In this issue:

- Historic England
- Badger baiting cruelty case
- Oil thefts warning

Plus the latest news on rural and environmental policing in Kent
Heating fuel thefts

Keep tanks secure this summer

As the weather warms up it is a good time to ensure fuel tanks are kept safe and secure as thieves know they are not being used during the summer.

Kent Police investigated five reports of heating oil thefts in East Kent and arrested three men. Between 27 March and 31 March around £1,500 of heating oil was reported stolen from a property in Etchinghill. Oil worth the same amount was also taken from a second address in the same area between 31 March and 1 April. Between 1 and 29 March around £700 worth of heating oil was reported stolen from a property in Stelling Minnis and around £400 worth from a farm in Brabourne Lees, Ashford between 1am and 3am on 6 April.

Police also received a report of an attempted theft at around 2am on 1 April in Acrise. A 33-year-old man from Dartford and a 29-year-old man from Strood were arrested on 7 April on suspicion of conspiracy to steal heating oil and on 10 April a 41-year-old man from Strood was also arrested for the same offence. All were bailed from Chatham.

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Safety advice

‘Now is the time to check fuel tanks and consider their security. Thieves will know the heating oil tanks will be full and not in use during the summer, especially in rural areas, and they will look out for opportunities to steal the contents. Home owners are reminded to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity they witness – especially vehicles or people in the area who appear to be paying extra attention to properties – and to call 101 or 999 if appropriate.’

Detective Sergeant Lopa McDermott of Kent Police

Steps to reduce the risk of fuel being stolen include:

• Make sure tank caps are locked.
• Physically mark tanks showing the oil level.
• Consider disguising the tank or placing obstacles around it which make it difficult to get, such as thorny hedging or fencing.
• Keep yards or drive gates closed and locked.
• Consider installing security lighting and CCTV.

For more crime prevention tips or details of policing in your area visit www.kent.police.uk

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Work stopped to keep habitat safe

When a local resident saw a digger ploughing through an area used by breeding birds, Kent Police’s Rural Liaison Team stepped in. Concerned that the work was destroying the bird’s habitat at Garlinge, near Margate, the team spoke to the operator of the excavator and the contractor employed to clear the site. They immediately stopped work after being told to continue would be committing offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

They were advised not to start again until late August after the breeding season. Rural Liaison Team officer PC Geordie Laidlaw said:

‘This was a lesson learned by all those involved. A local councillor gave feedback to residents via social media and the plant hire company are reviewing their hire agreements.’

Dogs shot in trespassing incident

Owners are being urged to keep their pets under control after two dogs were shot in Eastchurch.

Farmers are within their rights to shoot and kill dogs if they are deemed to be causing distress to flocks. Such attacks can often lead to huge financial losses.

Owners can also be prosecuted if their pets are let off their leads while in a field or enclosed space with sheep present.

Officers attended and interviewed the men under suspicion of hare coursing and sheep worrying.

PC Preston Frost of the Kent Police Rural Task Force said:

‘It’s important people know what can happen if their dogs run loose and kill or injure livestock.

‘Sheep represent a farmer’s income and are often worth a substantial sum. If attacked, the veterinary bills farmers face can leave them substantially out of pocket.

‘By ensuring dogs are kept under control when sheep or other livestock are present, owners can significantly reduce the chances of any of the animals involved coming to harm.’

PC Frost said farmers had received threats on social media for shooting dogs. He added officers would review any such messages received and take action if necessary.

Anyone who witnesses sheep being chased or attacked should report it immediately to police by calling 999.

Facts about sheep-worrying:

• Under the Animals Act 1971, a person acting to protect livestock may be able to kill or injure a dog that he/she reasonably believes is ‘worrying’ without incurring any criminal or civil liability.

• As a dog owner or a person for the time being in charge of a dog, you could be committing an offence if your pet worries livestock on agricultural land.

• Worrying includes attacking or chasing livestock in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, suffering or loss.

• It is also an offence to have a dog in a field or enclosed space where there are sheep when the dog is not on a lead or under close control.

Postbox stolen

Officers are appealing for information after a distinctive old fashioned postbox was stolen from a wall outside a pub in Hartley. Believed to be Victorian, it was discovered missing on 5 April. It had been imbedded into a wall at the front of the Black Lion pub in Ash Road. The post box is cast iron and believed to be worth around £200.

