

Report to Caerlaverock**Date 28.02.2018**

Officer Attending	Sgt Stitt <i>GRAHAM STITT</i>	Councillors Present	
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Update from Previous Meeting**Local Crime Stats****Local Crimes of Note****Other Significant Incidents/Occurrences:****LIVESTOCK WORRYING**

Police Scotland are again involved in a partnership initiative to prevent livestock worrying across Scotland in spring 2018. This is the fifth national campaign and will build on the success of the action taken in Spring and November 2016 and 2017. It will involve joint work with partners such as Scottish Natural Heritage, The Scottish Kennel Club, NFUS, Scottish Land & Estates and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscals Service.

The worrying of sheep by domestic dogs not only has the obvious financial impact on farmers when livestock is killed or injured but the day to day effect on the animals themselves, their productivity and welfare means that this is a serious issue in the farming community. The Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime (SPARC) has identified the worrying of livestock as one of the key issues impacting on rural / agricultural communities in Scotland.

Livestock worrying incidents are highly emotive crimes for those involved and continue to receive a high level of media coverage both locally and nationally.

Analysis of sheep worrying crimes shows that incidents start to peak in February through to end May, coinciding with the main lambing season. At this time the pregnant ewes and then their new born lambs are particularly vulnerable to dog attacks. This is also a key time for any sheep farming business and any loss or injury to stock has a significant financial impact.

Key aims of the initiative are to;

- **prevent** further instances of sheep / livestock worrying during this period.

- **educate** dog owners regarding their responsibilities, the effects of dogs worrying livestock and promote a better understanding of impact on the farming community.
- **enforce** legislation robustly ensuring all reported cases of sheep worrying are thoroughly investigated and offenders reported.

Overall recorded crime decreased in 2017 for the first time since 2014 and in some areas there was a significant reduction. This provides evidence that the national campaigns, delivered by local officers, are showing positive results; incidents are reducing while farmers are encouraged to report all livestock worrying.

Dumfries and Galloway is one of the areas where there tends to be more incidents, reflecting the large sheep farming areas. While reported crime is low, most areas with high density of sheep farming experience a rise in crime during the February-May period.

Key points identified from previous years;

- 2017 saw a decrease in reported crime from 2016 (33%*) during a period where farmers were encouraged to report all incidents.
- Offending dogs: Just under 50%* of incidents involved a dog that was local to that area, either off the lead or having "escaped" from a house/garden. This is compared to 69% in 2016. This may be where the reduction in reported crime is coming from as local residents are responding to targeted messaging and it may be easier to trace a local dog.
- Sheep continue to be the animals affected and most incidents involve only 1 dog
- Nearly all incidents resulted in injury and/or death to livestock. Insufficient data given in crime reports to give average cost but one farmer lost stock valued at £50,000 and many others resulting in four figure damages.

The following resources are available for download and printing;

Signage and advice for Farmers/Landowners-

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Access-management-guidance/signs>

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/access/taking%20the%20lead%20-%20full%20version.pdf>

Advice for Dog Walkers-

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/Practical-guide/public/dog-walking>.

Livestock worrying has been identified as a key issue in the farming community and remains a highly emotive crime for those affected. Efforts to prevent this crime at a key time in the farming calendar will be supported by the rural community and enhance the reputation of Police Scotland.

Initiatives Ongoing

- Anti crime patrols, to prevent and detect crime.

- Please report any suspicious incidents at the time.
- Intelligence sought in relation to drink drivers.
- Intelligence sought in relation to Drug dealers/cannabis cultivations.
- Report any bogus callers type incidents.

Matters brought to Attention by Council**Response Given to Matters Raised at Meeting****Actions to be taken regarding Issues Raised****Community Sergeant (Comments)**