



# Northamptonshire **Rural Crime Strategy**

2023 - 2025

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
**POLICE**  
Fighting Crime. Protecting People.





Fighting Crime,  
Protecting People.



## What is rural crime?

Rural crime doesn't have a definition and isn't recognised as crime in its own right. Instead, rural crime is a term that covers many different crime types and incidents that affect rural communities.

Northamptonshire Police considers a rural crime to be: A crime or incident type which occurs in any geographical area ordinarily described as 'rural', and where the criminal activity is more prevalent in, or unique to, rural areas.

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### EXAMPLES OF RURAL CRIME

#### Theft/burglary

- Tractors, farm machinery and plant machinery
- Machinery GPS thefts
- Theft of diesel, scrap metal and vehicles
- Theft of animals (including sheep and dogs)
- Residential theft
- Rural business theft
- Theft of agricultural/rural equipment (horse tack, gates, etc)

#### Arson and criminal damage

- Buildings, straw/haystacks, vehicles, machinery, equipment
- Fencing cut/destroyed
- Crops damaged
- Slaughtered animals
- Pheasant pens damaged

#### Wildlife and environmental crime

- Sheep worrying (to include loose dogs within livestock fields, chasing of livestock and injury/death to livestock)
- Fly grazing
- Fly tipping - low level/agricultural scale
- Aggravated trespass unless the trespass will include a breach of the peace as trespass is a civil only matter
- Theft/destruction/damage/interference of endangered and protected species, including hare coursing

#### Fraud

- Including specific targeting of farmers and vulnerable groups

#### Heritage asset crime

- Damage to listed buildings, sites and structures
  - Theft of historical features
  - Church lead thefts
  - Archaeological theft/vandalism
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In the 12 months between September 2022 and August 2023, Northamptonshire Police recorded 62,476 crimes. Rural crime accounted for 1,609 or 2.6% of the overall figure. This is a reduction of 237 crimes from the 2021-2022 crime figure painting a very positive picture for the county

Crime type breakdown is as follows:



The figure in brackets is the comparison with the previous 12 months. This shows a reduction across all crime types except theft of motor vehicle.

Theft offences accounted for the vast majority of all rural crime between September 2022 and August 2023, at 86.7%.



**Wildlife crime in Northamptonshire**

**176 wildlife offences**

This figure is for the August 2022-August 2023 period and includes Wildlife and Countryside Act offences along with poaching, hare coursing and badger related offences.



## Survey Data

### NFU Mutual's 2023 crime report

The annual NFU Mutual report paints a positive picture for Northamptonshire's crime levels with a significant reduction in claim levels from the county. However, the national picture is worrying with a significant yearly increase in claims.

- Northamptonshire was one of the few forces to see a reduction in claim levels in 2022 with a 30% reduction compared to 2021.
- From its claims statistics, NFU Mutual estimates that rural crime cost the UK £49.5m in 2022, up from £40.5m the previous year. The cost of rural theft in the UK shot up 22% last year. On a more local level the Midlands region saw the largest increase in rural crime in England with a 30.1% increase in 2022. This figure was the third highest increase in the UK behind Northern Ireland on 50.7% and Wales 72.8%.
- The cost of agricultural vehicle theft claims reported to NFU Mutual remained high at £11.7m as gangs capitalised on the countryside. Skilled and highly organised criminals continue to target farmyards stealing tractor GPS systems, high value quad bikes and ATVs worth millions of pounds. The UK cost of GPS theft increased by 15% to £1.8m in 2022. However, the problem has sharply escalated in the first four months of 2023, with the cost of GPS theft doubling to more than £500,000 compared to the same period last year. Meanwhile, in 2022, quad and ATV theft reported to NFU Mutual cost £3m nationally, a 34% rise on the previous year.



- The theft of trailers has also increased sharply, fuelled by the delays in the supply chain which are still causing significant delays in sourcing new equipment from suppliers. Trailer theft increased by 66% in 2022 to a total cost to victims of £2.9m. Despite increased security measures being implemented by owners to target harden their property, these security measures appear to be having little impact in reducing offences.
- Fuel theft is another emerging trend due to the rapid increase in the cost to the public. The claims for theft of fuel doubled in 2022 as thieves began to target fuel tanks on rural properties for onward sale.
- Livestock theft increased by 8.7% to an estimated £2.7m so remained one of the costliest rural crimes which has a devastating impact on farms. In a worrying trend the large-scale theft of sheep is becoming a regular occurrence for NFU Mutual members.

*The UK cost of GPS theft increased by 15% to £1.8m in 2022*



These national claims statistics clearly highlight the significant cost of rural crime to both the victim and the wider country. Along with the cost implications there is also the impact on victims who are feeling targeted and exposed to further criminality due to the perceived lack of visible policing in rural communities.

The most up-to-date rural crime survey to be completed by the NFU dates back to February and March 2021. NFU members were consulted with across all regions of England and Wales with the data providing a valuable insight into the current levels of both reported and unreported rural crime, and the perceptions of police activity from the farming community. The regional breakdown allows for comparison between police activity across the different forces and helps identify good practice and areas where more could be done.



