

Rural Crime Bulletin

March 2021



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DYFED-POWYS
POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER

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Dafydd Llywelyn - Police and Crime Commissioner

Welcome to the Rural Crime bulletin that provides an update on rural crime developments within Dyfed-Powys Police. This bulletin is circulated a year on from the successful **St. David's Day Conference** focusing on Rural Crime that I held at Police Headquarters last year. The last 12 months have been like no other but sadly crime and incidents affecting the rural community have continued. I wanted to share with you some of the work we are doing to prioritise these issues.

I am pleased to announce that Dyfed-Powys Police have recently appointed a Sergeant to lead the Force's Rural Crime Team. Matthew Langley will begin in his new post in March, and you can meet the rest of the dedicated Rural Crime Team on page 9 so that you can familiarise yourselves with your local Officers.

Sgt. Langley and some of the Rural Crime Team will be joining me on 9th of March in a very important **strategic partnership meeting** that I'm arranging with several organisations. I have invited partners including the Farmers' Unions, Local Authorities, National Parks, National Resource Wales and the Welsh Government to the meeting to identify ways of **working collaboratively** to tackle some of the rural crime challenges we face. Our discussions will highlight and develop our key priorities as we look to produce a new Rural Crime Strategy here in Dyfed-Powys for the next 4 years.

This bulletin includes information on some key operational activities within the Force area, such as the distribution of **SelectaDNA kits** to farms in Powys, examples of collaboration work with other forces that includes the development of the **Future Farms Cymru** project with North Wales Police looking to increase the uptake of technology on farms to improve security.

I am pleased to be able to include articles from the charities, **Tir Dewi** and **DPJ Foundation** that highlight the fantastic work they do in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals within our farming communities. I hope you take some time out to read about their work – both articles provide an insight of the support available.

I am also grateful for the support of the Farming Unions that I am in regular contact with and support greatly the work of the Rural Crime Team, I hope you enjoy the bulletin. Please contact my office should you wish further information on any of the content.

Increase in dog ownership presents challenges to rural and agricultural communities

Earlier this year, Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn issued a warning to dog owners that they face being prosecuted if they fail to keep their dogs under control when out walking the country side.

His warning came following reports of several incidents whereby livestock were attacked and killed by dogs in rural parts across the Dyfed-Powys Force area.

Having seen a surge in dog ownership since the first lockdown, more and more people have been turning to their local countryside for leisure walks, and Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn has warned dog owners that rural areas are not playgrounds for pets, and that they face prosecution for failing to control their dogs.

Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn said;

“This is a critical time in the rural community as farmers are in the middle of the lambing season. In light of these recent, concerning incidents of livestock worrying, as well as the surge in dog ownership, I will ensure that we maintain

effective communication between local organisations and partners within the agricultural and wildlife community to ensure that we take a collaborative approach to tackling the rural challenges we face.

“Dog owners need to take responsibility for ensuring dogs are kept under control while out walking the country side, especially during the lambing season.

“They may think it is fun to run around animals in fields, but this is not the case and these animals often get scared, injured or killed as a result.

“We are grateful to the majority of responsible dog walkers in our communities, but we want to remind all owners that dogs should be kept on leads at all times around livestock - it is an offence to allow your pet to worry, kill or maul sheep, their lambs, or any other livestock”.

“Dog owners must take responsibility for their dogs and ensure that they are kept under control at all times. If dogs are being walked be it on the road, through a field or on a footpath, and especially somewhere where there is likely to be livestock, they should always be kept on leads. Incidents like this can and should be avoided.”

PC Esther Davies, Rural Crime Team





FARMING COMMUNITIES IN POWYS BENEFITTING FROM ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM POLICE, AS OFFICERS CRACK DOWN ON RURAL CRIME FOLLOWING FUNDING FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER



"I have previously highlighted my continual commitment to supporting Dyfed-Powys' Rural Crime Team, and it is very reassuring to hear of the crime prevention activity currently taking place in Powys,"

"I am confident that Dyfed-Powys Police is making a big difference in fighting rural crime in this area, and that they will continue to do so."

PCC Dafydd Llywelyn

Dyfed-Powys Police Rural Crime Team and Neighbourhood Policing officers have been visiting homes and farms across Powys, offering crime prevention advice and practical measures to reduce the risk of becoming repeat victims of crime.

The work is being carried out in partnership with the Powys Crime Prevention Team and the Powys Community Safety Partnership, and is thanks to funding received from Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn.

