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### **Country Eye - Helping Keep the Rural Community in Kent Safe**

Country Eye Ltd have built a free App for people living and working in the rural community. The app allows users to record and share information on crime, suspicious behaviour and damage in their home community or whilst out and about.

The Crime, Rural Advisory Group (CRAG) has commissioned the design and build of the Country Eye app. Mike Bax, Chairman, explained, "data suggests that the cost of rural crime in Kent stands at 1.8 million, if you include the additional hidden costs to repair property, replace locks and the time taken out of a working day to address these issues, the cost is considerably higher. CRAG was formed to help combat rural crime and to work with farmers, businesses and residents to find solutions."

The app has been built to help residents and farmers in Kent report information quickly and efficiently. This information is securely stored in a central database and accessed by the voluntary Country Eye team who are fully trained by Kent Police. The team analyse and disseminate the information and then broadcast it out to other local app users.

Peter Rolington, Chairman of Kent Crimestoppers and member of CRAG will head the team of volunteers, Peter said "Country Eye will be an invaluable tool to inform people living and working in the countryside about incidents that are occurring in their area. Technology has advanced greatly in recent years and has enabled us to develop a digital version of the highly successful Neighbourhood Watch scheme for the rural area. We will be able to broadcast information directly to users about potential incidents as they happen. The Country Eye app will allow a greater audience to receive information, particularly those living in the most remote parts of the county."

Country Eye has the full backing of Kent Police with information being sent securely to the relevant authorities. Kent Police is committed to responding to concerns in rural communities and to carrying out high visibility patrols. The information collated through the app will give officers a greater understanding of potential problem areas. The app has been supported by Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Safer Kent, National Farmers Union and BTF Partnership.

The Country Eye app identifies four different Rural Categories which make up the majority of incidents that occur in the countryside.

**Theft:** Vehicle, Metal & Cable, Machinery & Plant, Livestock, Outbuilding, Fuel & Oil and Equine.

**Farm Crime:** Arson, Fly-Tipping, Trespass with and without Firearms, Criminal Damage and Suspicious behaviour with and without vehicles.

**Animal, Wildlife Crime:** Poaching, Animal Welfare, Endangered Species & Conservation, Hare Coursing and Horse Crime.

**Heritage Crime:** Off-roading and Metal Detecting (without owner's permission ) /Night Hawking

The app has a knowledge section which highlights the key factors for each type of incident above to assist users.

Sign up is simple; the system requires a contact number, email address and postcode. The app records and disseminates information using the phones camera and GPS location settings. Recording information is intuitive; users will click the camera icon, take an image, choose from a drop-down the type of crime, whether a crime reference number has been issued, and any other useful information. The location, time and date will be automatically recorded. The app can also use an existing image from the camera's photo library.

**The application is not intended for emergency purposes; users should report to; 999 – (crime in progress) 101 – (crime committed) or report to Crimestoppers if they wish to remain anonymous – 0800 555 111**

The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play by searching Country Eye

