

# THE RURAL REPORT

*News and updates from Surrey Police's Rural Crime Team*



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## Hello from Chief Inspector Mike Hodder

Welcome to the first edition of our Rural Newsletter, which I hope will become a regular fixture with your morning or evening beverage. I am very proud to be the Policing Lead for Rural Crime in Surrey, and am fortunate to work with two dedicated and passionate rural PCs and eleven PCSOs, who specialise in rural crime and advise other officers how to tackle it.

We have been working with our rural communities to better understand the issues across the county, so our policing response can be intelligence-led, focused and productive. Whether it's poaching, livestock worrying or anti-social behaviour, we will deal robustly with those who think it is acceptable to act in ways that blight our rural communities.

This is not an easy problem to solve, and I acknowledge that we have work to do to rebuild trust and confidence within the community. However, I am confident you will see a positive change going forward, with more engagement from our officers to protect our beautiful green lanes, footpaths, fishing spots and bridal paths.

Please continue to report crime to us: online via the Surrey Police website; through direct messaging on our social media pages, by calling 101 or the Crimestoppers Rural Crime Hotline on 0800 781 0137, so we can make your lives safer and allow our working relationship to blossom.

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# Man Pleads Guilty to Poaching Offence in Warlingham



A man has been sentenced after pleading guilty to a poaching offence in Warlingham which took place in December 2019. Christopher Tucker, 33, of Carshalton, pleaded guilty to possessing an article to kill or take game, contrary to the Night Poaching Act 1828 when he appeared at Guildford Magistrates' Court in September.

Police were called following reports of lamping and suspected poaching on land in Warlingham on 12 December 2019. They searched the nearby woods with assistance from a gamekeeper and came across two adults and a child, all of whom made off from police before they were eventually detained. The adults were arrested on suspicion of night poaching and entering land unlawfully with a firearm.

One of the men, Tucker, was also found in possession of a head torch, catapult and ball bearings. Tucker was charged following a lengthy investigation. No further action was taken against the other man arrested. Tucker was ordered to forfeit the catapult and ball bearings and was also ordered to pay a fine and costs amounting to £197.

PC Laura Rowley, Rural Crime Officer for Surrey Police, said:

"In the almost four years I've overseen this role, this is the first time I am aware of this offence actually getting to court. It is notoriously difficult to prosecute this offence due to a number of reasons, including lack of eyewitnesses or proof of the offence taking place. We were also using an offence from the 1800s. The fact that the defendant has been prosecuted should reassure residents that we are invested in rural crime and bringing offenders to justice."

## Rural Crime Days of Action



Although slightly restricted by Covid-19, over three days in November officers were still able to carry out activities for our rural crime days of action, including:

- PCSO Dave Boxall (pictured left) marked 15 saddles belonging to a victim of crime in Haslemere
- Two stolen Shetland ponies returned to their owner in Dunsfold
- Joint patrols carried out with a Forestry England ranger in Hindhead around damage and ASB by mountain bikers and trail bikes
- ASB patrols conducted in Frensham around vehicles such as trailbikes and 4x4s.



# Fishy Business

It's been a busy lockdown for our rural officers, and they have been hard at work with our partner agencies patrolling Surrey's waterways.

PCSO Dave Sadler recently teamed up with Martynas Pranaitis, Fisheries Technical Officer for the Environment Agency (EA), for a joint patrol at Bury Hill Fisheries in Mole Valley.

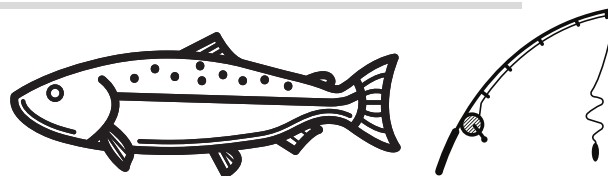
The patrol was a great example of partnership working. Martynas was able to issue four tickets for related to rod licences or lack of them, the first time the EA have been able to do so on a joint patrol, but we hope it won't be the last! With other patrols lined up in Epsom and Reigate & Banstead, we hope that we will be able to make this a regular feature of rural policing in Surrey.

As well as covering most of Surrey, Martynas is also responsible for London and Kent, so was glad of the company and local knowledge of our PCSOs. He said, "Your professionalism was exemplary and you are all excellent representatives of the Police. I am sure your higher management would be very impressed."

And, on Saturday 21st November, PCSO Chris Dell teamed up with an officer from the Environment Agency and the Head Bailiff from Horley Piscatorial Society. They spent the day carrying out a number of waterside patrols along the River Mole, Earlswood Lakes and other areas of water across East Surrey. As well as checking rod licences and fishing permits, they took the opportunity to engage with the general public and educate younger anglers on how to keep safe near the fast-flowing waters.

Chris said, "It was great to have the chance to work with two officers who are so passionate about angling and maintaining the environment for everyone's enjoyment".

The only thing we might need to look at in future is investing in some wellies for rural patrols!





