

Rural Task Force



**Kent
Police**



CRAG report for period July – August 2022

This period has continued to be busy for the Rural Task Force. Now the Harvest is done and the fields are clear we have seen the increase in reports of Hare Coursing (Op Galileo) offences. In addition to this the criminals are utilising the clear fields to gain access to Farms in order to steal various items. Please be aware and consider target hardening your properties where possible. The use of alarms, CCTV, tracker, marking solutions and of course quality locks are recommended to protect your property. Please ensure you have photos of your valuable items and a record of serial numbers and distinguishing marks etc. All this assists us when trying to locate the stolen property.

Livestock worrying continues to be an issue across the county. We now have new Livestock Worrying signs (thanks to NFU) which can be placed on footpaths to advise dog walkers of the legislation etc. The continue to investigate all such incidents, utilising DNA evidence when required and will work with the victim to secure the most appropriate outcome.

Are you a...



Both available from RTF officers.

It is important that all incidents are reported and recorded with us which can be done, online or by calling 999 or 101 as appropriate. '**OP Galileo**' If you have cause to report any Hare Coursing activity, please quote this operation name.

Rural Theft

A John Deere Dealer reported that they had a Kubota ATV stolen to the value of £6,000. Following information from a local Farmer on the Romney Marsh Farm Watch WhatsApp Group, the vehicle was located abandoned in Norwood Lane, Newchurch, and recovered.



Report of fencing poles being stolen from a farm at Minster Thanet.



Theft of Trailer and Kubota sit on mower at Aylesford. Witness sighted two males acting suspiciously around a parked trailer with sit on mower. Trailer parked and attached by tow bar to Communal Grounds Maintenance vehicle. Witness returned home and came back 5 minutes later to find same males had unhitched the trailer by removing the tow bar and suspect sat in the rear of mission vehicle holding onto the trailer with straps and 2nd male drove it away towards Aylesford Railway crossing. CCTV enquiries shows mission vehicle as a silver Vauxhall Astra with two males. Vehicle and trailer suspected to carry on up Hall Road, Aylesford towards Royal British Legion. Awaiting further CCTV enquiries from to ID vehicle index and suspects.



BOTD at Whitfield, Dover where Victim reporting barn broken into overnight. Offender (s) have driven a 4x4 vehicle across a cropped field at the back of the barn which is at the entrance to the main yard. They have then left stealing the tools and Trailer (Valued at £4,500) and driven back across the field and out onto the road.



Theft of two Cesspool Tanks from Whitfield, Dover. CCTV enquires revealed a silver LandRover Discovery towing an empty trailer in the area and then 35 minutes later the trailer with the two tanks on the back.

A white Ford Transit was spotted on the move in Swanley linked to numerous thefts of cooking oil in Kent, including a recent attempt theft in New Romney. Vehicle was stopped and the van searched to find 6 full drums and 2 half drums of cooking oil. Both male occupants were arrested, and the vehicle seized as used in crime.



Report on Farm Watch of a theft of a gate from a Farm at Bridge. CCTV shows a LR Discovery pull into the yard and two males stealing the gate.

BOTD in the Ashford area where a number of Storage Containers and two Barns had been broken into. Offender (s) have broken into around twenty containers, cutting padlocks, stealing items from several containers. They have also broken into two locked Barns, however nothing was stolen. Offender (s) have entered the farm via a field at the back having cut a perimeter fence. A large 4x4 vehicle has driven through a cropped field to a rear yard where there are over thirty storage containers. This is being investigated as part of a series of burglaries.



Horse trailer stolen from Borstall on the 26th July



There has been a spate of BT cable thefts across the County. One of these thefts took place at Goddington Park where offenders have made off in two vehicles. One of these vehicles was a Range Rover Evoque that reversed rammed a pursuing police patrol. Suspect initially evaded Police but subsequently the Range Rover was located unattended and seized for CSI examination.

Third report of theft of fuel from plant machinery in Swale. Farm is currently having groundwork carried out at the site by a Contractor. Offenders have returned for the third time stealing a large quantity of diesel. Suspect vehicle is described as silver or white Pick-up truck and recorded to CCTV. Victim has been spoken to and crime prevention advice given.