Can you help?

Anyone with information should call 01322 422502, quoting reference YY/6915/15. If you don't want to give your name call Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Latest news

• Postbox stolen

• Work stopped to keep habitat safe

• Dogs shot in trespassing incident

• Facts about sheep-worrying:
**Operations**

**Vehicles seized and stolen property recovered in regular rural operation**

Vehicles were seized, suspects arrested and fly tipping hazards removed during a Kent Police rural operation. More than 200 officers and staff from the force and partner agencies visited rural locations in each of the county’s 12 districts and Medway during the first Operation Nonagon of 2015.

Operation Nonagon days of action are held regularly to target crime and to engage with rural communities to tackle issues important to them. More are planned in the near future.

Pre-planned warrants were executed at addresses in Stone, near Ashford, Exeter Road in Gravesend and Dynes Road in Kemsing, Sevenoaks. An early morning warrant at an address in Oxford Road, Maidstone, resulted in large amounts of stolen property being recovered and a vehicle seized. Two men, aged 19 and 22, were arrested on suspicion of burglary offences.

In Shepway, Kent Police worked alongside staff from HMRC and the district council to carry out road checks on the A260 Swingfield resulting in three vehicle seizures and a £530 on-the-spot fine for illegal use of red diesel.

In Swale, officers carried out joint patrols with Kent Fire and Rescue Service conducting high visibility patrols in areas including Dartford, Tunbridge Wells and Thanet. Inspector Dave Smith said: ‘Operation Nonagon is proving to be a very productive and successful series of operations for us. We run these operations regularly to carry out pre-planned warrants and focused partnership working which complements the existing work of the Rural Task Force and partners. We’ve seen arrests, vehicles seized and stolen property recovered but officers have also been doing things that cannot be measured such as meeting and talking to members of the rural community and potentially deterring crime with their presence.’

**News**

**Illegal fuel crackdown – year long campaign**

The use of illegal fuel was targeted in a year long campaign – resulting in £7,000 worth of fines.

Rural Task Force officers searched locations countywide in partnership with HM Revenue and Customs officers, issuing on the spot fines to people caught filling their tanks with red diesel during Operation Flame.

Also known as gas oil, red diesel is illegal to use as fuel in a road vehicle without a licence from HM Revenue and Customs. This is due to its use in other activities such as hare-coursing and poaching.

Operation Flame ran from March 2014 until April 2015 with warrants executed under the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act.

In 2014 vehicles detected running on red diesel included:

- **A249 Stockbury** – three vehicles (total of £7,700 fines)
- **Chart Road, Great Chart, Ashford** – two vehicles (£1,000 fines)
- **Vauxhall Road, Canterbury** – two vehicles (£1,000 fines)
- **Nickley Wood Road, Shadoxhurst** – one vehicle (£500 fines)
- **Vauxhall Road, Canterbury** – two vehicles (£1,000 fines)

In 2015:

- **Nickley Wood Road, Shadoxhurst, near Ashford** – no illegal fuel detected.
- **Mustards Road, Leydown, Sheppey** – two vehicles (more than £1,000 fines)
- **London Road, Farningham, Dartford** – two vehicles running on red diesel and heating oil (more than £1,000 fines)

Operation Flame proved an effective way to gain intelligence and to disrupt and deter people who wish to commit crime and anti-social behaviour.

**Intelligence**

Since the operation started there’s been a reduction in the number of reported thefts of red diesel from Kent’s rural communities, so the message is clearly getting through. Some of the sites visited had also been reported to us for other illegal activities such as hare-coursing, which has now stopped. ‘We are pleased to be working in partnership with HMRC to help reduce illegal fuel usage in the county.’ The Rural Task Force brings officers from the Gypsy Liaison Team and Rural Liaison Team together in one coordinated unit. It directly targets those who cause harm to rural communities and consists of officers specially trained to deal with wildlife crime such as hare-coursing and poaching.

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**Fly tipping**

Officers also carried out a patrol of nearby land owned by the Ministry of Defence with MOD counterparts and worked in partnership with representatives from Kent Horse Watch around equine crime prevention. In Swale, officers carried out joint patrols with Kent Fire and Rescue Service identifying fly tipping hazards such as discarded tyres, fridges, and general commercial waste and liaised with Environment Agency officers to get them removed.

