

Field near the Kennet & Avon Canal in Seend  
taken by Sarah Bruton



# Rural crime prevention

Stay safe tips for people living in Wiltshire  
and Swindon's rural communities





Swans at Caen Hill Marina  
taken by Sarah Bruton

A number of photos in this booklet were supplied by members of the public through a photo competition run by Wiltshire Police. We encouraged members of the public to get snapping in the countryside on three topics - rural working, horses and wildlife. Wiltshire Police would like to thank everyone who sent in their entries and congratulate the winners. From the photos you can see what a beautiful rural county Wiltshire is.

# Message from Mike Veale



Wiltshire is a rural community with almost 94 per cent of the land classified as green space, compared to 89 per cent in the south west and 87 per

cent in England as a whole. Wiltshire has a rich and diverse environment, in terms of wildlife, landscape and historic features. But unfortunately rural locations are targeted by criminals.

Policing a rural area offers unique challenges. The huge geographic areas covered by many of the United Kingdom's rural forces and the vast array of road networks weaving through the countryside means that many criminals feel that rural crime provides easier pickings. Add to this the increasing sophistication of organised criminals profiting from crime, such as theft of agricultural plant, livestock, farm vehicles and machinery, means that some rural communities may feel a heightened sense of vulnerability and fear of crime. For years now, policing teams within Wiltshire have been highly

creative and innovative in the way that they tackle crime in their rural communities.

At Wiltshire Police we have developed a rural crime strategy to tackle this problem. We have a dedicated Rural Crime Team working in our rural communities with excellent working knowledge. Providing this specialist knowledge and skills as well as development of local, regional and national contacts has ensured that both preventative and enforcement work has taken place. We have seen a wide array of watch schemes grow throughout the county and some highly successful police led operations, involving not only partner agencies and rural communities themselves.

Following research nationally and locally, crimes that occur in rural communities and locations can be encompassed by the following five categories: rural thefts, wildlife crime, agricultural crime, environmental crime and heritage.

I hope this booklet provides you will helpful advice and tips to keep yourself, your home and property safe. And remember, we are only a phone call away.

**Mike Veale**

Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police

# Farmhouse and outbuilding security

## Farm buildings

### Storage of valuable equipment

Tools, chainsaws, welding equipment and fuel should all be stored in a secure building. A metal storage cage inside a building can also slow intruders down.

### Locks

Use British Standard locks, good quality locking bars and high security close shackle padlocks. Windows can

be protected with metal bars. Lock outbuildings when you are not using them. Install window locks on the ground floors.

### Lights

Thieves don't like well-lit areas so fit outside security lights that are controlled by an automatic time switch or infrared beams that react to heat or movement. Some areas may benefit from a constant low light. Consider fitting an intruder alarm and CCTV to alert you of anything suspicious.



## Possessions

If you have to keep cash or jewellery in the house, a safe is a good idea. Photograph and make records of valuable items, and keep them in a secure safe. Keep shotguns and firearms in a securely locked place and store ammunition separately.

Don't advertise the fact that you're not at home by leaving notes for traders or garage doors open.

## CCTV

You can install CCTV which can be remotely monitored. Furthermore you can set up alerts on a mobile devices which will alert you if somebody has opened a gate.



## Sheds

Make sure all doors are fitted with good quality locks. Always lock sheds and fit wire mesh to the inside of garden shed windows. Clearly mark your garden and power tools. Photograph valuable and unusual garden ornaments and keep these in a secure place.

## Gardens and driveways

Make sure any hedging at the front of your property is not too high to allow a burglar to work unnoticed. If you have a driveway use gravel to increase your chances of hearing an intruder.

Make sure your garden gates are locked and fences are in good condition with no gaps or loose panels. You can plant prickly defensive plants along fences or boundaries that deter thieves.

## Join Wiltshire Farmwatch

We encourage everyone in the farming community to be vigilant and to report anything suspicious to the police. Members of Farmwatch receive information via text alerts and email. More information about Farmwatch is on [www.wiltshire.police.uk](http://www.wiltshire.police.uk)