Rural Crime Team PC Charlie Jones said: "We saw a surge in reports of quad bike thefts in 2019 and collaboratively launched Operation Maple in response to this," she said.

"This operation was twofold – criminal investigations were carried out into reported crimes by response officers, while at the same time, our Powys Rural Crime Team, Crime Prevention Team and neighbourhood policing officers worked on a crime prevention element, making it more difficult for criminals to target rural



properties.

"As part of this problem-solving initiative, we obtained over £6,000 to support victims of rural crime with a prevention and an on-going target-hardening programme."

The team invested in 500 kits to mark agricultural equipment, with an emphasis on quad bikes. Details of marked items are stored on a database, making it easier to return stolen property to its owner.

In partnership with the National Farmers' Union and Farmers' Union of Wales, security signs have been provided to farm owners and advice has been given on installing additional security measures where needed.

TEAMWORK between police forces in carrying out cross-border operations is one way Dyfed-Powys Police is cracking down on rural crime

Roads Policing Units are working in partnership with South Wales Police Gwent Police and Wets Mercia West Mercia to target the borders between the three forces.

Operation Border is proving successful, as the forces combine intelligence and local knowledge to focus their efforts on cross-border criminals.

Chief Inspector Tom Sharville said: “Criminals use our road networks to access the Dyfed-Powys area, hoping to go undetected as they travel along rural stretches, however we are doing all we can to put a stop to that.

By working as a team with West Mercia, Gwent and South Wales Police, we are able to cover a significant geographical area, with a concentrated target on the borders to stop those we suspect of having criminal motives from entering or leaving the force area without being detected.

“The four forces are showing an ongoing commitment to supporting one another and the communities we serve in denying criminals the use of our roads.”

In January alone, a number of successful operations were carried out. Among the results were five arrests for drug

driving, with investigations ongoing into several speeding offences, cannabis possession and possession of an offensive weapon.

Warnings were also handed out for vehicles being driven with no tax, no insurance and no MOT, registration plate offences and manner of driving.

Two operations were planned in direct response to a spate of burglaries in Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, and a spike in rural thefts along the Crickhowell and Gwent border. Officers use live intelligence and patterns in reported incidents to plan their activity to have the strongest impact.

On January 16, roads policing officers stationed themselves at Llangynidr Mountain and stopped every vehicle entering and leaving the area via that road. The stops focussed on engagement with drivers over rural crime and COVID-19 restrictions.

“We are working proactively and responding to patterns or increases in reported incidents to target our activity.

“We are seeing positive results from this way of working, and we will continue to work in partnership with neighbouring forces to protect our rural communities.”

CI Tom Sharville



Dyfed-Powys Police and North Wales Police working collaboratively on innovative rural crime project to increase uptake of technology on farms

Dyfed-Powys Police and North Wales Police are working in partnership on a new initiative that aims to increase the uptake of technology on farms with a view of reducing crime and making it easier to detect.

Future Farms Cymru has two strands to the project. The first is to encourage the uptake of existing technology on farms, which includes CCTV, padlocks and alarms to deter criminals.

Future Farms Cymru has set up a series of demonstration farms across North Wales and Dyfed-Powys with support from Farming Connect.

As part of the initiative, companies specialising in security will be invited to install their devices free of charge on some of the sixteen farms, and will then be able to showcase their products via the Future Farms Cymru website in the form of recorded webinars.

The second strand of Future Farms Cymru is to encourage the uptake of new technology such as LoRaWAN (Long

Range Wide Area Network) which is designed to allow low-powered devices and sensors, that could be placed on gates, entrances, and farm buildings for example, to communicate with internet-connected applications over long-range wireless connections.

In 2020, North Wales Police held a Hackathon cash prize competition to innovators and companies who could put together LoRaWAN solutions to rural crime.

Competition winners are now developing their products to be used on the Future Farms Cymru demonstration farms to trial their winning prototype devices.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llywelyn said; "It is exciting to see how the Rural Crime teams of both Dyfed-Powys Police Force and North Wales Police are successfully working collaboratively to tackle rural crime through the Future Farms Cymru.

"We are well aware that every single crime bites hard in someone's livelihood and causes anxiety in the community.

"Anything we can do to make it more difficult for criminals, has to be a positive move. I welcome this initiative and fully support it, let's all work together to make rural areas across Wales safer".

The Future Farm Cymru website is currently being developed and will go live later on this year, and will hold other resources such as an e-learning package on farm security, provided by Farming Connect, and links to resources on mental health tailored to the agricultural community.

