



Security mark important items such as tack and saddles

impact this type of crime has on victims and are committed to preventing further instances occurring. Rural crime is very seasonal, and we are at a time of the year where we know thieves target outbuildings, like stables. Most offenders are opportunistic and will target a site where they have

identified a vulnerability. That means there are measures owners can take which can reduce their chances of being targeted. I would encourage those with horses, or anyone who stores items in outbuildings, to bear in mind the following advice and take reasonable precautions to protect their property.'

Safety advice...

Protecting equipment:

Vehicles or plant kept outside should be locked with their keys stored in a safe. Also consider fitting them with wheel clamps, ground anchors or hitch locks.

Security-mark important items, including vehicles. The mark should be unique, in a non-obvious place and include owner's post code and house name or number.

Photograph items, including identifying marks. Keep them somewhere safe along with details including serial, chassis and model numbers.

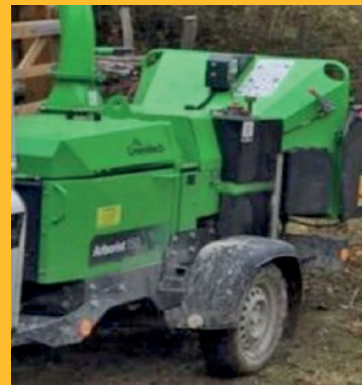
Keep land, and buildings, secure:

- Land owners should check the perimeter and make sure boundaries are as secure as possible.
- If possible, remove any access points that are no longer used and establish a single gated entrance and exit.
- Consider installing an entry control system, such as an intercom or keypad entry.
- Natural boundaries – thorny hedges or deep ditches – help restrict access by people or vehicles.
- Use good quality padlocks with covers so they can't be cut off easily.
- Use locking posts or temporary obstructions to control wide access points to yards.
- Keep doors and windows shut and locked when not in use.



Keep vehicles and trailers safe against opportunist thieves

Can you help?



Wood chipper stolen from wildlife charity

A wood chipper valued at £18,000 was stolen from the Kent Wildlife Trust, Sandling.

Chains were cut to get in and police are seeking information about a crew cab 4x4 with three men on board in relation to the theft.



Historic cattle trough theft

A cast iron cattle trough which had been at a farm in East Kent since 1909 was stolen.

Around eight feet long and two feet wide it would have taken five or six people to lift it persons to lift it.

The Rural Task Force is investigating two suspicious vehicles after the victim posted the theft on the village Facebook site.

Do you have information about a crime?

Calls to the independent charity Crimestoppers are anonymous. You can call **0800 555 111** or use the anonymous online form at **Crimestoppers-uk.org**

My role

Working with the Rural Task Force – PC Anna Verrall

What is the Rural Task Force?

The Rural Task Force is made up of 12 PCs, one sergeant and one RTF co-ordinator. We offer daily coverage countywide across the three county Divisions.

Where are you based?

We don't have a dedicated office, we work out of Aylesford, Faversham and Nackington.

What made you decide to become a rural officer?

I started my career at Maidstone in 2003 and worked locally and in national operations and deployments before I joined the Rural Task Force in 2018 following Kent Police's expansion in rural policing.

I wanted a new challenge and felt that as a horse owner for over 30 years, I could use my equine knowledge within the expanding team. The challenge of learning completely new legislation and working with partner agencies appealed to me.

What does your job involve?

We proactively cover wide and varied crime strands affecting those living and working in the rural community – theft of farm equipment, hare coursing, poaching, wildlife, environment and heritage crime. We work alongside local and specialist police teams targeting Organised Crime Groups that cause most harm. A lot of our wildlife work is specialist and complex and covers habitat destruction and protection of native and endangered species.

Some of our police investigations require the support of specialist groups, charities and Government bodies to provide direction and assist in gathering evidence and prosecutions.

RTF work is seasonal, and criminals will change their behaviour as seasons change. We work closely with colleagues from other policing departments and neighbouring forces to help us target the right people and locations. We advise victims in crime prevention and look at any areas where criminals could take advantage. Each Division has a contact number available online. We also run the



PC Anna Verrall, Rural Task Force

Whats App messaging group FarmWatch. This is split into Divisions and enables police and rural community members to effectively share information and respond to incidents. This is often quick time intelligence we can work on to intercept offenders and target criminals and vehicles involved.