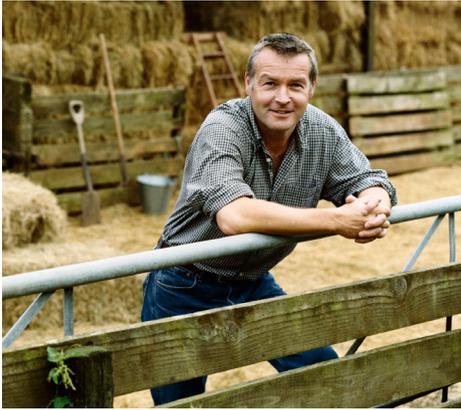


Old Sarum, Salisbury  
taken by Stephanie Tooze

## Vehicles, machinery and boundaries

Try to secure or immobilise vehicles or equipment when not in use. If possible remove machinery from fields, especially near roads. Identify your property by:

- Keeping a record of serial number and model details
- Painting your name on valuable tarpaulins in letters at least one foot high
- Using metal engravers to mark tools, vehicles and equipment with your postcode followed by the first two letters of your farm's name
- Always keep tools and small pieces of machinery locked away. Do not leave them lying around
- Take part in the 'CESAR' Scheme (tractors/quads)
- Fit a 'Tracker' to tractors, 4x4's and quads
- Keep keys away from windows and doors
- If possible keep vehicle/machinery in a lockable garage or building.



## Boundaries

To help prevent vehicles coming in and your vehicles from going out make your boundaries secure. On a regular basis check that there are no holes or damage to your hedges, fences and gates. Field-gate hinges should be capped or inverted type to prevent easy removal. If you find that your gates have been tampered with ring 101.

## CESAR Scheme

Construction and Agricultural Security And Registration. It is reported that with CESAR machinery is four times less likely to be stolen and six times more likely to be recovered.

Portable scanners have been sent to all UK police forces; enabling us to scan vehicles to get a confirmed ID. The CESAR system includes the following:

### Unique plant identification plate



These tamper-proof plates carry a unique plant identification number ensuring that your equipment can be easily

identified and concealed within a machine.

## Glass tag

This transponder is about the size of a grain of rice and is easily installed. It contains a unique code number which is permanently programmed into its integrated circuit which cannot be altered or deleted.



## Self adhesive tag

This transponder is a flexible self adhesive tag that also contains a unique code number which is permanently programmed into its integrated circuit. The number cannot be altered or deleted and will withstand any attack by electric shock and magnetic waves.



## Datadots

A superior microdot identification system developed for ease of use. The Datadots can be applied to any surface, thus making it virtually impossible for the criminals to locate and remove them all.



## Datatag 'DNA'

Datatag 'DNA' is a unique Forensic 'DNA' solution and the latest advanced ID technology to be introduced by Datatag. Each piece of plant or machinery will be protected with an invisible unique 'DNA' code and criminals will have to be confident they have removed every molecule.



For more information please visit [www.cesarscheme.org](http://www.cesarscheme.org)

# Fuel tank and heating oil security

**Secure it or lose it. The theft of diesel and heating oil has been an issue for many years. Make sure that it is protected against theft in the same way as you would protect any other possession. So follow these steps to minimise your chances of being a victim.**

## Fuel tank security

- 1. Isolate power from the tank when not in use:** This is a simple step. Put a control switch for the pump inside

a farm office or workshop. This will ensure the thief can't just pump the stolen fuel straight into waiting drums.

- 2. Oil drums / containers:** Don't leave empty containers lying around near your fuel tank where an opportunistic thief might decide to help themselves to the diesel.
- 3. Use close shackle padlocks:** These are the best as they offer the most resistance to the most popular of burglary tools, the bolt cropper.



**4. Security lights:** These can have a very positive impact and will make any property a much harder target for thieves. It's not always necessary to floodlight the area with high-power beams, as a more subtle level of lighting may be all that is needed to deter criminals. Low-energy dusk 'until dawn lights positioned close to the tank should, in most cases, provide sufficient light to illuminate any suspicious activity. This type of light can be both effective and inexpensive.

**5. Alarms:** Wireless fuel tank alarms can report back to your house or office. They can also be set up so you are alerted via text and mobile or landline message.

**6. Position of the tank:** This can have a significant effect on how hard a target is in the eyes of the thief. If the tank is close to a house, with one or more windows overlooking it, then the thief may consider that the chances of being seen are too high.

**7. Fences and walls:** These can make life difficult for fuel thieves but you must remember that the tanker driver will need access to fill the tank.

### Heating oil security

- If you have a drive with gates keep them closed at all times, not just when away from the property

- If the tank is near your house, consider fitting an alarm padlock which will alert you if anyone interferes with it

- If you have a plastic tank the oil can be accessed by puncturing the tank wall, so try to make your oil tank less visible and more secure by putting a fence with a lockable gate around it. Use prickly plants or shrubs – otherwise known as defensive planting to disguise the fence and make the oil tank less visible to passing traffic.