When officers were not involved in warrants or stop checks, they met members of rural communities and conducted high visibility patrols in areas including Dartford, Tunbridge Wells and Thanet. Inspector Dave Smith said: ‘Operation Nonagon is proving to be a very productive and successful series of operations for us. We run these operations regularly to carry out pre-planned warrants and focused partnership working which complements the existing work of the Rural Task Force and partners. We’ve seen arrests, vehicles seized and stolen property recovered but officers have also been doing things that cannot be measured such as meeting and talking to members of the rural community and potentially deterring crime with their presence.’

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**Equine crime prevention evening**

Keeping horses and stables safe and property secure were discussed at the first equine crime prevention evening held by Police Community Support Officers Anne KingScott and Sue Harwood at Eaglesfield Equestrian centre, Ash. Kent Horse Watch brought CCTV and solar lighting experts to the event on 19 May to demonstrate security devices, such as tracking systems suitable for trailers and solar lighting suitable for equine establishments without electricity. Kent Horse Watch also carried out saddle marking. Kent Horse Rescue representatives spoke about their work and new fly grazing regulations. Sergeant Marc Pennicott from Kent Police Rural Liaison Team spoke about partnership working to tackle rural crime. PCSO KingScott, who covers the Leigh and Hever area said: ‘The event was well attended and hopefully others in the coming months will ensure a wider circulation of the crime prevention work being undertaken in the district.’

Learn more about Kent Horse Watch, see page 12.
Unintentional call leads police and RSPCA to uncover sickening animal fights cruelty

A Kent man was jailed and banned for keeping animals for life after police and RSPCA inspectors found dogs with terrible injuries in kennels at his home.

Steven Alston had used the dogs for fights with wild animals. Some had their noses and lips almost entirely ripped off.

Appearing at Folkestone Magistrates Court on 11 May, Alston, 49, a former college tutor, was jailed for 160 days, ordered to pay £10,000 costs and banned from keeping animals for life. District Judge Justin Barron said he would have passed an even stronger sentence if the law had allowed it.

The dogs were discovered after Alston's wife accidentally called 999 and unwittingly revealed her husband's cruel hobby.

Police officers found terriers with terrible facial injuries in an elaborate kennel set-up at the back of Alston's home near Canterbury when they traced an unanswered emergency call from his wife's mobile phone to the couple's address.

Inspector Cliff Harrison, from the RSPCA's special operations unit, said: 'Using terriers to hunt and fight wild animals is a sickening form of deliberate and premeditated animal cruelty.

'It isn't just the animals targeted that suffer sickening injuries, but also the dogs used in this barbaric activity.

'These injured dogs will have been put underground in the likes of badger sets and fox earths, where they would have endured the sort of encounters that left both animals with huge trauma wounds.

'No animal deserves to be used and treated in this way. I am pleased that the court clearly took a similarly strong view and has prevented the defendant from owning a dog ever again.'

Response officers from Kent Police visited Alston's home on 6 November 2013 to investigate the unanswered 999 call.

When there was no answer at the property the officers looked over the rear garden fence and saw injured dogs in the kennel area. PC Wendy Heisley said: 'As I went through the gate to my left were some purpose built kennels. As I turned to the first kennel I saw there was a small black terrier type dog, with most of his lips, nose and toes missing.

'I'm a dog lover and was horrified by his injuries. I made friends with the dog, which was desperate for love and attention. The other kennels also had dogs in, either in the same condition or with more serious injuries.

The RSPCA inspector was horrified with the injuries and other officers said this was the worst they had ever seen.'

A search uncovered paraphernalia, including digging equipment, an adapted treadmill used to train dogs and veterinary medication, along with many photos of injured dogs and a number of diaries where Alston described in detail multiple fights between dogs and foxes and other wild mammals over several decades.

Eight terrier type dogs, adults and young dogs, were seized.

Alston pleaded guilty to one charge of causing an animal fight to take place and one charge of causing unnecessary suffering to three of the dogs by failing to get proper veterinary treatment. Seven of dogs seized have been successfully rehomed by the RSPCA. The eighth had to be put down.

Major (pictured) had lost part of his nose and much of the skin around his muzzle and jaw. He was successfully rehomed after rehabilitation by RSPCA staff. One of the charity's vets treated him using reconstructive surgery and he is now living a healthy and happy life.