Report of a vehicle turning up at the Farm in Ashford, where occupants broke into a Caravan and damaged the CCTV system, before making off. Incident occurred around 0330 hrs involves a black 4x4 pickup like a Mitsubishi L200.

Attempt theft of a quad bike at Romney Marsh at 0200 hrs in the morning. Offenders towed out the Quad and made off down the road with two offenders on the back. The Quad was dumped as the Victim gave chase and the towing vehicle made off.

Agricultural Implements had been stolen from a farm at Lydden overnight. Offender (s) have entered the yard and stolen a JCB Loader Adaptor Plate (Value £1,000), two John Deere Draw Bars (Value £400) and a John Deere Drop link (Value £260).
Library Photos of stolen equipment.



Vehicle stop of black Saab linked to fuel thefts and going equipped in Sittingbourne. There were two male occupants in the Saab. Vehicle and occupants searched. Driver witnessed discarding something over nearby fence which turned out to be number plates. The Driver was arrested for Going Equipped to Steal, Theft of number plates and Drug Driving. The passenger was arrested for Going Equipped to Steal, Theft of number plates and Racially Aggravated Public Order.

Intelligence received that a Lithuanian registered HGV, was travelling to the port in Kent, containing two stolen caravans. An area search was conducted, and the vehicle was located. The vehicle was searched where two caravans were located. The caravans were checked on the CRIS system and were not showing as stolen, however neither had keys, documentation and one had signs of forced entry. Both caravans were seized for examination and the driver was arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods.



OP Galileo (Poaching)

Farm Watch alert to a Green Suzuki Vitaria parked up with 3 males and dogs near to Stickfast Lane East Sutton. Following morning located by farmer rolled at East Sutton Road with collision damage. Vehicle linked to hare coursing in Lincolnshire.



Male suspected to be hare coursing was confronted by local farmer in Ashford area. From the description of the male and vehicle details provided the male was identified and RTF attended his home address and issued him with a Community Protection Warning (CPW). Male denied he was hare coursing and trespassing and stated he was using the footpaths.

Report of a 4x4 vehicle in his fields around Haguelands during the early hours of the morning, with people suspected to be Poaching. A padlock was cut along Donkey Street where the vehicle has entered the field.

A silver Suzuki Vitara was stopped on Ramsden Lane, Benenden after a PNC check showed the vehicle as having no insurance. The driver produced a traders policy covering him to drive the vehicle, which he stated he had recently purchased. Driver is known for poaching offences, and this vehicle suspected to be a new vehicle for poaching and will be stopped if seen driving again.

Wildlife Crime

SSSI disturbance at PegWell Bay, Sandwich. A video was circulating online from a boy performing a DJ set on a boat. The video has now been deleted after being shared on some East Kent wildlife groups. Natural England contact due to offence on SSSI land and to establish what action they wish to have taken next.

Report of nest destruction by neighbour at Tunbridge Wells. Established that no nest had ever been seen and assumption made those offences were being committed due to time of year a tree was being felled.

RTF attended an address in Folkestone following a report from the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) that male was illegally importing Great White Shark teeth and reselling them on eBay. A total of 17 teeth were seized. Images of the teeth have been sent to NWCU to confirm the species of shark they are from. Once this is completed male will be interviewed for CITES related offences.



RTF are working with partner agencies Natural England (NE) and Environmental Agency investigating a report that a frog not native to UK was unlawfully brought into the UK and released into the wild. NE are dealing with the capture and eradication of the frogs whilst RTF are responsible for interviewing two persons and dealing with any CITES related offences with guidance from the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU).

Ducklings killed by a group of youths on a new housing development in Dartford. Images of youths from nearby CCTV have been circulated to local policing teams for identification.

Report of pigeons trapped under Solar panels where netting had been applied by contractors at a local community building in Medway. Enquiries on-going.