- There are many alarms on the market which monitor the oil level in tanks and will send an alert when the oil level drops dramatically, such as would happen if there were a leak or theft. If you don't invest in one of these, then regularly check your oil level so you are aware of how much you are using and can recognise if a theft has occurred.

**Remember always call the police if you see anything that you think may be suspicious. In an emergency, when a crime is in progress, call 999. Call 101 if it is a non-emergency.**





Horses at sunset in Baydon  
taken by Amy Dickens

# Livestock and horse identification and protection

## Livestock

Grazing animals are an easy target for thieves. Regularly check the fields where animals are grazing, daily if possible.

Keep your hedges, fences and gates in good repair. Ditches form a natural barrier. Field gate hinges should have capping hinges so they cannot be removed easily. Cattle grids should be removable and locked out of position when not in use. Use

locking posts to obstruct large openings to yards and other fields.

Consider using CCTV so you can watch animals in barns or yards from your home or office. This can be especially useful during busy times like the lambing season.

If livestock is stolen, it is important that you can give the police an accurate description. Ear tags and horn brands help police

to identify stock. Freeze branding, hot branding or tattooing your postcode will also help.

Take photographs of particularly valuable animals.

## Horses

Passports are a legal requirement for all horses, ponies and donkeys. They must accompany the animal on all road journeys and be on hand for DEFRA inspection.

Any equine offered for sale that does not have an accurate passport should be regarded as suspicious and avoided.

Identification is important and will increase your chances of finding your horse if it is lost or stolen. There are various options like freeze branding, micro chipping, hot branding and hoof branding.

Tack marking usually involves stamping leather saddles on the nearside, under the flap. For synthetic saddles the near side stirrup bar is engraved.

Saddles can also be micro-chipped or coded with Smart Water. Although these are good secondary methods they are not immediately visible and need a scanner or database to check ownership. Postcode other property by either stamping or engraving it. Work on the principle that if it is stolen and not marked you will never see it again.

## Trailer and lorry marking

Markings should include adding your postcode to the roof, usually with self adhesive vinyl lettering. This makes them easy to see from the air or road bridges and can be difficult to remove.

## Protect your yard or stables

All gates must have a heavy duty lock and chain with their hinges secured to prevent them being lifted off. Install security lights

up high and add grills to prevent them being smashed. An alarm will also need protection so it cannot be disabled or have the wiring cut.

Do not label the tack room door, it makes it too easy for thieves to find. Never leave head collars hanging outside for thieves to lead your horse away with.

**Become a member of Wiltshire Horsewatch. Members benefit from the support of their community, security advice and tack marking. You can join the alert scheme operated by Wiltshire Police to receive crime warnings and local news.**

**Visit [www.wiltshirehorsewatch.co.uk](http://www.wiltshirehorsewatch.co.uk) or follow them on Twitter @wiltshirehorsewatch and Facebook and searching Wiltshire Horsewatch.**



# Protection of wild animals, poaching and hare coursing

## Protected species

### Badgers

It is illegal to take, injure or kill a badger. Furthermore it is illegal to make a dog enter a badger sett, dig on a badger sett and recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett, or obstruct access to it. For more information on badgers visit [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

### Bats

Bats are a protect species. It is illegal to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat, disturb a bat in its roost and damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time). Contact the Rural Crime Team on 101 if you witness or know of any of the offences taking place. For more information on bats visit [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)



Female Goosander, Coate Water  
taken by David Evans

## Birds

In England the legislation that protects wild birds is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law (apart from game birds.) It is illegal to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

For more information visit [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## What is poaching?

Poaching is the taking of game or freshwater fish without the permission of the person having the legal right to do so on that land or water.

## Fishing

If an individual is unlawfully fishing in a private fishery this will qualify as poaching. 'Unlawful fishing' means without the permission of the fishery owner or occupier (e.g. angling club). It is not necessary to catch or take away fish, attempting to fish without permission would be enough. Taking fish from an enclosed fishery (e.g. a lake or reservoir) could also qualify as theft.

## Hunting

The Hunting Act 2004 bans hunting with dogs of all wild mammals in England and Wales, including fox, deer, hare and mink unless there is permission to do so from the land owner and hunting is exempt for rats and rabbits.

## Hare coursing

Hare coursing is the deliberate pursuit of a hare with a dog or dogs and is illegal. If you witness this please ring 999.



