



# Devon & Cornwall Horse Watch

Spring  
2021

**Welcome** to the quarterly **Devon and Cornwall Horse Watch** newsletter, which gives you a glimpse into the work undertaken through the partnership between **Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association** and **Devon and Cornwall Police** to provide crime prevention and community support for all horse owners and riders, as well as stable/livery/yard owners and users across both counties.

## This issue:

- Latest news around EHV.
- Good work story – North Devon.
- Crime round-up.
- Member focus – meet this issue's HW member.
- Advice on getting your transport ready for the show/event season.

If you would like to feature in one of our forthcoming issues as part of the 'Member Focus' please drop us a message and we will contact you. If there is any information/guidance or topic you would like us to cover then just let us know!

Happy reading....





## Good Work....

In January, officers from the Rural Affairs Team (Devon) attended a number of locations in North Devon in relation to a series of crimes around fuel and battery thefts. Whilst at the one of the addresses a number of dogs and ponies were located. There were some concerns regarding the conditions the animals were kept in and also regarding their welfare.

As a result, the team contacted the RSPCA and World Horse Welfare who attended, along with a vet, and assessed the situation. Upon agreement of the owners, the animals were removed. The ponies were all microchipped and health checked. The little coloured colt (pictured) was gelded and paired up with a Shetland and they have now been rehomed together. The remaining ponies were returned to the site once the owner had been given help and advice from the RSPCA and WHW. The paddock was totally cleared and securely fenced, and the stabling upgraded.

The dogs were taken to a charity in Plymouth and have all since been re-homed successfully.

Although this is a sad story, it was a good result for the animals involved. They all received any supplementary care they required and were placed into loving homes or returned to much improved conditions where their welfare will continue to be monitored. We realise that sometimes, individuals' circumstances or a lack of knowledge mean that they are unable to provide what is required for their animals. Whilst this is unacceptable, on this occasion, the owners fully embraced their shortfalls and welcomed some guidance and support from the police and partner agencies.

### What is good practice?

The Animal Welfare Act was introduced in 2006 and applies to those responsible for domestic animals, working animals or farm animals in England and Wales. It places a duty of care on people to ensure they take reasonable steps in all the circumstances to meet the welfare needs of their animals to the extent required by good practice.

### What does this mean for those responsible for animals?

In short, it means they must take positive steps to ensure they care for their animals properly and must provide for the five welfare needs, which are:

- need for a suitable environment
- need for a suitable diet
- need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
- need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.





## Equine Related Incidents and Crime.

We are pleased to report that overall equine related crime remains low. In summary, the offences reported are as follows:

### **Criminal Damage/Thefts.**

This is where premises such as barns and stables have been damaged during theft/burglary offences. Items reported stolen have been rugs and assorted small equipment. There has been one report of passports being taken. Please ensure all buildings are made secure and locked when unattended. Mark all property with postcodes. You can etch, paint or use commercial products which are available such as smartwater/alpha dots etc.

### **Electric Fencing.**

We have had a couple of reports of electric fencing set-ups being stolen. (These occurrences were in Torridge and Ivybridge) This may become more common as we move into the grass season and more people are needing it for their paddocks. This equipment is expensive! Please mark batteries with a postcode and also consider marking energisers with the same. If they are visibly marked, it may put off potential thieves and your property will also be identifiable if stolen.

### **'Worrying' Incidents.**

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a lot of reports of livestock and other grazing animals such as goats, alpacas, llamas etc being chased by dogs. This has also been reported within the equine community where horse riders have been chased whilst out riding.

Please report these incidents to police. We may not be able to identify the dog or owner on every occasion, but it may form part of a bigger picture and enable us to spot any emerging patterns or 'hotspots'. If you use a mounted camera, any footage from that could be very useful in tracing offenders.

### **Civil Disputes.**

We have had a number of incidents reported involving disputes over the ownership of various property, animals, and equipment. The police do not deal with civil matters but our advice would be to make sure that if you are on a yard, loaning or sharing etc that there is an agreement in place so that all parties know where they stand and the expectations. There are free guides available online including advice from the BHS and a template agreement you can use:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/horse-ownership/loaning-a-horse>

You can also seek advice from: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

### **Neglect.**

There was an incident of neglect reported in North Devon which resulted in a horse being euthanised. This is currently under investigation by the RSPCA.

