

RuralMatters

POLICE SCOTLAND

Keeping our Rural Communities Safe

October 2022



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA



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Welcome to the October edition of Rural Matters.

A bi-monthly bulletin produced by the Police Scotland North East Division Crime Reduction Team aimed at keeping you up to date with what's happening in our countryside.

In this edition of Rural Matters

We investigate a high tech solution to deter criminals and protect your property.

PC Richard Russell answers your questions regarding CCTV.

PC Jonathon Davis talks about suicide in rural communities.

Following the Horse Society's September safety campaign PC Hannah Corbett explains how horse riders and road users can stay safe.

And we look at how fraudsters are targeting families suffering as a result of the cost of living crisis.

As well as a regular round-up of crime in the North East.

From the latest frauds and scams, to general security measures, each issue will bring you advice on how to keep your property safe.

Rural Crime across Scotland is increasing and criminals are using ever more sophisticated methods. By working in partnership we can make our countryside a safer place to live and work.



PC Mark Irvine investigates a high tech solution to deter thieves and protect your property...





Given the rise in Rural Crime, North East Crime Reduction officer PC Mark Irvine investigates methods of protecting your property and spoke with Spencer Payne, from Selectamark Security Services.

Spencer advised, 'It seems so common sense that it shouldn't need saying: the best solution to crime is prevention. The nature of rural crime makes this all the more true for policing in the countryside.

The morning after a visit from thieves, the morning where GPS systems are discovered as missing and tool-sheds as emptied, is always head-spinning, leaving victims wondering what they are to do.

SelectaDNA have played a vital role in returning stolen goods to their owners on many occasions. It is the most satisfying element of what we do. The most useful thing we do,

however, is providing deterrents. Top-tier deterrents instil real fear into criminals, and have an effect tantamount to a mental straitjacket. Properly shielding yourself from thieves requires a deterrent that assures them that their endeavours on your property will not end well.

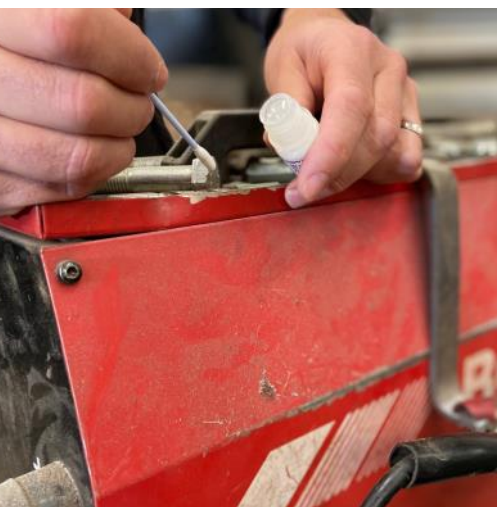
When valuable assets are stolen the cost of replacement can be devastating, and so can the costs incurred due to the disruption to lives and businesses. The stress, upset, and fear induced should never be understated either.

SelectaDNA Property Marking utilises uniquely-coded synthetic DNA solutions. Only visible under UV light, SelectaDNA solutions last for years when applied to assets. Quad bikes and the GPS systems of tractors can be easily marked using SelectaDNA, and doing so renders them far harder to sell on illegal markets.

SelectaDNA Grease can be daubed around the perimeter of a farm, ensuring that any intruders trying to gain access will end up covered.

SelectaDNA Intruder Spray systems using infrared sensors can also be installed. When criminals tagged by SelectaDNA are apprehended, they can be irrefutably traced back to the specific crime scene, and the solution remains on the skin and clothes of offenders for weeks.

Naturally, thieves think twice after seeing that a site is displaying **SelectaDNA Warning Signage** indicating usage of SelectaDNA solutions.



Rural crime tends to be meticulously planned

Expensive farming equipment stolen from UK farms has been turning up on sale on the far side of the continent, thousands of miles from home. The responsible crime organisations do not consist of opportunists or amateurs acting locally, and instead scout out their targets from afar. They scour Europe for farms where the high value equipment is not properly protected, and only take action after making a very careful choice.