Poaching, hare coursing, badger digging and dog fighting are often interlinked. People and vehicles involved with poaching are often known to police for rural thefts such as fuel, metal and vehicles.

## What can I do?

- If you see poaching taking place contact the police immediately
- Note a description of the people involved
- Note any vehicle registration numbers
- Note location and direction of travel of vehicles
- If the people are in possession of a firearm, ensure this information is given to the police when the incident is reported
- Do not tackle the poachers. If you have the opportunity, have a good look at them as you may be shown photographs of suspects later by the police. Do not put yourself at risk.
- Do not go trampling over ground where the poachers have been- you may be destroying evidence
- If you are aware of anyone who is involved in poaching or who is buying poached game inform the police.



Hack, Sandy Lane, Wiltshire  
taken by David Evans

# Directory: contacting Wiltshire Police and others

Discover more about Wiltshire Police's work to help keep communities safe at: [www.wiltshire.police.uk](http://www.wiltshire.police.uk)

To find out more about the Rural Crime Team visit: [www.wiltshire.police.uk/departments/rural-crime-team](http://www.wiltshire.police.uk/departments/rural-crime-team)

## How to report a crime

To report a crime anonymously, you can visit [www.crimestoppers.uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers.uk.org) or telephone:

**0800 555 111**

When it is not an emergency, or to report suspicious behaviour, you can Wiltshire Police on:

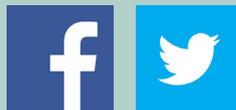
**101**

In an emergency, you should always call:

**999**



You can also follow us on social media:



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

- [wiltshirepolice](https://www.facebook.com/wiltshirepolice)
- [pages/Wiltshire-Rural-Crime-Team/216761121688578](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wiltshire-Rural-Crime-Team/216761121688578)
- [pages/Wiltshire-Horsewatch/124761100905641](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wiltshire-Horsewatch/124761100905641)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

- [@WiltshirePolice](https://twitter.com/WiltshirePolice)
- [@WiltsRuralCrime](https://twitter.com/WiltsRuralCrime)
- [@Wiltshorsewatch](https://twitter.com/Wiltshorsewatch)

## Community Messaging

You can receive free messages - by email, text or voicemail - about policing and crime matters relating to your area and interests by joining Wiltshire and Swindon Community Messaging.

Just visit [www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk](http://www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk) to sign up for free.



Wilton Hunt in Odstock Woods, Salisbury  
taken by Stephanie Tooze

# Useful contacts

## Wiltshire Fire and Rescue

[www.wiltshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshirefire.gov.uk)  
01380 723601

## Wiltshire Council

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)  
0300 456 0100

## Swindon Borough Council

[www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk)  
01793 445500

## Angling Trust

[www.anglingtrust.net.uk](http://www.anglingtrust.net.uk)  
Helpline: 08447700616

## Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency)  
Helpline: 01932 341111

## Badger Trust

[www.badgertrust.org.uk](http://www.badgertrust.org.uk)  
Helpline: 08458 287878

## Bat conservation trust

[www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0845 1300228

## British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)

[www.basc.org.uk](http://www.basc.org.uk)  
Helpline: 01244 573000

## British Deer Society

[www.bds.org.uk](http://www.bds.org.uk)  
Helpline: 01425 655434

## Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

[www.wiltshirewildlife.org](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org)  
01380 725670

## Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)  
Local advisor: 01392 457190

## SmartWater

*Forensic "paint" for invisibly marking your possessions*  
[www.smartwater.com](http://www.smartwater.com)

## National Farmers Union Mutual

*Business, personal and farming financial services*  
[www.nfumutual.co.uk](http://www.nfumutual.co.uk)  
New business: 0800 3164661

## The Environment Agency

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)  
Enquiries: 08708 506506  
Incident hotline: 0800 807060 (24 hour)

## The National Counter Terrorism Security Office

[www.nactso.gov.uk](http://www.nactso.gov.uk) and  
[www.secureyourfertilizer.gov.uk](http://www.secureyourfertilizer.gov.uk)  
Suspicious activity: 0800 789321

## Natural England

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)  
Licencing/enquiries: 0845 601 4523

## Immobilise

*Free register for logging your valued possessions or assets*  
[www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)

## RSPCA

[www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)  
Cruelty line: 0300 1234 999

Lake at Mouldon Hill Country Park, North Swindon  
taken by Martine Dodd





Photo taken by Marc Jackson



Water Management, Bowood, Wiltshire  
taken by David Evans



Swans in Trowbridge park  
taken by Lisa Brown

