

Re: Rural Crime Focus

February 2023

Devon and Cornwall and Avon and Somerset Local Policing Teams who cover Exmoor National Park and the surrounding North Devon and Somerset areas, are working together to address local issues, improve road safety for all as well as raising awareness of the many ways in which you can help support and protect your rural communities.

National crime trends are often linked to economic changes, and during these periods rural areas can often be a soft target for criminals due to their isolated location. This can invariably lead to an increase in reported thefts of livestock, farm and plant machinery, equine property, fuel theft and items forming part of our local heritage. Across our rural landscape, vigilance also needs to be applied to intimidation and damage by poachers, fly tipping, poor control of dogs and those illegally damaging our environment and wildlife.

Fortunately, crime statistics across this area remain low and being a victim of crime here remains lower than most parts of the UK, however we shouldn't be complacent. There are many preventative measures and schemes available (further details below) which are promoted by your local policing teams to reduce the risk of being targeted and we actively encourage the prompt reporting of any issues or concerns to assist in deterring and detecting criminal activity.

Along with preventing and detecting acquisitive crime, there is a renewed focus to increase road safety and reduce collisions on our rural road network which are often hazardous due to unlit roads, inclement weather, and the potential for wandering livestock or wild animals but also due to driver behaviours such as speeding, distraction, intoxication, or impairment. As such patrols are being undertaken across the year to increase police visibility in a direct attempt to identify and address driving behaviours, raise awareness of the hazards of rural driving and conduct enforcement activity.

In providing community support and resilience to acquisitive crime, we encourage membership of the Avon and Somerset Police or Devon and Cornwall Police Community Alert Schemes. These are two-way community messaging systems that help connect the police with our communities and enables the prompt sharing of information in your local areas:

Join the **Avon and Somerset Police** Community Alert scheme:

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/account

Join the **Devon and Cornwall Police** Community Alert scheme:

[Home Page - Devon and Cornwall Alert](#)

We ask for your support to read and share this information, thereby increasing awareness and growth of these schemes, to build greater resilience and reassurance in our rural areas. This support will also assist and direct our local policing teams with their visible policing activity and patrols to combat and deter all types of rural crime.

With a focus on road related safety, both the respective Police and Crime Commissioners for Avon & Somerset and Devon & Cornwall police, have both outlined priorities which include 'road safety' in their current Police and Crime Plans. As such both police Forces are working with CrimeStoppers Charity which offers 100% anonymous reporting in launching the **Op Landlike** initiative which is aimed

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at addressing the rise in nationally reported drink and drug driving cases, with a particular focus across Exmoor and the surrounding Devon and Somerset rural areas. This will involve support from our Roads Policing Teams across both Forces, undertaking activity across Exmoor throughout the year in a proactive attempt to improve road safety, reduce road casualties and collisions, as well as preventing and detecting any other criminal offences or activity.

Op Landlike, and the specific focus in and around the Exmoor area, seeks to compliment the current South West regional activity being promoted to eliminate road deaths and serious injuries under the *Vision Zero South West* campaign [Vision Zero - A collaborative road safety community project](#). As such we are asking for your assistance to also raise awareness of this initiative amongst your community and to ensure those that are undertaking any activity on Exmoor and the surrounding areas, do so considerately and in accordance with Road Traffic legislation and the Highway Code. You can keep up to date with this operation by searching for the hashtag **#OpLandlike** on Facebook and Twitter.

Whilst raising awareness of initiatives linked to our rural areas and the various road related user groups, it is a timely opportunity to include awareness of how you can report and submit digital footage of potential road traffic offences via a secure online form. The links below provide details of how to report this to your local police:

Avon and Somerset Police: [Report an accident or incident on the road](#)

Devon and Cornwall Police: [opsnap](#)

As we look ahead throughout the year to increase our presence and protect our rural communities, we seek your support with regards to sharing our preventative, supportive measures, and schemes to deter criminality, whilst also raising awareness of **Op Landlike** to improve road safety for all.

In assisting us to promote this focus to protect our rural communities, we would like to thank you and outline that we would welcome any feedback to our local policing teams, via the links below and then choosing the 'What is happening in your area?' section -

[Avon and Somerset Police](#)

[Devon and Cornwall Police](#)

These web pages also include many accessible links to precautionary and protective measures and schemes, that can be used and joined to protect you, our local areas and increase our resilience to criminal activity.

Thank you for your continued support.

Inspector 1010 Rich Preston
North Devon Sector Inspector



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