### The key findings from this report are

- 31% of respondents report experiencing at least one crime during 2020. The East Midlands specific return was 45% having been the victim of a crime which paints the sad picture of nearly half of the farming community being the victim of a crime in a 12-month period.
  - Crime types were mapped which showed that fly tipping was the highest reported crime with 48% of respondents reporting having been a victim. The East Midlands region received the highest proportion of reports of fly tipping for the whole country with 62% of respondents from the region reporting at least one instance. Fly tipping was followed by theft (42%), hare coursing (41%) and burglary (21%) as the top reported crimes.
    - 1 62% FLY TIPPING
    - 2 42% THEFT
    - 3 41% HARE COURSING
    - 4 21% BURGLARY
  - 60% of respondents reported the most recent crime to the police, 39% stated that they hadn't, which highlights the significant amount of rural crime that goes unreported to police. The biggest reason provided for not reporting was the belief that police wouldn't respond. If we are to build an accurate map of rural crimes, further engagement needs to take place to provide the farming community with the reassurance that their report will be taken seriously and action taken.
  - The average financial loss suffered by respondents in the East Midlands region was £7,680 the highest of all regions surveyed which is of particular concern.
  - Respondents were also asked whether they believed police took sufficient action to investigate the most recent crime they reported, 53% believed the police had taken sufficient action with 47% believing they hadn't. For the East Midlands region, the return was 50/50.
  - 51% of respondents believe that their local police force doesn't devote sufficient resources to tackling rural crime. This figure was higher at 57% for the East Midlands region.
  - 59% of respondents believed rural crime had increased in the previous 12 months. For the East Midlands this figure was higher at 66% which paints a very concerning picture. 30% believed it had stayed the same and only 2% believed it had decreased.
  - 73% of respondents in the East Midlands region report having no regular contact or interaction with police when not reporting crime.
    - 73% NO REGULAR CONTACT with police when report a crime
- 59% of respondents believed rural crime had increased in the previous 12 months*



## Partnership Approach

In Northamptonshire, we are working in partnership to tackle rural crime in the county. We have established a Rural Action Group (RAG) which meets quarterly and consists of the following partnership agencies:

- Northamptonshire Police
- Office for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire
- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
- County Land Owners Association
- National Farmers' Union
- Farming Community Network (FCN)
- Environment Agency
- Canal and River Trust
- Community Safety Partnerships from Northamptonshire North and West local Authorities
- Northamptonshire ACRE
- Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch
- Northamptonshire Community Foundation

The Rural Action Group will work collaboratively to deliver this strategy through a detailed action plan which will be continually progressed and regularly reviewed through the group.



## National Rural Crime Unit

Northamptonshire Police's Rural Crime Team has been an active member of the National Rural Crime Unit's working group since its creation in 2023. The national team is based in Northumbria but supports policing activity across all of England and Wales. This is allowing Rural Crime Teams from around the country to drive greater collaboration and coordinated national activity to tackle cross border organised criminality.

The national team are supporting teams across the county by highlighting emerging crime trends to all forces, allowing for crime prevention activity to take place before the crimes occur in other force areas. The national team are also able to raise matters to the Government and multi-national suppliers/manufactures to change/influence manufacturing practices or legislation to make it harder for criminals to operate. The ability to feed into a team with this level of influence is vital to Northamptonshire achieving its strategic aims of making the county as hostile to criminality as possible.





## Our vision

“ To effectively fight crime in rural areas through the informed deployment of police resources, meaningful partnership working and effective engagement with our rural communities

### OUR AIMS

- ✓ To operate a placed-based policing model where the community know who their local rural crime officer is and how to contact them.
- ✓ To continue to build trust and confidence among the rural community by ensuring their reports to police are taken seriously and follow up action taken.
- ✓ To reduce the amount of crime and anti-social behaviour in rural areas.
- ✓ To bring offenders to justice.
- ✓ To increase public confidence in the partnership approach to tackling rural criminality.
- ✓ To provide tailored and expert support to rural communities and victims of crime in rural areas.
- ✓ To work collaboratively with law enforcement partners to tackle organised criminality operating across county borders.
- ✓ To identify and implement new crime prevention initiatives and technologies to target harden property and equipment to reduce the opportunities for criminals.





## PREVENT

Working with partners and our communities, we will work to actively prevent crimes and incidents taking place, helping to stop people becoming victims of crime. We will provide advice and guidance to residents and businesses to maximize the opportunities to prevent, disrupt and detect rural crimes and anti-social behaviour. We do this by:

- Maintain and improve our visible police presence in communities, providing an effective response to calls for service.
- Promote and support rural communities to make use of the latest crime prevention initiatives.
- Increase the number of Special Constables and volunteers working in rural communities.
- Listen to residents and community groups to better understand our communities, acknowledging their concerns and vulnerabilities in order to take directed action to deter and disrupt illegal activity.
- Make use of new emerging technologies to target harden vulnerable remote locations.
- Work with the National Rural Crime Team to identify emerging crime trends before they impact our communities.