These thieves will continue to act for as long as they can get away with it. They will already have targets lined up right now, and will be making decisions about others. Give the thieves pause during their considerations. When they make their final choice, make sure they don't choose you.'



The spiralling cost of living, escalating costs on essential commodities and consumables as diverse as fertiliser, food and fuel has the potential to place mounting pressures on household and business finances.

Scam Update

Cost of living crisis



Scottish families warned of scams related to the cost of living crisis

Trading Standards Scotland has launched a campaign aimed at raising awareness of scams linked to the ongoing cost of living crisis. As prices and bills continue to rise, many consumers will have financial worries heading into autumn and winter.

Scammers may attempt to exploit these anxieties and to target people online and via cold calls, emails and text messages in an attempt to obtain their personal details and bank account information.

Email and text scams connected to the energy bill rebate and cost of living payments have already been reported, as well as fake supermarket voucher and fuel card giveaways on social media.

Doorstep scammers have been giving householders misleading information about grants and funding for energy efficiency measures such as boilers and insulation, while some rogue traders have taken advantage of the global shortage of construction materials to ask customers to pay large deposits, then failing to return to carry out the work.

There have also been reports of dangerous electric devices being sold online which claim to save money on energy bills – consumer safety charity Electrical Safety First recently tested some of these products and found that they all failed basic safety tests, posing the risk of fire or electric shock.

Those worried about making ends meet are also being warned to be wary of online adverts offering 'quick and easy' loans or cryptocurrency investment opportunities with supposedly high returns. These adverts often imply that the investment has been endorsed by celebrities such as Martin Lewis.

Trading Standards Scotland recently ran the Big Scottish Scam Survey, asking Scots about the scams they had experienced in the last year.

97% of respondents had experienced an email, text, phone, doorstep or online scam in the last year. For those who lost money to a scam, the amounts ranged from £37 to £25,000. 79% of survey respondents had avoided a scam after seeing or reading about it, with 41% going on to report the scam.

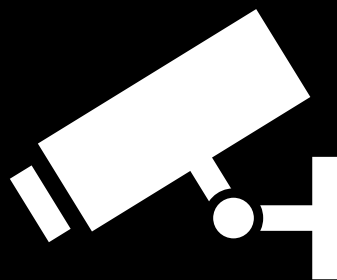
Cllr Maureen Chalmers, Chair of Trading Standards Scotland's Governance Board, said: 'Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, we have seen how quickly scammers can adapt to changing circumstances to take advantage of people's financial worries.

'Unfortunately, as we move into the autumn and winter months, scammers are increasingly likely to target people who are worried about paying their bills and who may be more likely to click on links or respond to messages offering discounts on bills or investment opportunities. We would like to remind consumers to be wary of cold callers, unsolicited emails and text messages and online adverts offering deals, discounts and giveaways. Never accept information offered from these sources without doing independent research, and don't provide any personal or financial information to a cold caller or via a link in an unsolicited message.'

Further information about the campaign can be found at <https://www.tsscot.co.uk/cost-of-living-scams/>

Scams should be reported to Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 or through their website: www.consumeradvice.scot.

THE FACTS ABOUT CCTV



One of the most common subjects the Crime Reduction Team get asked about is CCTV.

PC Richard Russell answers some of those questions and explains why CCTV alone is not a replacement for good quality physical security.

Those working and living in our rural communities are increasingly turning to CCTV to protect their properties. Farmers and landowners not only see the benefit of protecting property but modern systems offer other benefits like allowing you to monitor livestock from the comfort of your home.

There are so many choices of camera systems out there that picking the right system can be daunting and many people will query if there is any actual benefit to their business? Perhaps you have considered CCTV in the past but your Wi-Fi only works within metres of your house or you think it is not possible to have a system in remote locations. There is likely to be a system out there that will work for you and meet the needs of your business.

Do you need CCTV?

The provision and use of CCTV systems on farms and rural business premises is one solution to crime reduction. It should not be regarded as a deterrent to crime and is not a replacement for physical security such as robust doors, gates and good quality chains and padlocks.

