



Barn Meetings



closing the gate on rural crime

North Warwickshire Barn Meetings

In June and July this year we held our first forums for farmers and small businesses in North Warwickshire. We felt that it was important to provide a facility to hear the issues and concerns that people have and provide an opportunity for them to be addressed.



The meetings were held in Grendon for the North Warwickshire area and Pailton for the Rugby area. Both were extremely well attended and we sincerely thank everyone who gave up their time to come to the meetings and make them useful and constructive.

We were very pleased to welcome the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Ron Ball and Superintendent Martin Samuel, District Commander for North Warwickshire to the Grendon meeting and Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, Eric Wood and Chief Inspector Emma Bastone to the Pailton meeting. We felt that it was important to have senior people present to

answer the points raised and also listen and understand how crime was affecting people in rural areas which would help them when making decisions on strategy and resources.

The meetings were also supported by Luke Ryder from the NFU, Warwickshire County Council Community Safety Team, representatives from North Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue, Warwickshire Rural Hub and the local policing team. As well as concerns relating to crime we wanted to provide the facility to address other issues which affected you such as fly tipping, arson, livestock rescue and traveller concerns. Representatives from relative organisations attended and took part in the meetings.



As well as providing a forum to our farmers and small businesses we also wanted to help by showing you some of the latest crime prevention equipment available and how you could use it to deter crime on your properties. At both meetings we had set up around the barn equipment such as guardcams, alarmed beams, CCTV and other security measures that you could use at your own premises. There were also vehicles equipped with Tracker, Caesar and Datatag and lots of other crime prevention equipment for people to see such as padlock alarms, personal alarms and entrance gate alarms. We felt that it was important to show you how these devices worked in an agricultural setting so you could see how they could be used at your own premises.

At Grendon we even had our own flock of sheep!

Most importantly were the issues raised on both nights and we wanted to take this opportunity to update you on what was raised.

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Off Road Vehicles Damaging Crops

One farmer spoke of the problems he was having regarding off road vehicles coming onto his fields and damaging his crops, costing him thousands of pounds. Anti-Social Behaviour caused by off road bikes trespassing and causing damage is a problem and is being tackled by the local policing team Warwickshire County Council Community Safety Team and North Warks Borough Council.



Following the meeting the PCC agreed that he would fund three new off road motor bikes. These would be used by the police Off Road bike team to use to address these issues. Fully trained officers will be deployed to target the hotspot areas reported to the police. The team became fully operational in September. In this particular case the bike team has been proactive in the area. The farmer that raised the issues on the night had a follow up meeting with the Rural Crime team. He was able to implement recommendations that included ditches and bunds in strategic areas where the off road vehicles were accessing the land. We are pleased to report that to date the problem has been stopped on his premises.

The bike team can be deployed across the whole of northern Warwickshire and are presently working to assist other landowners in the area. If you have issues with off road vehicles accessing your land without permission please let the police know by calling 101.

Calls to 101

A number of people were unhappy with the time it took operators to answer calls to the police non-emergency number 101, some had waited a while before their calls were answered and others waited too long for an answer and hung up. Senior officers are fully aware of the issues and work is ongoing to address this. Other options are being considered for the reporting of non-emergency incidents, we will let you have more details as soon as they are available.

Awareness of Incidents

Warwickshire Police operate an alert system where people can register their email addresses with the police and receive details regarding incidents in their area. Warwickshire Rural Watch is part of this scheme and provides information on incidents on farms and in rural areas.

There was concern that these incidents are being sent out days after they have occurred and in some instances over a week which makes them less effective. This has been taken onboard and the alerts are now going out on a daily basis in North Warwickshire and rural Rugby wherever possible. In addition, the alerts are also posted on the Warwickshire Rural Watch website, plus the Warwickshire Rural Watch facebook page and twitter feeds for those who prefer to use social media.

Cross Border Communication

A question was asked as to what links Warwickshire have with their neighbouring forces and do they share information. It was confirmed that Warwickshire have links with all forces that neighbour our county borders from a senior level down.

Intelligence is shared and cross border teams regularly work on specific operations tackling a number of crime types. In addition the local policing teams are also linking up with their counterparts on neighbouring beats and share information at a very local level.