Animal Welfare

RTF executed two animal welfare warrants in Medway and Gravesend. A number of dogs were seized at both locations and a male arrested on suspicion of causing unnecessary suffering to animals. Investigation continues.

Report of several heads of pigs and sheep chained together and left in woodland at Shorne Country Park. No evidence that sheep or pigs have been killed unlawfully and unclear why they have been left in such a bizarre way at the location. Liaised with Park Rangers and there will be increased patrol presence in the area.

RTF attended woodland area near to Faversham to visit male who has been living nomadic lifestyle for 20 years. Recent concerns have been raised regarding his welfare and the welfare of his 30+ cats. Male refuses to engage with local officers and social services. Relevant referrals completed and joint visit booked with RSPCA for further checks on the condition of the cats.

RTF executed an animal welfare warrant with support from other Police teams and the RSPCA at a site at Staplehurst following information that a bull lurcher type dog had been involved in attacking deer and other mammals. Though the male subject and owner of the dog was not present, evidence was seized and arrangements made for the male to attend a Police Station for interview.

RTF seized a cat that had been abandoned at an address in Sittingbourne. The owner has since made contact with the RSPCA 7 days following the cat being rescued from the address. The animal will remain in the care of the RSPCA who are looking to persecute the owner.

Livestock

RTF dealing with joint agency work alongside DEFRA / Trading Standards /FSA and carried out a joint visit to an abattoir in the Ashford area which had its licence revoked a year ago. Information that they had received the abattoir was still in business carrying out illegal slaughter. Animal waste products were found at the location, so a notice was served to the person present. Further visits to the site are planned.

Livestock worrying incident at a farm in Sevenoaks. Offending dog Rottweiller killed three ewes and injured 2 lambs. Dog had been missing overnight from home address and was found within the sheep fields. Suspect visited and interviewed, and dog was swabbed for DNA saliva. The owner of the sheep was contacted and agreed to Community Resolution for full payment for the dead and injured sheep this include imposed conditions to owner for the dog concerned.

Livestock worrying incident at Oare where 4 sheep were attacked and injured. Owner of sheep did not want to pursue court prosecution, so owner of dog was questioned and the matter concluded with Community Resolution. The dog owner paying compensation to farmer and control conditions imposed.

On two occasions dogs have got out over the boundary fence and attacked and killed sheep from next door on farmland at Headcorn. Two dogs were identified as being responsible for the attacks and the owner was interviewed. Due to no known witnesses to these incidents, though dogs were sighted loose not under control on the land, it was agreed that a Community Protection Warning (CPW) would be issued to the dog owner with the conditions:

To maintain and reinforce boundary fencing. Not to allow the dogs to roam free from dwelling and to be under control in public place. To attend livestock chase prevention course.

Livestock attack at a farm in Tonbridge. Livestock owner has found 7 dead, one euthanised at scene by vet. 6 injured one required amputation of ear. No dog seen but would of been of large breed to carry out the level of injuries. DNA Swab taken. There was another dog attack where two pet Alpacas were attacked and killed by dogs. Due to this being very close to the site where the 7 sheep were found attacked and killed and that the Alpacas were attacked two days later, these two incidents have been linked. Update – dogs suspected involved have been identified and investigation underway.



Report from a Farm near Dover that a near by dog has chased cattle bring grazed on Ministry of Defence (MOD) Land. RTF attended the Farm to obtain details and evidence capture. The dog was being walked on MOD land, well off the footpath. Contact made with MOD who are going to provide RTF with a letter around straying from the footpath. Action in hand with Dog Owner.

Report from a victim at Coldred that some of his Sheep attacked overnight by a Dog which he had manage to capture in his yard. Around 0230 hrs owner of the sheep overheard a dog barking from the field and a commotion from the Sheep. He got up and went over to find the Sheep huddled in two groups in the third field furthest from the road. They suspected something had been worrying them, but could not see any Dogs in the area. They went back to the house and awoke around 0800 hrs and went to check the Sheep again and found four with injuries consistent of being attacked by a Dog. They returned to the Farm to find a white coloured lurcher type dog with blood on it in the yard, it ran off into a field where cows were but jumped back into the yard and was apprehended and secured until Police arrived. The dog was recovered and an owner came forward. The dog owner was interviewed and following the wishes of the owner of the sheep the matter was resolved through Community Resolution. The dog owner compensated the Farmer for his losses and agreed to re-home the dog.