Building design, internal layouts, lighting and security practices and procedures are equally important. Cameras and good signage should be used to deter opportunist thieves in conjunction with quality physical security measures. Thieves on most occasions hide their identity. New systems now not only record

but alert the user as soon as an intruder is detected and provide live footage of the incident. This allows the Police to be alerted immediately.

What type of camera?

A **360 camera** is exactly what is suggested with the ability to move a camera either with a computer mouse or via an app on your phone. These allow you to see entire area without switching between cameras. It might be just what you need to cover your yard and buildings.

Fixed/Static cameras are fixed on one designated area and often used to cover vulnerable access points like doors or gates to a property. A static camera is ideal if the subject is in a fixed place.



The provision and use of CCTV systems on farms and rural business premises is one solution to crime reduction. It should not be regarded as a deterrent to crime and is not a replacement for physical security such as good practise, robust doors, gates and quality chains and padlocks.

You can direct cameras at anything within or around your own premises, with the exception of sensitive areas, such as toilets or changing room facilities. You should not be viewing into adjoining property where possible and practical.

Wi-Fi

Most farms have Wi-Fi in the main house or office but it may have a limited range and is unlikely to cover all the key areas of your property. Older farm houses tend to have thick stone walls limiting the range of the signal. Firstly look at your current router. Is it over two years old? It is worth speaking to your service provider and explaining what you want to do and asking for a newer version. There are different ways to extend your signal from having hard wired systems to Wi-Fi long range antennas.

Many CCTV systems can now work with 4G Sim Cards. If you can get 4G on your phone then it is likely these CCTV systems will work. 4G cameras can be connected to a solar panel and used to top-up a rechargeable battery. This could be ideal should you wish to have a system monitoring a remote site or equipment such as tractors and harvesters located many miles from your house.

Location of cameras

When considering where to install each camera take a walk around and see where vehicles and those on foot are likely to approach your farm and outbuildings. Where do you store your quadbikes and chainsaws? What security measures and lighting have you already got in place? Remember cameras must be installed out of reach to prevent tampering.

Infrared/Night Vision

With any form of security we would recommend a good lighting system. No one wants to be seen walking across the farm yard when they are intent on committing crime. Infrared cameras are readily available and essential for covering an area which is at risk after dark.

Storage of footage

Most modern systems allow footage to be recorded directly to a cloud – stored securely on the internet where you can access it remotely from anywhere.

Legal part

Signage is required and should contain information about the purpose of the system, the Data owner and their contact details. Make your signs bold and highly visible. If a criminal was approaching your property from the road consider placing CCTV signage where they are likely to see it. It might just be enough for them to keep driving past and look for a weaker target.

In summary

As previously mentioned CCTV alone is not the answer to protecting your property or livestock and should be used alongside good quality physical security measures. It is not a replacement for good practice and locking up your property. Do your research and speak to reputable contractors for advice. The initial costs of setting up a system could be expensive but not likely to be anywhere near as costly should you be victim of crime.

Let's talk about

Suicide

By Constable Jonathan Davis

North East Division Suicide Prevention Officer

According to figures produced by SAMH,
1 in 20 people in Scotland at any given time are
thinking about ending their lives by suicide.



Let's Talk About Suicide

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According to figures produced by SAMH, 1 in 20 people in Scotland at any given time are thinking about ending their lives by suicide. Traditionally suicide was seen as a symptom, or a result of mental illness. But we now know that significant negative life events such as bereavement or relationship breakdown are equally powerful motivators for suicide.

When you look again at that figure of 1 in 20 people it is important to recognise that it isn't 1 in 20 people who have poor mental health, or those who are destitute, it is potentially 1 in 20 in your circle of friends, your family or your colleagues.

Much of the recent messaging about suicide mentions it being most prevalent in white, middle-aged males, and from a certain point of view this is correct. The problem with this is that if we are looking for means of preventing suicide we have no way of changing people's ethnicity, age or gender. Plus, it is misleading – it is far more accurate to say that those more at risk of suicide are those who have endured trauma and this can be from a variety of sources or severity, and helping these people is the key to prevention.

