

GWENT POLICE – RURAL CRIME NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2026

Welcome to the Spring 2026 Rural Crime Newsletter.

Welcome to our new Rural Crime Team newsletter, designed to keep those who live, work, and visit rural Gwent informed and involved. We'll share updates on what we've been doing, how we work alongside communities and partner organisations, and how you can help protect our countryside, livestock, wildlife, and heritage.

From farmers and landowners to dog walkers and local businesses, everyone has a part to play in keeping our rural communities safe—and we truly value your support.



Meet Your Rural Crime Team



Inspector James



Police Sargent 288 Smith-Stephens



Police Constable 969 Counsell



Police Constable 1006 Read



Police Community Support Officer 139 James



Police Community Support Officer 247 Hughes

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Listening to You and Working Together”

“Your Voice, Our Action”

“Shaping Safer Communities Together”

Community engagement is at the heart of our work, and building strong relationships with our communities is essential to delivering an effective service.

The Rural Crime Team attends the only working livestock market in the Gwent area each week, where we have developed strong relationships with farmers, traders and staff.

These regular, informal conversations provide an opportunity for people to raise concerns that may not always feel serious enough to report but are still important. In many cases, early advice can help prevent issues from developing further.

The team also delivers talks to local groups, outlining our role and how communities can support rural policing across Gwent. These sessions are consistently well received, with positive feedback and valuable discussion throughout.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Royal Welsh Show – 20–23 July
- Bedwelty Agricultural Show – 15 August
- Monmouthshire Show – 16 August
- Usk Show – 12 September

CAUGHT AND IN COURT

Gareth James Sentenced to two years and eight months at Newport Crown Court for a rural crime spree targeting four properties in Pontypool and Abertillery. James stole thousands of pounds worth of equipment, horse tack, a mini digger bucket, and diesel. To evade detection, he cut phone lines and used cloned license plates on his Mitsubishi L200.



Cross-Border Organised Crime Gang Three men were charged with conspiracy to steal hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of agricultural and farming equipment in a major cross-border operation targeting farms in the Gwent and Avon & Somerset areas. The arrests of Eli Isaacs, Charlie Hughes, and Jack Bowerman followed a joint operation by Gwent Police and Avon and Somerset Police.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Building trust and confidence in rural policing is vital. The Rural Crime Team delivers training to new Force Control Room staff and Police Community Support Officers, so they understand the unique challenges of rural crime, the role of the team, and how best to support rural callers.

The team undergo ongoing training within their specialist role to improve the service they provide to our communities this includes 4x4 driving, drone use, farm safety and environmental legislation.



SUPPORTING LOCAL POLICING

Rural Crime Officers regularly support local Neighbourhood Policing Teams, particularly in tackling the use of off-road bikes in rural areas and hard to reach locations. Thanks to specialist vehicles and knowledge of rural terrain, the team has achieved positive results across both rural and urban areas.

Officers also assist with missing person searches, using drones and thermal imaging equipment, contributing to several successful outcomes. In addition, the team works alongside Roads Policing colleagues by capturing imagery at fatal collision scenes, supporting thorough investigations.



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We continue to work closely with Local Council Authorities, Natural Resources Wales and CADW to respond to rural crime, wildlife crime and heritage crime related issues.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Earlier this year, officers investigated a report concerning the death of bats following building work without the appropriate licence. Working closely with a professional ecologist and the local authority planning team, officers established the facts and ensured the issue was addressed.

The matter was resolved using a Community Resolution, alongside internal learning within the company and preventative actions put in place by their legal department. This outcome ensured accountability while preventing future harm to protected species.

Livestock worrying is a growing issue for our rural communities – we have recently dealt with a report of a dog having entered farmland on more than one occasion. Thanks to the persistence of the reporting farmer, visual evidence was obtained, allowing the dog to be identified. The owner was issued a Community Resolution and attended (and funded) a Blue Cross responsible dog ownership course. Our campaign to end Breed Specific Legislation | Blue Cross

This reinforces the importance of keeping dogs under control around livestock and the value of reporting concerns. If you have any concerns or are experiencing livestock worrying, please report it to our team.

The team have also responded to a deceased badger in snare trap. Upon attending the location and speaking with the landowner who the caller was. Officers then proceeded to locate and examine the scene. It was concluded that the snare had been in the same location for several years and had been forgotten about. The snare itself was attached to a neighbouring landowner's fence and was not visible until the badger had been caught.

The snare had clearly been there before the All-Wales ban came into effect on 17th October 2023. If you want to know more about this legislation [Agriculture \(Wales\) Act 2023 - Explanatory Notes](#)

Recently, a peregrine falcon was found in a remote quarry location, suspected of having been shot. The bird was recovered and examined by a local vet before being submitted to Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) due to inconclusive X ray results. This investigation is ongoing, and we will provide an update in the next edition.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Report suspicious activity
- Keep dogs under control
- Check land regularly
- Speak with officers

Your Rural Crime Team

Email: ruralcrimeteam@gwent.police.uk

Report via 101 or Crimestoppers



<https://members.gwentneighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/QrJoin/1BC98DF2-D255-458C-98FC-AE15507364B6>

[Link to Join Our Rural Watch Group](#)