

## Crime in Rural Area`s – How you can assist



North Lincolnshire Country Watch is an independent scheme which has been developed by the police in conjunction with volunteers and has been running since 2011.

The system which currently has 134 members is designed to encourage people who live and work in local communities in North Lincolnshire to be vigilant against crime. It allows members and police to share live time information and intelligence.

Increasingly rural areas in the county are being visited by criminals looking for opportunities to commit crime. In the past rural communities had little crime but now that the majority of criminals have access to vehicles more remote locations have become accessible. By working together with police and partners we strongly believe that we can prevent many crimes happening in the first place which in turn will make rural communities safer and better places to live and work.

Local farmers are increasingly seeing incidents of hare coursing and poaching. In addition to the obvious wildlife crimes being committed, many of the offenders have caused damage to crops with their vehicles and made threats to local people. Many of these people also have links to other forms of criminality such as theft. Many rural premises have experienced theft of plant and farm equipment not to mention scrap and diesel.

Our scheme works by allowing the members to both send and receive live time text alerts about any suspicious activity to all other members in the network affording them the knowledge to prevent further incident at their own property. We are collectively 134 pairs of eyes and ears on the look out for suspicious incidents.

In the ten months since the scheme started over 200 alerts have been made.

As a result of these alerts there have been a number of positive results-

Police recovered a trailer in the belief that it was stolen. They were however unable to establish who the trailer belonged to from the markings on it. A text alert was made about the seizure as a result of which one member who was aware of a trailer that had been stolen advised the loser of the find which enabled police to reunite the trailer with its owner.

Police received a report of poachers and were searching for a vehicle. A country watch member sighted the vehicle and sent an alert which resulted in the police locating it. In May 2012 5 men who were located as a result of this alert appeared in court and were each found guilty of hunting offences.

Country watch is now looking to increase its membership in North Lincolnshire. In addition to live time text alerts members also receive a regular newsletter which includes crime prevention advice and an overview of rural crime.

The scheme is non profit making and entirely self funding. Membership which includes text alerts to one mobile phone costs £20 per year.

To join please contact Mr Alex Godfrey on 01652 688057 or

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