## PREPARE

Local people are our eyes and ears in the community, so it's important we listen to what they tell us. We'll improve the way we share information within our organisation, with partners and others we work with to help us understand problems and identify tactics that we'll use to deter and disrupt criminal activity. We do this by:

- Rural Crime Team officers attending high footfall engagement events and make use of engagement vehicles.
- Providing direct contact details for rural officers to their communities to ensure they have a known point of contact.
- Encouraging people to report all crimes and incidents so a true understanding of offending patterns can be established.  
A dedicated online reporting portal has been created to simplify the process and encourage reporting.



## HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?



### PROTECT

We want safe, engaged, cohesive and confident communities. We do this by:

- Ensure we understand the impact crime and anti-social behaviour has on people living in rural communities and provide an excellent service at the first point of contact.
- Improve the way we communicate with people living in our rural communities and keep people up to date with current trends of incidents, activity, planned operations and police patrols through the use of community messaging system Northamptonshire Talking and team and force social media portals.
- React swiftly to emerging crime patterns and trends to limit the opportunity of further offending.



### PURSUE

We will enforce the law robustly, targeting areas of crime and offenders who cause the most harm. We do this by:

- Ensure an effective police response to reports of rural crime and anti-social behaviour where every victim has contact from a rural crime officer.
- Generate and make maximum use of community intelligence to identify and tackle identified offenders.
- Run operations in conjunction with local partners and organisations targeting rural crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Develop even stronger links with neighbouring police forces to combat and deter organised cross border crime.
- Make use of innovative evidence gathering tools to increase suspect identification opportunities and strengthen cases against them.

## How can you help?

- Report crime and suspicious activity. It is vital to report all crimes. We need information to target our resources and develop intelligence.
- If you see anything suspicious or a crime occurring there and then ring 999.
- If you have information that does not require an immediate response, ring 101 or report online at Report a rural crime | Northamptonshire Police ([northants.police.uk](http://northants.police.uk)).
- If you want to report anonymously or pass on information about a crime, you can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit [crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information-online](http://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information-online)
- Join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme - the largest crime prevention movement in England and Wales with 2.3 million member households. Information on
- Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch can be found at [www.northantsnhw.co.uk](http://www.northantsnhw.co.uk) or you can sign up here [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)
- Sign up to Northamptonshire Talking: the Northamptonshire Talking system is a free online, secure community messaging system that allows authorised administrators to send messages to registered members on their chosen topics.

**Do not place yourself at any risk - in an emergency always dial 999**

### WHAT WE NEED YOU TO TELL US

- ❓ **Who you are and who is committing the crime?**
- ❓ **What is happening?**
- ❓ **Where this is occurring and where are you?**  
*Use What3words if possible*
- ❓ **When this happened?**
- ❓ **Why this happened/why are you suspicious?**
- ❓ **How did it occur/how was the crime committed?**

Let's get

# Northamptonshire Talking

Sign up to get email updates about crime and policing where you live and work

[www.northamptonshiretalking.co.uk](http://www.northamptonshiretalking.co.uk)

The graphic features a hand holding a smartphone displaying the Northamptonshire Talking logo. Surrounding the phone are various icons: a blue envelope, a red 'Urgency' icon with a house and person, a yellow 'BURGLARY' icon with a house and person, and a red 'OCTV REQUEST' icon with a camera.



## Contacts

### Northamptonshire Police

Phone: 101 or 999 in an emergency  
Web: [www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk)  
Twitter (now known as X): @NorthantsPolice

### Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Phone: 01604 888113  
Web: [www.northantspfcc.org.uk](http://www.northantspfcc.org.uk)  
Email: [commissioner@northantspfcc.gov.uk](mailto:commissioner@northantspfcc.gov.uk)  
X: @NorthantsOPFCC

### Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Phone: 01604 797000  
Web: [www.northantsfire.gov.uk](http://www.northantsfire.gov.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@northantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@northantsfire.gov.uk)  
X: @NorthantsFire

### National Farmers' Union

Phone: 024 7685 8500  
Web: [www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)  
X: @NFUtweets

### CLA

Phone: 020 7235 0511  
Web: [www.cla.org.uk](http://www.cla.org.uk)  
Email: [mail@cla.org.uk](mailto:mail@cla.org.uk)  
X: @CLAtweets

### Canal and River Trust

Phone: 0303 040 4040  
Web: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)  
X: @CanalRiverTrust

### Northamptonshire ACRE

Phone: 01604 765888  
Web: [www.northantsacre.org.uk](http://www.northantsacre.org.uk)  
X: @NorthantsACRE

### The Farming Community network

Phone: 03000 111 999  
Web: [www.fcn.org.uk](http://www.fcn.org.uk)

### Neighbourhood Watch

Phone: 0116 402 6111  
Web: [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)  
Web: [www.northantsnhw.co.uk](http://www.northantsnhw.co.uk)  
X: @N\_Watch

### Crimestoppers

Phone: 0800 555 111  
Web: [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)  
X: @CrimestoppersUK

### West Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership

Phone: 0300 126 7000  
Web: [www.westnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

### North Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership

Phone: 0300 126 3000  
Web: [www.northnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)





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