How does your job fit within policing in Kent?

We support the Kent Police Rural Policing Strategy – this is a three-year plan to set out our objectives in line with Kent Police missions, and framework. The objective is putting rural communities

at the forefront, building an intelligence picture around active organised crime groups and rural offenders. Being visible and accessible gives communities the encouragement to report crime.

What is the best part of your job?

Working in a committed team. We all have the same drive and motivation and use that to our strength and we're all friends. I enjoy working with outside agencies – whether it's a borough council with fly tipping operations or an RSPCA special ops unit with animal cruelty cases. Using powers under what may seem obscure legislation can often be used to our benefit targeting offenders.



Agricultural workers – joint welfare visits to farms and businesses in Kent

Officers from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and Kent Police’s Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit have spoken to around 300 agricultural workers across the county while carrying out welfare and visibility checks during the Covid-19 situation. They visited nine businesses incorporating more than 20 sites across three weeks in June and July. Around 1,000 workers were observed within their working environments, which included fruit picking farms, vegetable producers, vineyards and packing factories. No modern slavery or labour exploitation offences

were identified and all workers said that they were happy with their conditions. Workers spoken to were predominantly Eastern European, with some British. Over recent months, the GLAA has written to all agricultural labour sites in the south of England to ensure that they are receiving support and treating their workers fairly during the coronavirus restrictions. The GLAA will continue to visit farms to check on workers’ welfare and provide guidance to the industry as it continues to respond to the pandemic. Detective Sergeant Stacey Chapman of Kent Police’s

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking team said: ‘We have an excellent working relationship with the GLAA. Although the vast majority of organisations in Kent employ reputable firms to ensure their workers are well looked after, we do not take anything for granted and are always keen to demonstrate that we are here for those workers if they need us. ‘The agricultural industry is one that can be prone to abuse by human traffickers, which is why operations of this kind are so important. Tackling this type of offending is a priority for police forces up and down the country, and we encourage anyone



who suspects it may be happening in their town or village to contact us.’ Call the GLAA’s intelligence team on 0800 4320804 or email intelligence@gla.gov.uk Alternatively, call the police on 101, the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Keep contacting Farm Watch WhatsApp

Online messaging system Farm Watch WhatsApp has now been expanded across the county. The scheme for fast time sharing of information between the Rural Task Force and the community has proved successful in recovering stolen property, vehicles and farm machinery and helping police deal with crime as it is reported. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: ‘Farm Watch WhatsApp continues to be a valuable asset with all groups developing well. We’ve already had some great results with arrests and stolen property being recovered. If anyone would like to join please email the team.’ rural.task.force@kent.police.uk

Respect farmers land when out and about

Farmers and landowners are urging people to respect their property and take greater care in the countryside after the Covid-19 lockdown has seen an increase in people out enjoying rural walks and visits to beauty spots. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: ‘This has led to some issues with landowners – the most common ones being farmers experiencing high levels of trespass, gates being smashed open, left open, locks broken, and farm tracks blocked. ‘During the hot weather people were drawn to swim in reservoirs and so broke into farmland to do this. This should be discouraged due to extremely deep water. People are having picnics on farmland, leaving their rubbish behind, livestock will also eat litter which can harm or kill them.’



Please remember the country code:

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Leave all gates as you found them
- Keep pets under close control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone



Farm Watch WhatsApp is a tool to share information directly with the Rural Task Force team and not to be used to report crime. Any crimes should be reported in the usual way; 999 if a crime is in progress or 101 and online if non-urgent and don’t forget the Country Eye App.