This has been particularly picked up from a rural point of view and strong relationships are being made by neighbouring rural beats across counties



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ANPR Cameras

How are these used and are they effective? ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras are used to identify offenders who use the road network to commit offences. There are 11 cameras in North Warks and 13 in Rugby strategically placed. They are increasingly assisting officers in apprehending criminals and locating stolen vehicles. The Cross border team regularly use them with great effectiveness and specific operations are run to target gangs that break the law, especially in rural areas.

Police Response

Why do crimes such as stolen vehicles and theft from outbuildings not receive an immediate response? It was explained that although it would be preferable to provide an attendance to all incidents, incidents have to be prioritised and due to the cut in police budgets less incidents are being attended.

There are only a set amount of officers on duty at any one time and priorities have to be given to very serious offences such as murder, rape, threat to life, etc. and where an offence is happening at the time and offenders could be apprehended. Where a crime has already happened, i.e. you have gone to use a piece of equipment and it is no longer there or there is evidence of a break in and items have been stolen, officers will be sent only if there is anything evidential to obtain from the scene i.e. CCTV or witness statements.

In some crimes victims do not want the police to visit but want to report what has happened, which is very important. In some instances it is appropriate for the incident will be followed up over the phone by the crime bureau or your local safer neighbourhood team. It is very much dependent on the type of crime, the circumstances and the evidence available at the scene. However it was stressed that if you request it, you should receive a response from your local neighbourhood team to discuss your concerns. If you do not want a visit make it clear on your initial report to the police.

Concerns Regarding Travellers Sites

Warwickshire like all counties around the country have traveller communities, both on authorised and unauthorised sites. It was raised that these sites are seen as 'no go areas' to police officers and travellers are able to commit crimes and not be caught. It was strongly denied by the police that they have 'no go areas' and the law of the land applied to everyone.

As well as the local safer neighbourhood team working with the site managers, traveller liaison officers from the county council are also involved in a day to day basis. If any crime is committed it will be followed up and action taken against anyone where there is proof of their involvement in an incident. If anyone has a particular concern or issue and is not happy how it has been dealt with by the responding officer they should report it to a senior officer or register a complaint.

Fuel Theft

Theft of heating oil and diesel is an ongoing problem, both from properties and vehicles. Both the police and Customs & Excise run operations to check vehicles both for carrying fuel, the running of vehicles on illegal fuel and selling of fuel.

Tank dipping and arrests have been made in both North Warwickshire and Rugby and operations checking vehicles continue to be run. In addition crime prevention advice is provided on the Warwickshire Rural Watch website www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk and advice sheets are given to properties who have vulnerable fuel tanks. Fluorescent stickers are also provided to anyone who has taken measures to protect their tank by some kind of alarm or beam.

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Speeding

Traffic and speeding was a concern at both meetings, especially in villages and around country lanes. Communities will be supported if they would like to set up Community Speed Watch schemes. If there is a particular problem in a certain area residence can raise this at their local community/area forums (these are held quarterly see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communityforums). If the road is raised as a police priority, officers will be tasked to monitor the road and do speed checks where safe to do so and take action against offenders.

Danger to horse riders on some country roads was also raised and the point that in some areas riders are not wearing fluorescents. Although recommended by all authorities and the police, including the British Horse Society, it is not a legal requirement to wear fluorescent clothing when riding a horse on the road.

As officers visit livery yards they promote Warwickshire Horse Watch for crime prevention advice and their website which includes an advice sheet for riding safely on the road. Warwickshire Horse Watch will print off these leaflets so that they can be distributed more widely to help raise awareness, although it is up to each individual to ride responsibly on the road.



It was asked if cameras used in tractors and on riders helmets could be used in evidence if there was an incident, it was confirmed that yes, footage from these cameras could be used as evidence providing the images are time and dated.

Further Meetings

We would like to know if you found the meetings useful and if you think this is something that should be held again for farmers and local rural businesses. We would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to let us know if it is something you think is needed and would support.

Please email carolcotterill@warwickshire.gov.uk and let us know the topics you would like covered.

**The meetings were supported by the Warwickshire Rural Hub and NFU
who we are proud to have as partners
in addressing rural crime in North Warwickshire.**

For further information on these two leading organisations visit their websites at:



www.ruralhub.org.uk



www.nfuonline.com

www.warwickshireruralwatch.co.uk

