



Forensic marking kits being used to prevent theft from sports clubs



Devon & Cornwall Police have been working with DeterTech, Devon Cricket Foundation and Cornwall Cricket as part of a joint initiative to prevent burglary and deter opportunistic thieves.

Since 1 March 2025, 36 sports clubs in Devon and Cornwall have been burgled, with thieves stealing tractors, mowers and other high-value equipment.

In a bid to prevent further theft, Devon & Cornwall Police's Crime Prevention team have been working with DeterTech to offer SmartWater forensic marking kits to cricket clubs at a reduced cost.

SmartWater is a forensic marking fluid that is used to mark valuable machinery and equipment. Each kit has a unique code which can be registered to a database after

application. The fluid is invisible to the naked eye, but can be detected using specialist UV lights and is guaranteed to last for a minimum of five years in all weathers, ensuring that police can return recovered goods to their rightful owners.

These kits are being provided to sports clubs across Devon and Cornwall alongside signage that warns thieves of that forensic marking fluid has been used.

Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor at Devon & Cornwall Police, Hannah Denton, said “Theft of tractors and mowers from sports clubs has a significant impact on the local community and it’s something we take very seriously.

“We’ve had great support from Devon Cricket Foundation’s Facilities and Funding Manager, Nick Goodliffe who has helped to promote this scheme to clubs across the region.

“So far, more than 60 clubs across Devon and Cornwall have signed up to the initiative and we’re hopeful that this – combined with policing tactics – will send a clear message to thieves targeting sports clubs in the force area.”

Bridestowe & Belstone Cricket club near Okehampton was one of the first victims of theft. Facilities Manager James Ewen said, “We were shocked to have been targeted so close to the start of the season and it had a massive financial impact on the club. It wasn’t easy to replace the specialist mowers and equipment at short notice, and we are very grateful to local businesses who helped us out.

“We are particularly vulnerable due to our rural location and we were pleased to hear about the SmartWater initiative. We hope that this will deter thieves in the future along with other improved security measures such as improved locks and cameras.”

SmartWater kits for commercial use typically retail at £300.00 but are currently being offered to cricket clubs at just £60.00.

Sports clubs in Devon and Cornwall who are interested in learning more about forensic marking kits should contact Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor Hannah Denton via the Devon & Cornwall Police [website](#).