Inspector Harrison added: 'I'm pleased we've been able to put an end to this man's activities, but what is most satisfying is that his dogs have now been given a new life, free from the cruelty they were previously subjected to.

'It is this complete cycle of rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming which makes the RSPCA's work so important and why we must continue to investigate those people who think animal cruelty is acceptable.'

PC Preston Frost, of Kent Police's Rural Liaison Team, said: 'Using dogs to fight wild mammals has no place in a civilised society and is a particularly cruel thing to put an animal of any type through. Our officers are specially trained to notice the signs of such unlawful activity, and it was immediately clear from the injuries Alston's dogs had suffered just what he had subjected them to.

'We in the rural liaison team are proud of our close working partnership with the RSPCA and are pleased to have been able to help them secure this important conviction. What Alston did is completely unacceptable and today's sentence should act as a warning to anyone thinking about following in his footsteps.'

The RSPCA's Cruelty Line is 0300 1234 999 for more information see www.rspca.org.uk

‘No animal deserves to be used and treated in this way. I am pleased that the court clearly took a similarly strong view and has prevented the defendant from owning a dog ever again.’

RSPCA Inspector Cliff Harrison

‘Major’ (pictured with his injuries and in his new home after surgery) was one of the dogs seized. He was suffering from horrific facial injuries and had lost part of his nose and much of the skin around his muzzle and jaw.
News update

Helping police protect marine environment

A wildlife officer for the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is working with Kent Police as a volunteer. Claire Bowers has been sharing her expertise and experience in marine legislation with the Rural Task Force. The MMO is part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs network of organisations and Claire is responsible for enforcing wildlife legislation within the marine environment, which is anything seaward of the high water mark. She has a deep understanding of both UK and EU legislation protecting marine species and, as a warranted enforcement officer, has fisheries and wildlife enforcement powers enabling her to caution and interview.

She said: ‘I am delighted to be able to support Kent Police in their fight against rural and wildlife crime. I have always worked closely with the force and becoming a volunteer was a way of strengthening those links and sharing knowledge and experience.’

Specialist

‘I work with wildlife laws and directives every day and was really keen to use my specialist knowledge to support the police and protect the marine environment.’

Claire has been working alongside the Rural Task Force since autumn 2014. She’s also met with Kent Horsewatch to discuss ways in which the two organisations can work together more closely on issues of equine crime.

She said: ‘I’m also hoping I’ll learn more about rural and wildlife enforcement on land as well as on our oceans and seas. I know the basics, as I went on the National Police Wildlife Crime Officer Training Course a few years ago, but it will be great to widen my remit beyond the marine environment.’

Inspector Dave Smith said: ‘Kent Police and the Marine Management Organisation already have a close working relationship, dealing with the same issues and passing intelligence to each other. Claire working with the team will only serve to strengthen those links and her background in wildlife and environmental crime will be invaluable.’

Barn cannabis grower tapped into overhead cables

A man who hooked up a cannabis factory in a barn to overhead power lines has been jailed for three years. David Hill, 43, had established five grow rooms in a two storey barn in Bells Farm Road, East Peckham. Local patrol officers smelled cannabis when he was caught in his car for not having a valid driving licence.

He’d been entering a large barn and admitted it was used to grow more than 100 cannabis plants. An overhead cable had been tapped into, to power equipment used to cultivate the drug. A search of his Gillingham home revealed a cellar, used to dry out the cannabis.

Hill appeared at Maidstone Crown Court on 20 May 2015, he previously pleaded guilty to producing cannabis and abstracting electricity, and was jailed for three years.

Tonbridge Sergeant Joe Breen said: ‘Cannabis cultivation is a serious offence and this sentence demonstrates that. Organised gangs and individuals can generate huge sums of money from growing and harvesting these plants, often at the expense of landlords who have their properties ruined by the setting up and running of illegal sites. These also take a long time to dismantle and are very hazardous to officers and anyone else who may enter. This site was wired directly into the overhead mains power cable. We actively target people and gangs growing cannabis regardless of the scale of the operation and even when criminals are behind bars we continue efforts to recover as much of their profits as possible. In this case I think it’s very likely Hill can expect an unpaid electricity bill running into thousands of pounds.’

