

MDP-11-04-18 MM 007

PICTURE: MECHA MORTON



**CONCERNED:** Villagers in Fressingfield want action to stop the system of sewers overflowing in the village.

# Villagers fear old sewers will not cope

## Countryside in grip of rural crime wave new figures reveal

**By CHRIS MORRIS**

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Britain's countryside is in the grip of a rural crime wave, according to a leading insurance company.

Rural insurer NFU Mutual says latest figures reveal a sharp rise in the cost of rural thefts.

Initial estimates from the insurer show theft cost the UK's rural homes, businesses and farms £44.5 million in 2017, the highest level in four years.

NFU Mutual's claim statistics show 2017 saw an increase of 13.4 per cent – the highest year-on-year percentage rise since 2010.

"We're seeing brazen criminals stealing cars, 4 x 4s, tractors, quad bikes and tools," said Tim Price, NFU Mutual rural affairs specialist.

"We're especially concerned that criminals are becoming more sophisticated and are overcoming electronic security to steal expensive vehicles of all

ing it hard to resource rural policing and this may be one of the reasons for the rise in thefts.

"There is still a perception among criminals that there are easy targets in the countryside and farmers and homeowners can do a lot to deter thieves by taking simple security measures.

"Fitting gates to prevent easy access to farm yards and drives is one of the most effective measures. High-tech security such as movement detectors, infrared cameras and geo-fencing, which triggers an alarm if a farm vehicle moves off the premises, can also help.

"Social media is fast becoming the new eyes and ears of the countryside and keeping in close touch with neighbours and police through local farmwatch schemes can play a significant role in identifying suspicious activity."

Norfolk was the thirteenth worst hit county in the UK, while Suffolk was twelfth.

Rural crime cost the county £906,868 with the



# Housing plans will double the size of Fressingfield

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**Worried villagers in Fressingfield are calling for action after sewers in the village overflowed for the fourth time in four months.**

Water, toilet paper, food debris and other human waste burst through three manhole covers over the Easter Bank Holiday, leaving residents fuming.

They say that flooding and sewerage problems have been a problem for more than 20 years – and are getting worse.

A total of 53 new homes have been approved for the village with a further three applications for 233 properties in the offing, more than doubling the size of the village.

"The sewers in Fressingfield are already overflowing and the system cannot cope," said resident Sharon Lytton.

"Horrible stinking sewage is regularly bubbling into Low Road with heavy rain.

"We are worried that any more households coming on to the system would create even worse problems, such as sewage backing up into their homes.

"Many residents are convinced the sewer system is at capacity and can take no more houses."



**NOT AGAIN:** A man hole cover in Low Road, Fressingfield.

Residents formed a pressure group called Supporters Against Fressingfield Expansion (Safe) last year.

Mid Suffolk District Council currently has no five-year housing land supply plan, which residents claim leaves the door open for developers.

"Under current regulations, developers don't have to pay for any extra sewer capacity needed when they build," added Mrs Lytton.

"Anglian Water only invests in added capacity or upgrades when it is commercially viable.

"It is also only able to comment on individual applications and not on the cumulative effect on the

sewers of multiple applications.

"Mid Suffolk is the accountable authority, yet is under tremendous pressure from government to approve major housing applications.

"Despite the many concerns put to Anglian Water, Mid Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council about sewage and flooding, there still seems to be no solution.

"Overflowing sewage poses a public health hazard and cannot be acceptable in 21st century England."

Residents say flooding on Low Road, the lowest point of the village, is a regular problem.

"When the sewers come up, this disseminates waste

over 300 yards," said Dr John Castro, chairman of Safe.

"Early correspondence as far back as 1998 between the then MP and Anglian water proves this has been a problem for a long time. These sewers were originally built in 1946."

An Anglian Water spokesman said: "The sustained heavy rainfall we have experienced recently has led to additional surface water and groundwater entering the foul sewerage network at Low Road pumping station, which has led to some surface flooding in the area.

"Under normal conditions, the pumping station has plenty of capacity to service the houses in its catchment.

"In addition, last year we made some improvements to the pumping station which has improved the overall flow capacity through the sewer.

"Since this work was completed, we have had no technical issues at the pumping station. The only two incidents since this work have been as a result of heavy rainfall in the area, which puts extra, but unusual, stress on the system."

A spokesman for Mid Suffolk District Council, said: "The issues with the sewerage have been reported, and they will be considered and measured as part of the planning process."

types.  
"With police facing huge challenges – including budget cuts and extra workload – forces are find-

most common thefts including tools, garden equipment and machinery.

In Suffolk, the figure was £924,0621.

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