Future Farms Cymru

Fighting Rural Crime



[Looking after our mental health](#) [Keep your farm safe](#)
[Our sites](#) [Our partners](#)



Keep your farm safe

Many of our farms are targets for criminals. Here, take an online course (thanks to Farming Connect) to help you give your farm a security make-over.

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The DPJ Foundation is a mental health charity
that works with rural communities in Wales and
also provides professional counselling to
those in agriculture.

Poor mental health is a growing problem across the UK; it is estimated that one in four people will be affected by a mental health issue every year. Agriculture is far from immune to these issues. In fact, in 2018 there were 83 people in agriculture and associated industries who died by suicide: more than 1 farmer a week.

Agriculture still carries one of the highest rates of suicide in the UK which is a statistic that we at the DPJ Foundation are working to change. Many factors can impact on your wellbeing and lead to poor mental health such as financial pressures, relationship breakdowns, the weather and health worries. Being a victim of crime or worrying about becoming a victim can also cause poor mental health. Coupled with the increased isolation that we are all feeling at the moment, this can be one pressure too many. We would urge anyone who is feeling this pressure to reach out for support: we are just a phone call away.

In 2020 rural crime in the UK reached its highest level for eight years. The NFU Mutual's 2020 Rural Crime report found that farm theft cost the industry £54 million. However, this is the tip of the iceberg as issues like hare coursing, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour such as drug taking and littering and issues around dogs chasing livestock are widespread in Wales, especially with more people staying closer to home. Also, being locked down at home can be difficult for some people if their home situation is challenging or abusive.

The impact of crime will be felt differently by different people. Some may feel angry, upset or confused others may feel relatively little for a while before being affected later. Some people find it difficult to sleep, others feel consumed by worry and some feel embarrassed that they have been a victim. For a small number of people, it can also lead to conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or anxiety. What is important is not to suffer in silence.

At the DPJ Foundation we provide a 24/7 confidential help line called "Share the Load". It is staffed by Samaritans trained volunteers who understand the farming community and the challenges that farmers face. The service is completely confidential and can provide the first step to recovery from poor mental health (whatever the cause). Through the helpline, we also provide access to fully-funded professional counsellors who can meet with the farmer within a week at their farm, at another convenient location or by telephone or text message. We can usually provide at least six sessions of counselling and there is no cost to the caller. The Share the Load number is 0800 587 4262 or text 07860 048799.



0800 5874262



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"Don't let your thoughts
overwhelm you, please
share the load with
someone. To find out
more please visit our
website"

TIR DEWI... THERE TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

BY GARETH DAVIES



0800 121 4722



info@tirdewi.co.uk



www.tirdewi.co.uk

When we think of the effects of crime on farmers, we have to include their families. The theft can affect the business and its operation – if a quad bike is stolen it is more difficult to get feed out to the cattle or to go around and check the sheep – but it also creates huge worry and stress for all family members. The isolation of most farms can make people feel vulnerable and the ‘suddenness’ of a crime can have a huge impact on the state of mind. Most farming families are used to being able to leave doors unlocked or even keys in vehicles with confidence as there is no one around to steal anything, but crime can change all of this.

This is an often under-represented effect of crime. On its own, it may not be something that a farming family will struggle to cope with, but when it happens on top of ‘everything else’ then it can be a real problem. Farmers will often be struggling with several problems at any one time: - practical problems on the farm, issues with the health of their animals, the huge burden of inspections and regulations, endless decisions to be made, market uncertainty and volatility, and all in isolation. Add a crime on top of this and we can easily reach a breaking point.

Tir Dewi is a Farm Support organisation that tries to help farmers to overcome their problems... whatever they are! Our support is free, confidential and without judgement – we will never judge you for being where you are, we will do everything we can to help you to get to where you want to be. Sometimes a farmer will just want a chat – an opportunity to get it off your chest. We have a free helpline (0800 121 4722) for that purpose. But often they have reached a position where they can't cope with any more. Then we will come and visit you, have a cup of tea and begin the process of helping you to get to where you need to be. If it takes weeks or months we will keep at it, together we have a much better chance of getting past whatever obstacles are in your way.

Asking for help now and then isn't failing. If someone asks you for help then I'm sure you're only too glad to give a hand. So don't struggle on alone, call us and we'll do everything we can to help.



