



Standing against Rural Crime *The CLA's Five Asks*

Criminal activity is a blight on the rural population. Criminals are often emboldened by the isolation of rural communities, leaving families, farmers and business owners feeling vulnerable and powerless. Police forces all too often are inadequately resourced to investigate and prevent criminal activity in the countryside. The Country Land and Business Association is asking Police and Crime Commissioners to help us fight back against rural crime.

As a Police and Crime Commissioner you will have the power to make a difference, and should you be elected we ask you to pledge to protect rural communities through targeted funding and adaptation of policing for rural areas. Whilst many forces have ensured greater priority to rural crime, often with dedicated teams, we still feel that more needs to be done to ensure they are adequately resourced

In doing so we ask you to commit to a rural manifesto focusing on the following 5 priorities.

- 1. Wildlife Crime:** it is important that all police officers and police call handlers understand the issues of wildlife crime so they can act appropriately when called for assistance. The CLA would like to see wildlife crime training included as standard for all new recruits and the development of an ongoing programme of training for all call handlers.
- 2. National Rural Crime Network:** rural crime is unique and often takes place over sparse geography. The National Rural Crime Network, provides vital research and reports on the challenges of rural crime. We would ask all PCC candidates to continue to fund the NRCN and adopt the best practice it advocates.
- 3. Tackle crime against businesses:** the theft of metal, fuel, machinery and livestock blights the lives of farmers and rural businesses and the cost to the rural economy is significant. The countryside is a working environment as well as an area of great beauty, and these businesses face threats such beyond theft, such as criminal damage and arson. We want to see police forces with a properly equipped and resourced dedicated rural crime team to tackle this constant threat within our rural communities.
- 4. Effective responsibility:** Fly-Tipping is a blight on rural life, with many victims being repeatedly targeted, and left to deal with both the expense and waste. To best catch those perpetrating this crime, there either needs to be much closer working relationships between the local police forces, environment agency and local authorities, or a single body responsible for leading on this issue.
- 5. Promote Education and the Countryside Code:** Access to the countryside is vitally important for all, especially with the impact of Covid-19. However there needs to be greater promotion of the Countryside Code, following a worrying rise in incidents of fire, criminal damage, wild camping, trespass and livestock worrying. The CLA is

What is Wildlife Crime?

wildlife crime is any action which contravenes current legislation governing the protection of the UK's wild animals and plants and includes:

- Hare Coursing
- Deer poaching
- Fish poaching
- Badger persecution
- Raptor Persecution



running a campaign for the Countryside Code to be taught more widely across schools and has produced useful infographics for promotion on social media

Key Statistics

- £4,800 - The average financial impact of rural crime per incident
- £1,000+ - The cost to a rural business of clearing up fly-tipping per incident
- **Half of rural** business owners say that crime has a moderate or great impact on their lives.
- 60% of rural business owners are fairly or very worried about becoming a victim of crime.