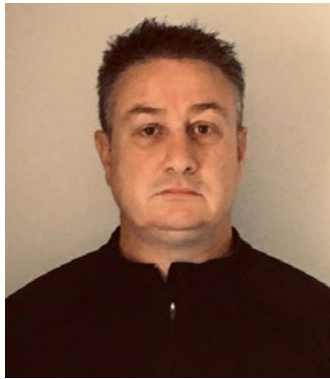
Introducing new PCs joining the Rural Task Force

PC Matt Lehman

‘I’m joining the Rural Task Force after 20 years’ service. I’ve been fortunate in being part of many proactive operational teams supporting Kent Police and national policing objectives. I grew up in the countryside near Canterbury. I joined Kent Police in July 2000 based from Dover, where I’ve planned and delivered many operations including targeting nuisance off road vehicles, poaching and modern day slavery. I’ve also been involved in policing football matches and animal rights protests

at Kent ports, however our main role was proactive policing tactics to suppress violence and crime. I’ll be bringing six years previous rural policing experience and seven years’ experience on Kent Police’s divisional public order and search support units to the team. In the past five years I’ve worked within the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate providing intelligence support to various high profile cases, supporting large scale investigations into the supply of Class A drugs via county lines and dismantling their support

networks and will bring my in-depth knowledge surrounding organised criminality to the team. Listening carefully to the concerns of the community and acting on information provided is something I truly understand – this is paramount to the success of any police officer and the benefits of working with the public and partner agencies are clear. I’ll be seeking to forge great working relationships across the rural communities we serve and I’m passionate about the conservation of our countryside, wanting to see it preserved for generations



to follow. I see this role as ever evolving, where I will be using the latest technology to prevent and detect crime and I’m thrilled to be serving the rural communities of Kent.’

PC Luke Jorden

‘Being part of Kent Police’s Rural Task Force is a role I have steered my career towards so I can have the best opportunity to be able to serve and protect members of the rural community, a group I hold close to my heart. My interest in the rural environment and communities comes from my family background. My grandfather

was the last dairy farmer in Peckham, London, in the late 1970s before relocating to a cattle farm in West Kent which was operational until only a couple years ago. I have been incredibly fortunate to have grown up with the farming lifestyle and I am excited to now be working in and among a community I am passionate about and have a personal attachment with.

I’ve been a PC in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells districts for the past four years and prior to this I was a Designated Detention Officer for a further two years based out of Tonbridge custody. I enjoy meeting people and welcome any ideas, information and advice that may be able to assist us in our common goal of making rural Kent a safer place to live and work.’



Operation Sealion – illegal shellfish harvesting

Rural Task Force officers have been working with Environmental Officers around the illegal harvesting of shellfish on the Kent shoreline. There have been reports of activity including removing cockles on the Isle of Sheppey. Officers attended and details of those involved in suspected illegal activity passed to prosecuting agency, Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA). Harvested cockles are returned to the sea. In an incident at Shellness hamlet suspects claimed they

were collecting the shellfish for personal consumption but the quantities suggested a commercial purpose. They were warned they face prosecution if they are caught again. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: ‘On 12 June and 24 June our officers were involved in joint operations on the Isle of Sheppey to deal with offences relating to the removal of shellfish, primarily cockles, from the coastline. This was to address the numerous reports to Kent Police over

the past three weeks of large groups on the beaches across Sheppey harvesting shellfish on a commercial scale. ‘The intention is for the partnership approach through Op Sealion to be planned regularly until this activity stops. Our team made use of their drone to identify where the offences were taken place along the beach.’ Other Partners attending were GLAA, IFCA and Environmental Health Mid Kent. Three people were arrested for immigration offences.





Livestock attacks latest

Dogs shot

Two dogs seen by a shepherd and landowner chasing and biting sheep on grassland at Bishopsbourne were shot. Three sheep were injured. The dogs were identified and the local owner informed by the Rural Task Force.

Goat killed

A husky type dog seen attacking goats was captured at the scene. A goat was killed and DNA swabs taken. The dog was identified as a repeat offender. The owner agreed to muzzle the dog when out. A court case is ongoing.



Hare coursing – court action

As the harvest is approaching the Rural Task Force team are preparing for an increase in reports of hare coursing activity. Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'The team have several court cases pending from incidents from last season where we hope to get convictions and criminal behaviour orders granted. This will have an impact on those caught re-offending this season.' Under Op Gallileo, the national operation against hare coursing, the team are planning dedicated patrols and ask farmers, landowners and rural communities to report incidents and any suspicious vehicles or behaviour. There are plans for more national activity in the coming weeks.

