



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

News Information

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Lancashire Constabulary fights rural crime



LANCASHIRE Constabulary is urging rural communities to make security a priority as it continues the fight against rural crime following a week-long crackdown.

Officers across the county have been conducting extra patrols, targeting suspected offenders and making visits to farms and rural businesses to offer crime prevention advice as part of Operation Firecrest which ran last week (7-13 July 2014).

Wildlife Officer PC Carl Chew said: "The most common type of offences in our rural communities include fuel, scrap metal and vehicle or plant theft, burglary of homes and outbuildings, and offences like poaching and hare coursing. These are the type of activities we have been cracking down on as part of Operation Firecrest."

On Wednesday 9 July, there was a 'night of action' across the Ribble Valley. The night started with an anti-poaching meeting at Clitheroe Police station which was attended by more than 25 people, including the Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw, land owners, Environment Agency fisheries officers, Gamekeepers, the Forestry Commission, North West Badger Group, local officers including, PC Carl Chew and PC Tony Walsh, as well as officers from Lancaster, Blackpool and North Yorkshire.

After the meeting Mr Grunshaw was taken out by the Rural Policing and Wildlife Crime Coordinator Lorraine Ellwood on a high visibility patrol with a local gamekeeper. The aim of the operation was to deter poachers and reassure vulnerable residents living and working in areas affected by rural crime.

PC Chew added: "We had more than 50 people out and about across the county and North Yorkshire targeting rural crime and we really appreciate people giving up their time.

Numerous vehicles and people were stopped during this operation, with a number of people being reported for offences from motoring to rod licencing.

“Crime affecting the rural communities shouldn’t be under-estimated. Criminals, sometimes in organised groups, generally target isolated areas and hard-to-protect buildings/premises, looking for easily saleable items like metal and garden equipment, as well as targeting quad bikes, 4x4 vehicles, agricultural machinery and livestock.

“I hope our activity, and that of our partner agencies, will send out a clear message to offenders that rural crime won’t be tolerated. Offenders will be caught and put before the courts.”

On Saturday (12 July) three Lancashire wildlife crime officers attended the Great Eccleston Show with the Rural and Wildlife Crime Roadshow highlighting the work that is being carried out.

At the show rural residents were encouraged to make security a priority on their farms, businesses and homes, deterring both organised gangs and opportunist thieves as much as possible. Police are also urging farmers, landowners and gamekeepers to become members of Farm Watch and Rural Watch schemes.

Lancashire Constabulary’s Assistant Chief Constable Mark Bates added: “We are committed to tackling rural crime here in Lancashire. Fortunately this type of crime is relatively low, but its impact can be severe, particularly as rural communities may already feel isolated due to their locations. This is why we are determined to take action and people living in these communities should be reassured of our commitment.”

Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Grunshaw said: “I am committed to ensuring our rural communities feel safe and secure, and are able to live without fear of the impact rural crime could have on their livelihoods.

"That's why I was so keen to join officers to see Operation Firecrest first-hand, and as a consequence I know the hard work which has gone into it, and how much our rural communities appreciate this proactive work. I am committed to listening to residents county-wide, and want to assure those in our rural communities that their concerns will be heard and acted upon.

"I will continue to give operations such as this my full support and join officers in sending the clear message that Lancashire will not tolerate criminals targeting our rural communities."

Anybody who would like to speak to an officer to discuss concerns about rural crime or report suspicious activity that they have seen and not yet reported should contact police on 101.

PC Chew concluded: “If you live or work in the Ribble Valley area and wish to receive Farm/Rural Watch messages please contact Clitheroe police and leave your name along with a contact number so we can get back to you to discuss the service.

“If you’re on Facebook why not take a look at our page at facebook.com/ribblevalleypolice and if you’re on Twitter follow us @RibValleyPolice.”

ENDS

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