One of four injured Sheep



Offending Dog

HERITAGE

Night Hawking reported at Village Hall green in Dartford area where persons are metal detecting on the site that includes a cricket pitch causing damage. There has been a historic incident where two persons have been previously warned for the same offence. There will be an increased patrol presence in the area.

An English Heritage Site near Sandwich that is currently undergoing a project to update the visitor centre and is therefore closed to the public has been subject to unlawful metal detecting on 3 occasions. Investigation on-going.

Environmental Crime

Fly Tipping (Op Assist)

RTF have worked with the following Local Authorities Waste Enforcement Teams during July and August on dedicated “days of action” in both stopping known fly tipping suspects in their vehicles, attending the addresses of identified offenders, and carrying out joint patrol and stopping vehicles carrying waste:

Dartford, Gravesham, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Folkestone and Hythe, Sevenoaks,

Tonbridge & Malling, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Medway and Swale

The results from this partnership working are:

- LA FPN no Waste Carriers Licence - 4
- LA FPN no Waste Transfer Notes - 5
- LA Reported for no Scrap Collectors Licence – 8
- LA Producers Section 5/34 – 16
- LA Vehicle Seizures – 2
- LA Intelligence Submissions - 31
- Police Vehicle Seizure No Insurance - 9
- Police Vehicle Seizure No Tax/Reported – 23
- Police Traffic Offence Reports – 14
- Police Arrests – 4
- Police Reported for Summons - 5
- Police Stop Searches – 11
- Police Intelligence Reports – 85
- Police ANPR Stops – 12
- Total Number of Vehicles Stopped – 146
- Visits to Premises 7





Fly Tip reported at Baker Lane Headcorn, Paperwork located within the waste to an address in Ramsgate and from that a vehicle nominated to be stopped and local Waste Enforcement Team updated.



Stop Check on a White Ford Transit van with blue flat bed and red Hiab at Penenden Heath Road, Maidstone. There were 2 male occupants. The driver is the son of a prolific fly tipping nominal from Swale. The driver was unable to produce driving Licence and stated there was some confusion that he had a licence, but DVLA had messed up. Enquiries showed the Driver has an Expired provisional Licence. The front passenger did not have a licence to drive or supervise. In the rear of the truck was scrap metal. It appears they had been out collecting though the Driver stated it was his and come from the company and was being moved. Suspect they were committing waste carrier offences. Both males were educated in what paperwork they needed to collect and carry waste legally. The vehicle was seized no Licence. Traffic Offence Report issued for no Licence and MOT and report made for no tax.



A white Ford Transit was stopped at Steplehurst with two male occupants with the vehicle full of scrap. Officers from Maidstone Council Enforcement Team were contacted and attended and the driver was issued a £300 FPN for not having a Waste Transfer Note.



Other Business

RTF attended Calverley Park, Tunbridge Wells following a disturbance where a group of 3 males had tried to steal a moped and were then threatening and attacking members of the public. On arrival only one male could be located. Male attacked RTF Officers and was detained. Enquiries at the scene also disclosed that the male has committed the offences of assault on 2 members of the public, shoplifting at the railway station, was in possession of cannabis as well as theft of motor vehicle. Male was also arrested for causing damage to Police Van whilst he was being conveyed to a Police Station.

Arson report at a Farm near Dover. 40 large bales of straw destroyed. Several youths seen running from the location towards Elvington.



RTF deployed to 1 vehicle RTC on A2 dual carriageway. Vehicle collided with central reservation barriers and left the carriage colliding with a tree. Minor injury only.



A White VW Polo stopped in Eureka Park Ashford Kent following marker for no Insurance. Checks with MIB showed vehicle was uninsured so Driver was issued a Traffic Offence Report for No Insurance.