The situation, though, is far from helpless.

There are some simple steps that we can all take that will help to prevent suicide. Going back to messaging, I am sure you will have seen adverts and the like encouraging those who are struggling with mental health issues or feelings of suicide to open up. This is absolutely right, but would you be prepared to help to someone who opens up? It is easy to feel overwhelmed in that position –

as if it is a matter of life or death. But, the good news is, the best thing you can do if someone opens up to you about thoughts or feelings of suicide is just to listen to them and to be kind. You don't necessarily have to agree with everything they are saying but, if you can, do your best to understand how they are feeling. Thoughts and feelings of suicide, generally, wax and wane and just being able to talk about them can often be enough for the feelings to lessen in intensity.

Police Scotland and our partners at SAMH have developed a new leaflet which Officers and Staff will be handing out in the North East in the coming weeks and months. In this leaflet are warning signs to look out for, when to call for help, who to call and how to make a safety plan. Making a safety plan is a simple but very effective way of helping to prevent suicide and I would encourage all to learn how to do this, in exactly the same way you would learn how to do CPR or provide first aid. Please remember that suicide prevention is everyone's business and that talking about suicide doesn't put that idea into someone's head – it saves lives.

The best thing you can do if someone opens up to you about thoughts or feelings of suicide is just to listen to them and to be kind.



Let's Talk About **Suicide**

By Constable Jonathan Davis

North East Division Suicide Prevention Officer

If you have serious concerns that someone may be about to attempt to end their life you MUST CALL 999.

If a person you know who has thoughts or feelings of suicide goes missing or their whereabouts are unknown, even if it has only been for a short time, you MUST CALL 999.

If you would like further support or information this can be found at:

North East Suicide Prevention App

App Store/Google Play

SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)

www.samh.org.uk

Samaritans

jo@samaritans.org

116 123 (Freephone)

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

0300 123 3393

Breathing Space

www.breathingspace.scot

0800 838 587



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What's happening in Aberdeenshire

Fuel Theft, Fordyce

On 11/08/2022 200 litres of fuel were stolen from a tractor fuel tank near Fordyce.

Housebreaking, Fettercairn

Between 14 and 17 August 2022 a rural property near to Fettercairn was broken into. Entry was gained by breaking a small window in the living room.

Fuel Theft, Marykirk

On 21/08/2022 5000 litres of fuel valued at £4,500 was stolen from a farm near Marykirk.

Fuel Theft, Fettercairn

On 08/09/2022 fuel valued at £700 was stolen from a domestic heating tank at a rural property near Fettercairn.

Livestock Worrying, Newmachar

On 18/09/2022 a number of cattle were worried by a dog not on a lead at a farm near Newmachar. One cow was injured as a result of the incident.

Hare Coursing, St Fergus

On 27 September 2022 4 males were observed on CCTV deliberately hunting hares with a number of dogs in fields near to St Fergus.

Chainsaw Theft and Recovery, Inverurie

On 29/09/2022 nine chainsaws were stolen from outside a garden centre in Inverurie. Following enquiries, officers from the Inverurie Community Policing Team, recovered the chainsaws from a car boot sale in Inverurie. An address in Aberdeen was also searched and further stolen property recovered.

A 35-year-old man and 21-year-old woman were arrested and charged, and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Inspector Gareth Hannan, from the Inverurie Community Policing Team, said: 'Following a report of the theft of nine chainsaws from a commercial property in Oldmeldrum a man and woman have been arrested and charged in connection with the incident. We will always robustly pursue all lines of enquiry to return any property to its rightful owner I would like to thank all members of the public who assisted us throughout this investigation. Choose carefully where you shop and research retailers to check they are legitimate. **Purchasing stolen goods is an offence. Remember – if it seems too good to be true it probably is.**'

What's happening in Moray

Vehicle Theft, Keith

On 19/08/2022 a John Deere Gator vehicle valued at £30,000 was stolen from a farm near Keith.