Operation Traverse – illegal fishing patrols and action

The Covid-19 lockdown has seen an increase in reports of fish poaching. The Rural Task Force regularly works with partner agencies to tackle the issue and is strongly supported in Operation Traverse action by the Rural Special Constabulary team. In early June they carried out weekend foot patrols and searches at various sites.

These included:

- Lullingstone Castle
- River Teise, near Goudhurst
- Shoreham Road leading to Lullingstone Country Park
- Mote Park recreation ground, Maidstone
- Medway Valley fisheries, Castle Lake
- Singleton Lake, Bucksford Lane, Ashford

Other areas affected included fish stolen from a private Southern Water site, Argent Road, Queenborough. Working with local policing team colleagues a number of people – most who'd come to the site from outside the county, including Luton – had their details taken for follow up action by the Environment Agency. Signs have now been put up at numerous locations warning about illegal fishing at the site.

Special Sergeant Scott Dawson said: 'Our recent all out weekend focusing on Op Traverse saw good proactive visibility and presence around certain areas with stop checks carried out where required.' Rural Task Force Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'Fishing clubs and members of the public are becoming increasingly concerned about the destruction of fish stocks and the affect this has on both the ecology of the countryside and also the tourist industry



TACKLING FISH THEFT & ILLEGAL FISHING

OPERATION TRAVERSE
Help us tackle fish theft and illegal fishing. Report any suspicious behaviour, calling 101 or the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

and economy. It is becoming increasingly recognised that individuals involved in poaching activity are often engaged in a much wider range of criminality and therefore of interest to various enforcement agencies. 'Kent Police receives a number of calls throughout the year in relation to illegal fishing on both open and private waterways – this involves the taking of fish and also the killing of swans and other river birds. Poaching, whether or not fish are actually taken, is covered by the Theft Act 1968 and is therefore a matter for the police. Kent Police Rural Task Force have received training from the Angling Trust in relation to fish crime.'

Soft fruit thefts – £1,600 worth stolen

Seasonal soft fruit thefts have been reported to the Rural Task Force team since the start of the summer. In one incident in the Rochester area £1,600 worth of strawberries were stolen and the offenders disturbed. An investigation is ongoing. Another incident near Tonge was resolved with a Community Resolution and £50 paid back to the owner after a man identified as a suspect said he'd

wanted some strawberries to eat. At another farm in the Faversham area staff chased off a Black Range Rover from their raspberry section which was seen with a number of occupants and doors and boot open. Rural Sergeant Darren Walshaw said: 'Thefts of soft fruit can cause real financial hardship for growers. We encourage them to report details of any suspicious vehicles to us.'

Teams work together against cross border crime

The Kent Rural Task Force recently supported Sussex Police's Rural Policing Team and Neighbourhood Team in a cross-border operation to target Organised Crime Group theft and burglary offences between the two counties. Sussex has seen an increase in thefts from farms of quad bikes. Routes were patrolled between the two counties and several vehicles were stopped.



Keep property safe in summer temperatures

As temperatures start to rise, so do the chances of criminals targeting properties with open windows and insecure doors. Following a number of recent burglaries, Kent Police is reminding people of simple steps to keep property safe. Detective Chief Inspector Lopa McDermott, who leads the Kent Chief Constable's Crime Squad, said: 'It is only natural that people should want to open their windows and doors to keep cool when the temperatures are high but it is also important that we make

people aware of the risks. 'It only takes a few minutes when you're in your garden for someone to climb through an open window and steal your belongings. Doors should never be left unlocked if you plan to spend the day outside. 'We certainly don't want to cause alarm, and no one should feel unsafe in their home, however it is important that we ask the public to take extra precautions while we do everything within our power to protect people and seek those responsible for such crimes.'

Recent cases include:

- Whitfield near Dover** – cash was stolen from a wallet inside the home of a victim who had been gardening at the front of the house. The suspect is thought to have entered through a patio door at the back of the property.
- Willesborough, Ashford** – the resident was in the front garden during the afternoon and when they returned to the house, found drawers and cupboards ransacked and money and jewellery missing.
- Pembury** – a van was reported stolen from outside a home after the keys were taken from inside the house.
- Rochester area** – a designer bag, purse containing cards and cash, phone and iPad were stolen while the victim was asleep upstairs. The offender is thought to have entered through an insecure door.

