



*Watching You, Watching me!*

# Colin's Blog

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018

'A Prickly Subject'

As we approach 'Hedgehog Awareness Week,' which will run from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2018, it seems timely to give some thought to these often ignored native British creatures, so I have

asked my friend Keith Snow, from **OWLS** (Ongar Wildlife Society), to contribute to my blog this week.

Many years ago, (infact some 56 years), I was involved with nursing some of these little creatures back to health, so that they could be released back into their familiar environment, so, you can see that is a subject close to my heart.

## Help for hedgehogs

Hedgehogs were the topic of an talk at the Ongar the Ongar Wildlife recently.

They are very endearing animals as that have read the children's book, *Tiggy-Winkle* by Beatrix Potter will Hedgehogs, once so common, have unfortunately become endangered. estimates indicate that their numbers declined from over 30 million in the around one million now. Hence their days as a species on this planet may be numbered unless some action is taken.



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They, and other forms of wildlife, face many problems in this world. Humans have taken away their natural habitats, fragmented their world with roads, removed hedges which are their refuges, made our gardens impenetrable, depleted their food supplies with chemicals, and endangered them with plastics and elastic bands.

We would all like to help but consider ourselves powerless. But we can help.

Hedgehogs have a wide home range, but most garden fences are complete barriers to them. A small opening in a fence at ground level is all that is required to allow them to move around freely. We all like to see hedgehogs in our gardens but we need to allow them access.

Plastic waste may entrap them and is dangerous for them to eat, but elastic bands may cause even greater problems, cutting into flesh and causing choking. I have seen wild mammals and birds suffering in this way and it is quite unacceptable. On a walk from one end of the town to the other recently I saw (and removed) 12 large elastic bands. So how many more must there be in our town and where do they come from?

All were large and beige in colour so there are no prizes for guessing that they are Post Office issue.

There are two things that we can do. Collect up the plastic bands that we see, and either dispose of them safely or, if you are more concerned, return them to the Post Office.

### **Keith Snow**

Ongar WildLife Society (OWLS) <http://ongarwildlifesociety.org.uk/>

OWLS meets on the third Monday of the month at ZINC, Great Stony, Ongar 7.30pm for 7.45pm. Further details from: [colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk](mailto:colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk)

### **LEE VALLEY PARK**

My wife and I recently took two of our grandchildren, and their dog, for a long walk around Lee Valley Park, where we could see the first signs of spring, coming to life. Having not been there for a few weeks, I was surprised to see that they are now charging for the use of their car parks, although the first hour is free, you need to pay £2.50 per car, for any time in excess of this, but, the ticket is valid for all day, until the park closes. That said, there are very few places that you can visit all day for £2.50, and, if you like the great outdoors, it is indeed, a small price to pay.

## **REPORTING NON EMERGENCY CRIME 101 ONLINE**

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE from ESSEX COUNTY NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION**

There are times that we need to call Essex Police and telephone 101 on a Non-Emergency matter and as you know there is also an **ONLINE** way to communicate to Essex Police too.

It may help to know what the screens look like before you go online?

These are attached and in order too.

So, familiarise yourself with the screens before you enter the information.

However, **BEFORE YOU START**, please ensure that you have all the details that may be requested of you when you are entering on each screen, as this will help you to complete the task without too much delay. So just take a moment to scan through a number of the "dummy" screens first, yes there are similar screens but scroll down as they show all the information requested!

You are allowed to report on behalf of someone else.

**BUT** You **MUST** have their permission.

Please you need their full names, postal address, phone number and email address. Essex Police will need to make contact with them and may do so within twenty-four hours.

Please have as much information on the incident you are reporting and who is the victim if it is not yourself.

To "Report a Crime" see the box which says "Report a Non-Emergency Crime" and click on the link.

In the box provided "Where did the crime happen?"

Please ensure you have the postal code or the name of the nearest town, village or city.

*If you know the place enter it on Google and you will see the postal code.*

It is essential that you not only know as much of the incident as possible but also the items that may have been stolen/damaged e.g. a description of the vehicle, its make/model, registration number, and colour and also any personal items i.e.: value of cash, descriptions of a bag/purse.

