

Newsletter

The Rural Beat

South Worcestershire Police

Rural and Business Crime Team



John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Autumn 2023

The Rural Beat is a new publication from the Police in South Worcestershire for the benefit of the people who live, work and visit South Worcestershire. The aim is to provide information, advice and contact details to assist the community. **We will welcome your feedback.**





**Please be mindful when overtaking riders on horses.
We have received reports of riders and horses being put in danger by other road users.**

The Highway Code provides the following advice.



You may cross a double-white line if necessary (provided the road is clear) to overtake someone cycling or riding a horse if they are travelling at 10 mph or less (Rule 129).

There is updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users, including:

- leaving at least 1.5 metres (5 feet) when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and giving them more space when overtaking at higher speeds
- **passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space**
- allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road (for example, where there's no pavement)

Wait behind them and do not overtake if it's unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances.

When you see a horse on a road, you should slow down to a maximum of **10 mph**. Be patient, do not sound your horn or rev your engine. When safe to do so, pass wide and slow, allowing at least 2 metres of space.

There were more than 3 million road users in the UK In 2022:

3552 road incidents were reported to the British Horse Society 21% more than in 2021.

68 horses were killed on the road and 125 were injured.

139 riders were injured in road related accidents.

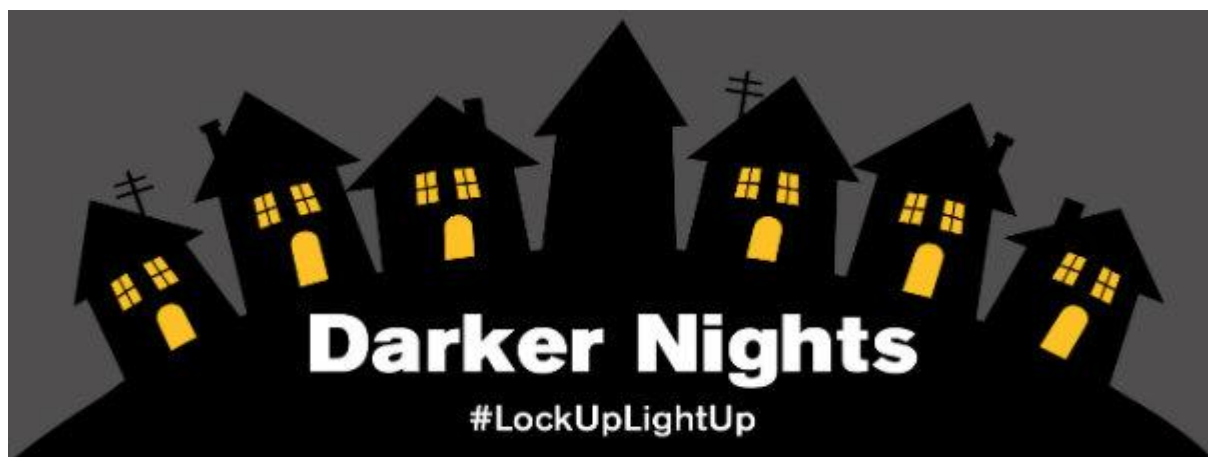
26% of riders were victims of road rage or abuse.

The following link details the effect careless overtaking can impact on the horse and rider.

It has been produced by the British Horse Society

<https://we.tl/t-cgg0HEtvpV>

Burglary and the Darker Nights



- Dark evenings can provide perfect cover for burglars who can easily spot an open window in an unoccupied room, see your valuables through open curtains or blinds, or try their luck with an unlocked door while you're distracted. Try to make your house look as occupied as possible when you are not there. Use timer switches to control lighting or radios
- Don't leave your house and vehicle keys in the lock or on a side table in view of a window making it easy for a thief to fish them through your letterbox
- Always lock your front door from inside - in particular UPVC front doors that have handles, as they are often left unlocked when people are in their house.
- Check your UPVC or Euro cylinder door lock to see if it is snap resistant. It should be stamped with a three star Kite Mark. If it is not, you get the lock changed to either a SS312 Diamond Approved Cylinder, TS007 3 Star Kite marked Cylinder, or a 1 Star Cylinder with 2 Star handle for maximum protection. For more information contact the [Master Locksmiths Association](#).
- Keep front and back doors locked at all times and keep keys and valuables out of sight and reach from cat flaps, letterboxes and downstairs doors and windows
- Close, and ideally lock, all windows when you're not in the room – approximately one in four burglaries in the county still happen because doors have been left unlocked or windows left open
- Make sure your door is well lit and fully visible from the street – dusk-to-dawn lamp adaptors are available from DIY stores
- Check existing lighting is in good working order and replace any faulty equipment – remember to check batteries in torches and smoke alarms
- Keep shrubbery and hedges at the front of the house pruned to below one metre – remove any cover for a burglar to work unseen and give your neighbours every chance to spot something suspicious
- Keep curtains closed at night – if you are away, ask a trusted neighbour to close them for you, and open them again in the morning
- Secure sheds and outbuildings with good padlocks and consider fitting alarms. Lock all tools and ladders away securely
- Consider using 24hrs timer switches to control lighting/radios

Each edition will feature a crime that occurs in our community with Crime Prevention advice

SHEDS



We are currently seeing an increase in thefts from our garden sheds.
A reminder that criminals will be on the look-out for items we keep in our sheds.

It's strange how most people don't secure their shed or garage in the same way they do their homes. People often end up using a flimsy lock or padlock to protect the contents – whether it's a bike or lawnmower. The fact is a burglar will usually try a shed or garage first because they can find the tools they need to get into the house.