Crime prevention tips:

- Lock doors and windows at night and during the day (even if you are just popping upstairs for something).
- Lock back doors and windows when you answer the front door. Some burglars use distraction techniques.
- Consider fitting extra security measures such as spy holes, door chains, door locks and intruder alarms or CCTV covering the front and back of your property.
- Keep receipts and serial numbers safe.
- Photograph and insure expensive or unique items.
- Don't keep valuables on display, consider installing a safe that could be bolted to the ground or wall or use a safety deposit box at your bank.
- Use timer switches on lights and radios to make your home look occupied.
- Keep gates, boundaries, outbuildings and sheds secure.
- Lock away bikes, tools, equipment and garden items that could be taken or used to break into your home.
- Don't leave spare keys hidden outside under pots or in garages.
- Think before posting holiday pictures on social media as it can make burglars aware the house is empty.
- Keep outside spaces and gardens tidy and pruned to remove good hiding places for burglars and install security lights.
- Cancel milk or other deliveries when you're away and make sure grass is cut so a property doesn't appear unoccupied.

Partnerships

Rural team working with partners to protect rural communities



The team use their expertise to support Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams, PCSOs or core response officers. The team are all fully trained Wildlife Crime Officers.



Farm machinery targeted – keep it secure

Theft of machinery and other items from rural locations continues to be reported.

The Rural Task Force are reminding farmers, landowners and rural property owners to regularly review their security

- Ensure sheds/ barns are locked and thoroughly secure when not in use.
- Remember to record and mark all property serial numbers so these can be passed to the police if you become a victim of crime.

Do you have information about a crime?

Calls to the independent charity Crimestoppers are anonymous. You can call **0800 555 111** or use the anonymous online form at **Crimestoppers-uk.org**

Key partners working with Kent Police to keep rural communities safe

Crime Rural Advisory Group – CRAG formed in 2012, brings together main rural stakeholders, including the National Farmers Union and Country Land & Business Association – representing a large percentage of land occupancy countywide. They bring their own insights to CRAG to help keep Kent Police informed on ever-changing issues in rural Kent.

www.btfpartnership.co.uk email: **michael.bax@btfpartnership.co.uk** phone: **Michael Bax 01233 740077**

Kent Association of Local Councils – KALC is a not for profit membership organisation serving member parish and town councils and parish meetings in Kent and Medway. It offers training, advice and services to member councils. KALC works with rural officers to disseminate information on their behalf, and to gather crime information from towns and parishes.

www.kentalc.gov.uk email: **kalc@kentalc.gov.uk** phone: **01304 820173**

National Farmers Union – The NFU champions British farming and provides professional representation and services to its farmer and grower members. Around 70 per cent of full time farmers are NFU members. They aim to support Kent Police to engage with members' extensive local knowledge, working in partnership with CRAG and other stake holder organisations.

www.nfuonline.com email: **isobel.bretherton@nfu.org.uk** phone: **01730 711950**

Kent Fire and Rescue Service – KFRS is responsible for delivering fire and rescue services to more than 1.7 million people. Each year fire officers deal with around 16,500 incidents including road crashes, house and barn fires and more than 2,400 non-fire rescues. KFRS works with the Kent Police, NFU, and CRAG to provide safety and risk reduction advice to support the agricultural business community.

www.kent.fire-uk.org email: **enquiries@kentfire-uk.org** phone: **01622 692121**

Historic England – Historic England is a public body which looks after England's historic environment. There are over 400,000 protected sites and buildings in England and Historic England works across a range of partnership to prevent the loss and damage to our shared cultural heritage. Former Kent police officer Mark Harrison advises the organisation and works closely with rural officers and CRAG.

www.historicengland.org.uk email: **southeast@HistoricEngland.org.uk** phone: **01483 252020**

Country Land and Business Association – The CLA is the membership organisation for owners of land, property and businesses in rural England and Wales and has been safeguarding the interests of landowners, and those with an economic, social and environmental interest in rural land for more than 112 years. The CLA South East Office works closely with Kent Police to help achieve these aims.

www.cla.org.uk email: **southeast@cla.org.uk** phone: **01264 313434**