Anyone with information about where drugs are being produced or sold should contact police on 101. Alternatively call Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Kent Police has been asking local residents to take part in a major survey into rural crime and Anti-Social Behaviour to find out how rural communities can be better served. The National Rural Crime Network (NRCN) survey gives people who work or live in rural areas the chance to share their views on policing in their community, and the impact crime and ASB has on them and their neighbours. The results will help shape the future of crime prevention and rural policing.

The survey will assess how crime and ASB – as well as the threat of potential crime – affects individuals, both financially and emotionally. It seeks to explore the impact not just on individual victims, but also communities as a whole.

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes said: ‘Around seventy per cent of our county is rural, so it really is vitally important that we have an accurate picture of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour on our rural communities. It’s vital every community in Kent gets the best possible policing service we can afford.’

The findings will be important to ensure the human cost of crime – such as its psychological impact – are taken into account and police funding is spent where it is most needed, with the ultimate aim of making rural communities safer.

Michael Bax, Chairman of CRAG (Crime Rural Advisory Group), stressed the important role community members play in the fight against rural crime. He said:

‘People must try to use their eyes and ears and not hesitate to report concerns to 101 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Without regular information, Kent Police cannot identify changing levels of activity in order to provide the protection to which the public aspire.’
An organisation which champions and protects England’s historic environment is changing. From 1 April 2015 English Heritage became two separate organisations. The English Heritage Trust is a new independent charity (retaining the name English Heritage) to look after, on behalf of the nation, the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 historic sites across England - from Dover Castle in Kent to national landmarks like Stonehenge and some of the best preserved parts of Hadrian’s Wall.

Historic England is a new public body which will champion and protect the nation’s wider heritage – everything from prehistoric remains to post-war office buildings – and will provide expert advice; run the listing system; deal with planning matters and give grants.

The new organisation will be working in partnership with Kent Police and the Crime Rural Advisory Group to ensure Kent’s rich and diverse heritage is protected and preserved.

This will fund the largest conservation programme in English Heritage’s history – primarily to address high priority conservation projects across its estate. Historic England will licence the new English Heritage Trust charity to look after the sites in the National Heritage Collection, all of which remain under the ownership or guardianship of the nation.

It will provide expert advice to everyone from national policymakers to local communities – from owners of listed buildings to volunteers helping to save heritage at risk. It also aims to promote constructive conservation, produce research and provide grants to encourage better understanding and enjoyment of England’s historic environment.

Simon Thurley, the Chief Executive of English Heritage for the last 13 years is stepping down and is succeeded by Kate Mavor as Chief Executive of the English Heritage Trust charity and Duncan Wilson as Chief Executive of Historic England.

He said Historic England was committed to protecting the historic environment from the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour.

A Heritage Crime Training Day was held earlier this year for the Kent Police Rural Task Force and Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. It was hosted by Mark Harrison, National Policing and Crime Advisor for Historic England and Dr Andrew Richardson, Finds Expert from Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Kent Police Support Volunteer for Heritage Crime.

Dr Richardson said: ‘As a professional archaeologist I can share my knowledge and expertise with police officers investigating heritage crime. As a Police Support Volunteer I have been involved in search warrants, suspect interviews and finds identification. I would encourage other archaeologists to consider becoming a support volunteer.’

Mark Harrison said: ‘Historic England is pleased to be working with Kent Police and the Rural Task Force to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour in the historic environment. Kent has a rich and diverse history and it’s important that we all work together to protect and conserve the past for the sake of future generations.’

Visit the Historic England website www.historicengland.org.uk
Kent Horse Watch – encouraging vigilance

Keeping horses and equine property safe is the aim of a self-funding voluntary organisation which now has more than 6,000 members throughout the country. Kent Horse Watch encourages vigilance and sharing information to prevent crime.

How does Kent Horse Watch work?
The organisation is run by Jackie Hearm-Bettis. It’s free to join and is based around a Facebook group which allows for the instantaneous sharing of news and information across the equine community. The emphasis is on encouraging vigilance and sharing advice to prevent crime and keep members, their property and horses safe.

Kent Horse Watch provides general advice on how to keep yards secure and can recommend reputable security companies, who’ve worked closely with the equine community and can help with security options to suit all situations and budgets.

Sharing information
Members are encouraged to post information around suspicious activity, theft, vandalism or anything else which could benefit the group as a whole.

A recent example involved a member posting pictures of two horses taken from her field. Within moments the pictures were circulated to the entire membership.