"You don't have to struggle in silence"



SENTENCES FOR FOOD RELATED OFFENCES FROM ILLEGAL SLAUGHTER HOUSE IN 2020 AN EXAMPLE OF HOW COLLABORATIVE WORKING BETWEEN LOCAL ORGANISATIONS CAN LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES.

In September 2020, three men received suspended prison sentences for food related offences which arose from the illegal slaughtering of sheep at Bramble Hall Farm, Ferry Lane Pembroke Dock.

Sean Burns, John Clayton and Kenneth Darren Evans were discovered by Officers of the Public Protection Department of Pembrokeshire County Council and Dyfed-Powys Police Rural Crime Officers, in the process of preparing sheep carcasses, which had just been slaughtered into 'smokies'.

Smokies are an illegal product which is created by the singeing of the fleece off the carcass of a sheep, to leave the surface of the meat with a smoky colour and leaving the carcass with a distinct strong smoky smell, as a result of the burning process.

Smokies are products which are sold to specific ethnic communities which view them as a delicacy. Apart from the filthy conditions in which these products were being processed, and the blatant disregard to any regulatory control over the slaughter of animals and processing them into food, smokies cannot be produced legally, as the skin is left on the carcass of the animal. This is not permissible for sheep meat in the EU.

Peter Cole, Pembrokeshire County Council Lead Environmental Health Officer, said: "Having a prior relationship with officers of the Rural Crime Unit in Dyfed Powys Police, specifically officers PC Gerwyn Davies and PCSO Jude Parr, was massively beneficial when the situation arose where we needed to get access to Bramble Hall Farm on 21st January 2019, at short notice, following receipt of information that led us to believe that illegal slaughtering of sheep was taking place. This meant that we knew which officers to contact, and they were able to divert themselves from what they were doing on the day, and come immediately to our assistance."

Officers from the Dyfed-Powys Rural Crime Team assisted throughout the investigation and on subsequent follow up warrant executions to the premises with Pembrokeshire's Animal Welfare Officers, to deal with animal welfare concerns. Officers from the Rural Crime also attended Crown Court to give evidence alongside the officers of Pembrokeshire County Council.

Cris Tomos, Pembrokeshire County Council Cabinet member for the Environment, Public Protection and the Welsh Language – and ward councillor for Crymych, echoed Peter Cole's thoughts. He said: "Without the assistance of the officers it would not have been possible to have entered the premises to catch offenders in the act. The officers had no hesitation in entering a building where smoke was emanating, without knowing exactly what they would be met with once inside, in terms of the number of people involved, and whether they would be hostile. I am very impressed with the partnership working that is undertaken by all concerned when tackling rural crime."



"I am very impressed with the partnership working that is undertaken by all concerned when tackling rural crime"

DYFED-POWYS POLICE RURAL CRIME TEAM

MEET THE TEAM



Superintendent Robyn Mason
Force Rural Crime Strategic Lead

Inspector Matthew Howells RCT

Sgt. Matthew Langley RCT

Ceredigion

PC Esther Davies 33

PCSO Chris Tipper 8072

Pembrokeshire

PCSO Liam Woodford 8025

PCSO Jude Parr 8015

PC Kate Allen 1120

Powys

PC Charlie Jones 927

PCSO Miranda Whateley 8196

PCSO Garry Gwilt 8054

Carmarthenshire

PC Simon Gibbard-Jones 915

PCSO Helen Fender 8013

MEETING SCHEDULED WITH UNIONS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS TO IDENTIFY COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO TACKLING RURAL CRIME ISSUES

Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategic Partnership Group Meeting

09.03.2021

2:00pm - 3:30pm

Following a meeting with the Farming Unions in Wales earlier this year, Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn is establishing a Strategic Partnership Working Group with key stakeholders to identify ways of working collaboratively to tackle some of the rural and wildlife crime issues in the area.

Dyfed-Powys Police have recently appointed a Sergeant for the Rural Crime Team, and the Police and Crime Commissioner is keen to consult with key stakeholders to gain an input from partners to support the development of a new Rural Crime Strategy.

Key Stakeholders that have been invited to be part of the strategic group include both NFU Cymru and FUW unions, as well as all four local authorities within Dyfed-Powys, Welsh Government, Natural Resource Wales, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Brecon Beacons National Park.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llywelyn said: "I had positive discussions with representatives from both unions earlier this year to highlight some of the rural crime issues in the Dyfed-Powys area.

"One of the priorities identified was the need to take a collaborative approach to tackling rural and wildlife Crime, and I look forward to meet with several key partners in March to develop discussions and ideas further".



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