Finally, we have had a report of a horse being injured the Buckfastleigh area. The animal has received some kind of stab wound to its armpit. We cannot establish how that injury was caused but enquiries are ongoing. Please note that although this sounds like there is a lot going on, equine crime remains low. We are highlighting these issues so you can be prepared and put crime prevention measures in place.





## This issues Horse Watch member:

**Who are you?** Ross Durkin, owner at Halwyn Equestrian, near Helston in Cornwall. A retired motoring journalist with a keen interest in everything outdoors.



**How did you join the equestrian world?** We bought a 14-acre smallholding eight years ago with the intention of developing it as a full-livery yard and riding school for my son and his fiancée to run as a business. Unfortunately, they split up and went their separate ways, leaving me with a busy yard to run on my own.

**What do you love about your work with horses?** Every horse has its own personality. They can be naughty but they don't answer back and always eat their greens.

**What's your reasoning for joining Horse Watch?** We already had pretty good security in the yard, but at the start of lockdown we became aware through the Devon & Cornwall Police Alert system of a small number of crimes involving livestock in the local area. My customers have a lot of time, effort and money invested in their horses and tack, and I wanted to do as much as I could to deter crime both in our yard and more widely in the local area.



The yard has a comprehensive CCTV system installed and clear crime prevention signage.

**What are you hoping it will help you with?** We wanted as strong a visual deterrent as possible and I was looking for advice as to the best way to go about this. We now have posters and stickers everywhere, bigger locks, microdot solution on all trailers and UV labelling on all tack. It would really bother me if a crime was committed because I had been lazy in some way.

**If you had a magic wand, what would you change to make things easier/better/more enjoyable in your world?** Really? We live in Cornwall so if I could, I would cut winter rainfall by half and dry up all my gateways. But seriously, the two big issues in our area are blocked or impassable bridledways, and the speed of traffic on rural roads. I am involved with both the Parish Council and the Countryside Access Forum for Cornwall and I use both to improve routes for riders and walkers where they can go safely.

**What's your most memorable equine moment?** The Grey Prince qualifying for HOYS was probably my proudest. Getting drenched by a wave at Portmellon when I was younger and emerging the other side looking like Neptune was the most memorable, as there were about 100 people laughing at me.

**What makes you get up each morning?** Every day is different, and I think you just have to make the most of every one of them. There's always something to do in a yard like ours and I try to keep everything in good working order. There are seldom enough hours in the day.







## GREAT NEWS!

Well! What great news it is that after over 12 months we will be able to get out and about and show our equines off again at shows and also catch up with all our friends and other competitors. I think we have all missed each other during this time.

But before we all venture out, we thought that we would remind you all about the essential maintenance that should be carried out on your equine transport prior to leaving your yards to ensure everyone arrives safely. (Don't forget your transport has been left standing for twice as long as it would normally have been.) The welfare of your horse, as we know, is very important to you. With quality stabling and the best possible veterinary care, you can ensure that your horse is comfortable and healthy, but what happens when you are on the move? How safe is your horsebox or trailer?

Lots of you will get your equine transport serviced regularly by a qualified transport servicer. However, due to current demand it may be possible that you are unable to fit servicing in prior to your first outing.

We feel that the following list of essential maintenance checks may be useful to you and provide a guide of the key things to check.

*\* Please note that a transport servicer will carry out between 30 and 40 checks \**

### For Large Horseboxes:

#### Wheels and tyres

Check the wheel nuts for security and ensure the tyre pressures are correct. Always move your vehicle regularly to ensure that the wheels are in alternate resting positions and also try to park out of direct sunlight. This will help to reduce the sidewalls of your tyres from perishing. Check that the tread depth is at least 1.6mm. Please note that it is no longer permitted to have tyres more than 10 years old on the front steered axles of any vehicle weighing more than 3.5 tonnes.

#### Lights and reflectors

Check that all your lights and reflectors are in good condition and working correctly. Make sure that there is no fading or cracks and that they are clean so that they can be clearly seen by other road users. A couple of spare bulbs are always worth keeping onboard.

#### Brakes

Regular use of your vehicle will keep the handbrake effective. If your vehicle has not had regular use over a long period of time, it would be good to check the effectiveness of your handbrake on a slope. Check that the moving parts of your braking system are not seized, and discs are not corroded. Check for air and fluid leaks and drain air tanks if required.

