



## Dorset Horse Watch

*Preventing and reducing  
equine related crime in Dorset*



### What is Horse Watch?

Like Neighbourhood and Home Watch, Horse Watch is about members of the public, working in partnership with Dorset Police to prevent crime, and reduce the fear of crime.

Members receive information on equine related and rural crime local to them, and advice on how they can protect themselves from becoming a victim. From time to time, we will also arrange tack-marking sessions where a need is identified.

### Why Do I Need to Join?

Horse owners and enthusiasts invest substantial sums of money in furtherance of their interest, but possibly more important is the significant sentimental value, which cannot be insured against.

The rural and often remote nature of many premises where tack is secured makes an easy target for thieves, who know there is a strong possibility that they will not be disturbed.

Members receive guidance on how best to protect their property, and will be quickly alerted to potential threats.

### How Does it Work?

Members register to receive alerts from the Dorset Police Community Messaging system, which will include:

- Details of equine related and rural crime, where appropriate
- Crime reduction advice

There is also a link through local Horse Watch Co-ordinators, drawn from police officers and staff who have an interest in horses and relate to the needs of equine enthusiasts, and will act as a local liaison between Dorset Police and members of Horse Watch.

### How Do I Join?

Complete the Dorset Police Community Messaging Registration form, making it clear that you wish to join Horse Watch, and return to:

Community Messaging  
Bournemouth Police Station  
Madeira Road  
Bournemouth, BH1 1QQ

## Crime Prevention

Dorset Horse Watch can help you to prevent Equine crime, and being a member gives you access to security advice and information to keep you safe and your horse and tack secure.

### Top Security Tips

- Always lock up, it may take you a little longer, but it only takes a few minutes for a thief to take hundreds of pounds worth of your equipment.
- Security mark all your equipment with your postcode, keep a photograph of anything unusual and/or expensive, and maintain a record of any serial numbers. It is important to let potential offenders know your property is marked, so display signs on gates and buildings.
- Keep tack room windows covered so burglars can't see inside, and secure windows with solid iron bars.
- Don't leave valuables in your car when out riding; if you don't need it for the ride leave it at home.
- Take down the registration number and a brief description of strange vehicles, towing vehicles, or horse type lorries moving around at night.
- Always report suspicious callers and vehicles to the police, and your local Horse Watch Co-ordinator, also alert friends and neighbours; you may prevent a crime or help us to apprehend an offender.
- Always keep a description of your horse or pony including height, colour and distinguishing features. Also keep updated colour photos of the animal from different angles.
- Having a visible mark on your horse is an effective deterrent, freeze branding, micro chipping and hoof branding are all useful methods of marking.
- Before purchasing a horse at auction check the Stolen Horse Register, if you are concerned keep the auction programme, record the lot number and alert the auctioneer.
- Check any fencing and gates regularly up close to look for damage or weaknesses. Gates should be secured with a close-shackled padlock and pad bar; also turning the bottom hinge upside down will mean it can't be taken off its hinges.
- Where possible vary your routine so you do not become predictable to anyone who may be watching.

## **Useful Links**

UK Horse Watch Alliance – [www.ukhorsewatch.org.uk](http://www.ukhorsewatch.org.uk)

Stolen Horse Register – [www.stolenhorseregister.com](http://www.stolenhorseregister.com)

Horse Passport – [www.horsepassportagency.co.uk](http://www.horsepassportagency.co.uk)

World Horse Welfare – [www.worldhorsewelfare.org](http://www.worldhorsewelfare.org)

Horse and Pony Protection Association – [www.happa.org.uk](http://www.happa.org.uk)

RSPCA – [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

Dorset Police – [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk)

Dorset Horse Watch – [www.dorsethorsewatch.org](http://www.dorsethorsewatch.org)

The British Horse Society - [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

## **Stop That Thief**

The primary aim of ‘Stop That Thief’ is to reduce the incidence of, and the opportunity for, rural crime in Dorset.

It is a partnership initiative between Dorset Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams, local branches of the National Farmers Union, and farmers and landowners. The Country Landowners Association also supports the scheme.

Members make a donation to the scheme through their local NFU Branch Secretary. The money is used to purchase ‘cost effective’ security items, for temporary installation on farms and properties, where a crime has recently occurred, or as a preventative measure, where intelligence suggests a property may be a potential target. Installation is entirely at police discretion. As part of the scheme, your local Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer can carry out crime prevention surveys.

The scheme has proved to be very successful, many potential crimes have been prevented, and at least one offender arrested. Members of the scheme also report that they feel more reassured.

For further information on eligibility and how to join the scheme, please contact your Safer Neighbourhood Team. To find out which teams serve your area and how to contact them, call 101 or visit [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk).

## Riding Safely

Make sure you return home safely from your ride by following a few useful safety tips:

- Be seen at all times – wear high visibility clothing all year round, even in summer as a horse and rider may be easily hidden in the shadows on country roads.
- Always tell someone where you are going and at what time you expect to return.
- Take your mobile phone with you if possible.
- Try not to ride after dark, if it is impossible to avoid make sure that you and your horse can be easily seen by wearing reflective clothing, stick to well lit areas where possible and carry a torch.
- Always wear the correct safety equipment, i.e. hat, and perhaps a body protector, ensure that it has a CE safety certificate and that it is well maintained.
- Ensure that your footwear is suitable and that there is nothing on it to catch in your stirrup. Traditional riding boots or Jodhpur boots are best.

Further safety advice can be found on The British Horse Society web pages at <http://www.bhs.org.uk/enjoy-riding/riding-safely>, where you can also download a range of free advice leaflets on subjects from Access and Rights of Way to Welfare.