A white Ford Ranger was stopped at Station Road, Charing. Only occupant was male driver. Vehicle was shown with no insurance and Driver stated he had a Traders Policy. Checks showed that Driver was disqualified until 27/02/2023 and he was reported for this and driving with no insurance.

A silver Suzuki Vitara sped off on sighting police in Cranbook but was subsequently stopped. Driver initially gave false details. Vehicle searched Section 1 PACE. Driver reported for offences and vehicle seized.



A grey VW Golf was seen in High Street, Headcorn. Upon seeing a marked Police vehicle, it took evasive action, travelling at speed to avoid being stopped. The vehicle eventually came to a stop and three occupants were detained. There was a strong smell of cannabis coming from the vehicle and a S23 Misuse of Drugs Act search was carried out with a jiffy food bag located in the glove box containing herbal cannabis. Driver stated the drugs were his. Cannabis seized.

A Ford Fiesta was stopped at Sutton Road, Maidstone and the driver found not to have valid insurance. Fiesta was seized and the Driver reported for offence of No Insurance.



A silver Ford Transit made off from RTF at Hermitage Lane, Maidstone. The vehicle was stopped a short distance later and the male driver was subsequently arrested for Drink Driving and Failing to Stop.

RTF liaised with Farm Manager at Chart Sutton to arrange for a Bulgarian national to return to the UK to be dealt with for a drink driving offence where he failed to attend Court and an arrest warrant was issued. The male returned to the UK and was taken to a Custody Suite by RTF Officer and the matter dealt with by the Court.

RTF were tasked to locate two outstanding offenders for GBH with Intent offence following an incident where a black Range Rover had driven into a Moped and injuring rider. Enquiries established that a male had insured the vehicle on the morning of the incident and other officers had attended the Insured address but confirmed he did not live at the location but believed moved to another address in Wouldham. RTF deployed to the area and located suspect outside an address working on another Range Rover and he was arrested and taken to Tonbridge Custody.

A Silver Vauxhall Zafira was stopped on Old Dover Road, Canterbury following information that vehicle maybe uninsured. Male driver was the only occupant of the vehicle. Vehicle was confirmed as uninsured since April 2022 and Untaxed since 2020. Traffic Offence Report issued and vehicle seized.



Attended an address in Chatham following information that a male was residing at the address who was wanted on warrant. Upon arrival several windows to the house were open and loud music was being played. There was no reply to repeated knocking. Officers entered the property and the wanted male was found hiding in an upstairs cupboard. Male arrested and taken to Tonbridge Custody.

Following an ANPR activation that a vehicle was being driven in Swale connected to a male wanted for a High-Risk Domestic Abuse offence, the vehicle was stopped and the wanted male was the driver, who was arrested and conveyed to Medway Custody.

An Audi 4 stopped in rural Hartlip. Driver had no driving licence or insurance and the vehicle was on a SORN with no MOT or registered keeper. Vehicle seized and driver reported for offences.



Reports of a van racing across wheat field with smoke coming from under the bonnet. The van came to a stop in Rayners Hill and subsequently caught alight. Local Farmer pulled the vehicle off the road into verge. Altercation then ensued between occupants of the van and other present at the scene. KFRS attended and extinguished the fire. KFRS believe dry wheat in the engine would have started the ignition of the fire. RTF later attended the home address of the driver and issued a Section 59 Warning for Driving otherwise than on the road.

Vehicle stopped at Sevenoaks. Driver failed a roadside drugs wipe. In addition, a quantity of cocaine was found inside the vehicle. Driver arrested for unfit through drugs and possession of class A drug; Cocaine.

A Grey Range Rover Sport was stopped on Somerfield Road, Maidstone following marker for no insurance.. Checks with MIB showed vehicle was uninsured so Driver was issued a Traffic Offence Report for No Insurance.



Rural Task Force came across vehicle in middle of road in static traffic on A282 Fast Slip just off the M25. Female giving birth in rear of the vehicle. Baby girl safely delivered without medical care. Mum and Baby blue lighted to hospital and passed into care of medical professionals.