#### Steering and Suspension

Check for obvious oil leaks and any unusual knocking noises. Ensure that your vehicle is sitting square and is not lopsided.

#### Fuel, Oil and Water

It might be worth draining your tank and replacing the fuel that has been sat in the tank for a long time. This will help stop any bits that have been laying in the bottom of the tank being sucked up through the fuel pipe and possibly causing a blockage. Check that the fuel cap has a seal fitted and has no obvious leaks.

Ensure that there is no black smoke coming from the exhaust pipe. Check the pipe under the box also. Make sure that your oil is at the correct level and carry some spare just in case. Top up the windscreen washer tank.

#### Speed limiter

If your vehicle has a speed limiter installed check that it has the appropriate calibration plaque and seals.



### Tachograph

If there is a tachograph installed, check to see that your use of the vehicle makes it exempt. If your vehicle is fitted with a tachograph but you only use it as a speedometer then you must ensure that all the seals are intact and that it has been calibrated and fitted with both the calibration and K factor plaques.

### **For Trailers:**

#### Wheels and Tyres

As above, but also ensure that you have a good, useable inflated spare on board. Make sure it's secure and all holding points have been well greased to enable you to remove it if required. Note that a trailer servicer will remove tyres and replace them if your tyres are over 10 years old, regardless of their condition.

#### Jockey Wheel

Check that the wheel is present and secure and that it is fully operational and in good condition. Grease all bolts and moving parts.

#### Electrical Connections

Check connections are secure and in good condition and that they cannot snag or become taut during normal use.

#### Vehicle to Trailer Coupling

Check for condition and security. Ensure that the breakaway cable is properly attached and could not become snagged or taut during normal use.

#### Body of Trailer

Check all panels for rust, strength, and general security. Ensure that there are no weak points should your equine lean against the body of the trailer whilst on the move. The floor is the most vital part of your checks and this should be examined not only from the inside but also from underneath. Please ensure you lift all inner mats and anything else that might prevent you from doing a very thorough check. This also includes your ramp. Check that all doors and windows are fully functional, and all locks and latches are greased and easily moveable. Check all safety equipment within the trailer is working to ensure that your Equine is not put in any danger whilst in transit

#### Lights and Reflectors

As above.

#### Mirrors

Before setting off on your journey please make sure that all mirrors on your towing vehicle are in the correct position and are clean and unobstructed.



The HW Team hope that you have found this information useful and we wish you all good luck for the coming season. Hopefully, we will catch up with you all at some of the shows very soon.



## Team

<b>Devon &amp; Cornwall Police Rural Affairs Team</b>	<b>PC 5036 Kerry WHITTING</b> covering Devon
	<b>PCSO 30381 Jennifer HOSKING</b> covering Cornwall
<b>Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association</b>	<b>Julie Dowton</b> , Chair of DaCCWA
	<b>Jules Fairman</b> , Strategic Co-ordinator for all of DaCCWA's Community Watches

As a team, we aim to increase the membership of Horse Watch, and continue to drive down crime by promoting sound prevention advice.

You can contact us via **101** or by emailing [horsewatch@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:horsewatch@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk). We are also on Facebook and Twitter offering regular updates and letting you know the events we will be attending:

**Facebook**      Devon and Cornwall Horse Watch  
**Twitter**        @DCPoliceRural\_D or C (for Cornwall) for all rural matters

**If you have an incident to report, do not hesitate to ring the Police on 101 for a non-emergency or 999 if you see a crime taking place.**

**[You can also report using by email on 101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk)**

**Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association** is the umbrella organisation for all community watches across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. In addition to **Horse Watch**, **DaCCWA** runs a number of other community watches including **Neighbourhood Watch**, **Farm Watch** and **Boat Watch**.

You can contact us at: [DaCCWA@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:DaCCWA@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk)

### **.Signing up to DC Alert**

You are receiving this message due to selecting an interest in 'Horse Watch' or 'Farm Watch'.

You can sign into [Devon and Cornwall Alert](#) to change your preferences.

Please share this message with anyone you feel would benefit from it; they can sign up to receive it directly from also visiting [Devon and Cornwall Alert](#)