If a phone is stolen, you need the make and model but take time NOW to enter on the phone's keyboard \*#06# and you will see on the phone the IMEI number – this is the phone's international serial number which is important to know should it be lost or stolen – add this serial number in the 101 report.

So, write down all you know of the phone and this number now for your reference. You may “know” who committed the crime and therefore there is a screen where you can enter the “suspects”. Remember all this information is private to Essex Police at all times.

Finally, it is worth noting that you do have a screen (7) to edit any details before you send the report.

*Should, after you have sent the report, you had forgotten to enter all the details or have updated information for Essex Police, you can send a further message to update Essex Police but this is after they have sent a reference number in reply to your initial “report” and Essex Police will update their system.*

It is hopeful that this is of help when entering any crime on 101 online or even by phone. Please remember that preparation is the key before you do so.

Clive Stewart, Chairman, Essex County NW Association April 2018

## CrimeStoppers.



### Speak up about crime in the Essex countryside

Independent charity Crimestoppers, is asking people in the region to speak up about crime in the countryside.

**A new campaign against rural crime has been launched across Essex, where nearly one third of all reported crime is classed as rural - with violence the most common category.**

Crimestoppers believes everyone has the right to feel safe from crime, wherever they live. The charity gives people the power to speak up, stay safe and stop crime 100% anonymously, either by calling the professionally-staffed 24-hour UK Contact Centre on 0800 555 111 or by using the non-traceable Anonymous Online Form.

There's **no ID**, no police contact, no witness statements, no courts.

**In the county, information given to Crimestoppers led to more than 300 people arrested and charged between April and September last year (2017). And the numbers continue to increase.**

**With a focus on raising awareness of crime in the countryside, Chair of Crimestoppers in Essex, Stuart Rawlins, said: “Rural crime not only has a significant effect on the farming community and those who live and work in the countryside, it also impacts on those in towns and cities. Our aim is to keep the countryside safer for all of us by getting that message across using social media, leaflets and other tools.**

“In countryside communities, people tend to know who’s who and they may have information about crime which could be important. It could also mean they won’t want to tell police because they fear reprisals. Crimestoppers charity can give them reassurance thanks to our guarantee of anonymity.”

The rural crime campaign will be in three stages. Social media has already been used to target hotspot areas and more will be rolled out during the next few months. Leaflets and posters will also be distributed to a number of partner organisations, many in smaller communities in the countryside, and village magazines will be asked to help promote the campaign.

Pauline and Keith Newton, who own Walthambury Stores in Great Waltham village, near Chelmsford, know only too well the impact of rural crime. In 2017 there were three break-ins or attempted break-ins at their store and Post Office.

“We were devastated each time,” said Pauline. “We work incredibly hard to serve our local community and to have our livelihood threatened by criminals was incredibly upsetting.

“As well as the emotional toll, there’s the cost of the repairs, the effect on our customers and the fact we’ve continued to invest in new security measures. If this campaign encourages more people to speak up when they hear or see something to do with a potential crime, then we would certainly welcome it.”

Crimes against property, crimes of violence, domestic violence, child abuse, trafficking and hate crimes all take place in rural communities; while rural crime itself includes theft of high-value agricultural equipment, vehicles, heating oil, metal, diesel and pesticides.

Serious and organised crime groups are often linked to rural, heritage and wildlife crime, such as hare-coursing and cannabis cultivation.

More than 1,000 people contact the Crimestoppers charity every day which leads to around 14 people being arrested and charged each day. Calls and information passed to Crimestoppers are not recorded and cannot be traced. You will be 100% anonymous. Always.

Crimestoppers is not an emergency service and in the event of an emergency, you should always ring 999.

For more information please contact Marcus Churchill, Media Officer  
[Marcus.Churchill@crimestoppers-uk.org](mailto:Marcus.Churchill@crimestoppers-uk.org) on 020 8835 3707 or 07825 220 589.

For more information on Crimestoppers in Essex, visit [www.crimestoppers-uk.org/in-your-area-eastern/essex/](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/in-your-area-eastern/essex/)

### **Take Part in the latest RURAL CRIME SURVEY: -**

<http://www.nationalruralcrimenetwork.net/research/internal/2018survey/>

### **Help stop home take-over gangs exploiting people in Essex**

Crimestoppers in Essex has launched a campaign to stop criminal gangs taking over the homes of people in **(the county/town/area)** who can't fend for themselves.