Female located laying on grass outside Coldharbour Police Station intoxicated. Checks revealed female outstanding for Harassment Offence. She was arrested and taken into custody. She further arrested for Criminal Damage to police vehicle after spitting inside it during conveyance to Police Station.

Court Results

Defendant: Stephen Oliver b 09/11/70

Stopped whilst driving by PC Southern whilst driving a vehicle when disqualified from driving and in a vehicle with a difference index plate. He was interviewed and reported for all three offences and summonsed to attend Medway Court. He failed to attend the original court hearing so a Warrant for his arrested was issued. He was subsequently located and arrested and put before the Court.

Sentence:

Disqualified Driving and No Vehicle Insurance – 6 Weeks Imprisonment

Court Costs £ 128.00

Defendant: Ethan Bradbery b 17/06/95

Stopped whilst driving erratically along the A299. Failed drug swipe test and when searched found in possession of Cannabis Resin. He was arrested for both offences and subsequently charged to Court.

Sentence:

Disqualified from Driving for 12 months.

Fine £250

Court Costs £119

Defendant: Alfie Tutte B 14/12/85

Stopped driving his van with waste in it on the 26th February at Sutton Vallence. Failed road side drug swipe and was arrested and subsequently charged.

Sentence:

Disqualified from Driving for 12 months.

Fine £400

Court Costs £85

Tutte failed to attend Court and case was heard in his absence and a Warrant issued for his Arrest.

Defendant: Shane Justin-Cull B 03/07/84

On the 2nd February 2022 The Environmental Crime Team, were contacted by the Rural Task Force (RTF) stating that they had stopped an HGV on the Orbital Business Park, Ashford. The RTF requested attendance by Ashford Borough Council Environmental Team to deal with allegations of waste offences. EEO's were shown the Environment Agency waste carriers licence in another name. Jestic-Cull was served with a Section 5 Notice, requiring him to produce his, or his employers, authority to transport waste. Jestic-Cull stated that he was in the process of applying for an Environment Agency waste carriers' licence. Cull failed to comply with the notice and subsequently was issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice which he also failed to Pay.

Jestic-Cull was summons to appear at before Folkestone Magistrates Court in relation to two offences namely, carrying in the course of his business controlled waste without having the appropriate registration, contrary to section 1(1) of the Control of Pollution (amendment) Act 1989 and Failing without reasonable excuse to provide Ashford Borough Council with his or his employers authority to transport such waste as required by a Section 5 Notice, contrary to section 5(7)(a) of the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989. Jestic-Cull failed to attend Folkestone Magistrates Court and therefore ABC applied for the matter to be heard in his absence.

Sentence:

Fine £1440

Court Costs £839.46

With addition of Victim Surcharge total payment of £2,423.46 within 28 days of hearing date.

Defendant: Nickolas Scarsbrook B 13/08/1998

A white Citroen Berlingo van was sighted at Junction 4 M20 on 21st August 2021 and the vehicle moving erratically between lanes. Vehicle was stopped and the driver failed a Drug Swipe Test. He was arrested and subsequently charged with Drug Driving

Sentence:

Fine £250

Disqualified from Driving for 12 months.

Court Costs £85

Defendant: Tammy Ryan

Stopped driving a vehicle suspected to be involved in fly tipping on the 8th January 2022 in Dartford. Reported for Driving Otherwise in Accordance Licence and No Insurance.

Sentence:

Fine including Court Costs £1070

6 Points endorsed on Driving Licence.

Defendant: Luke Warren

Warren was stopped by the RTF when exiting a Metal Recycling Centre in Ashford following information, he was collecting scrap without a licence. He admitted collecting scrap in the area and was asked to produce the authority to collect metal and waste transfer notice for its transit. He failed to respond so 2 FPN's were issued, on in respect of each of these notices. Warren ignored these FPN and all reminder notices sent and was taken to Court by Ashford Borough Council where he admitted 3 charges committed between 7 and 23 September 2021.

Sentence:

Fine £4,300

Court Costs £1,385.45

Victim Surcharge £180

Kind regards

Rural Task Force

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