This resulted in another member recognising the horses in a field near her home. The horses were returned to the rightful owner within hours thanks to ability to share information so widely on social media.

Jackie said: ‘The group is not a substitute for reporting crime to the police however. It’s vital police understand the extent and nature of equine related crime and this is only possible through the correct reporting of all crime to Kent Police.’

We are working closely with Kent Police Rural Task Force to help stamp out equine crime. We can only do that with the help and co-operation of our members. A number of equine crime prevention meetings are being organised across the county to help members and we will be advertising the details of these meetings on our group page.

Saddle marking
Kent Horse Watch offers a saddle security marking service to everyone, not just group members. Representatives attend yards and shows, or visit individuals to security mark saddles. It advertises on the Facebook group when attending shows where people can have their saddles marked for a small charge.

Marking involves stamping a unique reference number into the under-flap. This number is registered on national data base Immobilise with a full description of the owner's details.

Kent Police officers know where to look for the number when they come across potentially stolen saddles. They have access to Immobilise and can verify owners’ details.

The marking doesn’t prevent the sale of saddles. Owners just provide Kent Horse Watch with the new owners’ details and the data base will be amended.

Saddle logos are placed on our group page.

A recent Kent survey found a third of drivers in the county use mobile phones on the road – including texting or accessing social networks, despite knowing it is dangerous and illegal.

Kent Police and Kent County Council’s Road Safety Team – which carried out the research – have been running an awareness campaign to remind motorists of the dangers of using mobile phones while driving.

Road checks during June targeted drivers impaired through mobile phone use, as well as drink and drug drivers. In the first week there were 37 arrests.

Officers issued 12 tickets for mobile phone use while driving. One driver was found over three times the drink drive limit.

Research across six months showed 33 per cent of drivers aged 25-35 (21 per cent of all drivers) said they had used their phone to text or use apps while driving and 37 per cent of under 35s (27 per cent of all drivers) said they had taken a hand-held call. Both statistics are even higher for those aged 17-24.

The campaign, supported by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, highlights times when most people wouldn’t dream of using a mobile phone and asks ‘so why do it while driving?’

Distracting
Inspector Martin Stevens said: ‘Though the majority of people know it is wrong to phone or text at the wheel, some feel that using apps is acceptable. Doing this is just as distracting as calling or texting someone and just as likely to cause a collision. Should a motorist cause a collision or be caught on their phone, we can forensically examine it and find out exactly what the user was doing with their handset. Using a phone at the wheel is just as socially unacceptable as drink driving and both offences cost lives.’

Steve Horton, Road Safety Team Leader at KCC, said: ‘It’s a fallacy to believe we can concentrate on two things at once. The reality is one activity will dominate the other.

‘There are plenty of situations when using a mobile phone would be unacceptable or plain dangerous – would you seriously want to hold a conversation on the phone while using dangerous machinery? And don’t be fooled into thinking because hands-free phone calls are not illegal that they are ‘safe’. Hands-free phone conversations impair drivers to a similar degree as hand-held calls.’

Gas bottle theft arrests

Police arrested two men in connection with a number of reported thefts of gas bottles from villages around Maidstone and Tonbridge.

A vehicle believed to have been used in the alleged offences was stopped in Thurrock, Essex, shortly before 1.35pm on 28 April.

Officers arrested a 19-year-old man from Sevenoaks and a 24-year-old man from Herfordshire on suspicion of theft. Both have been bailed pending further enquiries.

The vehicle has been linked with a number of alleged thefts of gas bottles and reports of suspicious activity over the last month at locations including Horsmonden, Hawkenbury, Oatham, Marden, Yalding and Collier Street.
### Nuisance bikes face destruction

Motorcycle owners face having their vehicles destroyed following a clampdown on anti-social behaviour around Aylesford and Maidstone. Kent Police is continuing efforts to tackle people illegally riding off-road in rural areas near Blue Bell Hill, Wouldham and Burham... On the weekend of 9/10 May Police Community Support Officers issued a number of section 59 warnings to nuisance riders, under the Road Traffic Act. They mean if the riders are stopped again and found to be using their vehicles illegally they risk prosecution and having their bikes seized.