Think like a thief

Take a look at your shed and consider how you would break in? It's worth having a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws. Pay attention to hinges, as these are sometimes easily removable. If you have windows, then these could be vulnerable unless they're secured with wire mesh or grills. And keep it locked at all times.

Alarm it Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key, but they respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren.

Don't give them the opportunity or the tools to commit a crime. Lock everything away securely. **Tools can be locked inside a locker or box or secured with a chain.**

Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand within a locked shed or garage. Visit [Sold Secure](#) to search for ground anchors and other locks designed to fix to floors and walls.

Property marking your items is advisable and some tools can be painted with your name or postcode. Forensic marking such as SmartWater is also an option.

**WE DON'T
BUY CRIME**



The top five most common items stolen from sheds



A little bit of information goes a long way

Report suspicious activity, people or vehicles. No matter how insignificant you might think it is, if it is suspicious to you, it probably is.

Also, REPORT CRIME! We know not all crime is reported to us, and we know the many reasons for that including frustration.

You can help West Mercia Police by providing us with any information or intelligence about crime or anti-social behaviour

If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101, or <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>.

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.

In the event of **Immediate** threat of harm to life or property please dial

999



We Don't Buy Crime is West Mercia Police's response to acquisitive crime – crimes such as burglary and theft – and the associated harm it causes. These crimes can have a long lasting impact on victims, it can often leave someone feeling unsafe in their own home, and where possessions that have emotional attachment are stolen it can be heart-breaking.

We Don't Buy Crime has five key strands along with our **towns and villages**, we work with **second hand stores** and **fuel stations**, **deploy covert tactics**, and more recently look at ways our local communities can help tackle associated harm including **criminal exploitation and vulnerability**.

We currently have over 20 Towns & Villages signed up to the We Don't Buy crime Smart Water scheme in South Worcestershire and we are currently looking to sign up more!

Please encourage your local Town or Parish Council to contact us to arrange a meeting (Covid 19 Secure) so we can explain how the process could work

Calling All Farmers



Please contact us if you want to receive a FREE Farm security survey together with Smartwater marking solution and signage

Meet the Rural & Business Crime Team

Pc Nigel Bolton, and Rural & Business Crime Officer (RABO) Mick Simpson work across South Worcestershire, as part of a larger dedicated problem solving team and are supported by Special Constables, police volunteers and members of the public.

If you would like to help with reducing crime in your area, contact a member of the team on

southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk or call 07773050803



So, what are we up to?



Mick Simpson at a recent meeting at Grafton Flyford promoting the benefits of Smartwater and property marking.

Pc Nige Bolton working the Age UK to protect their vehicles from Catalytic thefts.



Mick Simpson and 'new boy' Pc Steve Chance with NFU representatives at s meeting with farmers at Spetchley Hall



Rural and Business Crime team recovering a stolen 'chipper' plant vehicle from a site near Evesham. £15k vehicle returned to the owner based in Devon & Cornwall Police area.

Some of the team's other recent activities

16 farms across South Worcestershire having been subject to crime were visited and crime prevention advice given.

25 rural businesses across South Worcestershire subject to crime were visited and provide with crime prevention advice.

2 Joint operation with local officers to patrol rural areas for wildlife crime and metal theft.

26 Catalytic Converter marking kits provided to victims of those types of theft.

5 Crime Prevention Awareness Talks/Events to Parish/Village groups

3 Crime Prevention Awareness talks to Women's Institute groups

Working with Local Policing Teams to Smartwater tools in trade vans

3 visits to Worcestershire Wholesale Market

STOP PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sign up for our brand new community messaging service.

www.
neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk



**Neighbourhood Matters is the new West Mercia Police community messaging service
Sign-up NOW**

[Home Page - Neighbourhood Matters](#)

Contact the Rural & Business Team for more information

southworcestershireruralcrime@westmercia.police.uk

Theft of Catalytic Converters

If you can, park your vehicle in a locked garage when it is unattended.

If it's not possible to garage your vehicle, park it in a busy well-lit area as close to your property as possible.

Consider installing a Thatcham approved alarm to your vehicle. Ones that activate if your vehicle is lifted or tilted are particularly effective. <https://www.thatcham.org/what-we-do/security-certification/>

Use a catalytic converter protection device or marking system ideally approved by Sold Secure <https://www.soldsecure.com/>



Blocking access to the underside of fleet vehicles, If you operate a small fleet, consider obstructing access to vehicles with high ground clearance by parking lower vehicles close by. Also, keep an eye out for anyone who seems to be working underneath cars nearby, they could very well be scouting out their next target vehicle.

In order to steal the parts, thieves need to slide under the vehicle and use cutting tools to detach the box from the pipes around it. This means parking your car close to fences, walls or kerbs will make theft much more difficult.

Catalytic converters control and convert exhaust emissions from your vehicle into less toxic substances. If yours is stolen, you will know because your vehicle's engine will sound different.

If you suspect your catalytic converter has been stolen, report it to us immediately by calling 101

Online Criminality

At last! There is now one email address you can report suspicious emails to

If you receive an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email: report@phishing.gov.uk

Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) report@phishing.gov.uk

Please be aware and remain vigilant of phishing emails. One of the many scam emails currently in circulation purports to be from the TV Licensing advising to cancel direct debits. These messages may look like the real thing but are malicious. Once clicked, you are sent to a website which could download viruses onto your computer, or steal your passwords. The criminal's goal is to convince you to click on the links within their scam email or text message, or to give away sensitive information (such as bank details).

For further information and advice please go to:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions>

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-ncsc/what-is-cyber-security>

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

<https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/>

Stay Safe. Stay Connected. Stay Cyber Aware

If you have any information regarding any crime you can contact police on 101,
or <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>

in an emergency please dial 999.

You can also contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** to report any crime or criminal activity anonymously.