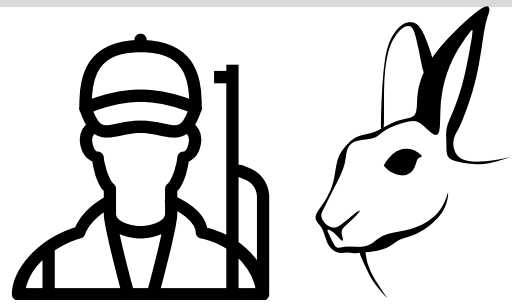
# Poaching Operation

On Friday 20th and Saturday 21st November, Tandridge Safer Neighbourhood Team worked with local game keepers to disrupt poaching and coursing incidents which we have seen a large increase already this year.

Officers from Kent, Sussex and our Special Constabulary worked with local officers in a show of force, high visibility patrol around the Warlingham and Titsey areas.

We were able to deploy our drone on a number of vehicles, which appeared to have been left beside fields on rural roads, to look for poachers who might be in the area.

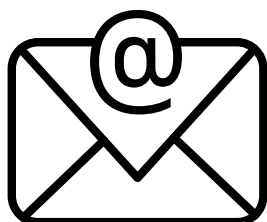
A number of vehicle stops and searches were completed over the two days. We had no reports of incidents in those areas of our days of action.



Working with neighbouring forces allowed us to expand our force boundaries and make sure that there were no limits to those we wanted to target.

One stop included a double crewed Special Officer unit spotting some torchlight in a field. They approached three persons who stated they were on land with permission to shoot rabbits and rats. Three air weapons were seized by officers until we could establish if their story was true. Enquiries are ongoing.

We are already looking at further dates before Christmas, to continue targeting people who want to commit offences in our rural communities.



Have you been a victim of rural crime? Do you think your farm or land benefit from a drone patrol by our Special Constables or some focused work by our rural crime team?

Email [RuralAffairs@surrey.pnn.police.uk](mailto:RuralAffairs@surrey.pnn.police.uk) to request our assistance.



# Spotlight On: PCs Laura Rowley & Hollie Iribar

In this first edition we're introducing you to our Rural Crime PCs, Laura and Hollie, who advise on wildlife and rural investigations, offer problem solving advice and deliver training to police officers and staff.

“Hi, I'm Laura and I have been a Police officer for 14 years, overseeing rural crime in Surrey for the last four years. I oversee Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge. I enjoy working with the rural community and educating officers on the vulnerabilities and difficulties unique to rural offences.

Recently, I have been working with Tandridge Safer Neighbourhood Team to combat poaching and coursing incidents. We will continue to try and disrupt this activity over the next few months, and roll out similar events in the other boroughs.”



Laura Rowley  
3863

“My name is Hollie and I have been overseeing rural crime in West Surrey for the last two years. I have worked for Surrey Police since 2010: four years as a PCSO, and six as a Police Officer. I am very passionate about fighting the cause for rural communities and want to make sure you all get heard. I have always had a great respect for the countryside which I imagine came from owning horses most of my life.

I am always happy to hear from rural communities whether that be directly or through the NFU. So please feel free to get in touch.”



Hollie Iribar  
40756

## Off Road



PCSOs Claire Owen and Leanne Still were out and about on patrol with our partners in Epsom and Ewell recently in some of our lovely parks and open spaces. Unfortunately, we have had several reports of off-road bikes being ridden illegally in an anti-social manner. Luckily, as a result of the patrols, we were able to seize a bike and a van and recover a stolen moped.

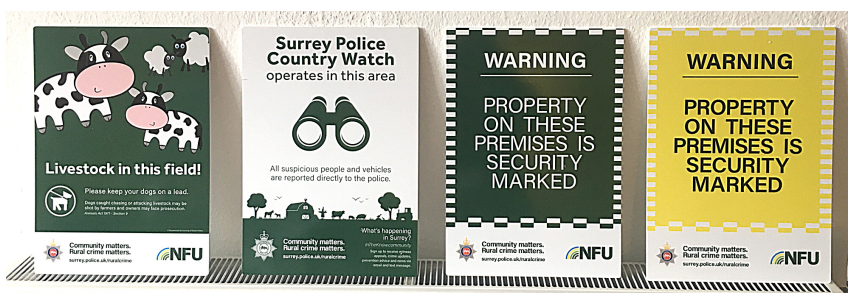
## Eagle-Eyed

Our rural crime officers are constantly learning new skills. In October, they went to Surrey Hills Falconry at Gatton Manor to learn how to handle and identify native birds of prey.



## DID YOU KNOW? Who are your rural crime officers?

We have signs that can be affixed to fences and gates for Country Watch, Livestock Worrying and Security Marked Items. Contact your local Rural PCSO to arrange delivery.



**Elmbridge:** PCSO Laura Deyoung  
**Epsom & Ewell:** PCSO Claire Owen  
**Guildford:** PCSO Alice Lee  
**Mole Valley:** PCSO Dave Sadler  
**Reigate:** PCSO Chris Dell  
**Runnymede:** PCSO Richard Sutton  
**Spelthorne:** PCSO Allan Bushnell  
**Surrey Heath:** PCSO Sian Hudson  
**Tandridge:** PCSO Terry Pearson  
**Waverley:** PCSO Dave Boxall  
**Woking:** PCSO Tom Hynes

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