PCSO Kim Lidbury said: ‘We issued 11 of these warnings on this weekend. This means if these people break the law again we will seize their motorbikes and they can be destroyed.’ We are reminding riders that it is strictly forbidden to use off-road bikes on public land such as bridleways and footpaths, public parks and open spaces. This includes the use of vehicles such as quad bikes and mini motos. ‘As well as the damage caused to areas of outstanding natural beauty, these are locations frequently used by families, children and horse riders. For anyone who may be unsure of the law it is very simple, if you own an off-road bike the only place it can legally be ridden is on private land, with the permission of the landowner.’

### Property marking at wildlife parks

Visitors to Kent wildlife parks can have their valuables protectively marked at a number of events throughout the summer. During weekends in June, July and August, between 10am and 4pm, local Police Community Support Officers from Kent Police will be based at the Mobile Police Station at Howlett’s Wild Animal Park in Bekesbourne and Port Lympne Wild Animal Park near Hythe. They can give security advice and talk about policing and there will be activities for children. Property marking sessions for items such as cameras, will take place on the days between noon and 2pm. PCSO Martin Connolly said: ‘During the summer months families have more days out and often take a number of valuable belongings with them, such as cameras, computer tablets, and phones, and it is important steps are taken to protect these items. We are working with attraction providers in East Kent to offer safety advice and property marking to their visitors. ‘The more items that we get marked and logged means it is all the more difficult for people to trade in stolen property and hopefully prevent people becoming a victim of crime.’

Helping us help you

There are many way for members of the rural community to keep up to date with policing across the county and support Kent Police in bringing criminals to justice.

Sign up to our regular e newsletter – an edition is available for every district and you can have it delivered to your email address or smartphone. Each edition gives updates on local initiatives, surgeries, Police Contact Points, seasonal crime prevention campaigns and witness appeals.

Visit [www.kent.police.uk/enews](http://www.kent.police.uk/enews)

On the Kent Police website you can help us find people we want to identify or trace. The [Most Wanted](http://www.kent.police.uk/MostWanted) pages feature people we know the identity of but need to locate. [Caught on Camera](http://www.kent.police.uk/CCTV) includes images of people captured on CCTV who officers need help in identifying.

[Is it Yours](http://www.kent.police.uk/IsItYours) contains photos of items seized across Kent during enforcement operations, but where the true owner has not been identified. It aims to reunite people with their property.

The [Appeals](http://www.kent.police.uk/Appeals) section lists incidents where police need witnesses or anyone who has information about a crime to come forward.

Visit [www.kent.police.uk/appeal](http://www.kent.police.uk/appeal)

Kent Police is using many social media channels to keep people informed, appeal for information and to provide safety and crime prevention advice.

### Kent Police Facebook site

The main Kent Police Facebook site is regularly updated with recent crime news and crime prevention advice. The site allows us to answer your queries about policing in Kent.

### Kent Police Twitter

Our main Kent Police Twitter page @kent_police is updated every day with news headlines and crime prevention advice. Again, it gives us the chance to answer your queries and pass on timely information.

We also have local accounts:

**Local teams**

- **East Division**
  - Ashford @kentpoliceash
  - Dover @kentpolicedover
  - Thanet @kentpolicethan
- **North Division**
  - Dartford @kentpolicedart
  - Medway @kentpolicemed
- **West Division**
  - Maidstone @kentpolicemaid
  - Sevenoaks @kentpolice7oaks

**Specialist teams**

- Roads Unit @kentpoliceroads
- Football Unit @kentpolicefootball
- Motorcycle Unit @kentpolicebikes
- Kent helicopter @NPAS_Boreham
- Kent Specials @KentSpecials
- Rural partnership officers @kentpolicerural
Rural Task Force

Kent Police has a dedicated team of specialist officers who work within the Rural Task Force, which combines both the Rural Liaison Team and the Gypsy Liaison Team.

They have received specialist training and work with a number of agencies on joint operations tackling both rural criminality and anti-social behaviour.

They are trained to deal with wildlife, environmental and heritage crime. Agencies they work with include the RSPCA, Natural England, Trading Standards and the Environment Agency.

The Rural Task Force also provides specialist expertise to other police units across the county, particularly officers working in mainly rural parishes.

Your rural PCs are also on Twitter!

Our officers regularly provide updates on their work, including what to watch out for and any live incidents – plus the latest crime prevention advice on rural issues.

Follow @kentpolicerural for the latest news and information.