Housebreakings, Keith

During August 2022 several rural properties in the Keith area were broken into. A number of males have been charged with the offences and reported.

Hare Coursing, Elgin

On 24/08/2022 a male with two Lurcher type dogs was observed deliberately hunting for hares in fields near to Elgin.

Theft, Elgin

On 28/08/2022 fuel was stolen from the tank of a lorry along with a chain saw and nail gun. A male has been charged and report submitted.

Housebreaking, Ballindalloch

During August 2022 a rural and unoccupied property near Ballindalloch was broken into a quantity of copper piping and copper water tank stolen.

Vandalism, Rothes

On 28/08/2022 a wooden fishing boat used on the River Spey near Rothes was vandalised.

Livestock Worrying, Elgin

On 19/09/2022 at a farm near Elgin a dog was shot and killed during a sheep worrying incident. One sheep was killed and another seriously injured as a result of the incident.

Theft, Buckie

On 22/09/2022 150 litres of fuel and a number of tools were stolen from a tractor parked in fields near Buckie.

Vandalism, Buckie

On 10/10/2022 attempts were made to gain entry to a quarry near Buckie resulting in £600 of damage to the entrance barrier.

During September, a number of horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians throughout the UK took to the roads as part of the British Horse Society's, Pass Wide and Slow Campaign. Three of these rides were carried out in the Grampian area; Banff, Peterhead and Aberdeen.

by PC Hannah Corbett

The people that attended these rides did so to raise the awareness of the need to pass by horses slowly at a maximum speed of ten miles per hour and with a two meter space.

Horses are prey animals and can be unpredictable, a number of things can cause them to spook causing them to spin or move out further into the road at any given time. This could be because of a cow in a field, a rattily trailer, a loud exhaust, a leaf falling onto them, a car going through a puddle splashing water or a young inexperienced horse who isn't used to the wider world yet.



Having a two minute delay in your journey could be the difference between getting their safely or being involved in a road traffic collision.

Drivers that are not considerate are at risk of being reported to the Procurator Fiscal for Careless or Dangerous driving.

It should be noted that it is not always possible for horse riders to take one hand of the reins to give a wave of thanks due to needing to keep the horse calm and controlled, so many riders will nod there head as a way of saying thank you.

Road Users

Should be considerate, keep a distance if approaching the horse from behind and thereafter pass by slowly providing adequate space when going past. If vehicles go past too close, they can scare the horse which can result in serious injuries to the rider and the horse, as well as potentially damaging your vehicle.

Horse Riders

Should wear hi visibility tabards and use hi visibility exercise sheets, saddle pads, leg wraps etc to make themselves as visible as possible to other road users. Helmet cameras are also a useful tool for personal safety and documenting incidents for the Police.

SIGN UP TO



Rural Watch SCOTLAND

We aim to ALERT you to:



Local crimes and emerging trends that may impact you and your community



Information on safety, resilience and community wellbeing



Prevention tactics to protect your home and business



Approved "Secured by Design" products and recommendations



Advice on how to secure your property, equipment and machinery



The opportunity to share best practice



**Rural Watch
SCOTLAND**

Delivered by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland



SPARC

SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP AGAINST RURAL CRIME

**Sign up to Alerts
to register**

www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk



Neighbourhood Watch Scotland SCIO is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charity Number: SC036510

Keeping Our Rural Communities Safe

Police Scotland's North East Division covers rural and urban areas in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The division has five territorial command areas which have their own dedicated Area Commander, who is responsible for the daily policing function. Each command area is served by a number of community policing teams whose activities are built around the needs of the local community. These teams respond to local calls and look for long term solutions to key issues. They are assisted by the division's Crime Reduction Unit who deliver against

Force and local priorities in a number of areas, including physical and social crime prevention, supporting and enhancing community engagement and creating and sustaining strong and effective partnership working.

Website

www.scotland.police.uk

Twitter

www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
NorthEastPoliceDivision](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision)

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