The practice called 'cuckooing' is where gangs target the homes of vulnerable people and use the property as a base for drugs dealing or other criminal activities.

Crimestoppers charity and community safety partnerships across the county are campaigning to stop gangs using violence and abuse to take over defenceless people's homes.

Anyone who has information or – for whatever reason – prefers not to talk to the police, can contact Crimestoppers charity 100% anonymously.

Our charity gives people the power to speak up, stay safe and stop crime by calling our professionally-staffed 24-hour UK Contact Centre on 0800 555 111 or by using the non-traceable Anonymous Online Form. There's no ID, no police contact, no witness statements, no courts.

Victims of 'cuckooing' are often drug users but can include those suffering from mental or physical health concerns, female sex workers, single mums or those living in poverty and older people. Victims may suffer from other forms of addiction, such as alcoholism.

Once they gain control, gangs move in with the risk of sexual exploitation and violence. Children as well as adults are used as drug runners. Gangs may use properties in rural areas, including flats, holiday lets, budget hotels and caravan parks.

Colin Dobinson of Crimestoppers in Essex said: 'Gangs could have access to several addresses. They move quickly between vulnerable people's homes for just a few hours, a couple of days or sometimes longer. It helps them evade detection.

'Crimestoppers wants your help to make our communities safer because everyone has the right to feel safe from crime, wherever they live and work.'

Some vulnerable adults may even be forced to leave their homes, making themselves homeless whilst leaving gangs free to sell drugs.

Caroline Wiggins, of the Essex Community Safety Partnership says: "Tackling gangs and organised crime groups is one of our priorities across the County and we are delighted to be able to support this Crimestoppers campaign. It is vital to get the message out to local communities, so they can be aware of the signs and help protect those vulnerable people in our society who are at risk of being targeted by these gangs."

Signs of 'cuckooing' include:

- An increase in people entering and leaving
- An increase in cars or bikes outside
- Curtains may be closed most of the time
- Possible increase in anti-social behaviour
- A build-up of litter
- Signs of drugs use
- Lack of healthcare visitors

Crimestoppers charity can be contacted 100% anonymously on **0800 555 111**

or at [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org) **100% anonymously.**

- Crimestoppers is an independent charity which helps the police to solve crimes, making communities safer. It does this by operating the 24/7 telephone number 0800 555 111 which people can ring to pass on information about crimes anonymously. They can also use our Anonymous Online Form.
- Around 14 people are arrested and charged every day as a result of information given to Crimestoppers.
- Since Crimestoppers began in 1988, it has received over 1.8 million actionable calls, resulting in more than 140,000 arrests and charges. More than £135 million worth of stolen goods has been recovered and over £340 million worth of illegal drugs has been seized.
- In 2005, Crimestoppers launched the UK's Most Wanted on its website which allows the public to view images of criminals and pass on vital information about their whereabouts. It has been highly successful, with over 4,000 arrests to date.
- Crimestoppers UK was founded by Lord Ashcroft, KCMG PC, Chairman of Trustees. In 1988, he launched Crimestoppers in the Metropolitan Police area.



Crimestoppers' 'call to action' is built on a three-way partnership between the business community, the police and the media. **DATA**

**PROTECTION** My blog is sent to members and supporters of Epping Forest, Brentwood and Harlow NhW groups. and partnership organisations. When you join neighbourhood Watch, you agree that your contact details are shared between Neighbourhood Watch and Essex Police under existing partnership agreements, and that they are not shared with other organisations or individuals.

To unsubscribe from my blog, or from Neighbourhood Watch, please send an email to: - [colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk](mailto:colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk) quoting the area in which you reside, so that, I know from which to list remove your contact details. Thank you.

Colin I. Freeman MITOL Trustee and Executive committee member of Essex County NhW Association, member of Epping Forest, Brentwood and Harlow NhW committees and Advisor to London Community Watch.

[colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk](mailto:colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk)

You can also read my blog at: <http://www.eppingforestnhw.org.uk/>

## **HELPING COMMUNITIES TO HELP THEMSELVES**

